



# TowerTalk

News and Information for Park Tower Condominium Association

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## Not So Sunny Under Palms - How the Palm Rulings Influence PTCA Procedures

by Sheldon Atovsky

These past several months unit owners have received many more mailed documents from PTCA and noticed a significant increase in the number of board meetings. These are but a few of the changes the association is making due to recent rulings and interpretations of court cases known as Palm I and Palm II.

### HISTORY

Palm began in 1999 in the Circuit Court of Cook County and has continued more recently in the Appellate Court. Palm I and Palm II are shorthand for rulings related to these cases.

More specifically, Palm II refers to the case titled, Gary Palm, Plaintiff-Appellee, v. 2800 Lake Shore Drive Condominium Association, an Illinois Not-for-Profit Corporation; Board of Directors of the 2800 Lake Shore Drive Condominium Association; and Kay Grossman, individually and as President of the Board, Defendants-Appellants.

The long title of this publication speaks to the importance and impact of the cases. For the purposes of this story, the two cases will simply be called Palm.

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## The Law On Working, Service and Emotional Support Canines

by Vince DiFriscio

Canines, specifically domesticated dogs, are uniquely positioned to be useful in our lives. They are socially in tune with humans. Dogs, for instance, are one of the few animals that understand the meaning of a human pointing a finger toward an object or location; not even monkeys or apes have made that logical leap. Dogs also have a high level of intelligence, a desire to please, an innate curiosity, and an incredible sense of smell. They are also relatively strong animals. All these characteristics make them able to assist both individuals and societies to accomplish specific tasks, often tasks no human could do nearly as well.

To understand how Federal laws work with these animals, it is important to separate the dogs into three groups. Service dogs are trained to help disabled individuals to work and live more independently by means both obvious (i.e., seeing eye dogs) and subtle (a diabetes assistance dog monitors a person's breath for signs of low blood sugar). Working dogs are trained to accomplish tasks from the traditional (sheep-herding) to the high-tech (while bomb-sniffing dogs are well known, research is being done to train dogs to sniff for compounds generated by tumors in the low concentrations of early-stage cancers). Finally, emotional

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# Property Values on the Rise, Foreclosures Decline at Park Tower

by Sheldon Atovksy

Data relating to sales of existing homes are published by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and combine figures on single-family homes, condominiums, townhouses and co-ops. This data is divided geographically into four regions: West, Midwest, South and Northeast. Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist, noted in its September 22 report that August sales, though down a bit, followed four months of increases.

"There was a marked decline in all cash sales from investors. On the positive side, first-time buyers have a better chance of purchasing a home now that bidding wars are receding and supply constraints have significantly eased in many parts of the country ... As long as solid job growth continues, wages should eventually pick up to steadily improve purchasing power and help fully release the pent-up demand for buying."

This assessment closely matches statistics on sales at Park Tower collected by Tim Patricio, property manager. It also runs parallel with analyses by Margaret Dralyuk, whose reality office is a long-time fixture at Park Tower. Dralyuk reports 39 units sold, September 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014. She notes that the percentage of foreclosures is down -- five in the same 12-month period -- and that of the 39 units sold during that time, only two were short sales.

Dralyuk notes that improvement has been slow, but she expects to see a rise in

momentum in the spring market, starting in January. She observes that prices this past September were 30 to 40% higher than September, the year prior.

Rentals, she says, are going for "sky high" prices, and those units are mostly owned by long-time unit owners, not new owners who bought them on speculation. She believes that in sales, Park Tower is ahead of other Edgewater condos because of our amenities, because indoor parking is immediately available, and because a lot of items are covered in our assessments.

Patricio has a similar take on the data. He observes that sale prices are slowly climbing, with a couple of really good sales recently. But he notes that sales of foreclosures, especially studio and one bedroom units, are holding us back. As the inventory of foreclosures disappears, he expects prices to climb significantly. At present, many of the foreclosures are sold to banks at sheriff's sales, then resold. This reselling, usually at much higher prices, helps to raise overall sale prices.

The cash sales mentioned in the NAR report greatly affect overall prices. Most sellers settle for lower prices when offered cash. It is thought, however, that if a seller can hold out and even refinance when necessary, he or she will be able to sell later at a higher price.

It is interesting to look at sales statistics at Park Tower over the past few years. In 2010, seven studios sold for the entire year, while in 2014 eight studios have

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# Where Did All The Spiders Go?

by Tim Patricio


This fall Management received several inquiries about spiders. They were decidedly different from questions we typically got in the past. Not that anyone misses spiders, but there was a dramatic drop in their population over years past. We believe this is due to a combination of things.

First, we are trying to combat them using a spider-killing agent (over the counter/environmentally friendly) mixed with the window washing fluid. Residents aware of this effort have commented they notice this kills them right away -- or that they may scurry into cracks on the curtain wall but coming out is a death sentence. One owner mentioned he noticed a spider started building a new web after the washers passed, but an hour later was dead.

To complement this process, we are attacking them at the roof level. Our exterminator is doing a spider kill at least monthly on the roof, which helps keep them from spreading back down as they multiply on the roof.

Add to that unfavorable weather conditions for spiders. Winter-like conditions continued right into May, followed by a cool and wet summer. Spiders and their webs are better suited to hot and dry summers. We cannot really quantify how much this helped in any meaningful way, but if we have a more typical end to winter next year, followed by a hot and dryer summer, then we may see just how effective the window washing procedure is.

What I noticed from visiting and inspecting the roof from time to time, was the absence of spiders resulted in a boom of other insects -- gnats, mayflies, mosquitoes and other bugs that spiders feed on. On one visit to the roof, as I walked around an air handler, I was greeted by a swarm of gnats, the kind you see along the lakeshore in huge pulsating clouds.

So killing our spiders does have at least one drawback, which a resident noticed and mentioned to me: You have a lot of other bugs bouncing and buzzing around your windows that would have otherwise been consumed by the spiders 



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## Dogs: Continued from Page 1

assistance dogs are not trained for any specific skill, but act to calm and mitigate a human's mental or psychiatric disability.

So what are the legal issues regarding these animals? It's first useful to recognize that all dogs are very social animals and work best in small teams. This is illustrated not only by packs of hunting dogs or teams that do search and rescue work, but also by canine/human teams that bond closely together. Most working dogs work as part of a human/canine pair who live together both on and off the job. When the human half of a working team retires, it's not uncommon for the dog to retire as well. It is not ideal for a dog to be housed away from its partner and then come together as a team for its "job"; the dog needs to learn to trust and understand its human partner by living with him or her.

The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) has very specific rules regarding service dogs. First it notes that a service dog is only defined as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. For landlords and communities, it is required that disabled persons be given "reasonable accommodations" as needed in order to fully use and enjoy their home; allowing these people to be accompanied by their service animal is such an accommodation as defined by the law.

Only limited inquiries may be allowed: Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? If so, then what work or task has the dog been trained to do? It

is not legal to ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require any identification or documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task. The ADA does not accept allergies or fear of dogs as acceptable reasons to refuse people with service animals access or service. The disabled person cannot be asked to remove the service animal from the premises unless the dog is out of control and the person hasn't taken effective action to control it, or the dog is not housebroken. Also, no fee can be charged that isn't charged to those without an animal; if a fee is charged for persons with pets, that fee must be waived for service animals.


Emotional support animals, although not covered by the ADA since they aren't given specific skill training, are covered by the FHA (Fair Housing Act). In this regard, emotional support animals aren't considered pets, but as an assistive aid like a wheelchair. In this case, however, the person may be asked to provide a letter from an appropriate authority (therapist or physician) and must meet the definition of a person with a disability. There have been legal cases involving condominium associations and unit owners with assistance or service animals to back up these standings. However, there is controversy and some "gray area" between the FHA and ADA specifically because the ADA only covers animals that are trained for specific actions and the FHA does not.

Be aware that not all training is obvious, as not all disabilities are obvious. An

autism service dog, for instance, can be trained to alert on behavior displaying overstimulation or shutdown and then apply pressure to the child's foot or lap to alert him or her to the behavior displayed. This helps the child to catch him- or herself before the behavior gets ingrained. Epilepsy seizure dogs are trained to alert family members (either by barking or sounding a mechanical alarm) or to lie atop or beneath the child having the seizure to prevent injury; some dogs even learn to spot an oncoming seizure before its onset. Some training is unexpected by the public: a mobility assistance dog can not only be trained to help pull a wheelchair or brace a person who has lost his or her balance, but may also be trained to hold open doors, to pick up a dropped item, or even to put laundry in the washing machine and pull it from the dryer.

So how should you behave when around one of these dogs? Always ask the dog's handler. He or she will be able to tell you whether you'd be interfering with its work. If the dog is wearing a vest, the dog is on duty and should not be distracted; it is best not to pet or talk to the dog because it is on alert for specific sights, sounds, scents, or behaviors. When the vest is off, a service dog is more relaxed and approachable. If, however, an emergency were to happen while the vest is off, the dog won't shrug its shoulders and say "Sorry, I'm on break." The dog is always on duty to some extent, so it is best to always ask the handler's permission before attempting to interact with the animal **TT**






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# PTCA Launches PTCondo.com - Park Tower's New Website!

by Sheldon Atovsky

PTCondo.com is PTCA's new and official website. For several years now, Draper and Kramer, our management company, has provided server space to access services, documents, calendar, communications, pictures, and make assessment payments.

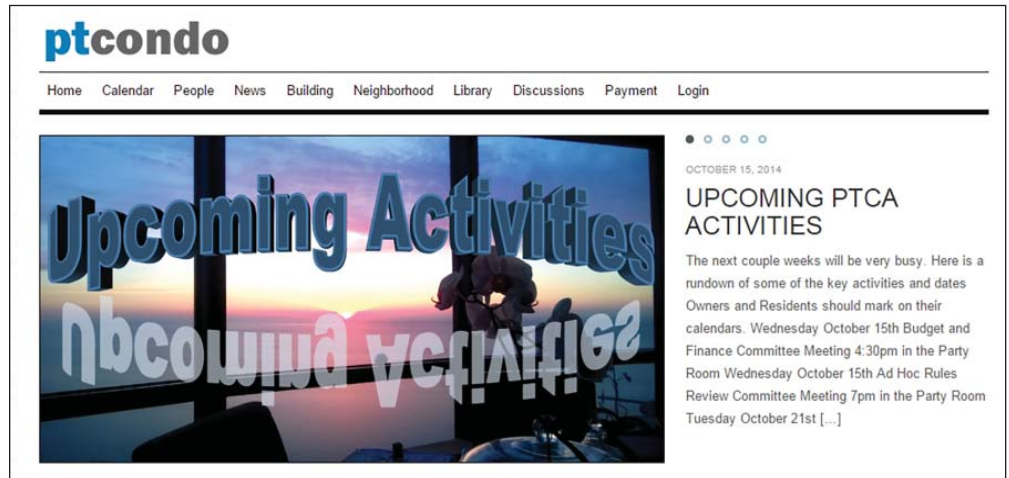
PTCondo.com replicates the functionality of DKCondo.com and over time will expand on it. While still in its infancy, the website has begun to attract the attention of PTCA owners and residents. By mid-October, it had been visited by over 550 unique individuals, in more than 1200 unique sessions.

Your first view of the website is its dynamic Homepage that cleverly cycles through items of current interest. At the top of the homepage are eight or so headings by which the viewer can drill down to progressively more detailed information – exactly what she's looking for (we hope!), unexpected but interesting items, and frequent links to other websites with relevant information.

A searchable Calendar with appropriate links can be viewed by the month, week, day, or as a list.

News, People, Building, Neighborhood, Library, Discussions, Payment, and Login are at the top of the homepage. These headings are in various stages of development – PTCondo.com will always be a work in progress – but even now contain the following: short bios/photos of board, management and staff; missions and members of association committees; archival issues of Weekly News & Updates and Tower Talk; history of and interesting statistics about the building; photos taken by residents; and Edgewater happenings in theaters, schools and parks. Coming soon will be classified ads posted by residents under Building, and in the Library section will be the many documents now at Draper and Kramer's website (which will be phased out in months ahead).

Most of PTCondo.com is open to all and may even be used by prospective owners and renters to get a feel for living here and in the Edgewater community. Two sections, Payment and Discussions, are restricted and require a login. Those who



have been paying assessments online may continue to do so, entering the same login information as in the past when so prompted.

Participation in Discussions requires registering specifically for PTCondo.com, and that is done when instead of just visiting you actually login for the first time.

Discussions is potentially the most powerful, stimulating section of the entire website. Fully functional even now, it has been used by a few but awaits further development. The intention is that it be a platform for opinion, dialog and suggestions. In some respects a blog, Discussions will use volunteer moderators to organize "back and forth" around a set of topics important to those who participate: owners, renters, and possibly also management and members of the board.

Many residents with good ideas are reluctant to speak in public meetings, and even for those who are not(!) there will not be the time constraints of 15 minutes prior to and following board meetings. The fervent hope is that opinions will be expressed thoughtfully and respectfully, as is appropriate with the written word. Over time, perhaps PTCondo.com will become the avenue of choice for discussing association business, making suggestions, and the like.

In gathering the materials for this story, I talked with Tim Patricio, our property manager, and William Kay, who with Dave Nicosia is developing the website. As excited as Tim is about PTCondo.com, he admits it requires a lot more work on his part. He adds news, information, and


photos by creating links to the website from his Weekly News & Updates.

"It gives me a sense of pride," Tim says, "and it's easy to see changes and accomplishments... residents feel more assured, more comfortable, more connected, a greater sense of ownership and pride... and it is free, it costs PTCA nothing."

William Kay sees the website as being useful "as an informative, helpful and fun community resource for Park Tower residents and potential future residents... It's a community resource, so the more people who contribute, the more interesting and vital it can be." He believes that going forward, it will 1) showcase the building as a premier condominium on Chicago's north side, 2) favorably influence how residents view the community and how the community views Park Tower, and 3) provide residents with timely and accurate information about the buildings, its management and operation.

PTCondo.com is an additional resource, but PTCA's other lines of communication also continue: Tower Talk, Weekly News and Updates, the bulletin boards, door drops, mailings, RCN channels 195 and 196.. and very likely will soon expand to include social media such as Facebook, Twitter and/or SMS or MMS messaging.

PTCondo.com – It's only a click away.

Thanks to William Kay and Tim Patricio for consulting on this story 

Go to [www.ptcondo.com/ttref](http://www.ptcondo.com/ttref) and click on the link to see results of the recent photography contest that proved so popular.



# Happy Holidays are Upon Us!

by Dave Nicosia

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Andy Williams released that song in 1963, and it has become a Christmas favorite.

But for some people winter brings hardship. Being part of the Edgewater community, Park Tower will hold its annual drive to provide clothing to those in need, hoping to make their winters a bit warmer.

Closer to home, we ask that you remember the dedicated and hardworking staff who provide services and maintain our building year-round.

Contributions to the Park Tower Employee Holiday Fund are pooled and distributed to management office personnel, door, maintenance and garage staff, as well as health club attendants. Information will be forthcoming about when and how to contribute.

Our Edgewater neighbors and Park Tower staff have always expressed appreciation for our generosity. Let's spread some cheer again this year. Please do consider contributing again both to the clothing drive and Employee Holiday Fund.

Happy Holidays to you and your loved ones from the Park Tower News and Social Media Committee! ■

*Dave Nicosia is a PTCA Board Member and Board liaison to the News and Social Media Committee.*

The two goals of the committee are:

- 1) to improve quality of life for all residents by acquiring new owners with high standards for maintenance of units, and
- 2) to reduce the percentage of rental units from the current 37%.

Tim Patricio, property manager, and George Pauley, Board liaison, met with committee members Ken Anderson, Sheldon Atovsky, Steve Koga, Sherman Lundy, Sharon Partner, Jean Shamo and Mary Toosi. Patty Abbaszadeh attended one meeting as an offsite landlord.

A proposal was sent to the Board, which then sent it on to PTCA's attorney for his review and recommendations.

At this point the Board is awaiting the attorney's response. Upon receipt of the attorney's response, the Board will decide what changes to make, if any, and a final proposal for changes in the Rules will be discussed at a special meeting of all owners ■

*Jean Shamo chairs the ad hoc Rental Policy Committee.*

## Rental Policy Committee Update

by Jean Shamo

The ad hoc Rental Policy Committee met four times in July and August to come up with recommendations to the Board for updated Rules and Regulations on a Rental Policy.

### Bed Bug Prevention Tip:

If you are traveling this holiday season remember: bed bugs can hitch a ride with your luggage so make sure you put your bags in the tub when you get home and schedule and inspection with Scout!

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# Budget & Finance Report: The New Reserve Study, What and Why

by Paul Groeninger

Greetings from the Budget and Finance Committee. We recently received the budget proposed for 2015/16 fiscal year (March 1 through February 29). Since we are now reviewing this proposed budget, I felt this would be a good time to describe what a reserve study is, exactly how it is used, and how it impacts assessment charges for the owners. The reserve study is one of the most important tools used in our review process.

Reserve studies are undertaken every few years for the purpose of helping us determine the current status of our reserve funds and to suggest a fair and stable way to meet the costs for future expenditures. These studies guide our estimate of the cash reserves needed to cover expenditures for the years in which they are expected to occur. The goal here at Park Tower is to avoid any special assessments that would otherwise be needed to cover the cost of these current and future expenditures.

Reserve studies are reviews prepared by outside companies -- in our case, Reserve Advisors -- of all the major common element components and their expected replacement dates.

The study we just received has identified 89 major common elements that are likely to require capital repair or replacement during the next thirty years. Among these items are the curtain wall, pool, roofs, garage floors, lobby, risers,

elevators, hallway carpeting, heating/cooling systems, second floor deck, and garbage chute -- just to name a few! Also included are items that may not be so obvious, such as wiring, air flow handlers, waterproof membranes, exhaust fans, pumps, and many others.

Reserve Advisors has now thoroughly inspected each component (such as those mentioned above) and assigned a useful life -- that is, an estimate of how long the component will function efficiently before it needs to be replaced or repaired. Once all the components have been assigned useful lives, there is then a likely replacement/repair cost assigned. Since our reserve studies cover the next 30 years, an inflation factor is added in.

Useful lives and replacement costs are determined by such factors as industry standards, historical costs, published sources, the current number of years the component has been in service, critical inspections of the items made by Reserve Advisors, and conversations with the maintenance staff as well as management. In some cases, too, a common element may need to be replaced/repared more than once over the thirty years.

The unit cost to replace/repair each item is plotted over thirty years. The values for each component in the year they are expected to be replaced/repared is summarized by year. A total reserve balance and a contribution needed to maintain a reserve balance for each of these

replacements/repairs is determined and plotted for each of the thirty years. This is the amount we will need to put in our reserves to cover the projects for that year.

Some of the common elements are expensive to replace or repair. For instance, the recent resealing of the curtain wall, estimated to cost \$2,140,555, could not have been covered in a single year's assessment. For larger projects like this, we need to "build" a reserve so the funds are available when needed. The reserve studies help us to get a head start on those future expenditures as well as insure funds sufficient for the coming budget year.

When management and our committee sit down to review budget numbers and the capital projects that comprise them, other factors must be considered when arriving at the final amounts.

For instance, certain components may need to be replaced even while there is life left in them in order to get to another one that needs replacement or repair. Cost may also figure in to a decision to replace/repair a common element before it has reached the end of its useful life.

I hope that this explanation of the reserve study will help readers understand how we budget for common element replacement/repair projects. Our assessment level is in part driven by these major common element components, and the reserve study is key to determining the contribution levels we incorporate in the budget presented to homeowners.

But keep in mind that major common element replacement/repair is not the only factor determining our assessment needs. The day to day running of the building is the other contributing factor. Included are staffing, utilities, insurance, and other operational expenses. Together, then, all these items determine the level of assessments needed to cover the costs.

*Paul Groeninger chairs of the Budget and Finance Committee. Meetings are open to owners. Meeting details are at [www.ptcondo.com](http://www.ptcondo.com) and also posted on our bulletin boards.*

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## Palm: Continued from Page 1

Gary Palm is past president of the board of directors at 2800 Lake Shore Drive Condominium Association. In 1999, the year after his term of office ended, Mr. Palm sought from the association copies of certain documents. When the association refused to provide them, he filed a complaint in the Circuit Court.

Note that these rulings are considered to be binding not only on the parties involved but on all condominium associations in Cook County. This is so even though the rulings relate to very specific circumstances in those cases.

Also, it is notable that condominium associations in Cook County are quickly adjusting their conduct to comply with the rulings, thereby acknowledging that the rulings are significant and expected to remain applicable regardless of future court cases.

### **EXPLANATION**

The most recent decision in this case is from the Illinois Appellate Court for the First District, Fifth Division, published May 2, 2014. The original ruling may be found online. See footnote at end of this story.

Many interpretations and discussions are available online under the search term, "palm v 2800 2014." They make for good cold weather reading if you're so inclined.



2800 North Lake Shore Drive Condominiums

The findings in this case are dependent on the many prior cases cited in the documents and on several ruling documents:

- ◆ the association's declaration and by-laws
- ◆ the Illinois Condominium Property Act (the Condominium Property Act) (765 ILCS 605/1 et seq. (West 2004))
- ◆ the General Not for Profit Corporation Act of 1986 (the Not for Profit Act) (805 ILCS 105/101.01 et seq. (West 2004))
- ◆ the Chicago condominium ordinance

This most recent decision renders an analysis of issues in the judges' rulings. Below is a summary of what to this writer appear the most relevant.

### **Conducting Business - Closed Sessions**

The board must conduct association business in open meetings for which prior notice is given to unit owners and at which a quorum of the board is present. The term, "meetings," includes workshops and executive sessions. The term, "conduct," includes discussion and voting. The board may neither discuss nor vote via email, phone calls or otherwise in a manner that does not allow the participation of the entire association membership. However, a closed, unannounced meeting comprising less than a quorum of the board does seem to be permitted. Also, notice to association members of meetings must be done via postal mail.

There are three instances in which the board must discuss business in closed session:

- ◆ discussion of litigation
- ◆ discussion of employee hiring/firing
- ◆ discussion of rules violations

Although discussions of these three subjects are to be held in closed session, the voting on them is to be held in open session at which a quorum of the board is present, and with the further requirement that all members of the association were informed in advance about the session and were invited to attend.

### **Votes on Contracts and Enforcement**

Management must receive approval of expenditures from the entire board, not

from any subset of the board, and only if the association's declaration and by-laws allow such approval.

As they apply to spending by management without specific prior approval of the entire board, dollar limits vary depending on the association's declaration and by-laws, and according to motions of the board voted on in open session for which prior notice was given to the unit owners and with the presence of a quorum of the board.

The board of directors may vote either to give management discretion to enter into contracts on behalf of the association and especially with monetary limits -- or to not give management this power at all. The vote must take place in open session for which prior notice is given to the unit owners and the vote must be conducted with a quorum of the board present.

The board has fiduciary responsibilities to the association and if the board, as a whole, or its individual members, do not meet their responsibility, then they may be liable to association members.

However, if the board members inform themselves of the material facts necessary to make decisions and, especially, if legal, financial, etc. counsel is sought and followed, then board members are not likely to be judged as negligent and thus not liable.

Other issues noted in the ruling include "failing to itemize reserves in the budget, failing to credit unit owners with surpluses, commingling operating and reserve expenses, allowing funds in bank accounts in excess of the FDIC-insured limit..."

Another ramification of the ruling is that there is no time limit on the maintenance of records and that an association must, upon the proper request from a member of the association, produce the requested document to the member within three business days.

To these ends, if a board seeks legal advice before reaching its decisions and

## All Things Mechanical

# In the Belly of the Beast: A look at What Keeps Park Tower Residents Warm through a Harsh Chicago Winter.

by Tim Patricio

This is the first in a planned series of articles intended to help residents understand the nuts and bolts of the Park Tower building – those mechanical components not necessarily seen, heard, or touched, but that we depend on for the needs, comfort and quality of life.

You might think keeping warm is pretty simple. It's cold out, the building pumps hot water through the pipes, you turn the knob, a fan comes on and there's heat. But there is actually quite an effort behind getting that hot water to your home. It's a yearlong effort that requires managing the purchase of natural gas and electricity, then carrying out the maintenance and repairs of miles of plumbing and millions of dollars' worth of mechanical systems.

Park Tower was built in 1971. Its two 550 horsepower Cleaver Brooks Fire Tube steam boilers have a capacity of 2.9 million BTUs, more than enough to keep the building and its residents warm. With the recent upgrades described in this article, we are now able to keep warm – down to temperatures of zero degrees – using just one of the two boilers. Last year, even as temperatures dipped below zero, that single boiler was usually sufficient, or the second would be added at low to medium capacity.

A computer system interacts with the boilers, using temperatures it measures at numerous locations both inside and outside of the building. In general, when the outside air temperature is 52 degrees or below, a boiler will be brought online to start pumping hot water through the network of pipes that lead to your units. The computer measures the flow and temperature of the water, and also monitors other systems to confirm that the overall performance is satisfactory.

Significant work is required to keep the boilers in good condition. After they are shut down for the season, usually in very late spring, the boilers and computer system are inspected, with skilled workers



Above is the front door to one of Park Tower's two massive boilers.



The boilers are opened during the summer months to perform regular maintenance.



A view of the computerized control panel.





With two huge boilers, it's a tight squeeze between the two in the boiler room.

brought in to conduct any needed repairs. Giant doors at the front and rear of the boilers are opened up, and workers crawl inside and poke around to gauge what needs to be done before they are brought back online in the fall. Sometimes this work can be done in a month. This past year it actually took a couple months, which was no surprise given the lengthy and very harsh winter.

Come fall, preparations begin to bring the boilers online, and our team keeps a close eye on weather forecasts. The City of Chicago requires that beginning September 15, residential buildings maintain indoor air temperatures of at least 68 degrees during the day and 62 degrees at night. The staff tests various pumps, motors and ancillary devices to make sure everything is functioning properly. Finally

the boilers themselves undergo testing and as colder weather approaches they are put on standby. Then when the system calls for it, a boiler is charged up for the first time. Voila! Heat is available for the winter.

Part of managing and maintaining these boilers is keeping up on the latest efficiency-oriented technology. Times have changed since they were installed 44 years ago. While new ones are more efficient, we are fortunate that Park Tower's boilers were of high quality and pretty advanced for their time. Some experts say that if properly maintained, they could hold up and remain operational for 100 years. These particular boilers were also popular enough that retrofits have been designed that significantly increase efficiency.

Park Tower's investments these past two years have included new digital equipment that controls the injection of natural gas and the way exhaust is handled, as well as advanced burners to make best use of those capabilities. A digital controller allows the system to determine the most efficient mix of natural gas and air. This produces the cleanest possible burn for the temperatures we want to maintain in residences and hallways.

In the past, regardless of settings, much of the heat went up the boiler stack and out into the atmosphere. Now, the digital controller determines the exact amount the flue should be open in a given situation. Thus the boilers hold heat inside longer and we use less natural gas to achieve the desired temperatures.

Prior to these improvements, the boilers had to work a lot harder. At freezing temperatures, it was typical for both boilers to be running. And below zero degrees, both would frequently be at full capacity. So our recent investments have made the boilers more efficient, we are spending fewer dollars on gas than we would be otherwise, and there is less wear and tear over time.

We are hoping to get another 20 to 30 years out of Park Tower's boilers. They are at the heart of the operation that keeps your homes warm. We are always at one point or another in a perpetual cycle of maintenance, preparation and operation of the heating system.

Down the road, there may come a time where not much more can reasonably be done to keep them going. But for now they're in good shape and will reliably provide the heat we need, even in the coldest weather.

In the next issue of Tower Talk, we'll consider the "convectors" in your rooms. These are the under-window units with motors you turn on and off (unless you have thermostats that do it for you) .. also the difference between convectors and the baseboard heating found in the living rooms of our two-bedroom units **II**



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To see more images and info visit [www.ptcondo.com/boilers](http://www.ptcondo.com/boilers)

## Property: Continued from Page 2

already sold as of October 1. In 2010 the average price for a studio was \$77,500; in 2014 the average, to date, is \$86,900.

Similarly, for two bedroom units in 2010, there were two sales, with an average price of \$201,500. This compares with seven sales so far in 2014, with an average price of \$237,000. In all of 2013 only nine two bedroom units sold while seven have already sold in the first 3 quarters of 2014 – and at an average price of \$211,000, compared with \$193,000 in 2012.

In 2012, a lot of foreclosed one bedroom units sold. But in 2013 sale prices for these units started to rise, and an '02 unit – a medium-sized one bedroom -- recently sold for \$175,000. Comparable increases are expected for the entire spectrum of units at Park Tower.

Since 2012, when PTCA sale prices were the lowest in recent memory, the average sale price in each size category has seen a significant rise.

**Studios** (↑up 18.6%)  
from \$73,136.36 to \$86,900.00

**One bedrooms** (↑up 25.5%)  
from \$96,922.50 to \$121,609.50

**Two bedrooms** (↑up 22.6%)  
from \$193,385.57 to \$237,128.57

For Park Tower rentals  
(2010 vs 2014 as of 09/30/14):

**Studios**  
from 41 to 67 (↑up 63%)  
from \$830.24 to \$968.34 (↑up 16.6%)

**One Bedrooms**  
up from 65 to 84 (↑up 29%)  
from \$1,037.09 to 1,161.86 (↑up 12%)

**Two bedrooms**  
(which peaked in 2013 but are still higher than in 2010) from 11 to 16 (↑up 45.5%)  
from \$1,538.18 to \$1,965 (↑up 27.7%)


Again, PTCA experience roughly tracks recent NAR report:

“Distressed homes – foreclosures and short sales – represented 8 percent of August sales, remaining in the single-digits for the second straight month and down

from 12 percent a year ago. Six percent of August sales were foreclosures and 2 percent were short sales.

Foreclosures sold for an average discount of 14 percent below market value in August (20 percent in July), while short sales were discounted 10 percent (14 percent in July). Existing condominium and co-op sales declined 1.7 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 590,000 units in August from 600,000 in July, and are now 7.8 percent below the 640,000 unit pace a year ago. The median existing condo price was \$213,900 in August, which is 2.1 percent higher than a year ago.”

Park Tower Condominium Association is weathering the economic storm mostly on par with the nation and has every reason to expect further improvement in its numbers with the start of the 2015 spring market and beyond.

Thanks to Margaret Dralyuk of Dralyuk Realty and Tim Patricio, property manager, for help with this story 





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## Restaurant Review

# Jin Ju

by Terry Gorman

Korean (jinjurestaurant.com)

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In this and future issues, I'll tell you about neighborhood restaurants I've enjoyed and can recommend. (There's no compensation from the restaurant nor any claim on my part that this restaurant is the best in the city -- merely that it's good and worth a visit!)

Walk (as we do), take the 92 CTA bus, or drive to this upscale contemporary Korean restaurant with cloth napkins, soft lighting, attentive service and excellent traditional Korean food. The staff speaks English and can explain dishes if you need advice.

Start your meal with refreshing chilled tap water or hot tea, wine, beer, or one of the several Sojutinis -- a play on the martini but made with soju, a grain fermented into a liqueur. Being a creature of habit, I've gotten stuck on Green Light, which is a drink of soju, sour apple schnapps and a splash of sour. It's served in a martini glass and is smooth, tart and refreshing.

Our party of three dines each week at a different restaurant. For this meal we chose an appetizer, two entrées and three bowls of brown rice. All together, then, we were fully satisfied for just about fifty dollars before tax and tip.

Our appetizer was Kim Bap, a seaweed roll similar in appearance to a Japanese maki roll but containing rice, bulgogi, spinach, carrots, cucumbers, yellow pick-

led radish, crab stick and egg. There were ten pieces, so my friends gave me the extra one! It was tasty, with nice textures, very fresh and served with pickled radish on the side. There are twelve other appetizers to choose from, including pork belly sautéed with brussel sprouts and fresh garlic topped with soybean paste dressing, crispy leeks, beets and sesame leaf, and lightly fried scallion pancake served with a soy vinaigrette dipping sauce to which you can add either kim chee or squid and mussels.

Our first entrée was Domi, which is lightly battered pan-fried tilapia fillet served with marinated eggplant, portobello mushrooms and baby carrots in a mild ginger-hot mustard soy sauce. The tilapia was crunchy on the outside, soft and moist on the inside. The dish was mild even with the hot mustard sauce.

Our second entrée, Dak Bulgogi, was boneless chicken breast marinated and sautéed in a spicy red pepper sauce with onions, green chili peppers and scallions, served with pan-fried potatoes. This dish contrasted nicely with the tilapia. I'd love to make this one at home.

Jin Ju's menu is short -- no five or ten minutes just choosing your meal -- but it has considerable variety. In addition to the above appetizers there are salads, entrées and soup entrées.




Nor are vegetarians overlooked. Besides the wonderful scallion pancake mentioned above, appetizers include Kim Chee Mandoo, which are dumplings filled with kim chee, onions, scallions, bean sprouts and tofu. Look for the asterisks to find dishes that can be made in vegetarian style.

Two dishes are already vegetarian. One is San Chae Bi Bim Bap -- rice topped with bean sprouts, spinach, carrots, shitake mushrooms, shredded radish, sweet potato stems, green leaf lettuce, fried egg, and a spicy red pepper paste sauce with soybean paste soup served on the side.

Entrées come with complimentary extras. We were served small bowls of kim chee, shredded daikon radish with pepper, potato salad and broccoli.

Since the restaurant opened in 2001, I've dined there on other occasions and enjoyed several other dishes. The meals are always excellent, as is the service. Give it a try.

One other thing. If you are registered as a United Airlines Frequent Diner and pay for your meal with Chase's United Airlines credit card, you get extra points for Jin Ju. Jin Ju means "pearl" in English. Certainly this is one of our local gems! 

*Terry is a long time Park Tower Resident and has been a tandem bicyclist since 1967 & a scanner/proofreader for Bookshare.org since 2010.*

## Got a Story Idea for Tower Talk? Let Us Know!

The News and Social Media Committee is looking for stories and people to help write them! If you would like to contribute contact the committee at: [news@ptcondo.com](mailto:news@ptcondo.com).

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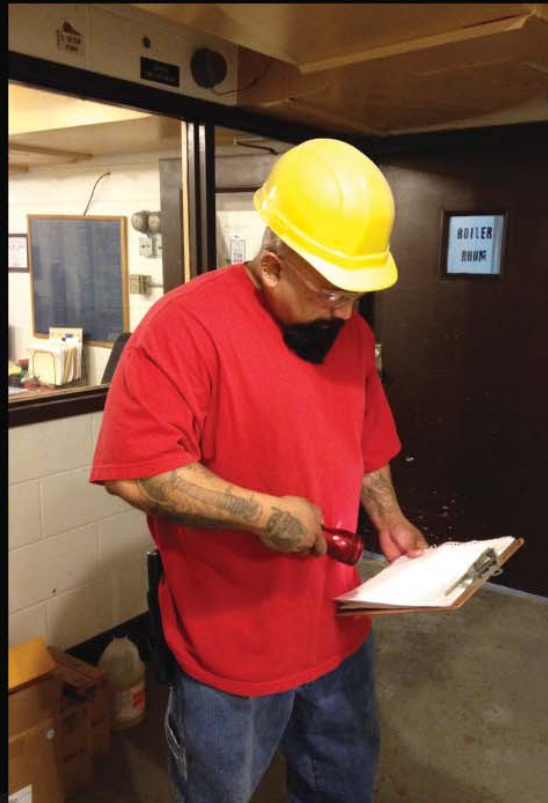
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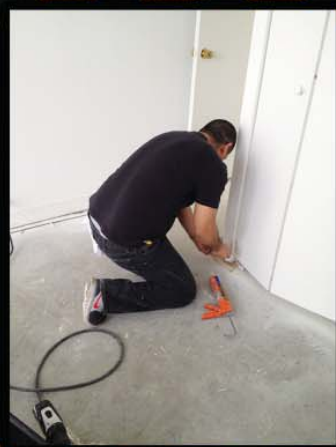


# N.R.S. INCORPORATED at work

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WORKERS



# Meet Marlon Dacres, Park Tower's New Assistant Manager!

by Bob Shamo

A new face has appeared in our management office. A smiling face, too, as we sat down to talk about who he is and how he came to join Mavis Mather as an assistant manager here at Park Tower.



Marlon Dacres (rhymes with acres) is 33 years old, a husband, and a father to two small children. He and his family purchased a home in Ukrainian Village recently, but prior to that they rented on Kenmore Avenue. He used to admire our building while waiting for the 147 bus.

Born in Jamaica, Marlon came to the States as a child, settling in with his parents and two siblings in Evanston. He attended public schools up to and including Evanston Township High School.


College turned out to be East-West University, located on Michigan Avenue, a couple doors south of the Hilton Hotel. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in management, paid for by working at a series of part-time jobs. His master's de-

gree is in business administration, from nearby Robert Morris University.

Marlon has always been interested in the hospitality industry. His first job after college was as a doorman at The Heritage at Millennium Park, and his most recent one, in the same capacity, was at the Palmolive Building on East Walton Street in Chicago. "Different clientele," he noted, "but valuable in that they allowed me to refine my service skills." Incidentally, both are Draper & Kramer buildings.

Upward mobility had been in Marlon's plans, but the recession slowed things down. He's thrilled now to be pursuing his career at our building and mentioned that Draper and Kramer is training him in the various systems it uses for property management.

Marlon's responsibilities here are in building operations: door staff, garage, health club, and other administrative tasks. He's been a little taken aback by the sheer volume of work given the complexity of the building and number of units. "But," he says, "I'm a hard worker, and Tim provides such a good framework, the why as well as the what."

With an engaging personality and a strong work ethic, Marlon ought to be a good fit here at Park Tower, the next step on his path of professional development 

# 2015/2016 Budget Meeting in January


by Sheldon Atovsky

PTCA's fiscal year begins on March 1. Association owners will receive a copy of the 2015-2016 budget in January and may attend a meeting January 27 in the Party Room (time to be announced) for the purpose of discussing it.

The budget, which includes both operational and capital needs, is prepared by management and then reviewed, line by line, by the Budget and Finance Committee. Changes are recommended by the committee, but the board makes the final decisions.

The committee is headed by Paul Groening and includes Becky Rossof, Scott Schmidtke, Jean Shamo, and Don Yuratovic. It meets in April, June and September to assess how things are going. Then in late September the budget review meetings begin. Usually there are seven or eight of these meetings, leading to one or two workshops with management and the board.

Always in consideration is the 10-year "hypothetical" plan in which capital needs have been projected. And this year a new Reserve Study -- discussed elsewhere in this issue -- is being prepared.

All meetings of the committee are open to observation by unit owners, except for the discussions of legal and salary expenditures. Meetings and topics to be covered are listed on PTCondo.com, bulletin boards, our television channel (RCN 195), and in emails from management 

*Thanks to Paul Groening, Budget and Finance Committee chair, and Jean Shamo, Committee member, for help with this story.*

## Got a Story Idea? Like to Lend A Hand?

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## Park Tower Profile

# Pete Zastrow: No Ordinary Mailman

by Bob Shamo

With an uncommon education, career experiences and outside interests, our own Pete Zastrow is really quite an extraordinary fellow. We sat down to talk the other day in the mailroom at the end of his work day.



Pete has worked for the Post Office for 35 years, the last five of which have included service to our building. Typically, his day begins at 7:30 am at the Uptown Branch on Broadway. By 9:30 am he's finished sorting and heads out to deliver. Doing Balmoral Avenue first – the old fashioned way, walking with a shoulder bag – he arrives here around noon, drops off packages in the receiving room, then proceeds to the mailboxes where he does the lower floors first. By mid-afternoon he has finished with the upper ones and heads back to the Uptown Branch for a 4:30 pm check out .. and another day is done.

Pete was born in New York City, grew up in Kentucky, and attended Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. While at Dartmouth he joined the campus ROTC unit (Reserve Officer Training Corps), whereby he received basic military training and a four year active service obligation as a commissioned officer following graduation. In Pete's case, that service was deferred for eight years while he pursued graduate work at Indiana University. At IU he earned a master's degree, worked as a teaching assistant, and went on to complete the course work for a PhD in English literature. Also during that time he taught as an adjunct professor at Thomas More College, just across the Ohio River in Kentucky.

But the army would wait no longer, and in 1969 Pete began active duty in Vietnam. Rising to the rank of Captain, he commanded a company of 100+ soldiers in the First Cavalry Division Air Mobile tasked with defending Saigon from infiltration by the North Vietnamese. "Saw a whole lot more combat than I wanted," said Pete, and then went on to describe the next chapter in his life.

Shortly after leaving military service, Pete became active in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. VVAW had recently staged its march on Washington where 1200 vets had thrown away their medals. John Kerry was an early member and had drawn attention to their cause in testimony before Congress. So VVAW became Pete's passion. For the next 28 years he did every job that needed doing, first as a volunteer in Cincinnati, then here in Chicago as one of the organization's six national coordinators. He resigned from that position in 2000 but continues to be active in the organization.

Even for its national officers, VVAW provided little more than communal housing and a small stipend for food. So while serving that organization, Pete also took on paid work. In 1979, the year he came to Chicago as a national coordinator, he signed on with the Post Office (USPS). His first assignment was as a temp employee at the O'Hare sorting facility and shortly after, full time here at the Uptown Branch.

Pete and his wife have three sons, two of whom live in Chicago, the other in San Diego following service aboard a U.S. Navy submarine. Longtime interests include reading and music. The latter finds expression in the work Pete does week-ends at Great Lakes Naval Training Station, where he provides music for Catholic masses. He selects and teaches the music to two choirs, one of which comprises energetic young men and women who are completing their eight weeks of boot camp.

As we wrapped up our interview, I asked Pete if he enjoyed his hours here at Park Tower. Yes, he said, particularly when residents smile and say hello, and he listed a few pointers: New residents might introduce themselves when Pete's here early in the afternoon, or at least leave their names in the new mailbox. Inform him when gone for extended periods so he can set their mail aside. And make sure that mail in and out of condos like ours has the unit number as part of the second address line (eg, 5415 N. Sheridan Rd, #XXXX).

Finally, he said, remember that postal work is exacting, that most mail persons are cordial and try hard to get it right. And so it is. Thanks, Pete 📧

*To read one of the many papers Pete wrote, in collaboration with others, about the Vietnam War and the mission of the VVAW, go to [www.ptcondo.com/ttref](http://www.ptcondo.com/ttref)*

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## Palm: Continued from Page 7

relies on that advice in reaching its decision, it will be found to have properly exercised its business judgment. This judgment is best documented in writing and with a date. This is applicable to advice in many other realms, as well, such as engineering, insurance, financial, etc.

### CONSEQUENCES

These decisions lead to a greater understanding of how the board and management must operate, and what members of the association may expect from their board and management. They also entail a far greater workload for members of the Board of Directors and for Management.

(I pause here to give thanks that our entire board, the members of which are volunteers, has not yet resigned as a consequence of trying to meet the new constraints to which they are subject according to the ruling.)

How PTCA measures up to these rulings in its past and present conduct is a topic of importance for all of us. Owners would be well advised to read and become familiar with the documents governing our association and to attend meetings of the board and its committees.

Until there are more rulings in related cases, condo associations throughout Cook County are working to meet the demands of these rulings and trying also to take a common sense approach with respect to the new workload.

Note that all documents ruling our association are available from the office and will soon be available at our new website, PTCondo.com, both in legal form and in a more easily read form.

In a recent conversation, Tim Patricio, our property manager, confided to me that the Palm “really makes management read the fine print, understand it and follow it. Everything now is hyper-intense and there is technical analysis of everything management does. It has really made things a lot more difficult and cumbersome.”

An example of what has become more cumbersome is the mailing of board meeting notification to all association owners. Prior to Palm, notices of board meetings were posted on bulletin boards, announced on our television channel (RCN 195), contained in emails to those owners who have joined the PTCA email list, and included in bold print on every monthly assessment statement.

Now, a separate mailing must be done, which requires an extra forty staff hours to write, reproduce, stuff envelopes, etc – all the while conducting normal office operations. The total cost of postage, materials and man-hours for a single mailing, is about \$1,200.00!

Tim observes that while it is important for all owners to know about board meetings, there was not a significant increase in attendance after these meeting-specific mailings were started. Therefore our board, in its wisdom, took the sensible approach of setting dates for all of its meetings through the next Annual Meeting in June, 2015 – then listing them in a single mailing to all unit owners.

This helps keep our assessments down and enables the office staff to devote more time to their already demanding schedule. Reminders continue via postings, television, email and assessment statements. Since there is no ruling about meeting cancelations, the board does so when they are determined not to be needed.

Another consequence of Palm, noted here at PTCA, is that communications between the board and management has become more complicated and hence more stressful.

Board members and management used to exchange emails frequently. This allowed dialog to be spread over time, with the possibility that greater understanding would emerge prior to votes. Now, Palm makes it illegal for such email to occur if more than a quorum of the board is included. In our case, three members of the board constitute a quorum, so email back-and-forth may not involve more than two board members.

The same is true if more than a quorum

of the board wish, let’s say, to have dinner together or just talk with each other in the office. In fact, any time a quorum of the board is in one place at the same time, that may be construed as a disallowed closed meeting, with negative consequences definitely possible. As Tim notes, “rulings are inorganic but people and organizations are organic and need room to breathe.”


Associations like PTCA, in order to remain healthy, need both announced meetings and casual gatherings. They allow relationships to develop between board members, staff, and owners. Under such conditions, people relax and speak freely.

In an effort to keep everyone informed, while honoring the rulings, Tim has increased his communication of news and information. He sends weekly emails to the board and Weekly News & Updates to owners who have joined the PTCA email list. The effort includes posting information of all sorts to the association’s new website, ptcondo.com. Staff continues to make sure posts go up on bulletin boards, door drops get done as necessary, and channel 195 is kept up-to-date.

Tim does note that Palm has its good points, especially for owners who take advantage of the increased communications. The renewed emphasis on attending board and committee meetings, the expanding venues for minutes and other documents – all these make for a better informed association.

He also notes that pursuant to the financial rulings of Palm ruling, PTCA has been found by its auditors to be in good shape with regard to its reserves and its process of budgeting.

It may take several years for all of the causes and effects of Palm to be understood and reinterpreted through subsequent court cases. However, its current impact is great and will continue to be so for many years to come.

Thanks to Tim Patricio, property manager, for his help with this story 

References relating to this story may be found at [www.ptcondo.com/ttref](http://www.ptcondo.com/ttref)



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# Why the Delay on the Riser Project?

by Tim Patricio



This year we scheduled for two hot water “risers” to be replaced: the ‘12/’14 unit bathrooms from floors 30 to 55 (the “high zone”), and the ‘06/’07 guest baths/kitchens from floors 3 to 29 (the “low zone”). The risers are the main lines that bring water to your units, in this case the hot water for bathrooms and kitchens, which one by one are being replaced. We completed the ‘12/’14 riser but will not begin the ‘06/’07. There is good reason behind this delay – it is a bit of a jigsaw puzzle to explain, so please forgive me ahead of time for jumping around a bit.

It all started with the main drain lines for the building. Over the past few years our staff has struggled at times with backups and leaking from the primary drain “loop” resting in the space above the ceiling in the main lobby. This loop is where all the water from your tubs, toilets and sinks ends up and joins into one great big pipe, which then exits the building as waste. This loop has become more of a challenge to maintain as it has aged, and even now our plumber is somewhat cautious when flushing it out. Some spots have become relatively fragile, and even performing everyday maintenance can be a bit risky. Last year in fact, a large section was found to be weakening at an alarming rate. So a portion of the loop was replaced between the party room and lobby, directly over and through the health club weight room.

This year, as our staff has conducted repairs and completed the usual preventative flush downs of this loop – to help keep your drains draining – we started to see similar weaknesses. As we conducted work in some locations, the loop would begin experiencing leaks. So, preliminary plans began to take shape to recommend

full replacement of this loop in 2015.

I mentioned the space above the ceiling in the lobby. It does not just contain the drain loop. It also contains the riser loops for all the kitchens and baths from floors 3 to 29. The main hot and cold water lines come up, and join with the risers on this loop. At each riser there is a main valve which creates the junction between the respective cold and hot water loop and the riser. With the exception of a few sections of the hot water loop and the handful of valves that have been replaced with some of the riser projects, the balance is original to the construction of the building. Along with the drain loop, the riser loops have presented their fair share of challenges over the years.

From time to time, you have probably seen workers in the lobby on the scissor lift performing repairs and patching the ceiling. Sometimes this has been in conjunction with a riser project, when the main valve on the loop for the riser is being replaced. Other times have been a result of leaks from a unit that have come all the way down the pipe chase and resulted in lobby ceiling damage. But a lot of times it is related to a weak spot in one of these loops. Typically, the only way to conduct repairs is to get up there, open the ceiling, and do the necessary work.

Fast forward to today, and we are looking at our calendar for riser replacements. This is the last piece of the puzzle I mentioned. The next six risers we are scheduled to replace are all on the “low zone”. The loop serving these six risers, rests just above the lobby ceiling with the drain loop. So, as the plans begin to take shape to address the drain loop, an opportunity presents itself while the ceiling is open to replace the balance of the low zone hot water riser loop and all the valves serving the remaining hot water risers between floors 3 and 29. In the short term, the disadvantage is we are putting the remaining risers back a year. The advantages are pretty clear; we eliminate the need to open the ceiling every time we are replacing one of the low zone risers, saving time, money and headaches, while replacing the aging and fragile drain loop at the same time ■

# Thank You Jacquie, Jenny and Frank!

by Tim Patricio

Sadly, we lost two members of our team this summer: Frank Naughton the House Plumber and Jacquie Smith, Assistant Manager.

Frank started with us in the Fall of 2009. As a licensed union plumber, he was hired after we determined the Association could save money by having its own plumber for smaller and medium level building plumbing related projects. He was instrumental in setting up and assisting the office, managing our Riser Replacement Projects, and acting as an experienced pair of eyes for any complicated plumbing issues that arose throughout his tenure. I would be remiss if I did not mention the staff will remember him for his gruff “tell it like it is” approach to his work and colleagues. But he applied that approach to the building’s plumbing and helped us proactively avert problems and plan effectively for projects and repairs when needed. An effort is presently underway to fill this position.

Jacquie joined us in the Spring of 2008, managing the Health Club, garage, front door attendants and security staff, as well as a handful of projects and office operations. She was in the somewhat thankless position of receiving the daily reports from the front desk and security, and was typically signing the letters to neighbors and owners when we experienced noise and cigarette smoke complaints, just to mention a couple examples. She managed to balance her responsibilities enforcing the Association’s rules, with a smile and positive attitude. Marlon Dacres has been hired to fill her position, and has already acknowledged he has some big shoes to fill.

Just prior to publication, we learned that Jenny Garcia has also tendered her resignation. Jenny worked as Administrative Assistant for the office since December of 2008. She was the welcoming smile and friendly voice on the phone most residents would be greeted with. A search is underway for her replacement.

We miss them all, and thank them for their years of service and effort on behalf of Park Tower ■



# Bryn Mawr Playlot Getting Revamped!

by Sheldon Atovsky

The Bryn Mawr Playlot is a project of the Chicago Park District and is in its final stages of development. Located just north of Bryn Mawr and west of Lake Shore Drive, it covers the same footprint as the previous one but with entirely new equipment. The quickest way to get there is via the walkway behind our building, which extends beyond Bryn Mawr directly to the playlot.

Intended for kids ages 3 – 12, the facility has new benches, a drinking fountain, and is very well lit. Come summer, younger children will enjoy the new water feature -- a low-lying, shower type system under which children may run and get sprinkled to their hearts' delight – and the "Flow," a colorful contraption that combines slides, a walkway, crawling areas and a playhouse.

For older children there are the "Rope Screw" and the "Rope Slalom," dexterity-building installations on which they may crawl, climb and hang.

Jerry Goodman, the Alderman's assistant, hopes all the equipment will have arrived in October but felt certain that the playlot would open by the end of the year 📅

## Park Tower Shout-out! Thank You Ariel Pina!



A shout-out to Ariel Pina, maintenance staff, for his beautiful job revarnishing the wood trim in the lobby elevators. Took at least two coats and infinite care to get it "just so." Thanks, Ariel!

# Health Club Committee Update

by Ken Anderson

The Park Tower Health Club Committee has been re-formed after several years of non-activity. Our main objective is to evaluate the adequacy of health club rules, facilities and equipment, and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors for any changes and upgrades. There are many issues to be addressed.

Cleanliness and Safety are the two most important issues. The primary focus of our first two meetings has been to address rules, maintenance and house-keeping. Subsequent meetings will look into facilities and equipment.

Since we have had only two meetings,

we have not yet prepared specific recommendations for the Board. We will keep you informed of our progress via future newsletters and website postings.

In the meantime, all Health Club members and Park Tower residents are encouraged to attend our meetings. Dates and times of meetings will be posted on bulletins boards and the website 📅

### Health Club Membership Fees

Single - 1 year	\$240.00
Single - 6 month	\$155.00
Double - 1 year	\$375.00
Double - 6 month	\$235.00
Family - 1 year	\$510.00
Family - 6 month	\$330.00



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# Under Our Front Step - The Plaza and Circle Drive Project.

by Sheldon Atovsky

**P**ark Tower is forty-three years old, an age at which it can be expected to need some extra attention. In the past few years we have updated the HVAC system, resealed the windows, remodeled our lobby and hallways. Currently, we are about a third of the way through a multi-year project to replace and upgrade hot water riser pipes throughout the building. And another large endeavor, partially complete, is the Plaza Driveway Project. We're all aware of that one!

The Plaza Driveway Project is focused on replacing the original membranes below our plaza entrance and the circular driveway. These membranes waterproof the areas below them, which include Levels 1P and 2P and the building's substrate and foundation.

These are very important elements to the long-term integrity of the building. Our original membranes are well beyond their useful life. They are normally guaranteed for 10 years but may last up to 30. Ours have been in place 43 years.

In recent years PTCA has done small, localized repairs to cracks in seams, repaired drains, and relined the planters. In 2013 we aggressively resealed the terrazzo. Unfortunately, none of these incremental steps can alleviate the inevitable deterioration of the membranes and adjacent materials.

The project was budgeted for \$950,000, and so far there have been both overruns and underruns. The original budget included \$50,000 for unknowns and the board has now added \$80,000 for specific additions to the original contract.

Originally scheduled to start in February, the work was delayed until April by wind and rain. Rain delays are serious, as rain affects exposed membrane, materials and equipment. Wind delays were not anticipated, but in fact the wind blew so much dust around that the City of Chicago sent inspectors on several occasions after it received complaints.

The delay in starting created a loss of 40 days. Then, come May and June, we lost



Repairs to the underlying concrete layer in the circle drive, where damaged concrete is removed, exposing the structural rebar.


another 20 days due to more rain. In order to complete the project before the really bad winter weather, crews are working six days a week.

Reconstruction projects necessarily bring surprises, and this one is no exception. It was not until the plaza terrazzo and driveway cement had been removed that some issues emerged. Under the revolving doors the terrazzo was crumbling. Under the plaza windows steel beams were rusting, some all the way through. These items were tended to, and then it was discovered that the lighting fixtures originally chosen were too big. The alternative fixtures cost more and required some modification to fit properly (though the added \$80,000 does take care of those lighting costs).

A couple of "good unknowns" are actually saving us money. One is that the structural slab of Park Tower -- underneath the membranes -- is in very good shape for its age and requires no repair. Another is that smaller quantities of construction materials will be required than what was originally budgeted. While the final cost awaits completion, we can hope that the good and bad unexpecteds cancel one another out .. or maybe even come in on the positive side.

To accommodate the project, we have put off refurbishing the elevator interiors and delayed the riser work. Mall businesses have been impacted -- especially the Park Tower Market, which relies on walk-in traffic -- and our maintenance staff has had to clean up a lot of extra dust in the mall, on 1P and 2P, and in our lobby area.

The Plaza Driveway Project is large in terms of both cost and impact. But it will bring major benefits in terms of building longevity and the return on investment for unit owners. With its completion, we can expect a good 30 years of minimal maintenance of the plaza and driveway .. and as an immediate benefit, a lot less noise, dust and inconvenience.

Thanks to Tim Patricio, property manager, for help with this story 

## Like to Take Pictures?

The News and Social Media Committee can use your help!

If you would like to contribute your photographic skills to the next issue of TowerTalk contact us at: [news@ptcondo.com](mailto:news@ptcondo.com)





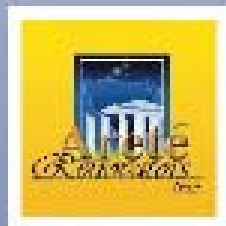
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# PTCA Announces Photo Contest Winners!

Recently, Management sponsored and coordinated a photo contest for Park Tower Owners and residents. In all 62 people submitted about 500 photographs for us to consider. There were some stunning shots of sunrises and sunsets, and a variety of views of Park Tower and the neighborhood. One thing is clear – no two views or perspectives are the same. We received shots of the same exact weather events from different units and different angles. It was an experience in and of itself, just reviewing, considering and admiring – in most cases – fantastic vistas and landscape shots taken right through unit windows.

Here is a list of our winners:

## GRAND PRIZE WINNER

### **Zoe Kolon - Unit 5205**

\$200 Mariano's Gift Card  
donated by DK Condo

## Sunrises And Sunsets

### **1st Place**

#### **Catherine Kestler - Unit 4501**

\$100 Gift Card To Francesca's  
donated by Henry from NRS

### **2nd Place**

#### **Cheryl Ronnett - Unit 3501**

Starbucks Pack - 2lbs of Coffee, 2 mugs  
and \$25 Gift Card  
donated by Starbucks and DK Condo

### **3rd Place**

#### **Nancy Smith-Ledvina - Unit 5511**

\$25 Gift Card to Zanzibar Cafe  
donated by LS Contracting

## Skyline And Neighborhood

### **1st Place**

#### **Cheryl Ronnett - Unit 3501**

\$100 Gift Card to That Little Mexican Café  
donated by LS Contracting

### **2nd Place**

#### **Michael Parrie - Unit 5401**

\$50 Gift Certificate to Wing Ho donated  
by Henry from NRS

### **3rd Place - TIED!**

#### **Will Grendahl - Unit 4802**

\$25 Gift Card to Mariano's  
donated by Mariano's

#### **Christopher Goldston - Unit 604**

\$25 Gift Card to Mariano's  
donated by Mariano's

## The Building

### **1st Place**

#### **Francisco Alvarez - Unit 501**

\$100 Lettuce Entertain You Gift Card  
donated by Lettuce

### **2nd Place**

#### **Cleo Dela Merced - Unit 3512**

\$50 Gift Certificate to Anna Held  
donated by LS Contracting

### **3rd Place**

#### **Benjamin Kelner - Unit 804**

\$25 Gift Certificate to Nookies Edgewater  
donated by Nookies

Thank you to all the Owners and residents who participated, and to all our sponsors. AND KEEP ON SNAPPIN'! We want all the photos we can get – particularly views from the building or of the building itself. We will organize another contest around the holidays. Stay tuned to [www.ptcondo.com](http://www.ptcondo.com) for announcements about this and other news, updates and events related to the building and neighborhood 📷

You can view the photos online at:

<http://www.ptcondo.com/photo-contest-winners/>

Needless to say, it was a challenge choosing winning photographs. So we also have a list of "honorable mentions":

<http://www.ptcondo.com/photo-contest-honorable-mentions/>

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Photo Contest Winners clockwise from top left:

- 1) Zoe Kolon - Gand Prize Winner
- 2) Cathrine Kestler - 1st Place (Sunrises and Sunsets)
- 3) Francisco Alvarez - 1st Place (The Building)
- 4) Cheryl Ronnet - 1st Place (Skyline and Neighborhood).


## TowerTalk Gets a Facelift!

Our much-admired Tower Talk is now TowerTalk and it has a new look. A quarterly publication, it is door-delivered to PTCA residents, with a pdf version (in color) to everyone who has signed up for email distribution.

We did take a few months off to retool and, as you'll see in this issue, it has taken more stories than usual to catch up. Be on the lookout for references to our new website, PTCondo.com, where a story might be continued or supplemented with additional, interesting material.

The newsletter and website are projects of the News & Social Media Committee. Sheldon Atovsky, William Kay and

Bob Shamo are members, Dave Nicosia is board liaison and Tim Patricio sits in for management.

Do you like to write? Are you familiar with WordPress, the platform used to develop the new website? These are two areas where we could use some help, be it by joining the committee or just contributing to our efforts. See any of the people listed or email [ptcondo@ptcondo.com](mailto:ptcondo@ptcondo.com) 

## Building Contacts

Office: 773-769-3250  
Fax: 773-769-0047  
Doorman: 773-769-3083  
Garage: 773-271-8859  
Market: 773-275-9130  
Cleaners  
Recv. Room: 773-784-3353  
Health Club: 773-769-1513

### RCN

Service/Billing: 312-955-2500  
New Services: 866-308-5556

## Mall Business Contacts

### PTCA Market

Suite 101 773-275-9130

### Aynot Enterprises, Inc.

(Salon—Spa Contractors)  
Suite 103 773-728-6486

### Dralyuk Real Estate

Suite 103A 773-275-8520

### Healing Center of Chicago

Tony Hollenback, LCSW  
(Integrative Care: Counseling for  
the mind, body and the spirit )  
Suite 103A 773-255-9234

### Lettuce Entertain You

(Gift Certificate Purchases)  
Suite 105 773-924-4438

**Dr. Shirley Roy (Internal Med.)**  
**Dr. Robert Reeves (Adult Psy.)**  
**Dr. Robert Brinkman (Int. Med.)**  
Suite 106 773-878-5151

**Park Tower Management Office**  
Suite 107 773-769-3250

**M & J Care, LLC**  
Suite 109 773-878-1032

**Elizabeth Todorovic**  
(Real Estate Attorney)  
Suite 110 773-271-2110

**Chicago Pain Clinics**  
Suite 113 708-344-1234

## Dates to Remember

Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	November 10, 2014
Budget & Finance Committee Meeting	4:30 PM	Party Room	November 11, 2014
Budget & Finance Committee Meeting	4:30 PM	Party Room	November 12, 2014
Rules Review Committee Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	November 12, 2014
Health Club Committee Meeting	7:00 PM	Party Room	November 17, 2014
Rules Review Committee Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	November 19, 2014
Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	November 24, 2014
Budget & Finance Committee Meeting	8:00 PM	Party Room	November 24, 2014
Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	December 8, 2014
Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	December 22, 2014
Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	January 12, 2014
Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM	Party Room	January 26, 2014

Please watch the bulletin boards or ptcondo.com for any scheduling changes.

## Management Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday	8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Thursday	8:00 am - 6:00 pm

## Upcoming Holiday Schedule

Day Before Thanksgiving	November 26, 2014	Office Closes at 3PM
Day Thanksgiving	November 27, 2014	Office Closed
Christmas Eve	December 24, 2014	Office Closes at 3PM
Christmas Day	December 25, 2014	Office Closed
New Year's Eve	December 31, 2014	Office Closes at 3PM
New Year's Day	January 1, 2015	Office Closed

## News & Social Media Committee Members and Contributors

**Bob Shamo** (Committee Chair)  
Writer, Editor and Forum Moderator

**Sheldon Atovsky** (Committee Member)  
Writer and Contributor

**William Kay** (Committee Member)  
Web Developer and Graphics Editor

**David Nicosia** (Board Liaison)  
Web Developer and Contributor

**Tim Patricio** (Advisor & Property Manager)  
Writer and Contributor

### Additional Contributors To This Issue

**Ken Anderson** Writer  
**Paul Groeninger** Writer

**Vince DiFriscio** Writer  
**Mike Magliane** Photographer

**Terry Gorman** Writer  
**Jean Shamo** Writer

The NSM Committee is looking for more writers and anyone willing to pitch in! Got a story idea? Contact us at [news@ptcondo.com](mailto:news@ptcondo.com)