

## Welcome to "The Pyramid Press"

Dear Community Resident:

Pyramid has been busy in 2010. We are offering this year-end newsletter to you so that we might share some highlights of how we've continued to improve the services we offer you.

### Client Survey

In the spring, we mailed out a survey to Board Presidents and Treasurers. The survey was for accounting, property management, the specific property manager, maintenance and responsiveness. From the responses, we received an average grade of 8.4 out of a possible 10 for our services.

We used this feedback to make improvements to our service – many are covered below in this newsletter. We'll do another survey to Board Members in 2011. Thank you for your feedback!

### People to Know / Recent Staff Additions



Martie Harding

**Service Coordinator** – We hired Martie to add additional call handling for your maintenance requests. Martie ran her own business, handling scheduling and deadlines and she brings that experience to schedule your repair work. Contact Martie at Extension 133.

**Working Foreman** – Chris is a highly skilled maintenance man with 8 years experience and we are happy that he is on our team to do work for unit owners. In addition he has a project management degree and is supervising jobs and our maintenance men in the field. Contact Chris at Extension 133.



Chris Gramlich



Terry Wilmot

**Assistant Manager** – When you call us we want to pick up your call right away. Terry is often the voice you will hear. Terry comes to us from the health care industry so she is used to giving "life depends on it" care. We are sure you'll appreciate her help. Contact Terry at Extension 138.



Phyllis Delvecchio

**Accounting** – Many of you already know our Accounts Receivable expert, Phyllis. She is always ready to handle your inquiries about common fees and more at Extension 123.

**Accounting Clerk** – One area your survey input went to work was hiring an additional hand in the accounting department to improve responsiveness to your accounting requests. Christian is a recent graduate of the University of Bridgeport's MBA program in Accounting and Finance and she is studying for her CPA exam. Contact Christian at Extension 123.



Christian Prakruti



Ryan

**High Skilled Maintenance Technician** – Please welcome our newest maintenance employee. Ryan lives in Stamford after relocating from Montgomery County, Maryland and holds a Journeyman's Plumbing License, HVAC and electrical experience and is OSHA Certified.

### Community Management Training

Three of our employees have attended and passed a 3-day training course designed by Community Association Institute (CAI) on the fundamentals of Community Management (the M-100 Course). The course was given by Walt Williamsen, the former Chapter President of the Connecticut Chapter of CAI.



Brian Lauro  
(Community Manager)



Mary Heberger  
(Community Manager)



Chris Dawalt  
(Service Director)

**Brian Lauro, Mary Heberger and Chris Dawalt all passed the Community Management test with flying colors at the end of the course.**

Additionally, **three of our managers have studied for and are expected to pass a test to achieve the Professional Designation of Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA)**. This is a designation of the Community Association Institute (CAI) – Congratulations Craig Leppla, Brian Lauro and Mary Heberger.

### *Maintenance Service Upgrades*

There was one too many breakdowns for “after hours” emergency call handling. Since emergency service is a high priority, we interviewed several companies and **changed our “after hours” call service** to a nationally awarded company, Answer 1 ([www.answer1.com](http://www.answer1.com)).

In response to more requests from unit owners to perform maintenance fixes in their units, we started **accepting credit cards** to pay for home repairs performed by Pyramid’s maintenance department.

After providing repair services to unit owners, many remarked they did not know we offered these kinds of services. In order to build awareness we put together several maintenance flyers on particular issues unit owners have asked us about – programmable thermostats, interior paint jobs, carpet cleaning to name a few. Keep an eye out for a flyer in the spring that will show several solutions to prevent water damage to your unit.

**Completed Work Follow Up** – We started a quality assurance procedure to email or call customers after the maintenance repair is completed to check on satisfaction. Initially we are contacting 20% of all maintenance work done by Pyramid.

**“Handyman Day”** – Pyramid Maintenance helped community unit owners get thru their “TO DO LISTS”. We had two Maintenance Technicians on site to fix items in unit owner’s homes - their “honey do” lists. By organizing a day we were able to reduce the total hours billed and reduce the cost of this service to unit owners. (To organize one at your community talk to your Board and contact our maintenance department at Extension 133.)

**“Clear the Clutter Day”** – Pyramid Maintenance helped communities have a spring / fall cleaning day. We organized a day where the community had onsite a donation box, recycling boxes, and dumpster along with several of our maintenance men to help unit owners move items. (To organize one at your community talk to your Board and contact our maintenance department at Extension 133.)

**Spring 2011 Upgrade** – A software customization is underway to improve communication on maintenance work. We will have an email generated to the Property Manager, Board President (or Grounds Chairperson) or a Unit Owner who requests work. The email will go out when the work order is created and when work is completed.

### *Condo Law Changes*

This July, Connecticut enacted changes in the law governing communities (Common Ownership Interest Act – CIOA).



Craig Leppla

Pyramid was helping to educate its boards and the community regarding these changes by providing educational opportunities. **Pyramid’s Craig Leppla spoke at an Educational Event in Stamford** regarding how the changes would affect community management from a Property Manager’s point of view.

Craig was on a panel that included: Art Layton Stamford Board of Representatives, Attorney Jane Freeman (Local Lawyer), Rich Bouvier (Insurance) and Attorney Greg McCracken (CIOA Law). These speakers addressed approximately 90 board members and unit owners regarding the law changes. (If you have a question, give Craig a call at Extension 114.)

**Pyramid In-House Training** – On a monthly basis Pyramid’s Managers receive in-house training. Most of the training is done by outside experts who come in to help us keep up to date on issues that face your community.

Attorney Bill Ward spent two hours going through the changes in the CIOA law. Attorney Mark Sank met with us for another two hours to go over the CIOA law changes and the delinquent payer collection process. Pyramid’s own Ruth Berk (Sr. Bookkeeper) and Frances Sabato (Controller) updated us on financial reporting requirements for CIOA and year end procedures.

In addition we had Connecticut’s top Insurance Adjuster, John Apicella, walk us through how to best handle insurance claims properly when an emergency strikes.

Pyramid Changes for the CIOA law – we customized the Unit Owner roster to show how many votes an owner has. And we then worked with attorneys and drafted **sample Policy Resolutions** for boards to adopt to help communities conform to the law changes. (Visit the resource section of our website to view the resolutions).

### *Pyramid's Updated Website*

Check out Pyramid's redesigned website ([www.pyramidREgroup.com](http://www.pyramidREgroup.com)). Some of the useful items on the site include a **resource section** for sample resolutions, as mentioned previously, and other tools to operate your community more effectively. Additionally, you can go to the **about** tab and see pictures and bios of our **team**. We want you to see who is supporting you when you call our offices.

### *Utility Savings*

Pyramid locks in a flat rate heating oil price for communities that want to participate every year. This year, **thanks to Community Manager Mark Liberman, in June we negotiated a rate with Apple Oil of \$2.29 / gallon** – a terrific price for those that hopped on the deal and signed up!



Mark Liberman

Reducing electric costs for over 50 clients by signing them up for electric supplier Viridian at approx \$0.9110/ kWh. This represents an approximate reduction of 20% from the CLP electric generation charges. Pyramid's Chris Dawalt (Service Manager) and Brian Lauro (Community Manager) are spearheading this great money saving initiative (Call our maintenance department Extension 133 and they can handle all the work to sign you up.)

### *Did You Know?*

Did you know that Pyramid offers these real estate related services?

**Single Unit Management** – Pyramid manages a single condo or home when someone moves out of the area. Currently we are helping 20 single family home & condo unit owners (to learn more call Craig at Extension 114.)

**Residential Real Estate Rental and Sales** - Pyramid has 5 licensed residential real estate agents. Over the last twelve months they have rented 42 units and sold 6 units. (To bounce an idea or ask a question about your unit, talk to your property manager or dial Extension 110.)

**Commercial Real Estate Leasing and Sales** – During 2010 our 10 brokers have been busy helping businesses find and lease over 100 offices and retail spaces. For the most part these businesses are either getting more space for less money, less space to save money, or better looking space or a better location. (If you run a business and want to find out more dial Extension 110.)

In the last 12 months Pyramid has sold 9 commercial properties from Greenwich to Fairfield with a total value of \$15,045,000.00.

### *By the Numbers - FYI*

Americans who live in community associations are overwhelmingly pleased with their communities, expressing strong satisfaction with the board members who govern their associations and the community managers who provide professional support.

More than seven in ten community association residents expressed satisfaction with their community experience, according to a survey conducted by Zogby International, a leading public opinion research firm. Almost 40 percent of community association residents say they are "very pleased," with only 10 percent expressing some level of dissatisfaction. Almost 20 percent express neither point of view.

An estimated 54 million Americans live in some 274,000 homeowner associations, condominium communities, cooperatives and other planned developments.

Here's what community association residents say:

- 88 percent believe their governing boards strive to serve the best interests of the community.
- 90 percent say they are on friendly terms with their association board members, with just 4 percent indicating a negative relationship.
- 86 percent say they get along well with their immediate neighbors, with just 5 percent reporting a negative relationship. Of those who reported issues with neighbors, the most common problems were pets, general lifestyle, noise, and parking.
- 78 percent believe community association rules "protect and enhance" property values, while only one in 100 say rules harm property values. About 20 percent see no difference.
- 88 percent of residents who have interacted with professional community managers say the experience has been positive.

The research was sponsored by the Foundation for Community Association Research, a non-profit organization created in 1975 by Community Associations Institute (CAI).

Based on telephone interviews conducted in August 2005, the survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points. A summary of the results is posted at [www.caionline.org/about/survey.cfm](http://www.caionline.org/about/survey.cfm).

[Source: Community Associations Institute.]

## View and Pay Your Property Common Charges Online

View and Pay Your Property Common Charges Online  
We have heard many unit owners asking for the ability to view and pay common charges online. Our system will allow you to pay using your savings or checking account and there is no additional fee for this service.

Please go to our website: [www.pyramidREgroup.com](http://www.pyramidREgroup.com)

On the top right of the homepage is a blue link "Make a Payment" – click on it.

You will be redirected to a screen like the one below.

Please have a copy of your recent invoice; you will need it the first time you visit the site to **REGISTER** and setup your profile. **FIRST TIME USERS NEED TO REGISTER!**

TO **REGISTER** you will need to enter:

- 1) Select your Property from drop down menu (under Register – says either "Bill Type" or "Property")
- 2) Your Account # (typed exactly as it appears including the dash "-")

DATE	ACCOUNT NUMBER
11/01/06	530 - 000452
LOCATION	UNIT
123 MAIN STREET	1C

- 3) The zip code for the managed property's location.

Please follow the instructions provided on the website.

## Payment Center

\* Indicates required field

### Log In

Username: \*

Password: \*

Login

[forgot your username?](#)  
[forgot your password?](#)

### Register

Bill Type: \*

If you need assistance please call (203) 391-6823 from 10a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. We hope you enjoy the convenience of this feature.

## Upcoming Events from the Community Associations Institute – Save the Dates

For more information and to reserve your space, visit [www.caict.org](http://www.caict.org)

### CAI-CT Conference & Expo

March 12, 2011  
Aqua Turf, Southington

**The ABCs:** A Basic Course for Community Associations  
April 16, 2011, Sat., 8:30am - 3:00pm Light Breakfast & Lunch will be served.

Oronoque Village, Stratford

Members \$50, Non-Members \$75

Topic: A comprehensive review of community association operations.

## How to Get a Live call Answer at Pyramid

When you dial our main number (203) 348-8566, enter the Department extension below to talk to someone.

### Ext Type of Call

123 - Common Charge Bill Questions

138 - General Management Questions

133 - Maintenance Questions

(Hint – don't call your property manager – they spend most of their time in the field)

We love helping make real estate easier for you and appreciate your using our services. From all of us at Pyramid Real Estate Group have a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.



Sincerely,  
Russell Munz  
Co-Owner/Chief Operating Officer



## Ways Pyramid May be of Service:

- Fix your unit
- Improve your unit
- Rent your unit
- Sell your unit

CALL (203) 348-8566 TO DISCUSS YOUR NEED WITH ONE OF OUR PROFESSIONALS

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Since 2004, MyEZCondo has been committed to building "Better Communities through Better Communication" by producing condominium newsletters. Visit them online at [www.myezcondo.com](http://www.myezcondo.com) or call (203) 937-5381