

Paradise Region Gruppe Formation Circumstances: *What Happened with Everglades Region PCA?*

Board members and founding club members prefer to focus on the VERY positive aspects of forming a fun new club where Porsche enthusiasts can enjoy their cars and their Porsche friends in and near Collier County. We are not interested in club politics. However, we are constantly asked exactly what happened and why many of us are no longer at Everglades Region PCA events.

Paradise Region Gruppe was founded by a group of former Board Members and Presidents of Everglades Region PCA (including every single President in the history of Everglades Region PCA prior to Dave Noelken). The decision to start a whole new local club for Porsche enthusiasts in Collier County was not entered into lightly: starting whole a new club from the ground up is a big endeavor. However, given the events that transpired, and the lack of intervention from PCA National and the PCA Zone Rep, it was the only logical solution.

Here is what happened for those who want specifics. First, there were several years of campaigning & complaining behind the scenes by a small faction of members in the northern part of the region jockeying to move the club and the majority of events northward. This culminated in the May 2, 2019 "hostile takeover" of the Everglades Region PCA board. The coup was specifically planned over the course of 6-12 months prior. Here is the order of events:

- 1) In the spring of 2018, President Dave Noelken appointed his friend John Petracco to the board as "Member at Large," a new board position requiring no work.
- 2) In December 2018, Dave Noelken listed John Petracco as VP on the slate of officers voted on at the "annual meeting" which was actually the Everglades Region December 2018 holiday party.
 - There was never any nominating committee or any sort of vote by the board to list John Petracco as Vice President.
 - There was no means for a club member to vote any differently than the slate that Dave Noelken presented. The list of names was verbally read off by Dave and "all in favor say aye."
- 3) With John Petracco automatically in place as Vice President, Dave Noelken took the opportunity to quit his position of President in April 2019 – with absolutely no reason given.
- 4) As Vice President, John Petracco automatically became Interim President.
- 5) On the morning of a scheduled board meeting on Thursday May 2, at 8:30 AM John Petracco made a phone call to board members Chris and Jenny Branston. John Petracco advised Chris Branston that he is no longer on the board as his title was "Past President." John Petracco advised Chris Branston that Dave Noelken is now on the board in the role of "Past President." He went on to say that effective immediately Chris Branston was no longer a signatory on the Everglades Region bank account or involved with the board. On same phone call, John Petracco advised Jenny Branston (Rally Chair) that she was no longer on the board either and that she had been replaced by Dave Samyn as Rally Chair. Both Chris and Jenny were advised NOT to attend the board meeting that evening as they were no longer on the board. Contrary to what is

written in the Everglades Region PCA board meeting minutes of May 2, 2019, in fact the Branstons were NOT invited to continue to plan WOTY or other events for the club.

- 6) At 8:45 the same morning of May 2, 2019, John Petracco called Becky Grafer (Webmaster, Social Media and all around general communications) and advised her that she was no longer on the board and should not attend the board meeting that evening. Petracco stated that she was replaced with Carlos Ojeda, who would be handling Social Media and with Tom Stuart who would be Webmaster. Contrary to what is written in the Everglades Region PCA board meeting minutes of May 2, 2019, in fact she was NOT invited to continue to perform tasks for the club. *Note that at this time, per PCA protocol, Dave Noelken and John Petracco were already in possession of all passwords for club accounts (Survey Monkey, Gmail, Facebook, ClubReg, etc.) with the exception of Instagram, which was not transferrable having been built on Becky Grafer's personal and business credentials long ago.*
- 7) This was followed by the resignation of Blanche LeCausi, Secretary, who wanted no part of the toxic environment created by Dave Noelken and John Petracco. Blanche did not appreciate hostile emails from John Petracco indicating that board members would fall into line or be "immediately replaced." She also did not appreciate being told by John Petracco at the last minute that her home in Naples was "not appropriate for a board meeting" and that the meeting would be at John Petracco's office with no food or drinks (despite the fact that Blanche was already ready to host and had personally ordered non-refundable catered food). On May 2, after learning that Chris Branston, Jenny Branston and Becky Grafer were no longer part of the Everglades Region board, Blanche resigned as she no longer wanted to be part of it either.
- 8) After the May 2, 2019 phone calls to Chris and Jenny Branston & Becky Grafer, the location of the May 2, 2019 board meeting venue was changed again to a third location: Dave Noelken's home with pizza (and beer, a celebratory new feature!), where all board meetings were held since Dave Noelken took the office of President January 1, 2018 - a clear indication of the real reasoning behind Dave Noelken's so-called quitting.

With the political coup of May 2, 2019 - 4 hard-working contributors from the south end were off the Everglades Region PCA board for no good reason and replaced with 6 members from zip codes in Lee County up to North Fort Myers. This resulted in a board with 9 members from Lee County and 3 remaining from Collier County. 75%-25%, not an accurate representation of the club's membership.

After this event... the original founding members of Paradise Region Gruppe got together multiple times to figure out what to do and contacted PCA National repeatedly. The silence was deafening as PCA National prefers not to be involved in the political issues at the regional level. Again, forming a new club was not something anyone went into lightly.

The bottom line is that open hostility and political drama do not belong in a car club. We are all here to share our love of Porsche with our fellow Porsche-aficionado friends and to have fun doing it. It seems that the years of moving Everglades Region PCA towards Fort Myers and

further north have resulted in a real void for Porsche-lovers around Collier County. We have been amazed by the incredible response and support of our fledgling club. Six months after being founded in June 2019, Paradise Region Gruppe has 175 paid members. We have genuinely enjoyed being able to unapologetically hold events in Collier County and the ease and friendliness with which board members operate Paradise Region Gruppe. We are all on the same team and eager to work for the good of the club.

And the best part? **Paradise Region Gruppe has 100% member participation since participation in club events is actually the only reason to join!** Every member has participated in club events- a few who have been unable to so far are registered to attend at least one event in the near future.

We have many dear friends and members who live in Lee County as well – we welcome these folks with open arms and are happy to have them. Don't worry, we will do activities in Lee County as well along with the road trips everyone loves.

We put the facts of what transpired in writing for two reasons: 1) to correct false narratives that are being disseminated and 2) because folks returning for season want specifics but this is really not what Paradise Region Gruppe board members want to discuss at our events – we want to enjoy the cars, talk about our common interests and have fun.

We are so excited to share our love of Porsche here in Paradise!

Happy motoring and we'll see you soon!

-The Paradise Region Gruppe Founders & Board of Directors