



Carleton Condominium Corporation No. 89
1195 Richmond Rd., Ottawa, K2B 8E4

2017-10-19

Dear Owner

I am pleased to provide you with this copy of the "Halcyon History" researched and written by Debi Lascelle to whom we are greatly indebted, and also the many long time residents who graciously shared their memories and documents. Thanks and appreciation is extended to Peter Burns our first Condo Manager for his valuable input and also to others who were associated with the Halcyon in the past.

Anniversaries are important as they provide an opportunity to look back and give thanks for past achievements, reflect on the many men and women who have contributed to the history of our country, our place in the world and have contributed to the quality of life we now enjoy in our vertical community.

While the Halcyon is not one hundred and fifty years old, at forty one it also has much to celebrate. This venerable building has sheltered many lives, engendered many friendships and created lasting memories, and thanks to the diligence and prudence of past boards we can look forward with confidence to the future.

Sincerely,

Colleen Henderson
President
CCC89

The Halcyon 1976...

2017 is a year with several anniversaries worthy of celebration. It is Canada's 150th anniversary, it's the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and Carleton University turns 75. It's also the 41st anniversary of the Halcyon condominium in west end Ottawa.

Early Days

The Halcyon was built in 1976, and marketed as a luxury condominium with an attractive range of modern amenities for the time, which were designed to attract buyers interested in a comfortable and convenient living environment. As taken from the documentation given to an original owner at the time of purchase, they were listed as, "Banquet sized party room with fully equipped kitchen, games room, two saunas with washrooms and showers, swimming pool and sun deck, guest suite with kitchen, private storage in basement, car wash facilities, hobby room, photographic darkroom, card room, lounge, condominium office/board room, and bicycle room." There was also a doorman for a period of time.

When considering whether or not to purchase a unit, one original resident recalls being told, "You'll never have a bigger backyard and you won't have to cut the grass!" She also recalls that indoor parking, dishwashers, and air conditioning were attractive amenities many other buildings did not offer.

The Halcyon was built by Urbandale Realty Corporation Limited, and was registered as Carleton Condominium Corporation No. 89 on November 16, 1976. At that time, 23 units had been sold. The first annual meeting was held on September 12, 1977, at which time there were 67 units represented in person and nine by proxy. Urbandale held 42 proxies but did not exercise the right to vote as Peter Burns, Vice President, said he was happy to leave all issues to the wishes of the owners for action by the newly elected Board of Directors.

The second annual general meeting was held on September 11, 1978. There were only five units unsold as of that date.

As of November, 1977, 108 units had been sold and by the end of that month 100 of them were occupied. The Board had retained Urbandale Realty as the Halcyon's Property Manager from the beginning, and that relationship went on very happily until 1996 when Urbandale took the business decision that they no longer would work in property management for condominiums. They were getting out of that area of business, and staying with what had always been the bulk of their business, rental units. It was the end of a long and very harmonious relationship between the Halcyon and Urbandale Property Managers. There are many long time residents who still speak glowingly of Urbandale's Vice-President, Peter Burns. He attended the annual general meetings every year, something residents very much appreciated.

The 20-year relationship with Urbandale Realty as the Halcyon's property manager had broader benefits for the building than is immediately obvious. When compared with many condominiums of similar age, the Halcyon is in better condition because it has been so well maintained over the years. Urbandale have always had an excellent reputation for managing their buildings well. They followed schedules for regular maintenance of equipment and structures; the approach was proactive, not reactive, unlike the way many condominiums are managed. The Halcyon further benefitted by being able to draw from experienced and competent contractors Urbandale worked with when work was required, this helped them ensure work was well done.

Good Fortune with Special Assessments

The Halcyon has had only two special assessments in its history, with the two totaling less than \$4,000 per unit. In 2011 there was a special assessment for the sum of \$450,000 to supplement contributions to the reserve fund. Also in 2011 a special assessment in the amount of \$23,800 was levied. It was voted on and approved by the residents, and was done to pay for the automatic door operators on the doors to the parking garage.

Given the special assessment nightmares faced by many condominium owners, Halcyon owners have been fortunate. Years of solid financial management helped balance the bumps that did take place along the way.

Condo Boards

Not all decisions taken by condo boards over the years proved popular with all residents. The effects were enduring, and still affect the condo community today. There were two occasions in the building's history when boards chose not to increase condo fees, despite several residents expressing concern about the soundness of that decision. It may have been well intended to give owners "A break" but it was definitely shortsighted. At the end of these periods, as was probably inevitable, fairly substantial increases in condo fees had to be levied to bring finances back in order. A decision that still brings ire to many long time residents is the one taken by a board not to purchase the parcel of land on McEwen Avenue, beside the small mall. Many residents were strongly in favour of the Halcyon acquiring the land to expand the parking for the building, and to make access to the building easier, but the board decided against it.

Committees and Activities

While a good Board of Directors is essential, it's the supportive work of various committees that contributes much to the quality of life in any successful condominium. Over the years the Halcyon has fairly consistently enjoyed having a strong core of residents for whom "Getting involved and getting it done" was second nature.

Many committees have existed over the years. The Halcyon has also had a newsletter on and off over the years, at some times being produced by the property management companies, and at other times being written by resident volunteers. The first newsletter was produced in May, 1977, and the issue was titled, "Bits and pieces."

Many aspects of society were quite different 40 years ago, including what was considered "proper" dress, and proper social deportment. Then as now, appearances mattered, but styles have changed. The Halcyon attracted many professional owners, as well as a large number of retired military personnel in its early days. Some say the formality and structure associated with the military in particular, certainly was present at the time.

An example of that is a rule that seems incomprehensible today but was stated in newsletter No. 5, October, 1977. Under the heading General, it reads, "The exercise equipment has been installed in the hobby room. If dressed for a workout (sneakers, sweatshirt or gym suit) please use the door by the stairwell rather than the main lobby."

An original owner recalls residents being asked not to come downstairs to the lobby to pick up mail, etc. unless fully dressed, no dressing gowns, no curlers in your hair! Imagine such things being in place today!

The initial committees established in 1977 were Finance Committee, Social and Recreation Committee, and a Fire and Safety Committee. New committees have been added, names have changed over the years, and various committees have gone, come back, etc. Much depends on needs as well as interest and initiative of residents.

Finance Committee

The Finance committee ceased operating in 1991, when condominium legislation mandated the use of Reserved Fund Studies to ensure condominiums were adequately funding their buildings for future expenses. According to Section 36 of the Condominium Act, condo corporations must collect from the owners amounts which are reasonably expected to provide sufficient funds for major repair and replacement of the common elements and assets of the corporation.

Social Committee

The Social Committee got started, and has been the one committee that has never been challenged to recruit new members. From the first, "Get to know each other" wine and cheese party held in November 1977, (where the surplus of \$20.18 was added to the "Party Room Revenue" account) to the present they have consistently held the same events over the years. Seems Halcyonites like their coffee parties! Coffee parties, St. Patrick's dinners, monthly TGIFs, Christmas dinners (catered since 1993), Spring Fling, BBQ's.

Assorted Activities

Apart from activities planned and run by the Social Committee, there are many other things organized by individual residents, such as Stitch n' Bitch Monday afternoons, exercise classes throughout the week, a seasonal walking group, and movies nights. There are weekly bridge and euchre nights. Most activities have small but dedicated numbers of attendees. For some of the Halcyon's senior residents their attendance at these activities provides a social life in the building, and is a big reason cited for their enjoyment of living at the Halcyon.

A "Put and Take" area established near the recycle/garbage area in the parking garage gives residents a place they can leave items that are in good working order, and that they perhaps no longer want or need. If a neighbour wants or can use the item, it's found a new home and been kept out of landfill.

In the library, residents regularly pass on their various magazine subscriptions which are then enjoyed over and over by others, read and returned for the the next person to peruse. It's a wonderful communal way to share among residents.

Grounds and Gardening Committee

There are wonderful grounds at the Halcyon, with a very generous amount of space, particularly when compared to newer condominiums. Greenery is all around, with the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway accessible just steps away. Mud Lake is an easy 10-minute stroll. Sunset walks along the riverside pathways are enjoyed by many.

Many hard working people have toiled on the grounds over the years. May be hard to believe, but at its inception, the committee looked after the lawns, shrubs, and the flower gardens. Several men cut and watered the lawns and planted and weeded the flower gardens. The row of cedars on the east side of the parking lot was planted the second year. The young trees were purchased at the Byward Market, transported to the site, and planted by residents. A few years later the care of the lawns was turned over to a commercial company. At one time Fines Flowers was contracted to water all plants and trees in the building.

In 2016 the gardens were lovely, with no shortage of residents and passersby stopping to comment and enjoy the various flowers and plants. However, the past number of years interested resident gardening volunteers have dwindled, resulting in the disbanding of the Gardening Committee in 2017. The same thing happened in 1995 when the committee disbanded due to lack of volunteers and interest. It was a number of years before a few residents who love gardening started it up again. Perhaps committed volunteer gardeners will volunteer in the future. Time will tell.

Donations made by residents

Residents have made several generous donations to the community over the years, including the tree (nearest the sidewalk) that is decorated with lights for the holiday season. It was donated by a resident in memory of her husband. Another resident donated the piano in the party room. There's a park bench in the back garden area that was donated in memory of a well-respected resident who died. The initiative to install it was led by a resident and contributed to by several residents. A resident and his wife contributed a Cabot rose bush which was planted outside the east side pool fence a few years ago.

Halcyon's own Urban Myth Debunked

There is an urban myth at the Halcyon, a story that's been told over the years. Many residents have heard it, and only recently the actual facts have come to light. The myth can now be put to rest. The story goes that McDonald Homes was the original builder of the Halcyon, and that they went bankrupt as the build was at the 7th floor. It was said that Urbandale Realty Corporation bought the building, took over and completed the building. Part of the story is that the original building had been planned for fewer floors, therefore two elevators were all that were required, and when Urbandale took over they wanted to add more floors, but couldn't then change the fact there were two elevators, not three - the story held that a building with 20 stories should have three elevators, with one designated for service purposes.

It's a great story, but very little of it is true. McDonald Homes did originally own the site, and they had submitted the plans and received the necessary permits from the city. They chose not to proceed, and Urbandale purchased the site, effectively taking over the existing plans, which meant no reapplication was required, enabling them to start building right away. Had they chosen to make changes the process would have easily taken a year, perhaps more. It was a simple business decision that made sense, and the Halcyon was started. Urbandale had already built the nearby Northwest One building, they were familiar with the area, and while their model designs were typically a bit larger, it was seen as a good project for them and all involved were pleased with the outcome.

As as for the third elevator - again - complete myth. There was never any requirement or thought of putting a third elevator in the Halcyon. The Code, then as now, is a simple formula that dictates the number of elevators that must be put in a building, and at 20 floors the number is two, not three. Much as waiting for an elevator frustrates residents, waits are not lengthened because, "There should have been another elevator in the building." (As told by Peter Burns, Urbandale Realty Vice President, retired)

Sense of Community at the Halcyon

People like to socialize with those they know. Until quite recently, condominiums at the Halcyon were seldom publicly advertised for sale because units were sold by word of mouth or a notice on the bulletin board. The residents wanted to have friends, family, and people they knew join them in sharing what they felt was a great place to live. Several people bought whatever unit came available, just to get into the building. Many then moved within the building to other units they preferred as they became available.

Things change over time, the condominium market is much more competitive, and people use realtors a lot more now. Bay Ward has the highest concentration of seniors in Ottawa, and the Halcyon building has been a reflection of the statistics. That has started to change, a large shift has been underway in recent

years and will continue as a larger portion of Halcyon owners continue to seek more supportive housing options than a condominium environment is designed and able to provide. One 86-year-old resident remarked emphatically, "Yes, there are seniors living here, but please don't call it a Senior's Residence!" Most readily acknowledge new residents with a wider range of demographics is what the building needs for renewed energy. There's more of a mix of age groups in 2017 than has been in the past at the Halcyon.

The Halcyon in 2017 Looking Forward

In 2017, the Halcyon condominium, like its surrounding neighbourhood is in transition. Refurbishment of the hallways, lobby, and several rooms on the ground floor will give a current design to the interior of the building. Nearby Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, originally Robert Magee's Farm, was called a "Field of Dreams" in the 1970's as industrious plans were being made for the development of the land. Interestingly, it is being seen in the same light again in 2017, as the mall's owner, RioCan has started holding open houses to seek input from the community asking what they'd like to see there when the site is redeveloped. There's a sense of renewal, of excitement felt by many at the possibilities the future will bring to the area.

As the Light Rail project continues to work its way toward the west end, its impact will continue to be felt in the coming years. How LRT and the new transit corridor will impact the Halcyon, its property values, etc. is not yet known, but certainly many think it will have a positive impact.

The condo boom of the past decade has in part been driven by Canadians who want to live closer to where they work, as well as cultural and environmental backlash against suburban sprawl, with its commuter traffic and car-induced smog. It's a very different environment and world than when condominiums first came to Canada in 1969.

It's often said the only constant in the world is change. Change can be many different things to people - exciting, frightening, something to go along with, and something to fight against. For the past 41 years the Halcyon condominium building has prided

itself on having a friendly, supportive sense of community that extends to all residents. Many new owners have commented the building, "Just felt right", or that, "People smile in the elevators and say hello." As change continues to take place, it is hoped that positivity remains while the community moves forward facing its challenges as it always has, and enjoying 40 more years of quality condominium living for all its residents.

Happy 41st Anniversary to the Halcyon!