



**From the President's Desk...**

Tom Sheridan

I am happy to report that everything at the Vassar is going well, especially when considering the loss of **Dr. Claude Damico** so unexpectedly in early December. It was a hard time for all of us here, including the full-time residents and our staff who saw her and worked with her on a regular basis.

First, I would like to thank **Gregg Bidlack** who stepped right up and assumed the role of Interim General Manager, **Kathleen Vail** who has faithfully run the business office for our Association, and **Hector Maldonado** who readily assumed the front desk day shift responsibilities for our building. All three have made my role as your president that much easier at a time when things could have easily unraveled.

The Vassar is a business as we take in over two million dollars in annual revenues and have to manage and operate our building within the parameters of our annual budget. It takes solid management and leadership to accomplish this. With all of the projects underway, not to mention the storms, holidays, routine building maintenance, water leaks, and lots of contractors working in individual units, our building has been

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**Manager's Message...**

Gregg Bidlack, General Manager

The past few months were filled with a myriad of tasks and accomplishments for our administration and staff. Fiscal planning, project assignment, and noteworthy efforts both inside and outside of our fine facility, initiated by Dr. Claude Damico and the Board of Trustees, are being carried out in a timely fashion for the benefit of our building and its residents.

The New Year brings with it a quantity of new projects, and the completion of those that are already underway to further enhance our infrastructure appearance and ultimately our standard of living here at Vassar Square.

As you may already know, our pool and deck re-design and replacement programs are well underway. The new pool and support facility are already in place. The new deck and redesigned masonry surfaces are the next items on our pool agenda.

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## What's Cookin' at the **New Vassar Café?**



As owners of the Carisbrooke Inn on Little Rock Avenue, as well as Carisbrooke Ice (formerly Mento's), Ventnor's John

**Batista and Agnes Debicz** know the hospitality business inside and out. Fortunately for us, Batista and Debicz plan to open the Carisbrooke Café at the Vassar this Spring.

The new café proprietors are very excited to be opening the cafe and see it as a "perfect way to blend [their] hospitality experience and expand their product line." Batista explains, "We have been looking for the right opportunity to bring these two worlds together into a cafe, and when the option of Vassar Square came up, we knew we found the right place."

The cafe itself will look much the same as it currently does – Batista and Debicz think it is a beautiful space with great colors and an amazing view. They hope to add a small area for takeout items including coffee options.

As they do at their ice creams store and the inn, Batista and Debicz believe in using quality ingredients and making many items from scratch. They plan to set up a small baking area at the Vassar café and will add ice cream (that means sundaes and milk shakes) and water ice freezers. In addition to quality food, the new proprietors believe in cleanliness to the nth degree and pride themselves on "floors that customers literally can eat off of..."

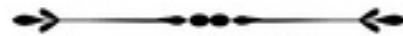
Although the menu has not been finalized, breakfast items will include waffles, pancakes, eggs (any style), several omelet selections including build your own. In addition, Carisbrooke Café will serve fresh bagels from Hot Bagels with typical spreads and lox, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers. And, lucky for Vassar, Debicz loves to bake homemade baked

items including muffins, scones, cookies, coffee cakes, and some breads.

For lunch, sandwiches will include some in house roasted meats like roasted turkey breast and beef brisket as well as corned beef and pastrami. Salads will also be served including fresh tuna salad, egg salad, and chicken salad.

In addition, Carisbrooke Café will have kid friendly options like chicken fingers, hot dogs, hamburgers, French fries, and grilled chicken. Batista and Debicz are also open to suggestions for menu items and possible specials. They plan to open May 1 – so stop by when you smell the coffee brewing and the scones in the oven.

Welcome to Vassar, Jon and Agnes!



### **Manager's Message**

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We are currently replacing all lighting with the exception of the hallway lights with energy efficient bulbs. Additionally, another part of our energy saving program is the replacement of our building's water pressure pumps and hot water generating and delivery systems. The redesign is complete, the contracts signed, and start up is within a few months.

Yet another major project currently underway involves our fire alarm system. As dictated by the Ventnor Fire Marshal, all of our building's fire alarm initiating devices (pull stations, smoke alarms, etc.) in the common areas must be changed.

With these new devices, our staff and the fire department will be able to identify exactly which device initiated a building wide alarm. That device, with fire department authorization, can then be by-passed and replaced effectively ending an alarm situation. Thus, there will no longer long waiting to silence the alarms and return service to our elevators. These are just a few examples of what the Board and management have planned for the New Year. Please pardon the inconveniences and enjoy the results.

## Remembering... Dr. Claude Damico



On December 2, 2015, Vassar Square not only lost a Building Manager, but more importantly we lost a dear friend. Dr. Claude Damico knew her way around condo management in the

Atlantic City area. She managed The Plaza and The Regency before coming over to Vassar in 2013. Since then, Claude took charge and made it her goal to improve the physical aspects of the building as well as the atmosphere and energy for residents and staff alike.

From giving the Jackson Avenue entrance a new look to refurbishing the staff break room to redesigning the pool, Claude was there to decide, direct, and implement over 100 projects. In addition, her open, warm, and sincere personality made all of us feel welcome and understood – whether at an annual Board Meeting or hosting a wine & cheese party in the lobby.

She believed in Vassar so much that she became a resident in 2014 – a sure sign that she thought the building was a great place to live. In fact, in the 1980s, Claude and her parents lived at the Vassar. Not surprisingly, Claude was an active Board member at the time where she brought her sense of “doing the right thing” for Vassar.

Claude had a way with people. She liked people (in and outside of Vassar), and she liked helping in any way that she could – without bragging, fan-fare, or the need to be recognized. She truly lived the saying, “Practice random acts of kindness...” For example, Claude would stop at the local Dunkin Donuts every morning on her way to work after attending mass at Lady Star of the Sea in Atlantic City and buy coffee and breakfast for the homeless. She was charitable and generous and kind – not

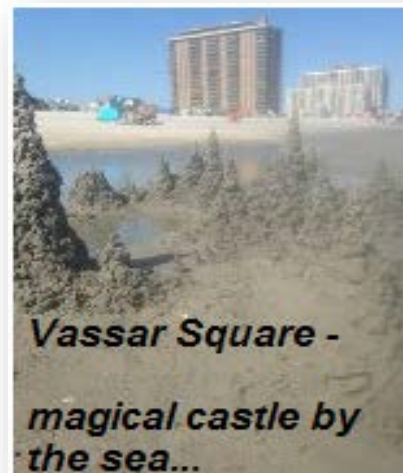
only from her pocket book but her words, compassion, and insight.

Claude was unique – a benevolent and brilliant force to reckon with. Many of you knew she was a Sister of Mercy. In addition, Claude held several degrees including law, education, etc. Impressive, but what made Claude unique was her additional interests and expertise including motorcycle riding, auto mechanics certificate, and started teaching herself Swahili because it “just sounded neat...” She loved life and appreciated simple things like going out for a good meal, seeing a Broadway show in NYC with Kathleen, or just watching football all day on a lazy Sunday afternoon.

We will all miss Claude here at the Vassar. The halls seem so quiet without her presence. The lobby seems a bit empty without her smile. Personally, I feel she was one of the best humans I have ever met and miss her advice, guidance, wisdom, and twinkle in her eye.

Rest in peace, Claude. As I write this I can’t seem to see her resting. I am sure she is up there now directing and orchestrating all of us to do the right thing for Vassar, and life in general.

Molly Golubcow, Editor



## Resident **SPOTLIGHT** On...

### Grace & Michael Zambelli



Vassar has got talent in the form of **Grace and Michael Zambelli** (1601). As residents of Vassar since 2005, the artists find the location “inspiring.” The beach and boardwalk scenes have inspired Grace to create many paintings. As for Michael, he finds his artistic muse in the architecture of Ventnor as well as the back roads of South Jersey.

As if being an artist is not a full-time pursuit, our artists in residence have interesting backgrounds. Grace is a psychologist, but began her career as an art therapist.

After purchasing the condo at the Vassar, Grace decided to start painting again as a means to help enhance the look of their residence. At the same time, she encouraged Michael to try his hand at painting as well. As an industrial designer, he had been drawing his entire life and always wanted to paint. So, they took some classes together and “..both became hooked.”

Grace’s paintings fall into two categories - People and Places and Pastels. Grace explains her vision, “When I paint, my goal is to capture a special fleeting moment in time that disappears immediately afterward. Hopefully

the emotions expressed by my subjects and the mood of the scene at the time, comes across to the viewer in my paintings.”

Michael, taking a more technical or industrial approach, divides his work into four categories - Structures, Vehicles, Products, Boats and Water. Michael feels that his paintings are “not necessarily meant to be pretty pictures, but hopefully the beauty or the sadness in the mundane will be apparent.”

In addition to the walls in their apartment overlooking downbeach, Grace’s and Michael’s paintings can be seen locally in several galleries including Art on Asbury Gallery (Ocean City), Great Bay Gallery (Somers Point), Riverfront Renaissance Center (Millville), and Holtzman Gallery (Atlantic City).

The Zambellis, who live in Basking Ridge, NJ hope that South Jersey will become their permanent residence in the very near future.

Vassar is proud of her many residents – including Artists<sup>2</sup> Zambelli.

[Additional articles about the Zambelli Team.](#)



**Bring Me a Dream AC –**  
G. Zambelli

*“capturing a decisive moment in time”*



**House on Vassar Square-** M. Zambelli

*“bringing out the beauty of the mundane”*

*From the President's Desk... (Continued from Page 1)*

quite busy all winter. The bottom line is that the Vassar remains in capable hands. Gregg will stay as our Interim manager for the remainder of 2016 and plans to return to the front desk once we hire a permanent manger.

As Gregg elaborates in his summary, the water pump project and lighting project are essentially complete. The energy management system, fire alarm upgrades, and new domestic boilers will be completed over the next several months.

We are also working on an updated, timeless design that will wear well and be tasteful for many years to come for the hallway project. Results will be presented in early summer. I understand that we can have as

many opinions as to the design as we do unit owners, but the goal here is to create a pleasing final result that most everyone will appreciate. We are planning to get this project underway in the fall of 2016 and have all 19 floors completed before the 2017 summer season.

Overall, we are looking at a project budget of approximately \$800,000 for the next budget year which will cover the costs of the hallway project, the new hallway PTACs, repaving the large parking lot across the street, the new domestic hot water boilers and a few other minor items. This cost will be financed with a combination of monies from our reserve, bank financing and extra condo payments over the

next budget year. Your board is sensitive to any additional costs passed along to unit owners (*we have to pay them too*) but at the same time we must balance that cost with the needs of our building. Job one of our board is to maintain the common elements of our building. Those needs far exceed available revenues so it's a challenging balancing act when it comes to the dollars. Again, I am seeking everyone's support to help get these projects behind us... I have no doubt that like our new pool, for example, these other projects can only add value to our building. We're already

realizing significant energy savings which is projected to save about \$50,000 annually in natural gas and electric costs, once all four phases of the energy project are completed later this year. Two major ones are already finished.

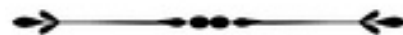
Finally, I want to thank **Molly Golubcow** for her time and efforts organizing and creating this newsletter. It would not have happened without her contribution.

Summer will be here before we know it. And, for something else to look forward to... our new pool and deck will be ready for everyone to enjoy! The new pool is already in place; just the finish work and new deck remain.

See you soon at the Vassar...

*"JOB ONE OF OUR BOARD IS TO MAINTAIN THE COMMON ELEMENTS OF OUR BUILDING. THOSE NEEDS FAR EXCEED AVAILABLE REVENUES SO IT'S A CHALLENGING BALANCING ACT WHEN IT COMES TO THE DOLLARS..."*

*TOM SHERIDAN*



## Ode to the Vassar Staff

As the reigning Queen of the Boardwalk, Vassar has a staff befitting royal –  
Professional, hardworking, courteous, and at all times loyal.

With Gregg at the helm – always even-keeled, kind, and always a pro –  
He really knows condo management, and can run the show.

Kathleen you can always count on for a personal and friendly greeting –  
Whether she is reconciling the books or recording a Board Meeting.

At the front desk, you meet Hector as soon as you walk through the door –  
You feel welcomed and very special as if you were in a Nordstrom’s store.

In addition to Hector, there’s Frank and Jeff always there to greet you –  
Dutiful manning their post, ready to help – boy, what a great crew!

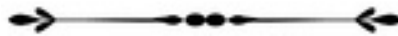
From carpets to windows, Vassar is kept clean and fresh and always tidy –  
You can count on Leslie and Sam - a small team that’s efficient and very mighty.

Vassar always needs repairs and upkeep - caulking, painting, and maintenance 24/7 –  
Ben and his team, Kevin and Ever, seem like they have been sent directly from heaven.

And if you need your car brought to the door, you can always rely on the staff from valet  
(Che, Octavio, Peter, Ion, Paul, and Rick) –

To get you in and out of Vassar’s driveway - sometimes choreographed like a fine ballet.

So as you sleep ever safe and sound in your lovely condo by the shore –  
Thank all of staff at Vassar and remember who could ask for more?



### Welcome NEW Residents!



It’s time to say “hello” and welcome to our  
new neighbors. See below for the latest  
additions to the Vassar family...

#308 Kevin O’Hare

#1001 Albert & Carmella Zalcmann

#1101 Fran Northridge & Matt DeSouza

#1103 Robert Zalano & Angella Carmella

#1104 Jim & Marianne Galante

#1704 Robert & Iona Sesholtz

#1800 Ralph & Jane Magnatta

#2005a Thomas D’Onofrio

**If you have news or ideas for the next issue of *The Vassar Times*, please contact:**

Editor.....[Molly Golubcow](#)