

BILTMORE II CONDOMINIUM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Volume 12 Issue 8

May 2020

BILTMORE II CONDO

600 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

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- Manager** .. manager@biltmore2.com
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- Maintenance**.....
- Maintenance@biltmore2.com

OFFICE HOURS

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



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MANAGER'S CORNER

City of Coral Gables Starts COVID-19 Testing

On May 1st 2020 The City of Coral Gables began free nasal swab COVID-19 testing for residents who meet the criteria. Appointments will be granted based on priority levels:

- Priority 1- Coral Gables senior residents age 65+ with symptoms or with underlying medical conditions.
- Priority 2- Coral Gables residents under the age of 65 with symptoms or with underlying medical conditions.
- Priority 3- Residents who do not meet any of the above categories and are requesting a COVID-19 test.

Please complete the online testing application at www.coralgables.com/covidtesting. For security reasons, you must create an account with a username and password. If you need help filling out the application, please call the Senior Resident & Testing Hotline at 305-460-5401.

ANNUAL MANDATORY FIRE ALARM INSPECTIONS

All Residents, please be advised that we will be completing the mandatory annual fire alarm testing the week of May 18, 2020. The management office will be providing you with a date and time of the inspections. Please make arrangements if you are not in town and/or provide the office with authorization to access the unit.

Vivian Medina
Property Manager



WELCOME!

NEW RESIDENTS
Eduardo Perez & Yamila Estevez

FISHTAIL PALMS

(Lobby's Tallest New Residents)

The tallest plants in our newly refreshed lobby planters are Fishtail Palms. Two of them, now about 12-feet tall, frame the large photograph of the Biltmore Hotel that is attached to the west glass window elevator bank structure. The objective was to select a plant that would make a significant vertical statement, as does our soaring lobby atrium. Fishtail palms are native to humid forests of Asia, northern Australia, and the South Pacific, from sea level to about 6,500 feet. Their lacy fronds make them special. Many palms are pinnate, which means that their leaf blades grow along both sides of the palm frond mid-rib. But only fishtail palms are bipinnate as each blade is further subdivided into leaflets. The bipinnate fronds give fishtail palms a feathery look, and they are also the source of their common name. The Fishtail palm's slightly ragged edges of the divided leaflets look like a fish tail – see picture below. This plant expects a humid environment but is frequently used indoors, where it must be kept moist.

Robert Petzinger




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CLEANING “INJECTION” WELLS



In April 2020, United Septic trucks and crew were seen in the landscape directly in front of Biltmore II’s main entrance (see photo above). They were cleaning out our “injection” wells that take rainwater runoff during storms and send it back to the aquifer that lies below much of southeastern Florida. In our front lawn, there are 2 pairs of manhole covers close to each of the Screw Pine trees. There are 2-pair of manholes on the southside along Valencia Ave. too. Each manhole pair is part of one well system. One manhole of each pair receives water from Biltmore II’s roof, parking deck, entry-exit ramps, and other areas and sends it to a below-ground sediment tank that allows suspended particles to settle out of the water. Then the water is sent via an underground connecting pipe to the adjacent well, which is a large metal-lined shaft bored into the limestone rock and extending 110-120 feet down toward the aquifer below. First, the septic crew cleaned the sediment tank. Then they assembled a high-pressure water cleaning apparatus with pipes running to the bottom of the well so silt and mud could be removed by vacuum pumping it to tank trucks waiting in the street. This work assures that our storm water system will operate properly and prevent any garage flooding. This preventive maintenance work is recommended to be done every 5-6 years. United Septic is the only reliable company in our area with expertise and equipment to do this essential work.

Robert Petzinger

BILTMORE II EMERGENCY GENERATOR REPLACEMENT COMPLETED

During the last week in April the installation, load testing and employee training of our new Emergency Generator set was completed – well ahead of the upcoming hurricane season. The new Caterpillar machinery has a higher capacity than the 40 year-old unit it replaced (400 kW versus 276 kW). It can power all required loads (emergency lighting, fire pump and alarm system, 2 elevators, garage drainage pumps) as well as domestic water pumps and some additional Common Area optional loads (Social Room and kitchen).

The new emergency generator runs on a combination of diesel fuel and natural gas, allowing for longer run time with less diesel fuel consumption and emissions. Although the new equipment has a much higher capacity than the old generator, it is roughly the same physical size and fits nicely in our existing generator room on the roof.

In addition to the replacement of the emergency generator set, this project involved the replacement of the fire pump control system with a more efficient type along with other significant upgrades to our electrical system. Much appreciation to Louis Aguirre & Associates (our consulting engineer), Electrical Alliance Corp. (our contractor) and our Maintenance staff for making this important project happen without significant issues.

Bill Beitz





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OUR CHANGING LIVES AND INTERRUPTED VACATIONS

By June Frost

The whole world is topsy-turvy. We have been through so much in the last months we are numb. Our lives have been put on hold. That's one way of looking at it. One day we will wake up, and everything will be like before. Or so we hope. We might even resume our plans to go on vacation again. Pick up just where we left off.

Let's face it. Our lives have been rudely interrupted. We are told we must be resilient and learn to adapt. For some of us seniors who have spent years adapting to advancing life this can be a bit tiresome. Exhausting really.

When can we feel safe again? When will we stop looking at everyone with suspicious glances as if they were the enemy carrying around a deadly virus? We scan their faces for signs of illness. Our ears are alerted to any dreaded coughs.

Taking out the garbage requires careful concentration. Put on your mask and arm yourself with Purell to wipe the door handles, the lever to the trash shoot, the door knobs to reenter your place. Remove your shoes, leave them inside the front door and proceed in slippers. Breathe again. Don't forget to wipe down your shoes later on. If necessary include your keys. Tired? Live with the garbage.

Our building is so full of residents with stories about travel plans that have crashed and burned. It would help if we maintained a sense of humor in spite of it all. We must do everything we can to muster all our emotional forces to laugh.

Can you imagine laughing if your April trip to France was suddenly cancelled, the prepaid rental was a total loss and getting refunds on airline tickets became a nightmare? This is precisely what happened to **Celita Lamar**, who along with her daughter Kathy, was supposed to be visiting friends in Canet on the Mediterranean and Paris later this month.

Instead Celita settled for phone calls with her friends. "What else am I going to do—sit here and cry? I have a sense of proportion about the tragedies in the world due to Coronavirus. I'm not going to become tragic over losing money when all these people are losing so much in other countries." She added, "Besides, during this pandemic I am saving money, because I am not going out to do all the things I normally do!"

In fact, she has never been so busy. "My life has become very virtual. I don't actually see a person, but I use Zoom

all the time." The French class she normally teaches every Tuesday at the Adult Activity Center is now taught on Zoom. She joins the total conditioning exercise classes taught at the Center every Tuesday and Thursday on Zoom in her guest bedroom. She has regular Zooms with her grandson in Austin, Texas on Wednesdays at 5 p.m. "Today," she says, "my granddaughter who lives in Brooklyn asked if we could do a Zoom session at 5 p.m. Normally we just text each other which is not very exciting. This is a treat for me that was initiated by them."

"I miss human company, just being close," she admits, "but I have so much virtual activity that I don't have too much time to miss my friends, because I see them on Zoom." On Easter Sunday Celita scheduled a Zoom meeting with 16 members of her family, some that she had not seen for years. "We got all kinds of interesting news. This virus has brought us closer. Made our relationships more important. I have more regular contact now with people that I used to have contact with only sporadically." And, "I am having a hard time finding time to read!"



Celita Lamar teaching Zoom French class

Julio and Raija Horstmann visit Finland every summer. This year they bought their tickets in January for July 8--August 12. But Finland, which is Raija's home country, just closed its borders this month. Finland is allowing its citizens to get back home, but no one else is allowed to get in.

Nevertheless, they have not cancelled their trip yet, as they are hoping things might change before July. Raija used to work for different airlines, so she knows a lot about buying tickets and travel insurance. "When buying tickets," she says, "you have to read every little print to see what it covers or not. Is it refundable or nonrefundable? The travel

Continued on page 5

Our Changing Lives (cont. from page 4)

insurance should say, ‘Cancel for Any Reason.’” So they feel covered and are waiting and hopeful.



Raija and Julio Horstmann before the pandemic

Climate and daylight are important factors in the months they pick to travel to Finland. In north Finland (Lapland), there is no night during the summer but 24 hours of daylight. In southeast Finland where the Horstmans have a little house by a lake just outside of Imatra summertime daylight is from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. but during winter 10 a.m. to around 3 p.m. The rest of the time it is dark.

So how are they coping now? Says Julio, “I feel like a prisoner. I go out every three days, but I don’t mix with people. I fly right through the supermarket. I drop things off things at my sister’s house. On the doorstep. I’m reading every last thing to keep busy.” Sometimes he talks on the telephone or watches TV.

Raija Skypes or uses Facebook Messenger to be in touch with her family almost every day. “They are fine,” she says. “The Finnish people are very stable and calm. That’s the way we were brought up.” Says Raija, “I read local papers in Finnish every day online. I watch a lot of movies, shows, HBO. I have no problem with time.” She loves to play cards online. She also reads magazines and books and does a lot of word puzzles in Finnish. “I thank God I don’t get easily bored!”

One lucky couple did manage to squeeze in their vacation. Just under the wire. **Terry and Yvonne McKinley** returned from their 10-day trip to Scotland on the evening of March 16 four hours before travel from the UK was banned. Whew!

Fear was already in the air when they boarded their plane on March 7. Before takeoff Yvonne had cleaned their seats and

trays from top to bottom with Clorox wipes. So did other passengers wearing masks and gloves.

In Scotland they visited Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh. Says Yvonne, “I cleaned every hotel room we stayed in...I wouldn’t let them into my room. Every time we got a glass, I cleaned the glass with a Clorox wipey.” In beautiful Edinburg they didn’t see one mask or one glove, and the bars were packed. During the 1 ½ hour London to Miami layover, she cleaned every chair they sat on.

When they landed in Miami only thirty at a time were allowed to deplane. After passport control, they followed the line, but instead of customs there were 9 people wearing masks and gloves waiting to interrogate them. They were told to quarantine for 14 days and call them at the conclusion. If they got Covid 19 they were to alert them, and likewise they would be informed if any of the other passengers were infected.

When the McKinleys got home they deep cleaned their whole house. Says Yvonne, “We are into intensive cleaning of our place. First it was the filthy sliding door, then I scrubbed and polished my tile floor. We rearranged the furniture. The lamps in the kitchen are sparkling, because we took the whole thing apart. We have an open kitchen, and grease is in the air, so we are degreasing the house including the baseboards.” They have cleaned out the bar and thrown bottles out. Next come the chandelier, books, window shades, etc.

Apart from cleaning, has her life changed? “I haven’t been outside my door since the 16th of March,” she said, “I stay in my house, watch Netflix, Amazon Prime, and I cook. I don’t feel claustrophobic because I sit on my balcony with a glass of wine.”

And she Zooms with her 18 cousins. “We are very close. Every Wednesday we have happy hours. Last Wednesday the Zoom host led us through exercises. We had so much fun. I laughed so hard,” says Yvonne, “the best part of all is that we don’t make up, our hair is a mess. Those of us with white hair like myself don’t have an issue of dyeing hair. It’s the natural look.”

So there you have it. Life goes on. When it comes to surviving, human beings are geniuses.

[Editor’s Note: These interviews are conducted by phone or Zoom.]

SOCIAL CLUB ACTIVITIES:

No activities are planned for the near future. The Social Club hopes all our Residents stay safe and healthy.

Newsletter will Temporarily Not be in Printed Form

Coastal Group Publications, our newsletter supplier, will continue to provide newsletters in digital format only. Due to the “stay at home” order they feel that providing digital copies prevents their staff, their printer’s staff and our own staff at Biltmore II, from unnecessary contact with others. Our office will continue to distribute the newsletter via email blast, as we have done in the past, and post it on our website.

MEMORIAL DAY MAY 25

Memorial Day is officially celebrated on the last Monday during the month of May. Memorial Day is dedicated to service men and women who gave their lives for freedom and country. It is also a time to remember loved ones who have passed away. The roots of Memorial Day observance, goes back to 1865 and the end of the Civil War.



Memorial Day was traditionally held on the 30th of May. In 1971, Congress changed it to the last Monday, in order to afford a three day holiday weekend. Regardless of the date, we encourage you follow Memorial Day tradition. Take time to remember lost loved ones in whatever way you feel appropriate.



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