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Condo owners at new Gateway Grand invited to call Mary

By Nancy Powell
Associate Editor

On Monday morning, a unit owner at the Gateway Grand needed to find someone to water his plants whenever he and his family are not there. He only had to ask one person, Mary Rice.

Rice knew of someone who could do the job of watering his plants for just a few dollars each week and she would make the arrangements. It was part of her job as the concierge at the 48th Street condominium that had its grand opening just a few weeks ago.

Each buyer at the Gateway Grand gets the concierge service at no additional charge and Rice is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The concierge service is known as Call on Jack and is available exclusively at The Carlyle Group properties, which are Park Place in Annapolis, City Palms in West Palm Beach, Fla., The Grand at Diamond Beach, N.J., Silo Point in Baltimore, and the Gateway Grand in Ocean City.

The job, Rice said, "is basically knowing how to solve everybody's problems all the time at a moment's notice."

Rice may be found at her desk in the Gateway Grand lobby or by phone. She has two cell phones with her at all times. "They can call me, day or night," she said.

Unit owners may also make their requests online at the www.callonjack.com Web site.

Rice's expertise is in knowing about the area's people, its restaurants, its decorators, its florists, its attractions, its events, its caterers and anything else the units owners might need. "I'm arranging it, not doing it," she said.

Her background as a bartender, real estate agent and rental agent gave her the knowledge of people and places along the resort coast. "I know this town like the back of my hand," said Rice, who moved to this area from Frederick in 1980.

Her years as banquet manager and event planner for the Carousel Hotel, marketing person for a District of Columbia bus company and owner of Delmarva Concierge gave her experience in event planning and knowing how to get a job done.

Prior to starting work in June, she had four days of training in New York City and she has a large binder of information about how to do her job. The friendliness, the approachability and the ability to put people at ease come naturally to her and were just what the concierge service wanted.

After someone asked about clamming, she took the family clamming off a private dock near 33rd Street. She and the family used their feet to find clams. They put them in a floating cooler and then took them back to the Gateway Grand, where they baked and ate them. "They had a blast," she said of the family.

The unit owners, many of whom already owned condominiums in Ocean City, want to experience the resort and "the nature of it," Rice said. To help them do that, she informs them of upcoming events such as Coast Day, Sunfest and Day at the Docks.

But whatever they want to do or wherever they want to go, she'll be ready to help.