



# Bienvenidos!

MEMBERS' EVENTS & NEWS SPLASHES

WINTER 2023

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# President's Message

Dear Ocho Familia,

As we welcome the fall season, I'd like to acknowledge all the hard work that our Manager, Rosario, and the Ocho Staff put into the September 2023 maintenance program!

They were able to tackle many of the projects successfully including installing new palapas where most necessary, resurfacing Villa 2 pool in new blue mosaic tile, refinishing carpentry as needed throughout the resort, painting, polishing floors, replacing appliances and more! Our beautiful landscape has continued to flourish over the last year and it was exciting to see how the plants have grown and filled in their planters!



We cannot underestimate the tireless work management puts in to keep the Ocho villas in the best condition possible! I'd also like to thank the Board of Directors for their time and dedication. Thank you for being steadfast in keeping all of our Ocho vacations a top notch experience!

I continue to share the current events at Ocho Cascadas with my mother, Patricia. She is thrilled with the progress and continued support of all to keep Ocho as her and my Father originally envisioned so many years ago. She is so pleased knowing that the Members are cherishing their time here!

Until next time...

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Giddings".

Mark Giddings

# Manager's Report

Dear Members:

Fall is a brilliant time of the year to visit Ocho. There are countless reasons for travelers, adventure lovers to escape to the beautiful sunny and sunsets of Puerto Vallarta. I encourage you for a jungle hike, an afternoon sail, a relaxing day at the beach. Ask our great Front Desk team for your perfect journey.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year eve are around the corner I strongly suggest booking in advance your dinner with Aline & Yuri our lovelies floating chef or in your favorite restaurant.

After September maintenance, we are ready to welcome you dear Ocho members in your home away from home. Thank you for letting us be your vacation destination.

Rosario Chavez

Ocho Cascadas, General Manager



# Meet Deborah Greenberg

I am originally from Cleveland, Ohio. I moved to San Diego in January 1984 and have never looked back. I love living here and my immediate family is all in this area. I still have a connection to Cleveland with my brother and his family. We are all avid Cleveland Browns fans.

I met my husband, Michael Karll, while completing my degree in accounting in San Diego. He was my tax professor. A year later, when he heard that I passed the CPA exam from another professor, he contacted me to suggest a celebratory lunch. That led to another lunch and another, and finally dinner. That was in 1986 and we have been together ever since. We go back to Madison, WI each year to watch the Wisconsin Badgers football games and reconnect with his family and roommates from college.



We have been visiting Puerto Vallarta for more than 30 years. We love the people, the architecture, and the beauty of Mexico. A number of years ago, Michael and I were staying in the Mismaloya area. He suggested a visit to Ocho Cascadas so that I could see a place he had visited after its initial opening. We contacted Dave Stoenner and he recommended we arrange a meeting with Luisa Anderson. We met with Luisa on our last Thursday in Puerto Vallarta. She suggested we spend our final Friday at Ocho Cascadas as there was a cocktail party, (she had us at cocktails), and an open villa to spend the night. After the cocktail party, she arranged for the floating chef to prepare our dinner and another floating chef to prepare our breakfast the next day. What a wonderful way to spend our final night in paradise! We were both struck with the whole package of Ocho Cascadas: the Villas, the employees, and the members. Michael was ecstatic that the elevators had been added during the renovation. On our flight home we discussed purchasing a Villa. Arriving home, we immediately contacted Luisa to purchase our first week. Since then, Luisa has been successful in “twisting our arms” to add to that original purchase!

The initial week we purchased at Ocho Cascadas was at the end of April. We are tax preparers and have tax practices in the San Diego area. Each year our visit to Ocho Cascadas is a wonderful way for us to relax and unwind after tax season at our home away from home.

Our daughter and her family have spent a week with us at Ocho Cascadas. We especially enjoyed sharing the culture with our Grandson. Our sons have young children, so we are waiting for the children to grow up. We look forward to the time they are old enough to experience something we love.

Rosario Chavez, Ocho Cascadas Manager and Daniel Garza, Regional Director of Resort Operations for Trading Places International Inc., have graciously invited me to “sit in” on their weekly Zoom meetings that enable me to report back to the Board on the current happenings at Ocho Cascadas. I enjoy being on the Board and giving back to the group that I have come to love. It has been my pleasure to work with the other Board members and Committee members. Each and every one is committed to ensuring the continued success and ongoing legacy of Ocho Cascadas.



Thank you.

Deborah Greenberg

# Meet Mark Giddings



Mark has spent the majority of his life traveling between California and Mexico. As a child he was exposed to architecture and interior design on a daily basis by his beloved parents, Ed and Pat Giddings, the developers of Ocho Cascadas and Club Cascadas de Baja. Out of high school, he moved to Cabo San Lucas to help his father build Club Cascadas.



In addition to his position on the Ocho Board, he also works full time in Cabo San Lucas at Club Cascadas de Baja as a Project Manager supervising their remodeling program.

When he isn't working you can find him in the ocean where he enjoys surfing, fishing, diving and swimming. He and his wife share 4 delightful kids and 2 grandchildren who live on the East Coast. He also enjoys traveling with his wife and spending time with his family and friends.



Mark is passionate about his role on the Board of Ocho Cascadas where he continues to contribute to the overall betterment of the Club. He is dedicated to keeping Ocho Cascadas as his parents intended and where improvements are made they are in keeping with the original Ocho design. His priority is the members' pride of ownership as he keeps his Mother's key principle alive, the most important thing to remember is, the Member, the Member, the Member!

## Staff Spotlight: Gerry Palacios



Gerry is the newest member to the Ocho Cascadas Staff. He will be filling our Night Watchman position. He is a true Puerto Vallarta native, born here 33 years ago on the 22nd of April. His name is Gerardo Palacios, but he prefers to go by Gerry.

He is a very talented carpenter, specializing in tables. If you ask him to show you some of his work, you will be impressed. He likes to go to the gym and camping. Good Mexican and Italian cuisine are what he likes to eat, as well as good seafood. But what he really enjoys is a good steak with a nice glass of wine.

Interesting item on his bucket list is that he wants to fly a plane. And land it. His life's dream is also to open a gallery in which to showcase the beautiful and amazing tables that he makes.

A very fun, young, and creative addition to the Ocho Cascadas Team.

Welcome Gerry!

By: Marcell Calderon, Front Desk

# Finding Past Newsletter Articles

Perhaps you remember a past Newsletter article on a cooking school, walking taco tour in Old Town, or some other topic that you would like to re-visit. Here is how to find past issues of the Ocho Cascadas Newsletters:

Go to the Ocho Cascadas Website and follow this sequence of tab selections and actions:

- 1) Ownership
- 2) Owners
- 3) Fill-in your Member Number and Zip Code
- 4) Scroll to the bottom of the page
- 5) Info & Updates
- 6) Newsletters

Newsletters are available back as far as the winter of 2017 edition.

## Incanto Closes Its Doors

Incanto, a live entertainment, bar and restaurant in Old Town, has closed its doors. This venue was a favorite, performances there of all varieties over the past 5-6 years. They abruptly closed on Sat., 10/28. Their website indicates that they are now seeking a new venue.

## Walking Into Town

We are sorry to report but as of 11/23, Calle Santa Barbara, a favorite walking route into Old Town from Ocho Cascadas, remains closed to foot traffic.

Calle Santa Barbara, view looking south

In addition, Hurricane Lidia caused several landslides and created piles of tree debris covering the sidewalk along Hwy 200. Until this debris is removed, Members and guest might consider taking a taxi or bus into town vs. negotiating the highway traffic and these obstacles.



# Landscaping Improvements & Development

The complete renovation of the landscaping conducted during the September Maintenance Period (SMP) in 2022 continues to thrive! And some further improvements were made during the 2023 SMP. Hurricane Lidia did do a “haircut” on some of the plants, but overall, the new landscaping is maturing well. Here are some pictures of how the landscaping is developing:



Some of the new plantings done in 2023 SMP.



The new palms along the stairway.



Planter boxes: brilliant color and foliage.



Some of the flowers took the brunt of Lidia’s winds, but they are making a terrific comeback!



Palms at the front of Ocho Cascadas and even the lower street entrance looking good.

# September Maintenance Period

The entire month of September is devoted to major maintenance of Ocho Cascadas. Work on our facility that can't be done with guests in attendance is planned, budgeted and performed during this shut-down period, the September Maintenance Period, "SMP". Most of our staff, all those who are not on vacation, participate in these maintenance activities. And specialized contractors are brought in for certain projects such as tile work, electrical and plumbing. Also, staff training is performed during September. Here are some pictures of this past September's extensive, hard work and improvements that we hope will give you a flavor for just how intense this SMP is for our staff and contractors:

## Common Areas:



A leak was found in one of the elevator shafts and repaired.



Lots of exterior painting was done.  
*(Some, at HEIGHTS!)*



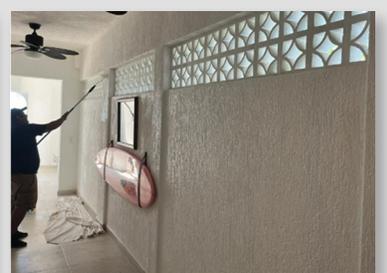
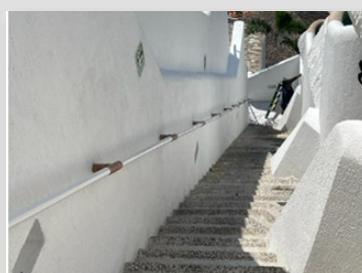
The electrical power supply and transformer were serviced.



The sky lights in the lobby we cleaned.  
*(More HIGH work!)*



Trees pruned. (Even MORE high work.) Preserving the view for our neighbors at Patio Azul.



And MORE painting.

## All Villas:



Guayabillo Wood railings maintenance from Villa 2 to Penthouse



Safes in each bedroom were relocated to a higher, more convenient location.



Water filters in each villa were renewed.



Air conditioners in all of the bedrooms were serviced.



Palapas were treated with fire retardant.



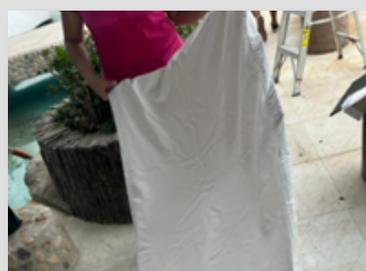
Cushions were cleaned.

## Some Examples of Work Performed in Individual Villas:

### Penthouse:



Refrigerator relocated.



New chaise covers.

# September Maintenance Period *(continued)*



Higuera (vines) color refinished to the original design.



Wall and roof repairs.

## Villa 8:



There were no major projects in Villa 8 this September. But, in addition to all the work noted above in all the Villas, Villa 8 was used to conduct staff training required annually.

## Villa 7:



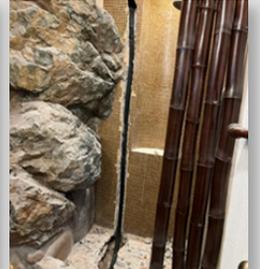
Palapa repairs. (Yes, done from outside, on top!)

## Villa 6:



Major repairs to the A.C. condensation line and electrical in the Junior Bedroom. Some VERY serious work (major "surgery" involved to the walls and floor! Similar repairs were also done in Villas 3 and 5.

## Villa 5:



Extensive work required to repair the AC condensate lines in the Junior Bedroom. Wall and floor had to be dug-up! This work will be required in Villas 2, 7, 8 & 9 next September.

Another new Palapa.



## Villa 4:



Repair to termite damage to the Kitchen Higuera. The new Higuera must dry and cure for 3 months before it can be finished in the standard dark brown color.

## Villa 3:



Major repairs to the AC condensate lines in the Junior Bedroom. Similar to repairs completed in Villas 6 and 5.

New oven.

## Villa 2:



New Palapa and replaced the microwave.

New bright blue tile surge for the pool! (Similar blue tile for the other Villas being budgeted for future years.)

## Sales Corner

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We look forward to welcoming all our members back in the coming months. Your Ocho Cascadas looks beautiful and we know you will be happy with the many improvements to the landscaping and the extensive work done during our last maintenance period. Why not bring friends along?

Even though the new Ocho Cascadas has only been open 9 years, we have a few members whose lives have changed and they have listed their villa for sale or rental. We also have a variety of Association owned memberships available for purchase and rent, mostly in the months of May through August. Some of our snow birds do not like to come in these months, but for anyone that has experienced the afternoon rain showers, stunning sunsets, and green, green jungle of summer, May through August are beautiful. (See the article "A best kept secret: the magic of Ocho and PV . . . in the SUMMERTIME" in this Newsletter.)

When you have any questions about buying, renting, selling, or bringing friends along, please let us know. You can reach Luisa Anderson on site at +52-322-150-6994 or e-mail [luisa@ochocascadas.com](mailto:luisa@ochocascadas.com); or Dave Stoenner in the U.S office at (949) 640 7642 or e-mail [dave@cascadaslegacy.com](mailto:dave@cascadaslegacy.com). We're here to help!

Dave Stoenner

## Summertime...Best Kept Secret

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As Mexico travelers, we've been coming down to Ocho Cascadas since the late 1990's. Our original interval was regularly scheduled for mid/late October of each year. Back then, we embraced our annual visit, and considered our October week and that time of year as ideal. And why wouldn't we, because it was, and it still is!

But then, about 10 years later, we were offered the opportunity to upgrade our Ocho accommodations to a larger unit. That opportunity came with the caveat that our new interval would instead be in the dead of summer, specifically July. At the time, we were hoping not to change from our cherished October timeslot. But after some serious deliberations, we decided to go ahead and take the plunge, and move from October to the summer week in July. It was then, while we were bidding a last farewell to the regulars from our October week that we were hurled an ominous warning: "YOU'RE GOING TO FRY IN JULY!" Uh-oh. . . gulp.

Well, that was about 15 years ago. And fast forward, we've been visiting Ocho and PV in our July timeslot since then (of course, with sporadic visits during other seasons, too). AND THE VERDICT: In our humble opinion, that "July warning" was about as accurate as the prophecy that cars would never replace horses. In fact, the bottom line is that we LOVE summertime at Ocho Cascadas!

Whether it's the majestic afternoon clouds forming over the jungle each afternoon, bringing a refreshing late afternoon shower, the magnificent light and sound shows radiating from breathtaking lightning and thunder, or a beautiful sunset that pops out afterwards, it's all amazing. That's not to mention that the water (either pool or ocean) is always the perfect temperature and tempting for a quick dip. Of course, with air air-conditioning in the bedroom units, sleeping at night is a breeze. And because the summer is not considered as "high season," there are fewer lines at the airport, easier access to activities and area

## Summertime...Best Kept Secret (continued)

amenities, and everything is even more affordable.

Now, with 28 years of Ocho visits under our belt and having seen it various times of the year, we know that it is a fabulous place year-round. But, believe it or not, we still pick July as our favorite time of year to come home to Ocho. Yep, we can't wait for July to roll around every year! And yes, we all know about the appeal of "high season" in PV and the demand for winter months. That said, and despite what so many people may think, there is an incredible magic at Ocho Cascadas and PV in the summertime . . . something that is incredibly overlooked. And though we're telling you, let's keep it as our little secret.

The Duysen's and our extended family Members - Weeks 29 & 30

## Happy Memories

"We have been visiting for 37 years! I wouldn't stay anywhere else. Magical! The chef will prepare your selected meals for a reasonable fee, the services are also reasonable and fantastic. Our pool cooks us off on hot days and provides a lovely ambiance otherwise."

"Almost 10 years in and we are still just as amazed by this fabulous property."

Perfect combination of large open air tropical living space and the comfort of air-conditioned bedrooms. Beautifully and uniquely decorated. Private splash pool, full kitchen, comfortable lounging areas, ocean front views - there really is no reason to leave other than to visit the various great Puerto Vallarta sites, beaches, and restaurants in the vicinity.

It's a great location up in the hills of a quiet cobblestone neighborhood in Conchas Chinas - easy walk, bus, uber or cab to downtown. They have grocery delivery and a fantastic private chef service available (breakfast, lunch and/or dinner). We have been fortunate enough to use Alin's chef services for multiple meals - all of which have been excellent. All the staff members are friendly, efficient & helpful. It's a perfect & unique vacation spot."



# Solicitation of Nominations 2024

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Dear Ocho Cascadas Members:

The Annual Meeting of the Members is scheduled to be held in Orange County, California on Saturday, June 8, 2024 at a location that is to be determined. The official agenda and Proxy will be sent to members in April. Among the items of business will be the Annual Election of the Board of Directors.

Serving on the Board of Directors is your opportunity to make an impact on the future of Ocho Cascadas by becoming involved in the decision-making process.

If you have an interest in serving on the Board of Directors, please complete the Nomination Form and the Board Member Disclosure Form. These forms can be found on the Ocho Cascadas website. Follow this link sequence from the Ocho Cascadas main webpage to get to these forms:

“Ownership” (at the top of the page)

“Owners” (from the drop-down menu)

Enter your Member Number and Zip Code

Scroll to the bottom of the page to “Recent Activity”

Under “Call for Nominations:” click “Nomination Form” and “Disclosure Form”

Please return the completed forms by March 11, 2024 using one of the following methods:

**By e-mail:** [droadmin@tradingplaces.com](mailto:droadmin@tradingplaces.com)

**By fax:** (949) 315-3753

**By U.S. mail:** Trading Places International

Attn: DRO Admin

22510 Commercentre Drive, Suite 100

Lake Forest, CA 92630

*Please be advised all Nomination and Board Member Disclosure Forms must be received at Trading Places by March 11, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. (PDT).*



# Annual Meeting Summary

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Held June 10, 2023  
A Brief Summary for Members

The Board of Directors held its semi-annual meeting in the morning of June 10th. Below is a summary of the key topics and issues being considered by our Board:

## Financial Review:

Elisabeth Chorak and Ken Loury, both from Trading Places Inc. (TPI), provided the BofD with a summary of O.C.'s YTD financial position. (As a background note, one of the services TPI provides O.C. is maintaining the financial "books" for the Association.) In addition, the monthly financials are reviewed by Board member Brian Jacobs, and he provides the Board with the results of his monthly reviews.

The overall financial results YTD are generally in very good order. The budget has been adversely impacted by a lower than forecast exchange rate. This impact has been partially offset by a favorable variance in actual Peso expenses (*slightly lower monthly operating costs vs. the budget.*) The budget was prepared for 2023 based on an estimated exchange rate of 19.5:1 (Pesos to \$US). YTD the exchange rate has averaged 18.4, and it is currently 17.5. As the exchange rate lowers, it cost the Association more to buy the Pesos required for operating expenses of the facility.

The cumulative effects of these two factors, adverse exchange rate and operating cost savings, has the overall operation running about \$1,000/month over budget YTD.

Brian Jacobs commented that the reserve fund, used primarily for repairs and improvements to our facility during the September shut-down period, is looking to be like the \$80,000 spent last year, when major improvements were made to the facility. He reminded the Board that the reserve fund is fluid and impacted by such factors as rental income to the Association. The actual budget for the 2023 September maintenance will be finalized and approved by the Board in August.

## Manager's Report:

Rosario reviewed with the Board highlights of employee gatherings such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, birthday celebrations, etc.: all important activities towards maintaining employee teamwork and morale.

She went over an extensive list of improvements that the staff has been able to make to our facility while in operation during the year: painting, landscape maintenance, appliance replacements, new replacement chairs, pool pump and heater maintenance. The review was a good reminder that maintenance of a sea-side facility such as ours requires constant attention and care.

Rosario also presented the Board with a preliminary list of maintenance work and improvement projects for the 2023 September facility shut-down. The list was made up of about 40 specifically identified projects. For each of the items the staff has prepared a detailed cost estimate. For six of the items that

# Annual Meeting Summary *(continued)*

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require extensive lead-time for materials or contracts, the Board approved proceeding. The final Board prioritization and approval for this extensive worklist will be made in August.

Rosario reported that she and the staff are looking into and making progress on an agreement with Medasist, a hospital facility just a mile from Ocho Cascadas (*1 block south of Basilio Badillo on Hwy 200*) for fast on-site-response medical services for the facility. This service would greatly reduce the response time for aid, such as EMT services, and provide Members with a convenient means for on-site help with non-emergency medical matters. More to come on this improvement opportunity.

Mark Giddings, Board Chair, commented on the impact of the building boom going on in both Cabo and Puerto Vallarta. Skilled labor is in very high demand and labor costs are going up dramatically. He commented that contractors in need of labor will sometimes pull up to an existing construction site in a van, offer employees working there a big pay raise, and driving off with a new crew!

Rosario reported that she has received two proposals for the hardware to further improve the Wi-Fi service throughout our facility. Two different systems have been proposed of differing technology levels. There is still some additional review required in evaluating the cost and effectiveness of the two proposals. A final recommendation should be available for a Board decision by August.

## **Sales Report:**

Luisa Anderson presented the sales report, filling-in for Dave Stoenner.

So far in 2023 there have been 9 Villa sales, 6 of these were on behalf of existing owners. There are 64 unsold villa-weeks of which 48 are in June thru August. Luisa made a great “pitch” that these latter villa-weeks are during very pleasant, laid-back times of the year for visiting PV. (*Dave would have been proud of her comments!*)

Luisa also noted that occupancy remains very high. Between January to June this year there was only 1 open villa-week at the facility.

## **Old Business:**

Mark Giddings reported on the highlights of his annual, thorough inspection of the entire facility. This survey looks at everything at the facility in detail. His report goes to Rosario and is the foundation for the work that the staff conducts during normal operations and the worklist for the September shut-down.

There are some changes in Labor Laws that are being made or are under consideration by the Mexican government. The minimum vacation days for employees have been increased from double to a 33% increase, depending on tenure. A change from a 6-day workweek to 5-day week is under consideration, but there is considerable opposition to this proposal from businesses. And a law is proceeding thru the legislature to increase the mandatory Christmas Bonus from 15 days' pay to 30 days' pay. Rosario reports that it appears there is sufficient support in the legislature for this latter change to become law. (*It is an*

*election year in Mexico.) Obviously, such changes will have a budget impact on our operation costs.*

The Board has undertaken another major project to investigate the replacement of the “soft goods” in our villas, items such as cushions, pillows, drapes, bedspreads. All such soft goods are now approaching 10 years old, and most of these furnishings are out doors and exposed to a severe sun and marine environment. Board was in favor of retaining the colors and textures of the facility when it was re-furnished in 2013. The go-forward plan is to obtain a detailed inventory and estimate for a selected villa, review with the Board in August, and implement the upgrade in one villa as a “test” during the September shut-down.

### **Short-Term and Long-Term Issues: Expenditures and Funding:**

The Board discussed at length the financial impact of several short and long-term issues in maintaining Ocho Cascadas at the level of excellence Members have come to expect. Prioritizing maintenance and projects, managing the operating budget and reserve fund, and planning for the funding of these issues or projects remains a “work in progress.” Here is a summary of these major issues (not in priority order):

#### **Long-Term Projects to Maintain and Improve Ocho Cascadas**

- Re-surfacing of the pools. (*\$15-18,000/villa, \$45,000 for the Penthouse*)
- Replacing the “soft goods.” (*Estimate under development for a trial Villa*)
- Internet Service Improvements. (*\$4- 8,000*)

#### **Short-Term Developments that impact Operating Costs of Ocho Cascadas**

- Inflation and demand for skilled services. (*Being monitored*)
- Effect of lower exchange rate. (*19.5 to 17.5 = 11% reduction in purchase-power of Pesos*)
- Labor law changes impacting employee costs

The Board is fully engaged in managing these competing project objectives and demands of the government while keeping Members maintenance fees as reasonable as possible.

### **Member’s Meeting:**

In the afternoon the annual Member’s Meeting was held. A Quorum was established. Members of the Board, Rosario, and Luisa all made brief presentations. Mark Giddings provided a report on the status of the facility and operations as well as the long-term plans for pool and soft goods refurbishment. Following Mark’s report Rosario gave a summary of her Manager’s Report, Brian Jacobs reviewed the Association’s financials, and Luisa covered current sales and the availability of wonderful summer weeks.

The final action at the Member’s Meeting was the certification of the election results for the 3 open Board of Director’s positions. Mark Giddings, Deborah Greenberg, and Brian Jacobs were re-elected. Congratulations to all three! And thank you for your service to our Association.



PRSRPT FIRST  
US POSTAGE  
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PERMIT 58  
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### NEW DESTINATIONS



**Northeast**  
Wells, ME  
Lenox, MA



**Atlantic Coast**  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
Williamsburg, VA  
Atlantic Beach, NC



**Florida**  
Orlando • Hollywood • Cocoa Beach  
Panama City • Pompano Beach



**Great Outdoors**  
Branson, MO • Lake Lure, NC  
Park City, UT • St. George, UT



**Caribbean**  
St. Thomas, USVI  
Sint Maarten, Dutch Caribbean



**Mexico**  
Cancun  
Punta Vallarta

### SAME GREAT EXCHANGE BENEFITS



Free Trading Places  
Classic Membership



Hundreds of Resort  
Destinations



Unit & Season  
Upgrades



2 For 1 Weeks



Access to Hot Deals

**AND MORE!**

NEW LOOK.  
NEW DESTINATIONS.  
SAME GREAT EXCHANGE BENEFITS.

