



REAL ESTATE

MID SUMMER 2011

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LBIRealEstateNews.com

A Newsletter for our LBI Rental Homeowners

SAND DOLLARS

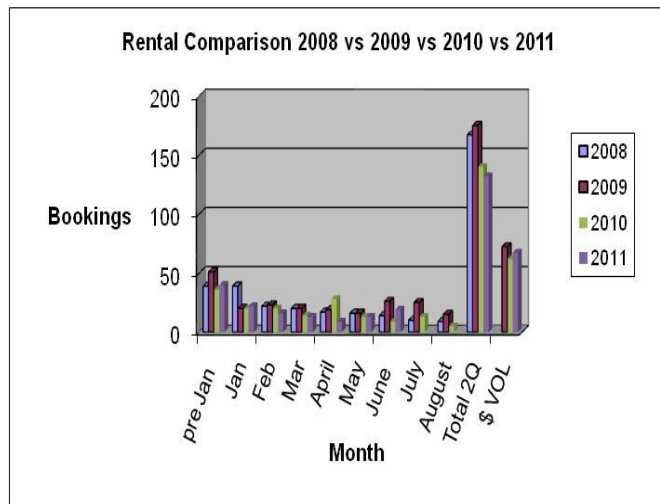
Rental Newsletter

## 2011 Rental Season

We were a little touch and go this year as the chart below shows. We all know the winter weather was rough and kept the traditional guest who prefers to come down and personally look away during the early months of 2011. March and April which should be our 'make up' months didn't happen. Japan's earthquake and Libya's civil unrest seemed to put everyone on hold. This

company has never experienced as quiet a month as April. It was literally like someone turned the Island lights off and no one came to visit, not personally or via internet. We discussed in the last Newsletter that we decided to work toward a hoped for resurgence and put 14 of our rental properties on HomeAway Internet Site. Our target date was to be up and running prior to Memorial Day Weekend. We succeeded and

we experienced a very good June booking rate. We booked almost 50% more than the month of June 2010. We are hoping those last minute inquiries will continue to come in and make July more productive as well. Overall, word on the street is that rentals are down, although homes with top notch amenities and maintenance programs are doing very well. The tenant can be selective and is, they seek the best deals on the best homes.



These numbers are based on our own rental book. However, the trends, in our opinion, are consistent with the overall LBI rental market. As you can see we came on strong pre season with our repeat business then went down with weather and world problems. Made a nice comeback in the month of June. We are only slightly behind last year bookings (6%) and interestingly - ahead in \$ Volume as we booked higher value rentals this year.

## Gotta Do's During the 2011 Rental Season

Yes, your guests are checking in and you think maybe it's time for you to sit back and enjoy your summer. Well, to avoid those pesky phone calls from your Realtor here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ If you get any last minute rentals, don't forget to inform your cleaning service.
- ✓ If you book any time for yourself or friends, call your Realtor prior to booking or showing up. They may have a rental in process.
- ✓ Be sure to remind your cleaning service that if they encounter any reportable guest problems to call the renting agency from the house so they may come out immediately and assess the situation.
- ✓ Be sure to check in with your cleaning service after each change over to determine if there are any house problems that need to be repaired or replaced. If so, inform your Realtor so they may tell the next tenant of the situation and the coming resolution.
- ✓ If you get a chance, it may be a good idea about half way through the rentals to visit your property to see if anything needs to be replaced or repaired and do some straightening up of those items the cleaning service can not get to during the hectic change-over time.

## Hospitality Gift Bags

Perhaps, many of you wonder what we do this time of the year besides check in our summer visitors. Well, there is a lot that goes into having a smooth check in. For starters, five weeks prior to check-in we begin to email or call each guest and remind them of their check in date and the amount due. We encourage them to take advantage of our 'Express Check-In' program. They can send us a personal check now with full payment and breeze in and out on the day of check-in. Unfortunately, most don't take advantage right away. We often get personal checks barely two and a half weeks prior (after that we don't except personal), bank checks right before and some still prefer to bring cash or a bank check on the day of check-in. Therefore, our processing time remains the same, however, we can get most of our guests in and out and on their way to a great vacation sooner. We also field a lot of questions from our guests just prior to their check in. For example, the past few weeks we had a lot of anxious calls about the beach replenishment in Surf City .

Two weeks before, we send out the 'poem' posted next to this article. This year we started a new program to make our 'Goody Bags' more useful to our guests. Each year we all stuffed the bags with flyers and coupons local merchants dropped off. Often these could be found in other media and quite honestly we didn't think our tenants really cared to wade through all these flyers. The local Sandpaper covers most of this territory of things to do, buy or eat! So, we decided we would give them items to make their first few hours in the home just a bit easier. We filled the bag with: a roll of paper towels, toilet paper, 2 bars of soap, sanitary hand wipe, trash bag, kitchen wipe and a small lunch bag with snacks and candy and finally a bottle of cold water. This has been very well received so far with our guests are telling us they loved getting the poem and appreciate the 'goodies'. We hope this will be another reason to repeat their business with us and you next year.

We also have a brochure with trash collection information, helpful hints - those items over the years we learned caused problems but could be solved quickly, such as: do not turn up the refrigerator upon arrival, how to leave the home upon departure. We also give them a form they can return if they wish to reserve the home for the same time the following year. Lest not forget all the phone calls or visits we receive during their week's stay with questions or complaints. So, you can see that we are very busy over the next few months in anticipation of making our summer visitors vacation a memorable and happy one and making sure they want to come back again next year.

### WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!



In a very short time your GPS will exclaim, "Arrived at Destination!"  
And so will begin your Island stay of a week, or more duration.

When you arrive at our office, we will have a Hospitality Gift Bag  
with necessities and treats, so the first hour is not such a drag.

"I'm hungry" "I'm thirsty" "Are we there yet?" You'll have heard it all day  
But when you pick up the bag, the complaints will quickly fade away.

Finally, you pull up to your beach house, everyone tired and cranky,  
Somebody says 'I got to go', they are dancing and doing the hanky panky.

Reach for the bag, filled with many items to make sure you relax;  
Toilet paper & towels, hand soap & wipes, cold water & snacks.

Our way of saying 'Welcome to LBI' and have a wonderful stay  
And Thanks for choosing Sand Dollar Real Estate to show you the way!



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## PARTNER ON THE GOODY BAG ?

Do you like our idea of our Hospitality Goody Bag? We would like to put even more 'goodies' into this bag next year and wonder if you would be willing to contribute to the bag. Say we charge you \$10 for the contents & distribution of this bag along with a card that states the this bag is given as 'Compliments of the Owner'. We would be supplying the bag and some of the contents, we also shop & pack the bag. We would also advertise that this property offers a special 'Hospitality Goody Bag' from the homeowner so your property would stand out from the crowd. What do you think? Please let us know by emailing us at: SandDollaronLBI@att.net

Do you have suggestions of what else we could put into the bag?

# HomeAway Internet Rental Site

HomeAway threw us a curve ball this year. We were told that another LBI agency, 'Who Shall Remain Nameless', was off HomeAway. This agency had dumped all 700 of their rental properties on HomeAway in February. This more than doubled the number of overall postings for LBI. Not to be overshadowed, we spent considerable time fine tuning our properties -- adding descriptions, headlines, Virtual Tours, oodles of pictures, updating our calendars -- to get our properties higher ranking and attention. This became much more time consuming than anticipated. However, as we mentioned on Page 1 we received considerable inquiries and were able to turn many of these into bookings. We had 50% of our properties duplicated as well but ... we booked and they didn't. Goes to show a little extra work and attention goes a long way.

## Exclusive Programs for Our LBI Home Owners !

Online Market Evaluation	MarkeTrends Newsletter	LBI Neighborhood Tracker
 <p>(click on icon for more information)</p>	 <p>(click on icon for more information)</p>	 <p>(click on icon for more information)</p>
<p>Answer a few questions about your property and be emailed back a detailed report full of information about the LBI market, an analysis explaining your property's price range of value, detailed information about your competition for sale, under contract and recent sales. A must for every homeowner who wants to stay on top of their LBI investment.</p>	<p>Published 2 -3 times a year with the latest LBI market statistics, our 'Crystal Ball' forecast for the local sales and rental market, and other pertinent LBI information. Delivered electronically to your inbox. <b>Email us with your request to be put on our email distribution list.</b></p>	<p>Want to know what's happening to property values in your neighborhood? Initially, we will send you all properties currently for sale in your neighborhood. Thereafter, you will be automatically updated via email with any new listings, price and status changes for the same area of concentration.</p>

## Greetings from the Beach!

This has been another tough rental season, starting with uncooperative weather, economic uncertainties, and world crisis'. And nothing like starting off the season with the delayed beach project in Surf City gearing up - 24/7 with generators and lights as our first tenants were arriving! More about that later. As usual, perseverance and new marketing ideas finally began to take hold and bring back some hope. Our bookings increased with increased advertising and our guests checking in have had smiles on their faces. They truly enjoyed our poem and 'goody bag' and were looking forward to their summer vacation on LBI. And why not! LBI is beautiful, offering our summer

families a place to kick back, enjoy making family memories and going back home truly refreshed.

**Pat Sepanak**

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**P. S.** On June 28th, the final phase of the beach replenishment project for the north end of Surf City was completed, they will use the week after July 4th for removal of their equipment and minor beach repairs. This was poorly timed and I do not feel we or the public were very well informed of the changes and logistics of the operation.

Enough said our guests who were affected by and large handled the situation with understanding and we thank those owners who offered discounts. It was appreciated by all and went a long way towards showing good will towards their guests.

