

TaraNotes

Fall Issue: October 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear TaraNova Members:

It is my sincere pleasure to announce that once again, TaraNova did not increase the maintenance fees for the coming year! Many of our members have contacted us to let us know how pleased they are with their ability to exchange their week through RCI. Many of you have been able to take vacations to fantastic resorts that have high maintenance fees, but you were able to use your TaraNova week with lower maintenance fees and exchange into those resorts. Those resorts may offer incentives to our members to purchase at that specific resort, but why purchase another week at a different resort with high maintenance fees, when you were able to reserve the high-end resort using your TaraNova week? Most of our members have now become experts in utilizing their RCI exchange and taking advantage of our "trade value" through the RCI system.

We are still interested in having new members serve on the Board of Directors. I would like to thank the current Board members for their dedication to TaraNova. They take time to review the overall operations and detailed financial information of the Club so they are fully informed in order to set the maintenance fees each year. They are all TaraNova members, and have the same interest in keeping the dues at a level that is favourable and within reason to maintain the club as a viable operation. Please consider volunteering your time on the Board to represent your fellow TaraNova members.

Attached is important information including Did-You-Know; Maintenance Fee Procedures; Reservation Procedures; and Transfer/Resale information. This type of information, though previously distributed to all TaraNova members, has been updated and is worth a yearly refresh for members to review. Also, I invite you to take a look inside for useful questions to ask your travel agent before you take your vacation.

This is our busiest time of the year! Members are paying their dues and booking or banking their next vacations. Some members are already prepaying their 2015 weeks and banking into RCI. Others have also prepaid their weeks so that they may send their request one year in advance to book at a TaraNova resort. Please keep in mind that school holidays are always considered high priority and require preplanning. The telephone is ringing off the hook; members are coming in and out of the office; sending fax and e-mails; and we receive hundreds of pieces of mail a day. Please make sure to identify yourself by your name, membership number, contact information and a brief message so that the appropriate staff member may assist you in a timely manner. Should you wish to meet to discuss any aspect of your membership, please contact us so that our customer service representatives may set aside a specific time to discuss your membership. They are eager to assist and will respond to you as quickly as possible.

I send the warmest of greetings to you and wish you all a wonderful year ahead.

Regards, Teresa Knapp

Request for Nominations for the TaraNova Board of Directors

Your Board of Governors exercises jurisdiction over and ultimately controls your resort properties, approves the annual budget and fully understands how the Club is managed. Every year at least one Board Member is elected to a three-year term to ensure continuity of experience. This year there will be three vacancies available on the Board for June 2014. If all vacancies are filled, two Directors elected will serve for a 3-year term and one Director will serve for a 2-year term. All members in good standing may seek election. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please notify Teresa Knapp, in writing, prior to December 31, 2013. If there are more candidates running for election than vacancies, a short bio outline on those seeking election will be distributed in the spring mailing along with an election ballot.

Letters from Members

Congratulations Sandra & Ivan Shepherd WINNERS of an RCI week!!! We love to hear from our members. Just mail, fax or e-mail telling us about your vacation. We will enter your name into the draw. You too may win a week into your RCI account courtesy of TARANOVA!

Don't forget we have a section on our website to display your pictures. Just go to www.taranova.com and click on "Membership" then click on "Member Photos". If you have any pictures that you wish to share with other TaraNova members, please send a message to club@taranova.com and attach your pictures in jpg format. In order to protect our computer system, you must send us a message on your e-mail cover noting your name and membership number or we will not be able to open the attachment!!!

Hello: I am checking the veracity of a letter received by my mother (who has a timeshare with you). It says she has "qualified for the permanent elimination of all future time share maintenance fees" and requires a reply by July 22. However, it is not on TaraNova letterhead and is signed by a "management department" with a Vancouver address, so it seems suspicious. Are there any changes in your maintenance fee arrangements? Thank you.

Note from TaraNova: All members are required to pay their maintenance fees as per their membership.

If you purchase at another resort, and they state a trade-in value for your membership, the trade-in most likely will not be valid and you may be responsible to the new company for trade-in value; AND you will still be responsible for your TaraNova maintenance fees. The membership is still considered your responsibility UNLESS the proper TaraNova Transfer Forms are completed AND accepted by TaraNova. Please see the attached information with respect to companies that offer "trade-in value; elimination fees; resale/transfers; or state they have a bona-fide offer to purchase your membership.

TaraNova does not provide your information to any outside source for marketing of any type of sale, including resale/transfer companies. Most of these companies will process your funds without any proper TaraNova documentation. TaraNova transfer/release forms must be signed and approved by TaraNova. NO OTHER FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Please contact TaraNova BEFORE you sign anything with respect to your membership.

To TaraNova Members;

Thank you for continuing to send in your Resort Reports. We thank you for letting us know about the units and service. We appreciate your feedback. We take your concerns very seriously and forward information to the resorts for follow up. The resorts have on-going maintenance and upgrading. If you have any concerns about the unit once you have checked-in, please contact the front desk so they may try and make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Pam:

I want to thank you for the recent upgrade you provided us. We had booked the TaraNova 2- bedroom Myrtle Beach unit for the week of Aug 10 – 17. When we checked in, they advised us that TaraNova had requested that we get upgraded to the 3 bedroom unit. This was a very nice surprise and much appreciated.

Note from TaraNova: If a member has requested a specific unit which is not available when they reserve their week, and the unit becomes available at check-in, we will try to accommodate our member. However, this is not always possible because if the unit has not been officially cancelled, we must keep it available for the reserved guest. At all times, we try and provide the best possible experience for our members.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **October 29, 2013**

2014 Invoices deemed to be mailed

- **November 15, 2013**

LAST DAY to bank 2013 week into RCI or you will lose your week.

- **November 29, 2013**

2014 Maintenance Fees are due.

Late fees and interest accrue from October 31, 2013 for payments received after November 29, 2013.

Review the attached Payment Information or review it on line at www.taranova.com

- **December 31, 2013**

Last day to advise TaraNova in writing if your intent to seek election to the Board.

Letter From: The President of TaraNova Vacation Club

Dear TaraNova Members:

October 1, 2013

Once again the fall season gives us the opportunity to review the past year and plan for the next. In doing so, your Board of Governors took into consideration many issues, including the modest improvement in the economy and the varying needs of each of our members.

Over the past year we have made some changes to our inventory of vacation properties. Most importantly we have exchanged a troublesome unit on the mountain at Attitash, NH and acquired a newly renovated one near our other unit and the check-in facilities. We are certain that those members who stay there will have a more enjoyable experience.

Your Board received reports on the improvements made and the anticipated upgrades that may be required during the next year. In its wisdom it unanimously agreed to budget for activities that will allow us to continue our operations without requiring any increase in the annual dues.

We congratulate our administrative staff under the leadership of Teresa Knapp for their dedication to improving the level of service to our members. Rosanne, Pam and Jeannine continue to offer great support. We are pleased that the new club computer programs will allow us to more quickly access the state of members' accounts, outstanding reservations and our detailed financial affairs.

Norman D. Griesdorf, Q.C. President

Travel Smarts: Things to ask a Travel Agent

Planning your travel just isn't a matter of deciding where to go for your summer or winter holiday, but making sure that you ask the right questions to make your trip smoother and worry free. From my perspective as a travel agent here are the important things to ask before you book your trip.

1. **Insurance:** Find out if your credit card or group insurance plan at your office covers you for out of country travel. If not, then do ask about the various insurance plans for travelers which include: cancellation, medical, baggage, accident, and any of these coverages individually - or all of those plus a few more, normally referred to as comprehensive insurance. You must book any cancellation, medical or comprehensive insurance within 24 hours of booking your trip. If you have booked your trip already and get ill even a few days after you've put your money down, without insurance, you wouldn't be covered for cancellation charges. If you're booking a car, you should ask if the car rental company includes any insurance with your booking.

2. **Passports** are mandatory for any transborder or international flights. Always check your expiration date to make sure that it will be valid for the length of your trip (some countries insist that it be valid for six months from the start of your trip). It's wise to make a couple of copies of your passport page with the necessary information on it and take one with you in your luggage or in a safe pocket - and leave one at

home as well for emergencies. If your passport is stolen or lost while you're travelling it's much better for you to have visible proof of your valid passport. If you're in any major city, town or vacation area, it's good to know where your nearest consulate or embassy is. P.S. Find out if your timeshare or hotel has safety deposit boxes in your room. They're invaluable and so important for your peace of mind concerning money, cheques, jewellery, watches and even your camera.

3. **Money.** Many people ask about money exchanges and the best place to get money exchanged. This varies depending upon where you are. For most international destinations, the best place is the bank. There are of course local exchanges, and the hotel where you're staying may also offer this service. Everyone has an exchange service cost, you only have to decide which one offers the best rate. This also includes travellers cheques. In the summer of 2012, I was in Florida right after banks decided not to exchange Canadian money for U.S. dollars. I had to scramble to find a local exchange which fortunately I found at the hotel next door to our timeshare.

Also ask your travel agent about any **additional charges** that may incur outside the cost of your airline ticket. Mexico, for instance has a departure tax (that will be included if you're buying a package (air, hotel etc.) but not if you're just purchasing the airline ticket). Many airlines also charge for **seat selection** ahead of time, as well as a **baggage fee**. They may also offer **food for sale** if your flight is over so many hours, though most offer coffee, tea and snacks for free.

4. **Security.** Security regulations will be changing in the next couple of years regarding taking liquids aboard the plane. Right now, they haven't changed and they are strict. Make sure you know the requirements for taking any liquids through security. No aerosols are permitted in hand luggage or your carry on. All airlines have a list of what you can and cannot take onboard on their website for international and domestic travel, as well as baggage requirements. It's easy to find the information and best for you yourself to check this out, or if you can't, ask your travel agent for the information or the website address of the airline.

Medicines with a prescription label on them are permitted in your hand luggage as well as most boxed pills such as headache and cold tablets. Bottled water is not permitted at this time, though you can purchase it after you've been through security and can take it onboard.

5. **Visas and Vaccines.** In resort towns, vacation areas and cities in North America, you will not need vaccine protection. That does include Mexico, the Caribbean, as well as most of Central America, though it's always wise to check but can depend upon the specific destination. If you are a Canadian or American citizen and have permanent residency, you will not need a Visa to travel in North America. However, these things can differ with people, your friend or relatives, who are coming from abroad to travel within these countries or to cruise from Canada or the U.S. These are special and individual cases. With some cruises or packaged tours going to international or foreign destinations, especially in countries where there is concern for malaria or tropical diseases, information on Visas and Vaccines will be forthcoming from the travel company or the cruise company. Your travel agent will also be able to assist you with information on Visas, their cost, and how to obtain them as well as where to get vaccinations specifically for travel within certain countries.

***Jeniva Berger is a Senior Travel Consultant for Vision 2000 Travel Group, a specialist in Scotland, the U.S. and Mexico - and a long-time member of Taranova Vacation Club. She can be reached at jeniva.berger@vision2000.ca or 416-342-3898. (* The author has provided general information only and members should verify information prior to any reservation.)**