

The Casta Courier

Official Publication of Casta del Sol Homeowners Association www.castadelsol.com

Library Committee Advances Technologically

By Debra Friedman, photos by Jeff McCoy

The Library Committee is a prime example of new advances benefiting our residents. Pat Vitti has been the Chair of the Library Committee for 10 years and is always welcoming to those who want to join. The Vice Chair and Secretary is Sheila Kessler and the Treasurer is Linda Galloway. Linda is also the “software” guru. There are currently 31 members including three men. Some have been with the committee for more than 10 years, with the veterans including Libby Victoria, Pat White, Mo Caywood, and Mary Kay Crowley. Within the past six months, three new members have joined. The non-voting members, who do not attend monthly meetings, are considered “Friends of the Library.”

It is apparent that the Library Committee serves the needs of senior residents albeit staying abreast of technological changes. When the pandemic was underway in 2020, the library was closed but there was the “Home Bound” delivery service. In addition to continuing a home-delivery service for those physically unable to visit, there have

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23 of the members of the Library Committee

Blooming with Passion: Celebrating Volunteerism in the Heritage Garden

By Parizad Sethna, photo by Jeff McCoy



Heritage Garden Club Volunteers

April showers bring not only May flowers, but also a time to celebrate the spirit of giving: April 20 is national Volunteer Recognition Day. This occasion reminds us that countless individuals volunteer, such as the green-thumbed angels tending our Heritage Garden, weaving together a tapestry of beauty through their selfless dedication.

The Heritage Garden, was once a four-acre humble patch of mostly weeds surrounded by an asphalt path. It has blossomed into a vibrant testament of collective action thanks to the vision of our resident volunteers. Its transformation began in 1991 with a dream for beauty and the unwavering spirit of volunteer residents. Years of sweat and devotion have nurtured this haven, enriching countless lives. Today, thanks to the continued dedication of club members,

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April: Don't Be a Fool

By Evelyn Rothert

Happy fourth month of the year. April derives its name from the Latin word *aperit*, which means “to open.” The sun warms the earth, awakening the plants and blossoms to “open” bright and new. How true. I have jasmine and hyacinths starting to bloom. It is

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2024 Election – General Notice

The Election Operating Rules for 2024 are available for member review on the Casta del Sol website: www.castadelsol.com. Login with your Powerstone account, then select the Homeowners drop-down menu, and then select *Election* and then *2024 Election*.

Election: Member Review of Association Voter Eligibility List

California Civil Code Section 5105 specifies that the Association shall have a Voter List of those members who are eligible to vote in the annual election. The *Voter Eligibility List* shall include name, voting power, and either the physical address of the voter’s separate interest, the parcel number, or both. The mailing address for the ballot shall be listed on the *Voter List* if it differs from the physical address of the voter’s separate interest or if only the parcel number is used. The Association shall permit members to verify the accuracy of their individual information for at least 30 days before the ballots are distributed. The *Voter List* is scheduled to be finalized on May 1 and approved by the Board on May 3 as the final *Eligibility List* for the June 27, 2024 Election, and used by the printer to mail ballots to each eligible member. To allow for the required 30-day member review, the initial *Voter List* will be available for members to review their individual record in the Association Administration Building during normal business hours beginning Monday, April 1.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Message

Linda Silverman,
President



Who, How, What and Why is Casta del Sol

The Board of Directors is the governing body of our community. Members are elected to the Board to set policy, oversee management, and protect the interest of the homeowners. Each Board Member signs an oath of office to:

- faithfully uphold the Declaration of Covenants, Condition and Restrictions, the By-laws and all rules and regulations of the Association.
- never discuss confidential Association information with any person outside of Association Management and other members of the Board.
- uphold all sections of the Code of Conduct, Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy.
- treat members, non-members, staff, committee members and fellow Directors with respect and dignity at all times.
- work to the best of your ability to provide effective and responsible leadership to the members you are privileged to represent.

Casta del Sol is a \$13.7M community with 1,927 homes and one vote per household. We have 1,927 homeowners who are assessed monthly to provide the working capital to cover all current and anticipated expenses. There are more than 3,000 residents living in our community and the Board of Directors work in the best interests of all. However, we cannot always satisfy all.

Management provides financial and general management duties required by an entity of this magnitude and works as needed with our legal group.

There are a number of sitting Committees and Ad Hoc Committees advising the Board of Directors, who utilize approved Rules and Regulations, CC&R, Policies, and Charters of the Committees to make sure all are in compliance with Homeowners Association responsibilities and preparing for current and long-term upkeep and enhancement of our community.

I am proud of our volunteers that share their time, energy, and knowledge working for the betterment of our community.

Manager's Report

Marilyn Smith,
General Manager



Role of a Manager

A manager has two primary responsibilities: to carry out policies set by the Board of Directors and to manage the Association's daily operations.

- While the manager works closely with the board, he or she is an advisor—not a member of the Board.
- The management company is responsible for monitoring contractors' performance. Contractors are responsible for supervising their own personnel. If you have a problem with a contractor, notify the appropriate staff member, who will forward your concerns to either the applicable vendor or the Board of Directors.
- The management company inspects the community regularly, but even an experienced person will not catch everything. Your help is essential. If you know about a potential maintenance issue, please report it to the appropriate staff team member.
- The manager, nor the management company, sets policy. If you disagree with a policy or rule, please send a letter or email to the Board in care of the General Manager to ensure the full Board receives the communication. Individual Directors cannot make decisions, nor act, on behalf of the corporation/homeowners association.
- The manager has a broad range of expertise, but they are not a consultant to the residents. Neither are they an engineer, architect, attorney, or accountant. The manager may offer opinions, but they cannot provide technical advice in areas where he or she is not qualified.
- The manager will not get involved in quarrels you might be having with your neighbor. The manager will assist in enforcing the Association's rules and regulations.



Casta del Sol HOA - Board of Directors -

President:	Linda Silverman	dirsilverman71@yahoo.com
Vice President:	John Nethercutt	j.nethercutt.bod@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Susan Ashby	ashbycasta@gmail.com
Secretary:	Jayne Freed	jfreedcds@gmail.com
Directors:	Mary Kay Crowley	marykaycrowley@yahoo.com
	Phyllis Foglesong	phyllisfoglesong@gmail.com
	Karen Warren	kwarrencds@gmail.com

For *Courier* staffing contact information, please see page 26.

The Casta Courier is published monthly by the Casta del Sol Homeowners Association. The mailing address is 27651 Casta del Sol Drive, Mission Viejo, Calif. 92692. Deadline for submitting material for the next month is the 6th of each month.

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Landscape Notes

Bill Thornton,
Landscape Services
Coordinator



Bees

There are nearly 20,000 known species of bees in the world. The best-known bee species is the European honeybee and the one we see most frequently in Casta del Sol. Bees play an important role in pollinating plants and are the major type of pollinator in ecosystems that contain flowering plants. It is estimated that one-third of the human food supply depends on insect pollination, most of which is accomplished by bees, especially the European honeybee.

We find bees in Casta del Sol occasionally building hives in valve boxes, controller cabinets or other equipment they find habitable. Swarms of bees are also sighted in trees and shrubs. Swarms are bees resting with the queen until the right moment when they all fly away in search of a permanent location.

Bee removal on owners' property is not in the landscape contract, but workorders@oclm.com does take calls regarding bee locations. Only bees in the common area landscape are evaluated for removal. Bees in and around homes are the responsibility of the owner.

We take a measured response to bee reports in Casta del Sol. Some calls come in when bees are simply flying from flower to flower in bloom-

ing trees, like California Peppers or shrubs, which we cannot prevent. Even when we contract to have the bees removed from boxes by a licensed pest control company, bees will continue to return to the same spot using pheromones, or scent, left by the others trying to rebuild the hive and they will be present for days.

I would like to introduce the new Landscape Administrative Assistant, Cindy Van Patten. Cindy's direct phone number and her email address are listed below. For landscape requests, please call O'Connell Landscape at (800) 339-1106 or email O'Connell at workorders@oclm.com.

Bill Thornton,
bthornton@powerstonepm.com,
(949) 455-4672

Cindy Van Patten, Landscape
Administrative Assistant,
cvanpatten@powerstonepm.com,
(949) 215-3146

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ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

**The Casta del Sol Board meeting minutes are available within two weeks following each meeting on the CdS website, castadelsol.com.

Board Meeting Highlights March 7, 2024

The Board:

- Accepted the Delinquency Report through February 12, 2024. Approved recording liens on three accounts that are in arrears.
- Approved staff representatives to attend all Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Committee meetings.
- Approved the officers of the Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Committee: Chairperson, Jodie Trainer; Co-Chair, Barry Silverman; and Secretary, Shelly Lethiot.
- Approved the appointment of Priscilla Tripp as Chair and Fred Wilmott as Vice Chair of the Architectural Committee.
- Approved plumbing repair and tree removal at 27871 Espinoza consisting of relining of the pipe by Santa Margarita Plumbing and removal of a tree by W.B. Starr for a combined cost of \$7,270.
- Approved sending the charters of the Architectural, Facilities, Greenbelt, and Traffic Committees for legal review to ensure the charters do not conflict with the CC & Rs or with each other.
- Approved replacement of five umbrella covers and poles at Rec Ctr 2 pool and spa area from Amazon.com for a not to exceed cost of \$1,160.
- Approved giving read-only access for the Treasurer and the Board President to the Association's bank accounts.
- Approved re-strapping of 20 chairs and eight chaise lounges at Rec Ctr 2 by Patio Guys for a not to exceed cost of \$4,367.78.
- Approved a temporary hold on the installation of artificial turf by homeowners in Casta del Sol until the Greenbelt and the Ad Hoc Policies and Procedures Committee can update those necessary changes to the Policies and Standards as well as the relevant changes by the City of Mission Viejo based on Senate Bill 676.
- Approved the proposal from Association Reserves for Reserve Studies for the fiscal years 2025, 2026, and 2027 for a total cost of \$9,000 for a three-year period.
- Approved the ancillary price list from three vendors including W.B. Starr, O'Connell Landscape, and Great Scott Tree Service.
- Approved accepting credit card payments for Social Committee events, purchases of transponders, and architectural fees. Payments to include a \$2 processing fee.
- Approved having committee recommendations provided to the Board of Directors to include the Scope of Work documents.

The next regular meetings of the Board of Directors will be **Thursday, April 4 at 9 a.m. and Thursday, April 18 at 1 p.m. in the Vista Room.**

Fran Morgan, Courier staff

**For a copy of the February 2024 Treasurer's Report, refer to castadelsol.com, Recreation Center bulletin boards, and/or eblasts.

February Treasurer's Report

Total HOA Assets as of February 29, 2024: \$8,496,066

• **Operating Cash: \$2,392,249**

This includes \$960,485 in checking, \$328,937 invested in a money market account, and \$1,100,000 invested in CDs. We invested in one CD in February for \$200,000 at 5.05%.

• **Reserve Cash: \$5,428,808**

This includes \$1,039,674 invested in a money market account and \$4,400,000 invested in CDs. Four CDs matured this month and we received \$21,579 in interest. We invested in two 12-month CDs, one 18-month CD, and two 24-month CDs at interest rates from 4.75% to 5.1%. Also included in the balance is interest receivable of \$51,858 and Due to Operating of \$62,725. Reserve expenditures were \$92,184 which included house painting, concrete repair, patio cushions at Rec Ctr 1 and a new golf cage at Rec Ctr 2.

• **Capital Improvement Cash: \$385,571**

This balance includes \$41,782 Due to Operating. The Capital Improvement expenditures for February were \$3,944 which included truck accessories and display cases for Rec Ctr 1.

• **Outstanding Accounts Receivable (A/R): \$96,740**

This is an increase from January. Allowance for Bad Debts is \$24,720. Allowance for Bad Debts is an estimate of receivables that will not be paid. The Allowance is adjusted quarterly (March, June, September, December) and is equal to outstanding receivable balances over 91 days.

The following are highlights of our Operating expenses as of February 29:

- **General & Administration** has a YTD positive variance of \$20,989 due to low activity in several accounts.
- **Land Maintenance** has a YTD positive variance of \$104,506. Due to the rain, projects like planting and irrigation repairs have been delayed.
- **Recreation, Repairs and Maintenance, and Traffic Control** have a combined positive variance of \$6,593.
- **Utilities** has a YTD positive variance of \$32,687 at this time.

Treasurer's Comments:

The YTD surplus is \$336,162, but the YTD budget to actual surplus is \$173,258. The surplus is largely due to positive variances in Land Maintenance and Utilities. The amounts reflected in the February financial statements are not final. 2023 year-end adjustments will be reflected in the March financials. You will receive the final 2023 audited financial statements in April.

This Treasurer's Report as of February 29, 2024, is being submitted to the Board of Directors for their review and acceptance. Once accepted by the Board, this report will be posted.

*Respectfully submitted by Susan G. Ashby,
Casta del Sol Board of Directors, Treasurer*

Organic Waste Collection

The green carts are for green waste and food waste. This includes yard trimmings and a variety of food wastes that are listed on the flyer that came with the green carts. In the letter that was also mailed to our residents, it was noted that you can line the green cart with food-soiled paper, like napkins, *or may use a paper bag to hold the food waste and place the bag, with the waste, into the green cart.* This will allow you to help keep the bottom of the cart clean from spoiling food. **Note:** Paper bags must not have any wax lining on it so that it will decompose along with the waste. In addition, you may want to keep your food waste bag in your refrigerator during the hot months to avoid any decomposing waste smells. Otherwise, you can place it in the small waste pails provided by Waste Management.

Phishing

Email and text message scams, known as phishing, can be difficult to distinguish from legitimate messages. They may impersonate a reputable company and include an urgent request for you to update your information, secure your account, verify your identity, or confirm a transaction. You may be prompted to call a phone number, sign on to a fraudulent website, or respond with personal or account information. Protect yourself by: not clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding to unexpected emails or text messages from suspicious or unknown senders; not sharing your online banking password; and not signing on to your account from a link in a suspicious message. Always access a company's website by using a reputable search engine or typing the entire URL into your browser.

If you receive an unexpected request for information from your bank or credit card vendor, verify it by calling the number on the back of your debit or credit card.

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Library Committee Advances Technologically

Continued from page 1

been additional changes including resident library cards, a computerized system called "Handy Library Manager" (HLM) for tracking books, and a reserve program for newly purchased books.

Researching is a key feature of the Library Committee to stay abreast of the genres, authors, and print size of books that are checked out. Typically, each month there are about 20 to 25 new books ordered for the library, including large print and audio books. Through the free give-away cart, older books are provided to residents, or donated to the Mission Viejo Library.

When Pat assumed the role of chair there were about 10 members. Libby states, "we have a growing committee because it is a well-run, effective, and efficient committee. We are a friendly committee and enjoy one another." The Library Committee has different assignments allotted including: ordering books, working with the database, stocking the books, culling the books and DVDs, recycling books, organizing and purging puzzles, handling library reservation requests, ordering supplies, etc.

The Library Committee is clearly a dedicated group of residents who love to read and share that love with the community



From left, Chair Pat Vitti and Vice Chair Sheila Kessler

Join Us In Welcoming Our New Residents - April 2024



Ackerman, CathyUnlisted.....(858) 357-7321
Del Mar, CA

Fitzgerald, Ron & Deborah.....27746 Via Sarasate(949) 275-8163
San Clemente, CA

Goodell, Brian & Vicki.....Unlisted.....(949) 842-8328
Mission Viejo, CA

Pardee, Shandor27651 Via Rodrigo..... Unlisted
Santa Ana, CA

Robinson, Victoria & Cleand....28137 Alva.....(909) 374-0614
Silverado, CA

Senters, Wendy & Jesse.....23313 El Greco(949) 701-7681
.....(949) 702-3361
Mission Viejo, CA

Williams, Cathryn.....Unlisted.....(949) 439-8150
Laguna Hills, CA



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1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Offered at \$875,000



27862 Torroba
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Offered at \$900,000



28286 Via Zarza
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1203 Square Feet
Juautia Floorplan
Offered at \$890,000



28132 Via Bello
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1114 Square Feet
Juautia Floorplan
Offered at \$730,000
IN ESCROW

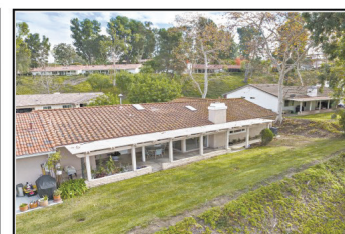


27701 Via Rodrigo
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1503 Square Feet
Juautia Floorplan
Offered at \$875,000
IN ESCROW



27881 Calle Valdes
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1188 Square Feet
Blanca Floorplan
SOLD for \$700,000
Sold on 3/20/2024

Arshi Team Have Sold Over 350 Homes In Casta Del Sol



23541 Via Ventura
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1563 Square Feet
Juautia Floorplan
SOLD for \$915,000
Sold on 3/8/2023



28272 Yanez
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Offered at \$1,050,000
Sold on 2/26/2024



28078 Espinonza
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1410 Square Feet
Maya Floorplan
SOLD for \$770,000
Sold on 2/9/2024



23846 Villena
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1279 Square Feet
Violeta Floorplan
SOLD for \$700,000
Sold on 12/28/2023



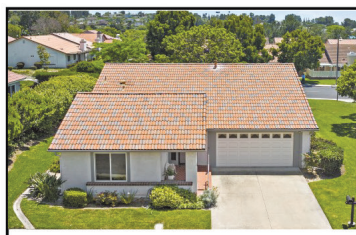
28041 Calle Valdes
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1099 Square Feet
Blanca Floorplan
SOLD for \$680,000
Sold on 12/21/2023



27856 Torroba
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,503 square feet
Rosa Floorplan
SOLD for \$875,000
Sold on 10/25/2023



28485 Barbosa
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1,503 Square Feet
Custom Rosa Floorplan
SOLD for \$1,015,000
Sold on 9/28/2023



23831 Villena
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1503 Square Feet
Rosa Floorplan
SOLD for \$855,000
Sold on 8/11/2023



28376 Zarza
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
SOLD for \$770,000
Sold on 7/7/2023



28126 Via Enriquez
3 Bedrooms, 2 baths
1346 Square Feet
Lolita Floorplan
SOLD for \$859,000
Sold on 6/9/2023



23901 Villena
3 Bedrooms, 2 baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
SOLD for \$750,000
Sold on 5/9/2023

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Blooming with Passion: Celebrating Volunteerism in the Heritage Garden

Continued from page 1

and with monetary and recycling donations, the garden flourishes, offering residents a peaceful escape.

As you stroll through the garden, a symphony of sound surrounds you. The rhythmic crunch of shovels breaking soil mingles with the cheerful chatter of neighbors exchanging stories. The melodic chirping of birdsongs mingles with the raking of leaves. Butterflies dancing on the blossoms and the calming sound of afternoon breeze rustling through the leaves transports you into a fantasy world.

Volunteer Recognition Day serves as a call to action. Opportunities to help the garden to continue to bloom are abundant. You do not need a green thumb to assist us. Let us be inspired by the dedication of our club members. You can contribute your unique skills and time to weave your own threads into the tapestry of a better tomorrow. The next time you encounter a helper in the garden, take a moment to stop and express your gratitude. Their time and energy makes a world of difference, transforming not just the garden, but our community as a whole.

Do You Need a Copy of the *Casta Courier*?

If the *Casta Courier* was not delivered to your home, or it was in too poor condition to read, there are copies available each month outside of the Rec Ctr 1 office.

Also, the *Casta Courier* can be found on the castadelsol.com website more easily than ever before. Scroll down to the middle of the home page and click on the *Casta Courier* box. You will not only find the current issue of the newsletter, but also issues from previous years.

Election: Return of Ballots and Ballot Tabulation

The Board of Directors plans to approve the final *Voter Eligibility List*, the *Annual Meeting Ballot*, and *Annual Meeting Notice* on May 3. The Voter List, Ballot, and Member Notice will then be sent to a printer for preparation and mailing to all members of record. The Election Calendar calls for the ballots to arrive no later than May 23 to permit a 30-day period for voting before the annual June 27, 2024, *Annual Meeting*. California Civil Code Section 511(b) specifies that the Association shall provide members with a general notice concerning the date, time, and location for the return of ballots, and the date, time, and location where the ballots will be tabulated at least 30 days before the ballots are distributed. In accordance with this requirement, the necessary general notice will be posted on the Casta del Sol website and Bulletin Board no later than April 19.

April: Don't Be a Fool

Continued from page 1



also believed that the month is named after the Greek goddess, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty.

April Fool's Day may have originated in France where New Year's Day was celebrated during medieval times on April 1. When Gregory XIII changed it back to January 1 in 1582, many people in rural areas did not make the change for several years. The more sophisticated people living in the city thought them fools for this reason, and the country folk were taken advantage of because of it.

Another origination story takes place around the fifth century. Anglo-Saxons referred to April as *Oster-monath* or *Eostre-monath*, a reference to the goddess Eostre, whose feast was celebrated during the month. A monk from the Northumbrian monastery believed this gave root to the word *Easter*, which is most often observed during the month of April.

Have a lovely month. Time to prank your kids and color some eggs.



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Residents Are Asking

Q. Why does the Casta del Sol Board of Directors consist of seven members?

A. In the "Restated By-Laws of the Casta del Sol HOA" it states that the "Board shall consist of seven members" and there is an option to increase that number to nine if certain requirements are met. An odd number is advised in case there are ties during a vote taken by the Board.

Q. What happens when a Board member resigns or leaves the Board before the end of a term?

A. The Casta del Sol By-Laws state that "any vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the directors remaining in office..." This information is also stated in the Davis-Stirling Act* (citing *Corp. Code § 7224(a)*.) as well as Robert's Rules of Order. Advice from the HOA attorney was also to fill the vacancy recently occurring.

Q. When is the selection of a Board member replacement presented to homeowners?

A. The Davis Stirling Act states: "While interviewing candidates may be done privately, the appointment of a director should be done in open session."

*The Davis-Stirling Act is a document of rules governing California Homeowners Associations.

Good Sleep Should Happen more than Once in a Blue Moon...

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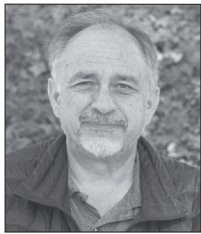
E-mail: info@OptimalSleepOC.com

2 Osborn Ste 140 | Irvine, CA 92604

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Maintenance Report

*Ed Pedroncelli,
Maintenance
Services Supervisor*



As we move into spring and near the end of the rainy season, many homeowners switch their attention to doing some projects around the outside of their home. This is a good time to inspect your property for any wood siding and/or stucco damage and start the process of getting those taken care of early so they will not lead to a bigger problem later. The home is 100% the homeowner's responsibility, but if you have architectural maintenance questions, please feel free to contact the maintenance department at (949) 455-4671.

On another matter, the Maintenance department has a small, dedicated team who are assigned daily duties of keeping the recreation centers clean and running smoothly. There have been several reports of excessive use of hand paper towels, removing of shower heads, graffiti on the bathroom mirrors, and an insoluble substance

that is left behind in the men's restroom sinks. We strive to keep the Casta del Sol recreation centers clean to ensure everyone in the community is able to enjoy the comforts of the facilities. If you witness a member of the community causing damage to any of the facilities, please report any information you may have to the main office at (949) 837-4073. Reports can also be made using the Customer Service Request form. All reports are kept confidential. Please remember, it is everyone's responsibility to help keep our community beautiful.

*epedroncelli@powerstonepm.com,
(949) 215-9155
Donna Duhn,
Maintenance Coordinator;
dduhn@powerstonepm.com,
(949) 455-4671 (office)*

“ If you witness someone causing damage to any of the CdS facilities, please report any information you may have to the main office or by submitting a CSR form.”

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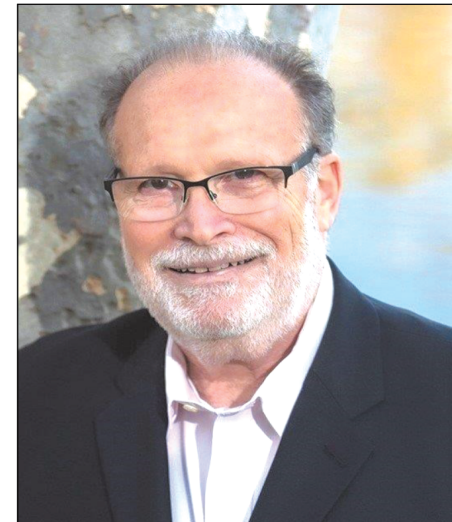
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COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness

The Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Committee was formed to develop Emergency Action Plans (EAP) for a variety of emergency situations we may experience in our community and to prepare and be able to respond. The goal is to ensure the safety of all residents during a small and/or large-scale emergency situation. We will be working closely with the Red Cross, fire, and police departments in the development of these Emergency Action Plans. It is essential that our property management team, Board of Directors, committees, and club leadership are also involved.

Individual homeowners play a vital role. Individual homes should have a household emergency plan and supplies on hand in the event of an emergency. Each month there will be an article and inserts in the *Courier* to assist homeowners in emergency preparation. Please see this month's insert.

The Neighborhood Watch Group was formed several years ago. This group is key to executing any emergency action plan to protect the community. If you are interested in joining, please contact Mary Kay

Crowley at (949) 581-2826. We will all be preparing together.

The Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Committee will be meeting every second and fourth Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Fiesta Room. We look forward to your participation.

Jodie Trainer, Interim Chair,
(949) 836-6511

Architectural

Spring is upon us. This would be a great time to evaluate your planting areas, particularly your front foundation for that curb appeal that enhances not only your property value but also that of your neighbors. The Architectural Committee has oversight of the aesthetics of the exterior features of your home as well as, to some extent, the planting areas. What is considered to be non-aesthetic? Is your front foundation looking tired and sparse? Are you using potted plants in place of in-ground shrubs? Do you have too many pots and other non-plant material cluttering your foundation? Is it overgrown? Do you need ground cover or mulch or new plants, or do you have no plants at all? These are but a few of the conditions that would be considered unsightly. Refer to the Greenbelt section (pages 41-44) in the

phone book for more information on foundation areas.

Even though the landscape vendor is maintaining by trimming, raking, weeding, etc., there are still responsibilities placed on the homeowner. This is true to an even greater extent if your foundation area is considered private (with red stakes) and has been neglected, as those areas are not maintained by the landscape vendor. If we all have attractive and well-maintained front foundations, we will all benefit.

Priscilla Tripp, Chair,
ptripp1@gmail.com

Budget and Finance

The Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee reviewed the February financials at our March meeting. A joint meeting with the Board of Directors and the Budget and Finance Committee was held in March to review with the auditor the draft audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2023. The 2023 audited financial statements will be ready for Board review and approval in April. We also met with the Board and the committees in March to discuss priorities for the 2025 budget.

All residents are welcome to attend the B&F meetings. The Budget and

Finance Committee meets regularly in the Vista Room on the third Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Our next meeting will be held on April 15. Please look for the eblasts with additional details about our next meeting.

Lisa Shoemaker, Chair,
(949) 305-6336

Courier

The main essence of the *Casta Courier* is that we are a publication of the Association. Our Charter states that we act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. With that in mind, we always publish Association News, the President's Message, and reports from Powerstone Management staff including the General Manager, Maintenance Services Supervisor, and Landscape Services Coordinator. This section also contains Board Meeting Highlights and the Treasurer's Report. In addition, we always publish reports from our Association-supported committees. Additional regular features include club, activity, and sports reports, *Courier* stuffing volunteers, and several regular columns in the Casta Community section.

Many of our articles highlight residents and their accomplishments. We seek to recognize our friends

Continued on next page





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Christina Ford is a full-time Realtor with decades of experience in the business, this is why my wife and I chose her and because of her kindness and easy to talk too. Her knowledge of the region allows her to make the connections we needed in selling our home.

Christina gave us professional insight and advice about our home and the local Real Estate market. She knew exactly what to set the price of our home and received multiple offers in a few days after putting our home on the market. She gave us efficient, energetic and professional service. It was a very smooth and easy transactions throughout the process.

Any questions we had, Christina gave us a quick response back. We highly recommend Christina for all your Real Estate needs.

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COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD *Cont'd*

Courier

Continued from previous page

and neighbors. Beyond this, we aim to inform residents and potential residents about new features, facilities improvements, activities, and events. We hope that residents will look forward to participating in what Casta del Sol offers and that prospective buyers will be inspired to join our community. In the past few years, attendance at social events and participation in many clubs and activities have increased. The *Courier* content may be in part responsible for this positive trajectory. We hope that our residents enjoy the *Courier* each month, and we thank all those who provide positive feedback.

Our next *Courier* Committee meeting is April 10 at 9:30 a.m. in the Fiesta Room.

*Debra Friedman, Chair,
debrafriedman0@gmail.com*

Election

At its March meeting, the Election Committee reviewed the Voter List requirements which were forwarded to the Board of Directors for approval. The California Civil Code 5105 (7) requires the creation of a Voter List for Casta del Sol members to review 30 days before it is used. The Voter List will be available for review by Casta del Sol members beginning April 1. The management staff will handle reviews and updates.

April 1 is the final day for eligible homeowners to submit a Candidate Application if they wish to run for one of the four Board of Directors open seats. Board candidates will have their resumes and photos published in the May issue of the *Courier*. On April 19, the Election Committee will post an Election General Notice covering: 1) ballot return information, 2) ballot tabulation information, and 3) a list of all qualified candidates who will appear on the ballot.

*Jeff McCoy, Chair,
jmactr1@gmail.com*

Facilities

Spring is here and the days are getting longer, which means more time to spend outdoors and enjoy walking, biking, tennis, pickleball, paddle tennis, swimming, and much more. Special thanks to the *Courier* for featuring the Facilities Committee in the March issue. The article, written by Liz Rickett, shared about

two long-standing members. It also highlighted major projects for 2024 that involve the pools and spas at both Rec Ctrs, and updates to the Fiesta and Ceramics/Arts and Crafts Rooms. The photos taken by Fred Lake featured the Project Groups assigned to each area. Thanks again for a great article.

The eleven-member Facilities Committee is responsible for the review of maintenance, engineering activities, and capital improvements of association facilities. The committee also monitors the repair, maintenance, and preservation of the association's physical assets and property, including items in the Reserve Study. Once a project is reviewed and approved by the committee, a recommendation is submitted to the Board with pricing and conditions for approval.

Think about becoming involved in making decisions regarding maintenance or repair of the assets of the HOA. The committee is always looking for new members. Come and be a part of making change happen. The committee meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at 9 a.m. in the Fiesta Room. Our next meeting is on April 25. If interested, homeowners can complete an Interest Form at the Administration or Rec Ctr 1 office.

*Nancy Cunningham, Chair,
(949) 350-3562*

Greenbelt

According to the Greenbelt Charter, one responsibility of the committee is to identify reserve projects such as turf renovation, inside and outside slope/embankment renovations, and landscape transformation projects. Committee members are part of smaller project groups that take on the responsibility of identifying common area needs that will be part of any new community project. Committee members can be seen walking in the community and at times interacting with residents as plans develop. One project group has identified several interior slopes for renovation that will be discussed at future committee meetings. A different project group has already identified one street for turf renovation along Espinoza while another project group is exploring turf transformation, which will fall under the new State mandate to eliminate all nonfunctional turf within Casta del Sol.

A lot of preparation is involved in the development of community projects. Committee members meet once

a month, but those smaller project groups can also meet several times a month. All proposed projects are discussed at the monthly Greenbelt meeting. As a community member, you can ask questions about those projects and about any impact to your home or the surrounding common area around your property.

If you have a landscape maintenance request (LMR), please use the following contact information from O'Connell. You can phone in your request to 1-800-339-1106 or use *workorders@oclm.com*. You may also contact Bill Thornton, Landscape Services Coordinator, at *bthornton@powerstonepm.com*. The next committee meeting will take place in the Fiesta room on April 9 at 9 a.m.

*Randy Gish, Chair,
gishra@sbcglobal.net*

Library

The library has more than 2,400 books to choose from. There are more than 850 borrowers each month. We are a very busy library that has wonderful volunteers keeping it in excellent condition.

Please remember that when you finish a book, return it as soon as possible so that other residents may borrow it.

If you want to take out a new book, you may reserve it by either sending an email to *cdslibrary2@gmail.com* or by filling out a green form in the library and placing it in the basket next to the forms. If you would like to have a new book ordered, fill out a pink form and place it in the basket.

To look at what books we have in the library, from your Web browser, go to *http://www.lightdb.com:1220/?user=castadelsol* and you may search for the book title or look up what books we have by any specific author. Most important, please remember to check out your book before leaving the library. Happy Reading!

New Additions to the Library Regular Print:

Diva, Daisy Goodwin
Good Material, Dolly Alderton
Held, Anne Michaels
Leaving, Roxana Robinson
Lone Wolf, Gregg Hurwitz
Missing Persons,
James Patterson & Adam Hamdy
Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame,
Olivia Ford
The Book of Doors, Gareth Brown
The Chaos Agent, Mark Greaney

Continued on page 10

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COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD *Cont'd*

Library

*Continued on page 10
Continued from page 9*

The Covenant of Water,
Abraham Verghese

The Mountain King,
Anders de la Motte

The Road from Belhaven,
Margot Livesey

The Women, Kristin Hannah

Welcome to the Hyunam-dong Bookshop,
Hwang Bo-reum

Large Print:

A Cold Highland Wind,
Tasha Alexander

Family Family, Laurie Frankel

Random in Death, J. D. Robb

The Antique Hunters Guide to Murder,
C. L. Miller

The Bad Weather Friend, Dean Koontz

The Friendship Club, Robyn Carr

The Year of the Locust, Terry Hayes

Audio Books:

Cahokie Jazz, Francis Spufford

End of Story, A. J. Finn

Sheila Kessler, Vice Chair,
rskessler2@gmail.com

Social

Spring in California means green everywhere you look, and Casta del Sol is no different. Not only is the entire community green, but the Social Committee continued with that green theme with our first ever Suds and Spuds Potato Bar on March 15. Everyone was decked out in their green attire and the tables were a fun combination of pots of gold and shamrocks. We all had a wonderful time loading our potatoes with a fantastic assortment of toppings. The entertainment was a combination of scavenger hunt, Irish dancers, Irish music, and Family Feud.

Ladies, get your hats, gloves, and pretty floral outfits ready for the Tea Party and Fashion Show on Saturday afternoon, April 20. Tickets are \$20 and go on sale March 19.

I want to thank the entire Social Committee and Valerie Hanich from Powerstone for their hard work in providing new and creative ways to keep Casta ranked as the most fun place on Earth (outside of Disney). The Social Committee meets on the first Friday of the month in the Fiesta Room at 10 a.m.

Amy Lake, Chair,
(516)263-7941,
Arlake225@gmail.com

Traffic

Daylighting? No, it isn't a daytime revival of the old TV series but a new California law as of January 1. AB 413 was approved by the Governor in October and deals with vehicles stopping, standing, and parking. Existing law prohibits the stopping, standing, or parking of a vehicle in certain places and under certain conditions, including within an intersection, on a sidewalk or crosswalk, or in front of a fire station. Existing law additionally authorizes local jurisdictions to restrict parking in certain areas at certain times and for certain reasons, and to establish metered parking. This new law prohibits the stopping, standing, or parking of a vehicle within 20 feet of the vehicle approach side of any unmarked or marked crosswalk or within 15 feet of any crosswalk where a curb extension is present. The law authorizes jurisdictions to only issue a warning and prohibits them from issuing a citation for a violation unless the violation occurs in an area marked using paint or a sign. After January 1, 2025, fines rather than warnings will be issued for violations. By restricting parking in certain areas, this law imposes a state-mandated local program.

The state may provide funds for curb painting and signage for local municipalities. How this affects our parking rules within Casta del Sol has yet to be determined.

Lynn Yeazel, Co-Chair,
lyhdtv@gmail.com

Welcome

A special welcome to newcomers who are in their first year living in Casta del Sol. Over the past year, members of the Welcome Committee met with 120 newcomers and handed out our packets of information in a gift bag. It is our pleasure to meet with new members of the community and to help them feel that they made the right decision in moving here.

If you have not yet been contacted by one of our members and wish to meet and receive information about the many clubs, committees, and activities in Casta, you may email me to arrange a time and place to get together with one or two of us. Welcome to Casta once again and we hope you enjoy exploring and finding your way around the community. We look forward to meeting each one of you.

Priscilla Tripp, Chair,
ptripp1@gmail.com

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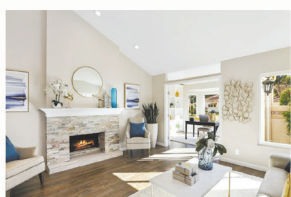
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SOLD 02/21/23



28366 Zarza
SOLD 09/28/22



23652 Via Pellicer
SOLD 07/11/22



28035 Via Tirso
SOLD 03/03/22

BUYER REPRESENTATION



28376 Zarza
SOLD 07/07/23



28172 Via Chocano
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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES

Bible Study

Any resident of Casta del Sol who has an interest in participating in the study of the Bible is welcome to join us. This is an active group of folks from different churches. Our studies are varied, but always Bible-oriented. We examine and/or question the study of the day, but always keep the discussion on topics from the Bible.

The club meets at Rec Ctr 2 every Tuesday morning from 10 to 11:30 a.m. for study and prayer. Come and join us as we sing the old hymns.

We are a no-dues club. All are welcome. For more information, please

contact Peter Filakouridis at (949) 305-1935.

*Kay Reed,
dentist2cali@gmail.com,
(949) 354-1460*

Billiards

Are you tired of the same old routine? Bored of staring at screens all day? Well, it's time to shake things up and dive into a world of balls, banter, and bloopers – yes, you guessed it, the Billiards Room! If you're still not convinced, here's why you absolutely need to come by and grab a cue. Who needs Netflix when you've got that cue in hand and balls on the table? Let's

face it, life can sometimes be a bit boring. But fear not! In the billiards room, boredom is banished faster than you can say *scratch*. With every shot, you'll feel the adrenaline rush and the thrill of uncertainty. You can line up a perfect shot, only to see your cue ball take a detour into a pocket. Well, welcome to the world of billiards bloopers! In billiards, every missed shot is a chance to laugh at yourself. It's all part of the fun!

*Fred Wilmott,
BilliardsCdS@cox.net,
(949) 367-6671*

Bridge

Well, it rained a *lot* in February, and it rained this morning, early March. It'll probably rain this month, too – bringing those flowers we want in May. But it's cozy, warm, and dry in the Garden Room, by the Rec Ctr 1 Rose Garden, where we play duplicate bridge on Tuesdays – noon to 3ish. Stop by, visit, introduce yourself. If you play bridge, we welcome new teams. To learn more about bridge at Casta del Sol, we can provide helpful information. Duplicate Bridge at CdS is unsanctioned by the ACBL.

The venue for Wednesday Party bridge isn't fixed at this time; visit the Rec Ctr 1 office for the location each week. Meet and greet the players between noon and 3 p.m.

We occasionally need substitutes for both days. Stop by or just email me with bridge on the subject line. Hope to see you rain or shine.

*Tim McCoy,
mccoystest@cox.net*

Canine Companions

This is your president, Tom Brockmiller, willing and able to serve as needed for the betterment and enjoyment of all dogs and their owners. That's my commitment.

To that end, I would like to propose a new, or should I say revisited, location for an afternoon sojourn of dogs and owners at the fountain near Gate 1 at 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was always a nice social event and just showing up whenever you can.

Good parking and sitting location. And daylight savings time started last month. So, come on down.

Which brings to mind that all of our events are open to everyone and their dogs in Casta del Sol. We only ask that you RSVP.

We had another great Yappy Hour last month with the always delightful appetizers prepared by Linda. This month, Saturday, April 20 at 1 p.m. is our Hot Dog lunch. Please RSVP.

*Tom Brockmiller,
lindabrock@cox.net,
(949) 412-1083*

Casta Creatives

The Casta Creatives Club had a wonderful workshop on collages in March. In April, Casta Creatives artists will be displaying and selling artwork during the Heritage Garden Open House. Another member event is a Drawing Fundamentals class taught in two sessions at \$10 each – April 25 and May 2. Our very successful Paint & Wine events are open to the entire community. The next one is on May 10 in the Vista Room starting at 3 p.m. Signups will begin on April 19. This event will cost \$35 and includes wine and appetizers.

If you are interested in being a member for 2024 and participating in our activities, please pay your annual dues of \$10. We meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays for Open Studio from 2 to 6 p.m. in the Arts and Crafts Room at Rec Ctr 1.

If you are interested in finding out more about our club, please contact Jacki Keller at (949) 293-5487.

*Debra Friedman,
debrafriedman0@gmail.com,
(949)230-7195*

Ceramics

Every year the Ceramics Club hosts a Flea Market, and this year it is April 12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. So, keep those dates open for a spectacular experience. The tables in the Vista Room will be filled with new and old items, some are hand crafted by our very own resident artisans who are skilled in creating awesome items such as jewelry, woodcraft, quilting, knitting, crocheting, gift cards, rock art, oil painting, and many more creative items. There is so much to see and people to talk to that you shouldn't miss the opportunity to come to this unique fair. There is no entrance fee so come and see what Casta del Sol has to offer.

The Ceramics Club always welcomes new members. We are here five days a week, drop in and say hi.

*Shelly Lethiot,
(949) 533-331*

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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Crafts For Charity

The Craft Ladies of Casta del Sol have been busy with projects for the residents of Laura's House and recipients of Meals on Wheels in Mission Viejo. In addition to Meals on Wheels tray favors for St. Patrick's Day, we made table centerpieces using beautiful artificial flowers lovingly donated to us by the family of Joyce Tipton, who was a longtime member of our group.

Craft Club meetings are on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at Rec Ctr 2. Meetings this month will be on April 3 and April 17.

We welcome new project ideas and seek potential recipients. Stop by when you can and lend a hand. We'd love to meet you. Materials will be supplied, and you'll be shown what to do. It's a great way to meet your neighbors and make new friends while helping others.

Jessica Hollowell,
(310) 480-9093

Cribbage

We play cribbage each Thursday in the Heritage Room at Rec Ctr 2 from 6:30 until about 8:45 p.m. If you are

interested in learning to play this old English card game, any of our members would be willing to teach you on a one-to-one basis, or we can do it on a Thursday evening; it's really not that complicated. You just need to be able to count to 31. If you have ever played in the past, the rules will quickly come flooding back; just come on down for a few games and a general social evening. There is no sign-up or commitment. If you want more information, contact Susan Herrning.

Susan Herrning,
susanherrning@aol.com,
(949) 630-2565

Democrats

At our February meeting and La-sagna Party, we had more than 70 attendees. We were able to discuss the ballot and the candidates running in the primary. At our March meeting, we discussed strategies to help campaigns such as postcards, canvassing, literature drops, etc. We also discussed relevant speakers for future meetings.

Our next meeting is April 21 at 3 p.m. in the Vista Room. Generally, the meetings take place on the third Sunday of the month at 3 p.m. in the Vista Room, unless there is a holiday. Please bring potluck food or beverages

to share as we like to mingle after the business part of the meeting.

We are hoping to expand our membership, especially in this important election year. Please encourage friends and neighbors to join our no-dues club. If you would like to receive emails, please let me know.

Debra Friedman,
debrafriedman0@gmail.com,
(949) 230-7195

Health & Fitness

Join us on Monday April 8 at 1:30 p.m. for a presentation by the Strong Foundations Study at UC San Diego, where faculty is studying fall prevention, bone health, and balance. This is a great opportunity to tune in to expert advice on fall prevention – information vital for seniors.

The presentation will be given via Zoom. You will be able to view it from your home computer, or you can join us in the Vista Room as we watch together on the big screen. It is free to residents and sponsored by the Casta del Sol Health & Fitness Club. Watch for an eblast with the Zoom invitation or contact Helen Freedman with your email address to be sent the invitation.

Helen Freedman,
PelicanPost123@yahoo.com
(646) 662-7325

Heritage Garden

April paints our Heritage Garden with a vibrant palette as spring bursts into bloom! As temperatures climb, shedding winter's cool embrace, a warm sun bathes the landscape in a golden glow. We invite you to celebrate the season with us. Join us for a delightful afternoon at our Open House on Saturday, April 27, from 3 - 5 p.m. with complimentary wine and cheese and an art display.

Wander amongst the blooms buzzing with birds and fluttering butterflies. Meander through the paths and explore our flourishing garden, bursting with colorful flowers. Relax and unwind under a shady tree and indulge in complimentary wine and cheese. Art lovers, take note! Stroll through the garden and immerse yourself in captivating artwork by our Casta Creatives Club artists. We can't wait to share the beauty of the season with you. This is a no charge event for all to enjoy. For more information contact Beth McVey at (949) 279-0103. See you in the garden.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 2:00 PM Ad-Hoc Policy & Procedures, F	2 1:00 PM Architectural, F	3 10:00 AM Library, F 3:00 PM Election, F	4 9:00 AM CdS BoD, V, Z	5 10:00 AM Social, F 10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G	6 
7	8 10:30 AM Traffic, F	9 9:00 AM Greenbelt, F	10 9:30 AM Courier, F 11:30 AM Las Damas Luncheon, V	11 1:00 PM Ad-Hoc Emergency Preparedness, F	12 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Ceramics Flea Market, F 10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G	13 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Ceramics Flea Market, F 11:00 AM - Lawn Bowling Event, LBP
14 	15 1:00 PM Budget & Finance, V	16 10:00 AM Welcome, F	17 6:00 PM Italian American Dinner, V	18 1:00 PM CdS BoD, V, Z	19 10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G	20 1:00 PM Social's Tea Party & Fashion Show, V 1:00 PM Canine Companions, LBP
21 10:30 AM ARMDI Event, V 3:00 PM Democrats, V	22 Passover Begins	23 	24	25 9:00 AM Facilities, F 1:00 PM Ad-Hoc Emergency Preparedness, F	26 10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G 12:00 PM Fishing Club, F	27 3:00 - 5:00 PM Heritage Garden Open House, R2
28 	29 2:00 PM Ad-Hoc Policy & Procedures, F 5:00 PM Military Veterans, V	30 10:30 AM Courier Stuffing, V	Recreation Center 1 Hours: May - Oct: Mon-Sun, 8 am-10 pm Nov - Apr: Mon-Fri, 8 am-10 pm; Sat & Sun 8 am-8 pm Recreation 1 Pool & Fitness Center Hours: May-Oct: Mon-Sat, 7 am-10 pm, Sun, 8 am-10 pm Nov-Apr: Mon-Fri, 7 am-10 pm, Sat, 7 am-8 pm, Sun, 8 am-8 pm Recreation Center 2 Pool Hours: Mon-Sun 7 am-10 pm Rec 2 Heritage Room Hours: Mon-Sun 8 am-10 pm			Calendar Coordinator, Valerie Hanich Recreation Director, vhanich@powerstonepm.com (949) 455-4681 Note: All meetings are subject to location change or on Zoom.

- Association, Board & Committee Meetings
- Association Sponsored Activities
- Club & Activity Events

Daily/Weekly Activities Schedule - April 2024 (All activities are subject to change.)			Recreation Center 1
Bible Study T, 10:30 AM, H	Hand & Foot M, 6 PM, G;	Rubber Bridge..... M, 11 AM, G	AC = Arts & Crafts
Bocce Ball M, W, F, 2-3 PM, BC	W, 12 PM, H;	Scrabble T, 6 PM, L	B = Billiards Room
Bunco 1st T, 6 PM, H	S, 5:45 PM, H	Shuffle (Pot of Gold) W, 6:30 PM, SBP	BC = Bocce Ball Courts
Bunco 2nd T, 6 PM, H	Jewelry Class F, 1 PM, AC	Shuffle League Play TU, 10 AM, SBP	CW = Ceramics Workshop
Bunco 2nd T, 6 PM, G	Lawn Bowling M, W, F, 1:00 PM, LBG	Shuffle (Friendly Play) 3rd W, 10 AM, SBP	F = Whole Fiesta Room
Bunco Babes 3rd T, 6 PM, G	Mah Jongg Mavens S, 10 AM, H	Shuffle Training 1st & 3rd F, 10 AM, SBP	F1 = Fiesta Room Fireplace Side
Casta Creatives..... W, TH, 2 - 6 PM, AC & CW	Mexican Train T, 1 PM, V or AC	Shuffle Super..... 2nd Su, 1 PM, SBP	F2 = Fiesta Room Back Side
Ceramics Club..... M, T, W, S, 8 AM - 1:30 PM;	Paddle Tennis M, T, W, TH, F, 9 AM, PTC	Strummers M, 1 PM, H	G = Garden Room
AC & CW	Pickleball T, F, Su, 8 AM, TC;	Support Group 1st & 3rd TH, 10:30 AM, G	L = Library
TH, 8 AM - 12 PM, AC;	M, W, 4 PM, TC	Tennis T, TH, 6:30 PM, TC;	P1 = Pool 1
F, 8 AM - 1:30 PM, CW	Ping Pong S, 9:00 AM, G	M, W, S, 8 AM, TC	SBP = Shuffleboard Pavilion
Crafts for Charity 1st, 3rd W, 10 AM, H	Pinochle..... F, 6:30 PM, H	Texas Hold'em W, 12:45 PM, G	V = Vista
Cribbage..... TH, 6:30 PM, H	Poker Ladies..... 1st W, 6 PM, G	Water Exercise..... M, T, W, TH, F, 9 AM, P1	
Duplicate Bridge T, 12 PM, G	Quilting..... 2nd & 4th TH, 1 PM, G	Wood Workers..... M, 2 PM, AC; TH, 12 PM, AC	
			Recreation Center 2 CG = Chipping Green H = Heritage Room LBG = Lawn Bowling Green LBP = Lawn Bowling Patio/Pavilion P2 = Pool 2 PTC = Paddle Tennis Court TC = Tennis Court

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FEATURE OF THE MONTH

Were You There?

By Claire Readey, photos by Fred Lake

What do fettuccine, football, and baked potatoes have in common? If you attended the first three Social Committee events this year, you already know the answer. The three wildly popular events started 2024 off with fun for all.

Fettuccine Friday, a new event on January 19, saw the Vista room transformed into an Italian bistro with a perfect menu served buffet style by Martinez. Was there dancing? Yes! For more than two hours crooner Doug Houston sang a great selection, and the packed dance floor was proof.

Our second ever Super Bowl party, a free event, saw the Vista Room turned into a sporting venue, with the huge drop-down screen, seating for all, BYOB, and yummy appetizers to share. Fans could see the game easily, root for their team, maybe put a winning bid on the points spread pool, meet new friends, or just enjoy the general camaraderie.

Finally, Suds and Spuds, a brand-new event on March 15, sold out so quickly four more tables were added. A treasure hunt, yummy potato bar, suds, local Irish dancers, and a competitive *Family Feud* game confirms once again that the Social Committee hosts a great party.

“Thank you to the Social Committee for planning and hosting great parties!”



Fettuccine Friday friends at the Bistro



Dancing the night away at Fettuccine Friday



Big screen action and cheers for the teams on Super Bowl Sunday



Residents enjoying Super Bowl LVIII



One of the first-place tables for Family Feud during Suds & Spuds event



Ann and Norm Loranger are all smiles at the Suds & Spuds event for St. Patrick's Day

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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Italian American

Sorry, we will be dark for April. Hope to see everyone for Bingo in May.

*Lucille Naves,
neilnaves@cox.net,
(949) 600-5887*

Las Damas

The month of April has arrived in all its finery, and the Las Damas Club invites you to hop on down to its April 10 luncheon at 11:30 a.m., where the Vista Room will be awash in vibrant pastels to greet you. A delicious spring menu awaits featuring pork tenderloin, scalloped potatoes, spring vegetables, citrus salad, and decadent lemon meringue pie for dessert.

By popular request, entertainment to follow will feature Raza, reprising his fun and memorable renditions of Elvis, John Denver, BB King, and

Michael Bubl , along with some dance moves you are probably still talking about.

Reservations are being taken at Rec Ctr 1 through April 7 at \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members, payable to Las Damas Club. Invite a newcomer friend to join us, as all are welcome.

*Pat Crowley,
(949) 305-0582*

Mah Jongg Mavens

Players, join our group on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room at Rec Ctr 2. We are a friendly group and welcome newcomers. No reservations needed. Bring the 2023 and 2024 cards and \$3 to play any Saturday morning.

Mah Jongg Mavens hold a tourna-

ment and potluck lunch on the first Saturday of each month. Bring both cards, \$3 to play, and a potluck item to share.

Winners on March 2: Most Mah Jonggs - Jean VanDerford; Concealed Hands - Suzanne Moore; Jokerless - Jayne Freed. No winners in Quints or Singles and Pairs.

May the Jokers be with you!

*Jean VanDerford,
abutterflylady@cox.net*

Military Veterans

The U.S. Department of Defense supports April as the Month of the Military Child. Do you or someone you know fit this criterion? Children of parents serving full-time in the Armed Forces are sometimes referred to as military brats. My wife is a military brat. Her father served in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Military children endure moving multiple times while growing up. It's a badge of honor because the moves, stresses, and cultural experiences can make them more resilient than their civilian counterparts. We members of the Veterans Club of Casta del Sol would like to recognize the rich and unique backgrounds of military children.

The CdS Military Veterans Club will hold our monthly meeting in the Fiesta Room at 1830 hours on April 22. Please monitor your inbox for updates and information. We hope to see you there.

*Rod Jordan,
rodny@rodnyjordan.com,
(714) 746-1158*

Pinochle

We are a friendly group of Pinochle card players. We play every Friday evening promptly at 6:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room of Rec Ctr 2. If you know how to play Pinochle, join us. If you don't know how to play and would like to learn, we can arrange to help you learn this bidding and trick taking game.

During February, Dawn Hibbs had the best single game total of 4380 and Alice McNany was second with 3510. Dawn also had the highest total for all games played during the month at 7430; Linda Owen was second with 6300. There were six Double Pinochles. One Friday, when there were eight players, we voted to play with a partner. Twosomes were randomly paired, and the best score was achieved by Nancy Money and

Dawn Hibbs. Congratulations to all our winners.

*Dawn Hibbs,
idglass@cox.net,
(949) 455-9826*

Social Singles

If you are a Casta del Sol resident who is single, you are invited to join our singles group. We have no membership dues. In April, we are planning to meet for lunch at 1 p.m. on Thursday, April 11, at Polly's Pies in Laguna Hills. To reserve your seat at the table, please RSVP only to Carol Kowalsky (*cekewpiel@cox.net*) by Monday, April 8. We kindly ask that you RSVP to Carol, and please do not show up at the restaurant without a reservation, so that we can give the restaurant an accurate head count. If you would like to join the group and get on our email list, or for more information, please contact Mary Carlson.

*Mary Carlson,
marycarlson28@gmail.com,
(949) 380-0744*

Sol Rock 'n Rollers

Our Ladies Night Out held on March 8 was very fun and well enjoyed. There was a DJ for dancing, as well as glasses of Prosecco, chocolate, and desserts galore. Men, let us know what you want to do on your special night.

Come and celebrate Cinco de Mayo with us on Sunday, May 5 from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Enjoy tacos poolside from Taco Surf and music to dance the night away.

Then, we will have Sunday Brunch on June 9 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. poolside. We will have music by the Calirays, so bring your dancing shoes to work off the delicious brunch.

*Karen Parmer,
parms@att.net,
(949) 215-5118*

Support Group

If you experience grief because of losing a loved one, losing independence due to illness, aging, or caring for a loved one, this is a place for emotional support, sharing experiences and hearing similar situations. You are not alone on your journey. Come and meet others in similar seasons and situations. We meet twice a month. For more information, contact Kathy Wu.

*Kathy Wu,
Kathywu.mv@gmail.com,
(818) 590-8009*

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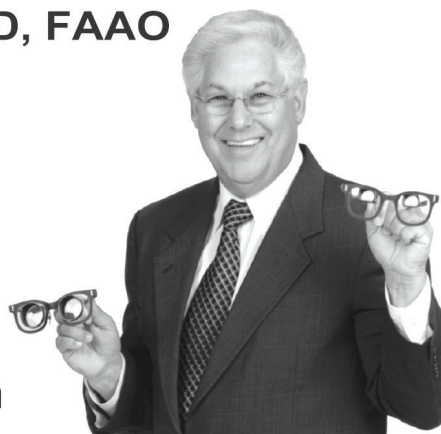
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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Variety

We are already in rehearsals for the Casta del Sol Variety Club's next show. The shows will be on Thursday, June 13 and Friday, June 14 at 7 p.m. and on Saturday, June 15 at 1 p.m. It will be a satirical sequel of a well-known musical, entitled *GrAnnie*. This senior oriented twist on the musical will be written and directed by Bear Sanchez and Barb Turino. With this duo, we are sure the performance will be the high quality of the shows over the past few years. Save a date for this not to be missed show. See you there.

The Variety Club is so much fun that we keep adding to our family of performers. We now have around 30 regular performers and a large crew for backstage and front of the house. If you are interested in joining us for future shows, please contact Barb Turino at (951) 858-7350.

Debra Friedman,
debrafriedman0@gmail.com,
(949) 230-7195

Vegetable Garden

Spring is in the air and gardeners are busy preparing and tending their gardens for the summer crops. Last month, we had a delivery of compost and the gardeners utilizing this compost prepared their soil for gardening. Because the waiting list for gardens has gone down so much, we have a slew of new gardeners who are energizing our garden with all their plantings. Thanks to the various talks we have had with Master Gardeners, we learned vital facts about plantings in our gardens. For instance, carrots do not like to be transplanted; it is best to start carrots from seed in the location desired for planting. Another tip we learned; worm casings are a good source for organic fertilizer. Our waiting list for gardens has decreased from 25 in February to 14. Happy Gardening!

Michael Schlesinger,
mikeschles123@gmail.com,
(914) 815-1002

Water Exercise

We should definitely be back by now in our newly refurbished pool. We have had some very rainy periods of time this year that have kept us out of the pool. Hopefully those April showers that may come our way will be just that, showers! Each Monday through Friday from 9 to 10 a.m., our day starts with water exercise in Pool 1. We have coordinated music and instructions to guide us, a mix of wall exercises and general exercise. It's a great way to start your day. Come join us, keep in shape, and meet many new friends. See you in the pool.

Nan Rednall,
nrednall@gmail.com
(949) 584-432

Woodworkers

Woodworkers Club members continue to stay busy with personal projects and home related honey-do list completions, along with wood related repairs requested by Casta del Sol residents. We are mainly concentrating on items that we can make and display for sale at the Ceramics Club Flea Market on April 12 and 13.

A few of those items are personal wood signs, game boards that make it easy to hold playing cards and dominoes, wooden children's toys, food cutting boards, and cork trivets that can be placed under a hot serving dish to protect a table or surface. We will consider requests from residents for small wood projects that we can complete in our garage workshops.

Woodworkers meet on Monday afternoons at 2 p.m. in the Rec Ctr 1 Arts and Crafts Room located across from the Vista Room. Drop by if you have a wood project request or are interested in our activities.

Steve Vallely,
(714) 595-5766

Customer Service Request Form

When you want to report something in your neighborhood or in our community that needs attention, the *Customer Service Request Form* is a good way to do it. This form makes it easy to bring issues to the attention of the staff. It is available at the Rec Office, the Administration Office, or online at castadelsol.powerstonepm.com/documents. You will find the form under the forms folder. It is used to report issues regarding traffic, parking, gates, animals, pests, facilities, or CdS contractors.

Bulletin Board

Please see club reports for more information.



Book Group #1 - Cover to Cover

Our newly named book club is currently reading *The Last Nomad: Coming of Age in the Somali Desert* by Shugri Said Salh. The author tells her own inspiring story of leaving her homeland. It is a compelling story of resilience, survival, and the shifting definition of family. Our meeting is on April 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the CdS Library. Amy Lake, (516) 263-7941, Arlake225@gmail.com.

Quilters Group

Do you love the rhythmic dance of needle and fabric, the vibrant tapestry of colors, and the satisfaction of creating something beautiful? If so, then join us from 1 - 4 p.m. on Thursday April 11 and April 25 in the Garden Room at Rec Ctr 1. We are not a club, have no dues, and we welcome all who enjoy needle art. Victoria Crayne, (949) 587-1853.

Flea Market Announcement

Calling all treasure hunters, bargain lovers, and hidden gem enthusiasts! The CdS Ceramics Club will host its annual Flea Market on Friday, April 12 and Saturday, April 13 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Vista Room. Questions? Call Carol Favreau at (714) 470-8181.

Yarn Art Group

Are you passionate about the art of knitting, crocheting, weaving, or any other yarn craft? Do you crave a community of like-minded crafters to share ideas, tips, and inspiration? Look no further! Join our friendly group of yarn enthusiasts. We meet every Wednesday from 9 - 11 a.m. in the Garden Room at Rec Ctr 1. We are not a club and have no dues. Teresita, (949) 716-5072.

Heritage Garden Club Open House

Sip, savor, and surround yourself with nature and art. Heritage Garden Club invites you to join us for a delightful afternoon at our free Open House amongst the blooms, birds, and butterflies on Saturday, April 27 from 3 - 5 p.m. Indulge in complimentary wine and cheese as you stroll through the garden and immerse yourself in captivating art by our Casta Creatives Club artists. Beth McVey, (949) 279-0103.

Social Committee - Tea Party

Attention Ladies! It is teatime at CdS on Saturday, April 20, at 1 p.m. Don your tea party attire and bring along your favorite teacup to enjoy your tea. Join us for a lovely afternoon tea party and Chico's fashion show in the Vista Room. Tasty finger sandwiches, delicious scones, and some tempting treats will be served. Amy Lake, Arlake225@gmail.com.

Paddle Tennis Club Tournament

May 4 is the Paddle Tennis Cinco de Mayo tournament. All levels of players who are members are invited to play starting at 9 a.m. There will be margaritas and lots of breakfast goodies. If you are not playing, come watch. Dan Viotto, viotto512@gmail.com.

Casta Creatives Club

Display and sale of artwork by over 10 Casta Creatives artists on April 27 from 3 - 5 p.m. during the Heritage Garden Open House. Also, sign up for the popular Paint & Wine event on May 10 at 3 p.m. in the Vista Room. Appetizers and wine will be served. Look for sign-ups in the Rec Ctr 1 office in mid-April. Jacki Keller, (949) 293-5487.

Health and Fitness Club

Join us for a Zoom presentation of the *Strong Foundations Study* from UC San Diego, where faculty is studying fall prevention, bone health, and balance. The event is April 8 at 1:30 p.m. in the Vista Room. Helen Freedman, pelicanpost123@yahoo.com.

Canine Companions Club

We are having a Hot Dawg Party on April 20, 4 - 6 p.m. at the Lawn Bowling Pavilion. Menu: hot dogs, salad, chips, and dessert. Don't forget, you must RSVP! Linda Brockmiller, (949) 412-1083.

New Group Forming - Pony Canasta

Want to play or learn Pony Canasta? A Pony Canasta card game will be held on the first and fourth Thursday each month at 1 p.m. in the Heritage Room, Rec Ctr 2. If interested in joining, contact Neomi Ramos, mimicastillo@cox.net, (949) 215-1634.

Submissions to the Bulletin Board

The Bulletin Board is to be used by Casta del Sol clubs and organizations to briefly announce activities or changes to activities occurring during the month of, and the following month. Submissions to the Bulletin Board are due the 6th of each month and should be typed in the body of an email or as an attachment in Word document format.
-Jeff McCoy, Bulletin Board Editor, jmactr1@gmail.com.

SPORTS

Away Golf

Our next tournament will be held on Tuesday, May 21 at Glen Ivy Golf Course in Corona. The tournament will have consecutive tee times starting at 9 a.m. Cost for golf with cart and prizes is \$75. Sign-ups will be available at Casta del Sol Rec Ctr 1 from Monday, April 29 through May 10. Mark your calendars and sign up early. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Joyce Parlin, (949) 588-0337

Bocce Ball

If you want to have an hour of laughs, please join us at the Bocce Ball courts. We play on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons from 2 to 3 p.m. We would like to welcome two new members to our club: Bari Russell and Kay Kirchner.

Our next regular meeting will be on Monday, May 6 at 7 p.m. in the Fiesta Room. Following a short business meeting, we will be playing cards.

Carol Zinsmeister, (949) 305-9890

Bowling

After 21 weeks, Pin Pals Cynthia, Tom, Maureen, and Don have a five-and-one-half-point lead on Rollin' Soul Mates Gail, Stu, Pat, and Hugh.

There is still plenty of time for any team to catch and/or pass either of these teams. We have eight weeks left in this season's league. The Casta del Sol bowling league bowls on Thursdays at 1 p.m. at Saddleback Lanes on Marguerite Parkway in Mission Viejo. If you do not want to commit to bowling every week, you could join our list of subs; we can always use more subs. Just call Donna Miller at (949) 395-8958. If interested in checking out how much fun we have, you can stop by on Thursday at 1 p.m. at Saddleback Lanes.

Van Quinn, (949) 842-9151

Fishing

We have no further news on transplants and water quality in Lake Mission Viejo. Last year, though, after the heavy rains, the golden algae problem had declined to the point that tilapia transplants succeeded. If pH, close to neutral, is a factor in the growth of that algae, then our current heavy rainy period may prove a positive for future plantings. Golden algae prefer more saline waters that result in higher pH levels above the neutral for fresh water of pH 7.0. At this time, there are no methods known to successfully eliminate the algae from a lake as deep as our own.

In the meantime, our Club, in conjunction with that of Laguna Woods, continues to fish twice a month on the three-quarter day trips out of Dana Wharf. Shallow water rockfishing is opening April 1 for most groundfish species. So, join and fish with us in the beautiful Pacific.

Nick Morenc, (949) 588-6223

Golf Chippers

The next Golf Chippers event will be held at the Golf Practice Area of Rec Ctr 2 on Saturday, May 4 at 9 a.m. All Casta del Sol residents are invited, and you can bring adult friends. The fee is \$5 plus a white elephant item for the prize table. February winners were Sandy Kuta, Nancy Hulse, Jan McMains, Walt McCleary, John Wallin, and Jerry Castro. Plans are being studied to create a golf target hole in the center of the golf area. Stay tuned. We hope to see you in May.

Bob Hrad, (949) 290-0366

Lawn Bowling

New officers have joined our executive group. Bob Riva is our new vice president and Ed Tutton is secretary. We join President Roman Swystun; Butch Nelson, officer-at-large; and Liam Gardner, treasurer.

This month, our club event will be the Short Jack tournament from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 13. The lanes will be much shorter than usual and easier to score points. It is a great event to watch for those who are thinking of joining the club. We have scheduled four more Saturday events through October giving members lots of competition and fun times with each other.

As usual, we are looking for more members. Our May 18 Open House will provide a chance to learn more about the sport and participate in a competition. Come enjoy our social time after bowling and hopefully join our membership. In the meantime, if you are interested, please call Ed Tutton (949) 584-1638 or Roman Swystun (818) 669-9970 and we will be happy to introduce you to our sport.

Ed Tutton, (949) 584-1638

Men's Golf

Once again this year, February and March have not provided the best weather for a golfer. Rainfall total for the two-month period was 11.08 inches; normal for the entire season is 13.63 inches. Most members, including me, have suffered a severe case

Continued on next page

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SPORTS *Cont'd*

Men's Golf

Continued from previous page

of golf depression. Spring is finally emerging. The Oso Creek course is in great shape. Our guys are more than ready. Why don't you dust off those old clubs and consider joining us?

The April games are: 4/3, Best 15 Holes; 4/10, Team Best Ball; 4/17, Twosome Total; 4/24, Two Man Scramble. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact our membership chairman Al Arnott at (714) 425-4320.

Merl Barrett, (949) 770-5024

Paddle Tennis

The Paddle Tennis Club will have our second tournament of 2024 on Saturday, May 4 at 9 a.m. This Cinco de Mayo Tournament will include margaritas in addition to yummy theme-oriented breakfast goodies. Our tournament director, Dan Viotto, will send an email to all members shortly before the tournament. We encourage all players, even beginners, to experience the fun of playing in a tournament. All who are not playing are invited to come and watch.

Open Court times are 9 to 10:15 a.m. Monday through Friday and 6:30 to 8

p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Everyone is welcome to play. Our friendly players will help newcomers during these open play times. For other times, please put your name on the whiteboard outside the courts. Our special skills clinics have been very successful and well attended. Sign up as a member and join us.

Debra Friedman, (949) 230-7195, debrafriedman0@gmail.com

Pickleball

The first Pickleball Club tournament was held in March and we are off to a great start. Both the play and the refreshments were spectacular. There will be several more tournaments and social activities throughout 2024. Join the club and be part of these exciting events. Dues are \$10 per person for the year and can be paid by check payable to "CdS Pickleball Club" at the Rec Ctr 1 office.

The Club has reserved the courts every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8 to 10 a.m., and every Monday and Wednesday from 4 to 6 p.m. Join us at Rec Ctr 2 for the action. Loaner paddles are available and club members will help get you introduced to the game.

Eric Vanderslice, (562) 712-1225

Shuffleboard

Our winter leagues ended March 19-20 and the spring sessions started the following week. If you would like to sign up as subs, contact Jim Kinney at dothemath99@yahoo.com for the Tuesday morning league and Susan Herrning at susanherrning@aol.com for the Wednesday evening league.

Winners for the Sunday Super Shuffle were: First: Stan Krauson/MaryEllen Marcus; Second: Bob Caywood/Laura Storrie; Third: Judy Paskey/Susan Herrning. The next date is April 14. Winners for the Sunday Potluck Social Shuffle were: First: Jayne Freed/Jesse Hunt; Second: Debra Friedman/Myrna Smith; Third (tie): Richard Scott/MaryEllen Marcus, Linda Clark/Judy Paskey. The next date is April 28. Sign up in the Shuffleboard Pavilion.

The first social event of the year, Spring Fling Pizza Bingo, was a great success. Our next big social event will be on June 21. Friday morning lessons by Bob and Mo Caywood are on the first and third weeks at 10 a.m.


Debra Friedman, (949) 230-7195, debrafriedman0@gmail.com

Tennis

Although the weather continues to be a challenge, a significant number of intrepid Casta del Sol tennis players have found opportunities to enjoy their favorite game. The Tennis Club's group court activities generally remain on track, with some rain-induced schedule modifications. The popular group activities include the 8 a.m. Monday morning sessions with ball machine practice and assorted drills. There are also round robin group sessions on Wednesday mornings and Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. We are also continuing the very popular first Saturday sessions featuring Clarity Tennis Tips, with coffee and breakfast munchies, along with our third Saturday program with drills and court fun led by local pro Jimmy Gleason.

The Tennis Club is planning a series of tournaments and social events throughout the year. You can catch up on all these on our Facebook page; visit the site on Facebook at "Casta del Sol Tennis Club."


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CASTA COMMUNITY

On the Road Again Hilbert Museum

New to SoCal, too busy to explore, or perhaps time to revisit? Debra offers suggestions.



Debra Friedman

The grand reopening of the Hilbert Museum in Old Towne Orange was on February 24. I had eagerly awaited the opening of an expanded venue, three times the original size. The museum's 5,000 pieces are housed in two buildings – one for rotating exhibits and one for permanent exhibits. The three-year renovation resulted in new aspects including a café, a courtyard, and gardens.

The Hilbert Museum was founded in 2016 due to the generosity of Mark and Janet Hilbert. The gift of \$10 million was for the 1,000-piece art collection from the 1930s to 1970s, as well as construction. Mark Hilbert

noted, "This will be the first museum dedicated to the display of California Scene and Representational art. The intent will be to cast a spotlight on this style of painting and these amazing artists, and to make this art known around the world. California has its own style, own light, and distinct landscape."

The permanent collection includes oils, watercolors, and drawings by California artists. The themes are urban, industrial, coastal, farming, ranches, and landscapes. The museum endeavors to "celebrate the unique artistic and cultural development." Some of my preferred genres, include realistic paintings and slices of life cityscapes. Albeit not a California native or resident, the Norman Rockwell exhibit is also a favorite. A fun exhibit is the Disney character art of Mary Blair which is quintessential Orange County.

While you are in downtown Orange, you can spend time browsing in antique shops and dining in a unique restaurant.

Small Talk Cats, Cats, and . . . More Cats!

A freelance writer's humorous spin on the ups and downs of life.



Dorothy Frances

I've always taken stray or injured animals under my wing. I remember during childhood bringing home hungry cats and wounded birds. Our landlords didn't allow pets, so my mother and I had to secretly take care of those homeless critters.

Fast forward many years later. One morning, I found four adorable kittens and a mother cat scampering around our patio. My husband, who knew all too well how I was about stray animals, said, "Don't feed them!" I resisted the urge until mother cat disappeared, and the kittens started killing birds to survive. I fed them

twice daily and enjoyed watching them play.

Then the mother cat appeared again with a swollen belly. She made herself comfortable under the bushes and soon delivered five more kittens, and then once again left them behind. Evidently, she was a cat of low morals, as she returned over and over again with her belly full of kittens. I soon found myself with thirty feral cats and buying cat food in twenty-pound bags. At feeding time, all thirty cats sat watching as I put out the food.

I knew this couldn't go on, so I called every no-kill shelter and cat rescue to get the cats, but not one would help. Desperate, I prayed for an answer to my dilemma. Low and behold, within a few weeks every cat had wandered away.

So, did I learn my lesson? Uh, no. You see, there was an abandoned baby opossum . . . but that's another story.



Reflections of a Casta Neighbor

A resident explores the adventures of Casta.



Nevin Valentine

Many of us in Casta are grandparents and might agree that having grandchildren is life's grand prize. Darrell and I have been grandparents for 22 years and being a grandmother is by far my favorite life role. I was thrilled when my first grandchild, Azlan, was born. We would drive or fly from the Bay Area to Salem, Oregon as often as possible to see him. Are your grandchildren part of your daily lives or are you a frequent flyer for magical overnight visits?

Our friends Nancy and Rich Blumenthal love having their young grandchildren spend playful weekends with them. Val and Paul Ricci are first time grandparents whose grandchild lives in Northern California. They stay up north for weeks at a time visiting and caring for their precious little one. Val's face lights up when she even mentions her granddaughter and her deep and radiant joy is contagious. Fran Morgan has

had the joy of watching her grandson make it into professional baseball. You may even have adult grandchildren and have danced at their weddings and witnessed the launching of their adult lives.

Our first three grandchildren live in Oregon. I visit as often as possible, and the visits are punctuated with thrilling hellos and heartbreaking goodbyes. When my daughter and Darrell's daughter began their families, we decided to both retire and move to Orange County to be near our Southern California children. It was the best decision we could have ever made.

Every Casta grandparent I've spoken with has a unique and wonderful story to tell about their grandparenting. I'm always interested in hearing the name their grandchildren call them. My grandmother Mimi was my greatest teacher of how to be truly present and to love children without conditions. I wanted to be called Mimi by my grandchildren but didn't feel it was my place to choose that sacred family name for myself. Imagine my delight when Azlan, at 18 months, began calling me Mimi. I am forever grateful to be called Mimi by all seven of our grandchildren and I do my best to live up to my namesake.

What's Cooking at Casta

Want help in the kitchen? Linda shares her favorite recipes.



Linda Brockmiller

Sausage Stuffed Mushrooms

32 cremini mushrooms
½ lb. ground mild Italian sausage (if in casings, remove)
2 tbsp. sherry
1 garlic clove, minced
¼ cup panko crumbs
¼ tsp. Italian seasoning
1 cup Gruyere cheese, grated

½ cup chopped scallions
1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Use a damp paper towel or brush to remove dirt from mushrooms. Remove stems and finely chop. Brown sausage in skillet, breaking it up as it browns. Add chopped mushroom stems, scallions, garlic, and sherry; cook over medium heat until tender. Remove from heat and stir in panko crumbs, Italian seasoning, parsley, and ¾ cup cheese. Fill mushrooms with stuffing and place on baking sheet. Top each with a pinch of cheese.

Bake for 10-15 minutes until mushrooms are tender and cheese on top is golden.

A Good Read: *The Sisters Sweet*

Book Review by Liz Rickett

This book sounded intriguing: twins posing as conjoined twins to put together a vaudeville act after their mother, a vaudeville star, is injured in a freak accident. Family relationships, secrets, and coming of age, all in a large print book written by Elizabeth Weiss.

The reality was not so good. The book is long, 656 pages, with lots of long paragraphs of narrative. It hops back and forth in terms of time and place. But worst of all, I really didn't care about the characters and their stories. I did finish the book but afterwards asked myself why I did.

PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS

From Seed to Supper: CdS Vegetable Garden Celebrates Earth Day

By Parizad Sethna, photos by Jeff McCoy



A patchwork of plenty; home grown goodness



Sprouting joy; growing up green

As Earth Day, a global celebration of our planet approaches on April 21, our Casta Del Sol Vegetable Garden emerges as a shining example of collective action for environmental and social good. The CdS Vegetable Garden is a tapestry woven from disparate threads. Each plot, though defined by borders, holds a world of experiences. Retirement brings changes to routine. Social circles change or shrink, and physical limitations inhibit mobility. That's where our CdS Vegetable Garden offers a unique space for connection, physical activity, and renewed sense of purpose.

Each morning the garden transforms into a vibrant hub of social connection. With the gentle clink of hand spades and trowels, longtime gardeners impart wisdom like heirloom seeds to a new generation of gardeners. Neighbors share stories and rave about their produce. At CdS, it is not just about the produce; it is about its purpose. Every Thursday, gardeners share their excess produce with the local food bank. Last year, the club donated more than 1,500 pounds of fresh produce to the food bank. What an impactful way to contribute to society!

Vegetable gardens offer a surprising number of environmental benefits, making them a great choice for both our plate and our planet. Flowering vegetables and companion plants attract pollinators like bees and butterflies, which are crucial for the reproduction of many plants and a healthy ecosystem.

Spending time outdoors and working with plants in the sunshine promotes a sense of peace and well-being. Light gardening activities like digging, weeding, and carrying small tools help improve coordination and

increase flexibility.

What could be more satisfying than nourishing ourselves with food we have nurtured from seed to plate? It is a celebration of the earth's bounty and a testament to our own creative power. Earth Day reminds us of our collective responsibility toward the planet. By supporting this green haven at our Vegetable Garden, we not only contribute to a more sustainable future, but also cultivate a stronger and healthier community, one seed at a time.

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Election Committee: An Exercise in Civic Responsibility

By Jeff McCoy, photo by Susan Wadsley



Front row, Barbara Harris and Jeff McCoy, Committee Chair.
Back row, Myrna Smith, Scott Shiroma

The common thread for the individuals who serve on the Election Committee is civic duty and civic responsibility. Most of the current and past members have been paneled on juries, a civic duty; and served as poll workers for county, state, and federal elections; a civic responsibility. They take their civic duties and responsibilities seriously.

For Committee Editor Myrna Smith, who has worked local and national elections, “exercising one’s civic responsibility” means that her volunteer service with the Election Committee allows her to participate in the democratic process and in making decisions that benefit the Casta del Sol Homeowners Association. Committee Secretary Scott Shiroma,

who joined the Committee in 2022, agrees. “Although I’m not a political person,” Scott said, “I’ve always been intrigued about the election process. I’ve learned in the past year there are a lot of rules and regulations involved in making sure we have a safe and honest election tally. As I learn more and meet people, I’m having fun being a part of it.”

The Election Committee’s Operating Rules are governed by California Civil Codes that were written for common interest developments like Casta del Sol. Rules are especially appealing to Committee member Barbara Harris, who also serves as the Inspector of Elections, an inde-

pendently-appointed position. “I like to see that all rules that guide our elections are administered precisely and fairly.” As does Chair Jeff McCoy. “The Civil Code requires the Election Committee to keep the homeowners informed about the election process, step by step,” Jeff said. “This includes giving homeowners at least 30 days to vote.” Committee work revolves around meeting deadlines, and its efforts are aided by Assistant General Manager Susan Wadsley. But after the votes are counted, and the winners are announced at the Annual Meeting in late June, the Election Committee rests until the next election cycle begins in December.

Getting to Know Our Neighbors: Gertrude Fox

By Liz Rickett, photo by Fred Lake

When one pictures an individual who is over 100 years old, the image is often of someone frail and/or immobile. Casta del Sol resident Gertrude Fox is more than 100 and neither of those adjectives pertain to her. She is vibrant, interesting, active, and independent.

She was born May 5, 1923 in Columbus, Wisconsin. After high school she attended Groves Barnhart Secretarial School in Madison, Wisconsin. After completing her secretarial studies, she began work at an insurance company and took the Civil Service exam. This led to her obtaining top security clearance and a move to Washington, D.C. where she worked at Marine Corps Headquarters.

In 1946, she and her two sisters moved to Los Angeles where she worked as executive secretary to the executive vice president of the largest cotton merchants in the world. When the business moved, Gertrude changed course and became a real estate broker. She admits that while no longer a realtor, she is still interested in the housing market and value.

Gertrude is a no-nonsense individual. She attributes her longevity to her faith and the fact she is always moving and always searching. Her interests range from whatever is new to civic matters. When the *Courier* photographer arrived to photograph her, she wanted to know all about his camera, the features, setting, and model, remarking that she used to



make and edit 16-millimeter movies.

She does not go to the theater or movies which she classifies as “make-believe.” She wants real information. Likewise, she does not read fiction but instead prefers books that have useful facts. She refuses to give advice, stating that each person needs to live his or her own life.

She drives her own car, does all her marketing, cooks every day, bakes, cleans her house, and does her laundry. If one is looking to a role model as to how to age well, look no further than Gertrude Fox.



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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

**Getting to Know Our Neighbors:
The Bernsteins**

By Liz Rickett, photo by Fred Lake



Joanna and Stewart standing by the Emmys he won

How did a girl from Nutley, New Jersey and a guy from Chicago, Illinois get together? It happened in Los Angeles, thanks to CBS.

From her first performance as the Virgin Mary in kindergarten, Joanna Bernstein knew she wanted to be an actress. Her high school teacher told her she was a gifted actress. In an acting class, Stella Adler, a celebrated acting teacher, confirmed she had talent.

Her father, appalled she wanted to study acting, withdrew her from college and sent her to Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School so she would have a backup plan. Working as a secretary paid for acting lessons that led to her achieving her dream. For more than five years, she played the resident ingénue in a string of plays throughout the United States.

One day, realizing she was an actress but had no personal life, she decided to use her Katherine Gibbs certificate to find a new career. She quickly found work as a secretary at CBS. After several years in the New York office, she transferred to CBS in

Los Angeles. This is where a fellow worker insisted that she meet Stewart. Not a fan of blind dates, Joanna insisted her friend accompany her on the blind date and the date that followed.

Meanwhile, after a brief stint in the Navy, Stewart prevailed upon a cousin who produced the Red Skelton Show at CBS Television City to arrange some interviews. He soon became a film editor, meeting many producers and celebrities. This led to his opening a boutique production company, making films/videos for celebrities used in TV shows, network awards, and tribute shows. He produced a film shown on ABC entitled *The Children of Terezin*. For his work during this time, he received three Emmy nominations and two Emmys.

Going back to work at the studios, Stewart worked on movies and TV series as a film/video and sound editor.

While this fascinating couple have met and worked with many celebrities, they insist the people who live in Casta del Sol are as interesting as any people with whom they interacted during their CBS years of fame.

**Remember When?
One-Room Schoolhouse**

By Sara Henninger



When I was three in the early 1950s, my family lived in Missouri where my mother was a schoolteacher in a one-room schoolhouse. She had grades one through seven which included my brother, Robert, who was six and my sister, Sue, who was nine. There was no such thing as childcare, and Mom did not know anyone who could watch me, so she took me to school with her.

I sat in the classroom at my own little desk and never bothered anyone.

I have a grade card that my mom made out for me with all top marks. It was very cold in the wintertime, and I remember the smell of the wet wool when the kids came back in from recess and took off their snow-covered coats and mittens and laid them near the heater. When the school day ended, the children would hope that their coats and mittens had dried enough so they could climb back into them and make the trek back home.

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Recently Remodeled Residences: Laura Guest

By Debra Friedman, photos by Jeff McCoy

When Laura Guest bought her Narciso Plan home in Casta del Sol in May 2022, she knew that a major remodel was in store. In fact, her remodeling touched nearly every room of her home. Throughout the house, changes included all new flooring, HVAC system, lighting, and re-piping.

The middle of the three bedrooms was designated as an office and the opening was converted into a single door. The Murphy bed was removed since the design was for a dedicated office rather than combo office/guest room. The water heater and HVAC in the hallway were moved to make way for an indoor laundry room. The hallway closet was removed and part of a wall shortened to help make more of an open concept.

A very large built-in cabinet was placed in the living room to serve as a pantry and linen closet. The door to the primary bedroom was moved to allow for a walk-in closet. The vanity and toilet were replaced in the guest bathroom. In the en suite bathroom, a wall was removed, the vanity was changed, and a pony wall was installed as entry to the shower.

The largest remodeling was in the kitchen where the cabinets, countertop, and appliances were replaced. Some of the unique features were extending the quartz countertop up the wall as a backsplash, installing a drawer microwave, and adding cabinets on the dining room side.

Laura made many of the design decisions but also worked with a kitchen designer. Although the renovations lasted six months, she was able to live in her home during this time. As with many Casta residents, Laura moved from a much larger house and had to downsize. Her wise choices have resulted in a comfortable, functional, and beautiful home.

While she is very happy with the results of the extensive remodel, she has a few other tweaks in mind, eventually.

“The water heater and HVAC in the hallway of the Narciso floor plan were moved to make room for an indoor laundry room.”



Newly remodeled kitchen



Hallway showing where closet was removed and cabinets installed

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Conversations in Casta: Advice I Would Give My Younger Self

By Sara Henninger

Phil Naideth - When considering a career, follow your dreams rather than the money. If you love what you are doing, you will excel and will likely be happy and successful.

Sara Henninger - Get your education right out of high school and defer marriage until education is complete. When looking at a potential mate, look at their family, too.

Melanie Delgado - Don't get caught up in the excitement of the moment. It could cause you to make a decision you will regret.

Cathy Johnson - One simple rule: question everything.

Louise Sobieski - Whatever you do, do not be afraid. Fear causes anxiety and alters your response to situations you may face. Trust your intuition. If something doesn't feel right, most likely, it is not.



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In Memoriam

Marie DeGeorge

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Courier Committee Members and Staff

<i>Courier Chair</i>	Debra Friedman	debrafriedman0@gmail.com
<i>Courier Vice Chair</i>	Jeff McCoy	jmactrl@gmail.com
<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>	Charlotte Lassos	charlottelassos@gmail.com
<i>Secretary</i>	Karen Scott	karenascott7@gmail.com
<i>Section Editors:</i>		
Association News	April Wilsey	aprilincal@gmail.com
Bulletin Board	Jeff McCoy	jmactrl@gmail.com
Casta Community Clubs	Nevin Valentine	nevinvalentine@gmail.com
Committees	Bob Destino	bobdestino@outlook.com
People, Places & Events	Bob Destino	bobdestino@outlook.com
Sports	Fran Morgan	fmorgan17@cox.net
	Bob Destino	bobdestino@outlook.com
<i>Columnists:</i>		
On the Road Again	Debra Friedman	debrafriedman0@gmail.com
Reflections of a Casta Neighbor	Nevin Valentine	nevinvalentine@gmail.com
Small Talk	Dorothy Frances	dfranceswrites@yahoo.com
What's Cooking	Linda Brockmiller	LindaBrock@cox.net
<i>Feature Writers:</i>		
	Debra Friedman	debrafriedman0@gmail.com
	Sara Henninger	saraely@gmail.com
	Jeff McCoy	jmactrl@gmail.com
	Fran Morgan	fmorgan17@cox.net
	Liz Rickett	LizRickett@me.com
	Parizad Sethna	sethna7@hotmail.com
<i>Staff Photographers:</i>		
	Darrell Holdaway	holdaway@gmail.com
	Fred Lake	lakebbc@gmail.com
	Jeff McCoy	jmactrl@gmail.com
	Kip Isbell	kipisbell@live.com
<i>Proofreaders:</i>		
	Judy Barrett	lvbarretts20@gmail.com
	Kip Isbell	kipisbell@live.com
	Dottie Lewis	dottielewis19@gmail.com
	Suzanne Moore	Jsmoore830@gmail.com
	Claire Readey	csreadey@gmail.com
	Evelyn Rotherth	erotherth@sbcglobal.net
	Nevin Valentine	nevinvalentine@gmail.com
<i>Delivery Preparations:</i>		
	David Ankeny	candyman803@gmail.com

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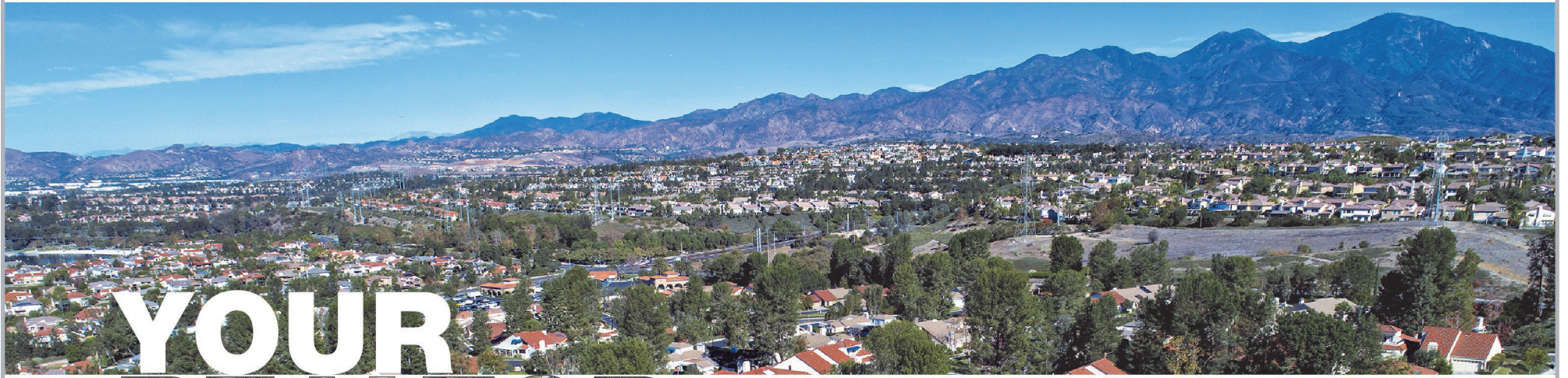


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