

The Casta Courier

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

Memorial Day Celebration CdS Style

By Sara Henninger, photos by Jeff McCoy



CdS Military Veterans Color Guard

A plethora of patriotic songs resonated throughout the day on May 27, poolside, for the annual Casta del Sol

Memorial Day celebration. The weather was sublime, and it was a wonderful day to be outside. Those attending



Several guests trying out the kazoo

were quite comfortable and proudly wore their patriotic attire. The Social Committee members displayed their

expertise by decorating, greeting, and helping to serve more than 100 guests.

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The Welcome Committee: Setting the Right Tone

By Claire Readey, photo by Jeff McCoy

“Setting the right tone,” stated Welcome Committee Co-Chair Linda Galloway, explaining the very helpful and friendly service provided by the 12 Committee members. Co-Chair Jane Deak and Secretary Roxanne Spafford and the other nine members round out a very dedicated Committee.

Evelyn Okura compiles an updated list of new residents who requested being contacted during the CdS orientation. Welcome Committee members make plans to call all the newly arrived folks in a timely manner. This is no small task and a very special one. With an average of ten or more individual visits scheduled monthly, new residents are acquainted with all that Casta del Sol and Mission Viejo have to offer. Residents

Continued on page 6



The Welcome Committee is ready to meet and greet

July: Dog Gone, It's Summer

By Evelyn Rothert

July is known for celebrating Independence Day on the Fourth of July. Did you know it is also known as National Hot Dog month? In the mid-1800s, German immigrant butchers in the United States began selling variations of sausages, some of which were thin and long, like the dog breed, dachshund, and were called “dachshund sausages.” As time went by, the

reference was shortened to “hot dog.”

July is the only month named for a real person and not a deity/God. It was named in honor of Julius Caesar in 44 BC, who helped make the Julian calendar before being assassinated. *Quintilis*, which was his birth month, was renamed *July* when he died. *Quintilis* means “fifth month” in Latin, which represents where this month

originally fell in the Roman calendar. In 1582, the calendar changed again to the Gregorian calendar we use today.

The full moon this month will be on July 21. It is also known as Buck Moon because the antlers of male deer (bucks) are in full-growth mode at this time. When I was in Yellowstone National Park, we saw a majestic 7-point buck.

Have a lovely month and try not to burn your fingers on a sparkler.

July

“July is the only month named for a real person and not a deity/God. It was named in honor of Julius Caesar in 44 BC.”

ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Message

Linda Silverman,
President



I have written the President's Message in the *Casta Courier* newsletter for Casta del Sol residents for eleven months. I now write my twelfth message. I am very aware that words matter, and every word must be chosen that reflects my thoughts, ideas, concerns, and values.

I have praised our committees, clubs, activities, our greenery, 22 miles of roads, the Vegetable and Heritage Gardens, social events, the Variety Club and our faithful canines that walk with us through the greenbelt. I've shared thoughts regarding the athletic warriors on the various courts, lawn bowling, the card games, shuffleboard, billiards, and the many artists showing us their creativity who work in so many different mediums.

Attending and enjoying the various events presented by the clubs, social events, and activities are wonderful, especially when interacting with new friends. I believe it is important to support these activities that are provided to our residents. Enjoying an afternoon together may be the best medicine for all of us.

I would like to share my thoughts regarding *you*, the residents. Every person that is part of Casta del Sol is important to the development and growth of our community. Each person matters. I, as a Board member, appreciate when you choose to provide your comments. The Board of Directors work for the homeowners and must give residents the opportunity to discuss and voice concerns and share many of the values of our incredible community.

It has been an interesting twelve months. There have been a few changes. The Association is in a stronger position now than a year ago. Challenges have been met which prepare our community for the near future. Through it all, I want to thank you for your advice, participation, and assistance in giving the Board that represents you, the feedback that leads us to believe that the right decisions were made on your behalf.

I thank every one of you for personally making the past year very rewarding.

Manager's Report

Marilyn Smith,
General Manager



Architectural Guidelines and Standards

Like many community associations, Casta del Sol has a set of written design review standards and processes. Some homeowners mistakenly believe these standards restrict their freedom of individual expression. Actually, they provide a framework within which each homeowner can express individual tastes and preferences. The standards have been carefully developed to reflect a balance between individual rights and the good of the entire Association, which includes property values.

You may wonder, why do we need processes and guidelines to maintain architectural standards? Perhaps most important, we need a basis for treating all homeowners fairly and reasonably. Written guidelines allow you and the Architectural Committee to work from the same criteria. Sometimes architectural requirements can be complex. The guidelines show you exactly what is required, and helps you design improvements that comply with the community's standards.

Then there is the application and approval part of the process. The review committee members assure you they want the paperwork to be as simple as possible for everyone. The guidelines take the guesswork out of your application and their decision making. It should be noted that staff does not have the authority to approve or deny any homeowners' applications for improvements. In fact, the guidelines not only provide criteria for the current committee to make appropriate decisions, but for successive committee members to make consistent decisions in the future. Without the criteria in the guidelines, the application approved today may result in construction deemed unacceptable by new committee members upon completion.

One last purpose of the guidelines is to clarify the Association's authority in this area. State statutes and the Association's governing documents give the Association a legal right to enact and enforce design review standards. The guidelines spell this out so everyone understands they must comply even if they don't agree.

Marilyn Smith,
msmith@powerstonepm.com

Casta del Sol HOA - Board of Directors -

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Vice President:	John Nethercutt	j.nethercutt.bod@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Susan Ashby	ashbycasta@gmail.com
Secretary:	Jayne Freed	jfreedcds@gmail.com
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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



Licensed Contractors

I get calls from homeowners asking for help finding someone to perform services at their homes. I will always recommend hiring a licensed contractor.

The reply I sometimes receive is that they charge too much. My response is always the same. I agree, but licensed contractors must pay for taxes, insurance, benefits, and still make a profit. In California, anyone who contracts to perform work that is valued at \$500 or more for labor and materials must hold a current, valid license for the specialty for which he or she is contracting.

Unlicensed contractors pose a risk to your financial security because they expose you to significant financial harm in the event of injury or property damage. Few unlicensed contractors have bonding or workers compensation insurance.

Eleven tips for making sure your contractor measures up:

1. Hire only licensed contractors.
2. Check the contractor's license number by calling (800) 321-2752, or go to the website for the Contractors State License Board at www.cslb.ca.gov.*
3. Get at least three references and three bids.
4. Get a written contract and do not

sign anything until you completely understand the terms.

5. Pay no more than 10% down or \$1,000, whichever is less.
6. Do not let payments get ahead of work; keep records of payments.
7. Do not make the final payment until you are satisfied with the job.
8. Do not pay cash.
9. Keep a job file of all papers relating to your project.
10. Keep your family, friends, and/or neighbors in the loop, check with the city, and do not get scammed by low bids.

*The Contractors State License Board website is also an excellent place to start your search for the right contractor for the right job. And visit the Senior Scam Stoppers page.

The HOA is not responsible for

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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

May 16 and June 6, 2024

May 16, 2024

General Manager Marilyn Smith reported:

- The Powerstone/Casta del Sol website is up and running. Residents will find many forms online.

Landscape Services Coordinator Bill Thornton reported:

- Great Scott Tree Service has trimmed 366 trees for the 2024 tree program. O'Connell Landscape is updating the software to process work orders.

Maintenance Services Supervisor Ed Pedroncelli reported:

- The maintenance staff processed 68 maintenance requests and 137 work orders.
- The practice cage at the Chippers Area is finished.

Recreation Supervisor Valerie Hanich reported:

- The pool and spa at Rec Ctr 2 will be closed for refurbishment. There is a website for iGate to enter your guests. Contact the staff at Rec Ctr 1 for assistance with using the website.

The Board:

- Approved the list of seven tree removals by W.B. Starr with potential to cause sewer damage for a cost of \$4,450.
- Approved tree root plumbing repair and tree removal at 23681 Via Ventura for a total cost of \$7,402.68.
- Approved a contract with Premier Paving for the Association's 2024 asphalt project for a total project cost of \$1,715,135.35.
- Approved a contract with GMU Geotechnical Inc. to provide geotechnical services, material observation, testing services, and construction management for the 2024 Asphalt Project for the amount of \$219,500.
- Approved an agreement with GMU Geotechnical, Inc. to provide a Pavement Management Plan update and Falling Weight Deflectometer Testing and Analysis in the amount of \$25,082.
- Approved Great Scott Tree Service for Priority 1 tree removals in areas 1-5 for a total cost of \$257,560.
- Approved payment to Santa Margarita Plumbing for the repair and re-lining of the sewer line at 28227 Nebrija due to common area tree roots at a cost of \$4,820, and for W.B. Starr to remove one tree at a cost of \$225, and a reimbursement to the homeowner for \$145 for a combined total of \$5,190.
- Approved a reimbursement payment of \$155 to the homeowner at 27995 Calle Valdes for a plumbing repair.
- Approved holding only one meeting in July since the first meeting would fall on July 4. The board will hold its only meeting for July on Thursday, July 18 at 1 p.m.

June 6, 2024

The Board:

- Approved the Landscape Concept Slope Design provided by Amelia Herndon-Steen from the Santa Margarita Water District. The design is for the first phase of a slope renovation project which would include two interior slopes for clearing and planting.
- Approved the proposal from O'Connell Landscape in the amount of \$5,937 to run 4,000 linear feet of 14 gauge wire inside a ¾ conduit pipe from satellite 102 located on Calle Valdes to flow meter and master valve located on Via Albeniz.
- Approved holding an evening Board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2024.
- Approved allowing the Salvation Army to come into Casta del Sol with their truck on a specified date and time for a donation day.

The next regular meetings of the Board of Directors will be **Thursday, July 18 at 1 p.m. in the Vista Room.**

Fran Morgan, Courier staff

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

May Treasurer's Report

Total HOA Assets as of May 31, 2024: \$9,585,514

• **Operating Cash: \$2,684,449**

This includes \$901,091 in checking, \$680,465 invested in a money market account and \$1,100,000 invested in CDs.

• **Reserve Cash: \$6,112,373**

This includes \$298,128 invested in a money market account and \$5,800,000 invested in CDs. One CD for \$200,000 will be maturing in June. Also included in the balance is interest receivable of \$67,364 and Due to Operating of \$53,119. Reserve expenditures in May were \$53,119 which included house painting and Rec Ctr 1 spa equipment.

• **Capital Improvement Cash: \$455,876**

This balance includes \$49,664 Due to Operating. Capital expenditures in May were \$5,300 for the Emergency Shut Off Switch at Rec Ctr 2.

• **Outstanding Accounts Receivable (A/R): \$85,593**

This is a increase of \$356 from April. Allowance for Bad Debts is \$45,142, and 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 May 31:

- **General & Administration** has a YTD positive variance of \$54,799 due to low activity in several accounts: legal fees, printing, postage, and salaries. Bad Debt expense is \$14,173 higher than budget.
- **Land Maintenance** has a YTD positive variance of \$311,908. Great Scott and West Coast Arborists have recently been pruning and removing a few trees so we will see those expenses next month.
- **Recreation, Repairs and Maintenance, and Traffic Control** have a combined positive variance of \$20,547.
- **Utilities** has a YTD positive variance of \$157,104. Water has a positive variance of \$123,916 primarily due to the rain in the first quarter. With this nice warm weather, we are watering regularly now. Gas has a positive variance of \$17,050 and Electricity has a positive variance of \$7,725.

Treasurer's Comments:

The YTD surplus is \$789,014, but the YTD budget to actual surplus is \$576,399. The surplus is primarily due to the large positive variances in Land Maintenance and Utilities.

This Treasurer's Report as of May 31, 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*

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Join Us In Welcoming Our New Residents - July 2024



Basho, Adriana & Dhmitri.....Unlisted.....(216) 224-1642
(216) 338-7583
 North Olmsted, OH

Brunelli, Larry & Cathy23234 Villena.....(714) 699-0991
(714) 321-0837
 Fullerton, CA

Carns, Jim & Jenny28366 Borgona.....(949) 533-1434
 San Juan Capistrano, CA

Dembik, Dennis & Peggy23701 Via Storni.....(714) 469-3425
(714) 366-9048
 Temecula, CA

Eberhardt, Jim & Sharon.....23686 Ribalta.....(626) 255-8131
(626) 255-8132
 Arcadia, CA

Erb, DouglasUnlisted.....(949) 463-8447
 Laguna Niguel, CA

Hardin, David & Patricia23661 Via Storni.....(949) 257-8674
(949) 201-7417
 Kuna, ID

Hermosillo, Madison.....Unlisted.....(562) 760-6282
 Long Beach, CA

Huff-Rigley, Nancy.....28212 Via Herrera.....(310) 871-4213
 Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Newkirk, JoannaUnlisted.....(562) 754-1341
 Laguna Niguel, CA

Parfitt, Donna28521 Cano(714) 928-7373
 Anaheim, CA

Santon, Bonnie & John28145 Manchuca.....(460) 224-4961
 Vista, CA

Soliman, Maria & Abdul.....27739 Calle Valdes.....(562) 208-5700
 Cerritos, CA

Directory Change

Beck, Marti & Robert23561 Via Agustini.....(949) 716-0858

Evans, Christy28255 Las Casas Unlisted

Torn American Flags

If the wind and weather have aged and/or damaged your American flag, please take it to the Mission Viejo Library. They will properly dispose of our nation's precious symbol.

Maintenance Report

Ed Pedroncelli, Maintenance Services Supervisor



Who are we and what do we do for the Association? This is a question which has been asked several times and I would like to address this inquiry in this month's article.

The roles of the maintenance supervisor and coordinator are to care for all Association-owned amenities including, but not limited to, recreation buildings, offices, meeting rooms, recreational facilities, roadways, fencing and walls, as well as supervision of custodial and maintenance duties.

Our team ensures all the aforementioned areas and amenities are well organized, maintained, and operational. This includes ensuring that the following items are functioning such as air conditioning, appliances, plumbing, and recreational equipment. Our department oversees all vendors tasked to complete Association projects including, but not limited to, the painting of homes, recreational buildings, offices, and meeting rooms; repairing asphalt and fencing; cleaning of the pools and repairs, and ensures the prop-

erty is clean and well maintained. The Maintenance Department also promptly repairs any breakdowns of Association-owned property.

Our custodial team keeps the buildings and grounds clean and neat meeting standards set by the Board of Directors. Additionally, they complete the room set ups and breakdowns for special events, committee meetings, club meetings and events, and Board meetings.

Our maintenance team fixes and maintains all HOA owned property. Tasks include repairs to drywall, plaster, flooring, minor electrical repairs, minor plumbing repairs, concrete, as well as general repairs, such as fixing latches, fencing, Association-owned mailboxes, minor roadway repairs, traffic signage, and hanging pictures within recreational buildings, offices, and meeting rooms. The team conducts preventive maintenance of kitchen appliances. They also assemble and move HOA furniture in offices, meeting rooms, etc., as well as the cleaning and maintaining of external recreational facilities.

Ed Pedroncelli, (949) 215-9155, epedroncelli@powerstonepm.com



You're invited to church! Sundays 8:30am

Spirited traditional service with liturgy & hymns



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We have had **17 sales** in your community since **1/1/2024**.

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1495 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Offered at \$899,000
In ESCROW



27862 Torroba
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Offered at \$885,000
IN ESCROW



28566 Cano
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1295 Square Feet
Violeta Floorplan
Sold for \$920,000
Sold on 6/20/24



28331 Yanez
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1295 Square Feet
Violeta Floorplan
Sold For \$842,000
Sold on 6/10/2024



27871 Via Prados
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1287 Square Feet
Dona Floorplan
Sold For \$830,000
Sold on 6/6/2024



28051 Via Tirso
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1606 Square Feet
Cypress Point Floorplan
Sold For \$895,000
Sold on 6/4/2024



28286 Via Zarza
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1230 Square Feet
Maya Floorplan
Sold For \$850,000
5/10/2024



23552 Villena
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Sold For \$873,000
Sold on 4/30/2024



28132 Via Bello
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1114 Square Feet
Blanca Floorplan
Sold for \$705,000
Sold on 4/16/2024



27701 Via Rodrigo
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1503 Square Feet
Rosa Floorplan
Sold for \$875,000
Sold on 3/28/2024



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



23541 Via Ventura
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1563 Square Feet
Juanita Floorplan
SOLD for \$915,000
Sold on 3/8/2024



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



28078 Espinoza
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



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

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Memorial Day Celebration CdS Style

Continued from page 1



Board President Linda Silverman (right) and friends in red, white, and blue

Social Committee Chair Amy Lake welcomed the attendees.

Upon arrival, everyone received a sheet of patriotic songs along with a kazoo. You may ask, "What is a kazoo?" It is a musical instrument, of sorts, where you insert the tip into your mouth, then hum, and a funky sound comes out of it. Jokingly, it was for those who could not carry a tune.

Linda Donahoe, vocalist extraordinaire, led the group in an old-fashioned sing-along to the delight of all. Songs, such as *America the Beautiful*, *This Land is Your Land*, and *You're a Grand Old Flag* were sung or played on the kazoo by attendees. Kip Isbell was the DJ and following the audience participation segment played patriotic music throughout the event.



CdS residents gather on Memorial Day to honor our country's fallen heroes

A very dramatic Color Guard presented colors. The ceremony was carried out with military precision. The Casta del Sol Military Veterans Club members marched with well-practiced poise.

The meal was catered by Martinez. Everyone enjoyed pulled pork, BBQ chicken, beans, corn on the cob, corn-

bread, fresh fruit, coleslaw, lemonade, and water. The festivities were topped off with good old all-American apple pie and ice cream.

Thank you to the Social Committee that planned a fun-filled day that left us feeling nostalgic and reminiscing about family members and friends in the military.

The Welcome Committee: Setting the Right Tone

Continued from page 1

are also given a packet of pertinent information in a keepsake bag.

Residents can choose to meet in the library or by a pool rather than being visited at their homes. How many years has this wonderful introduction been offered? Linda believes this service has been in place since around 2005.

There is such valuable information provided during the Welcome Committee visits. For instance, the Mission Viejo's Dial-A-Taxi Program requires an application from the Murray Center and all residents age 60 and over are eligible to apply. This program includes a \$20 one-way taxi ride for up to three people to and from John Wayne Airport.

Save the Date! On August 17 from 1-3 p.m., all new residents, as well as current residents, are invited to attend the Casta Newcomers Welcome and Community Fair at Rec Ctr 1. Attendees will be informed of the latest information from all the committees, clubs, and activities at designated booths. Where else can one live and feel so welcomed?

Landscape Notes

Continued from page 2

anyone advertising in either the CdS phone directory, or *Casta Courier*. Owners must do their own diligence.

Bill Thornton, (949) 455-4672, bthornton@powerstonepm.com
Cindy Van Patten, (949) 215-3146, *Landscape Administrative Assistant*, cvanpatten@powerstonepm.com

Good Sleep Should Happen More than Once in a Blue Moon!

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COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness

The Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Committee will be meeting to plan an educational community event which we will present to the Board for approval. A wealth of information and numerous flyers are available pertaining to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergency situations through the Red Cross, the Orange County Fire Authority, and ReadyOC, to name a few. AlertOC is a mass notification system to keep residents informed of emergencies. By registering with AlertOC, time-sensitive messages may be sent to your home or cell phone. Text messages may also be sent via cell phones, email accounts, and hearing-impaired receiving devices. Registration can be done through ReadyOC.com.

Depending on the severity of an emergency situation, emergency personnel may be delayed. Therefore, the best way to make you and your family safer is to be prepared before an emergency happens. An emergency supply kit is one of the most important items you may need in addition to a plan. Visit ReadyOC.com for more information.

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, Chair,
(949) 836-6511*

Architectural

By way of a reminder, in the *Fine and Fee Schedule* of the Association, there are some pretty stiff penalties for violations of the architectural rules. This came to mind recently when we noticed a home undergoing exterior construction but there was no yellow form (the project approval notice) posted in a front window. If there is no project approval, a Stop Work is issued and a fine of \$50 may be assessed. Then a \$250 fine may be assessed if no application for project approval is received within two business days. Some of these fines were significantly increased a few years ago. They may need to be reviewed again, and enforcement might also be reviewed. It is the Board's job to decide if and when to apply the fines after notifications go out from the Architectural Committee. No fines are issued until the resident is notified of a Board hearing and invited to attend.

The purpose of a fine schedule is to remind residents that there are guidelines in place to keep the community looking as good as it can be with aesthetically pleasing improvements. If your neighbor's property looks good, it reflects well on yours.

*Priscilla Tripp, Chair,
ptripp1@gmail.com*

Budget and Finance

We reviewed the April Financial Statements at our May meeting. As of April, the total budget to actual surplus was \$486,363. The Land Maintenance portion of the Operating budget had a positive budget-to-actual variance of \$269,110. Please keep in mind that we will be incurring an unbudgeted expense of \$251,000 for tree trimming and tree removal before the end of this year. We also have a positive variance for water of \$100,140 due to the significant rain received this winter. The irrigation system has now been turned back on for the lawns and embankments so we should experience higher water costs soon.

Budget season has arrived. The first Reserve meeting was held on June 7. In July, budget request forms will be sent to the various committee chairs

and staff to justify their financial needs for 2025. We will begin our preliminary budget review in August.

The Budget and Finance Committee meets regularly on the third Monday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Vista Room. Our next meeting will be on July 17. Please look for eblasts with additional details about our next meeting.

*Lisa Shoemaker, Chair,
(949) 305-6336*

Courier

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who help during monthly *Casta Courier* stuffing days. Most of you come for more than just the free donuts and bagels. You are gratified by the chance to volunteer and help our community. We have had some challenges in the past few months. At times, some of the materials were not delivered and/or the copies of the *Courier* were not delivered in a timely manner. During the May stuffing, there were nine flyers to insert; that was at times chaotic and definitely more time-consuming. Thanks for your patience; we understand if you had to leave early.

Continued on page 8



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and delivered
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COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD *Cont'd*

Courier

Continued from page 7

In scheduling the content for our publication, we generally have sufficient articles for three months ahead. We are open to suggestions for other articles. We would like to profile residents who have an interesting ancestry and/or a unique background. We also look for residents' special long-term collections or those who have a recently remodeled house with exceptional features. If your club or activity is having an event that you would like to be featured, please let us know well in advance. We love to show off the best that Casta del Sol has to offer. Our next *Courier* Committee meeting is July 10 at 9:30 a.m. in the Fiesta Room.

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

Election

Articles and reports for the *Casta Courier* must be submitted at least a month before publication. As a result, you probably already know who the four newly elected Board members are. They will be featured in the August issue of the *Courier* along with the three returning Board of Directors members.

On May 30, the Election Committee held a Meet the Candidates Night in the Vista Room. A full house along with a Zoom audience listened as each candidate gave opening remarks and then answered questions from attendees. Election Committee members Scott Shiroma and Myrna Smith kept the candidates on track by serving as timekeepers. Richard Scott, with Barbara Harris' assistance, handled signups for homeowners who wanted to question the candidates. A special thank you to Recreation Director Valerie Hanich for arranging the room set-up and handling the Zoom feed. Election Chair Jeff McCoy moderated the event.

Ballots were tabulated on June 26. Inspector of Elections, Barbara Harris, oversaw the counting process that was handled by the following Inspector Designees: Ron Harris, Elaine Isbell, Kip Isbell, Ann Loranger, Cathy McCoy, Jeff McCoy, Scott Shiroma, Myrna Smith, Fran Sprankle, and Vern Sprankle. The election results were announced at the Annual Meeting held on June 27.

I greatly appreciate the volunteer support of Election Committee members Barbara, Scott, Myrna, and Richard, and the Inspector Designees. Also, a special shoutout to staff

members Susan Wadsley and Valerie Hanich for their professional support throughout the election process.

*Jeff McCoy, Chair,
jmacotr1@gmail.com*

Facilities

Summer is in full swing with spending time with family and friends or taking that much needed vacation. Please note the following updates on items being addressed by the Facilities Committee.

The update to the Rec Ctr 2 Pool/Spa/Shower is underway with gutting the old plaster in the spa and pool, adding a new shower, re-strapping the chairs and chaise lounges, purchasing new large and small tables, and adding new umbrellas.

The asphalt paving contract has been signed and this year Borgona and four cul-de-sacs and Ribalta and all cul-de-sacs will be done. Information will be mailed to all homes affected by the paving to be done this fall.

Other items in process are the update of the Fiesta and Ceramics/Arts and Crafts Rooms, update to benches and support structures at Lawn Bowling, working with design firms on reviewing Association amenities, update of kitchen at Vista Room, replacement of fencing at Chipper area and Vegetable Garden, replacing lights in the library, and replacing the element for lighters in the fire pits.

Don't forget, the Chipper area is not a driving range. A new driving cage has been installed with a new foundation and better netting.

Think about joining the Facilities Committee and getting involved by sharing your time and experiences. The Committee meets on the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in the Fiesta Room. Make sure to read the *Courier* for information on Committees and Clubs or access the Association website.

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

Greenbelt

On June 6, the Casta del Sol Board of Directors approved phase 1 of a slope renovation project along Las Casas and Alava, and El Greco and Alava. The Board only approved the slope design and plantings for phase 1. All designs were provided at no cost to the association by Amelia Herdon-Steen of the Santa Margar-

ita Water District. The Board tabled the Association's new Artificial Turf Policy and will review it at a future Board meeting.

The first turf restoration project along 27781 to 27795 Espinoza was completed in late May by O'Connell Landscaping. The Greenbelt Committee discussed a second turf restoration project at the June 11 Committee meeting. This project will consist of ten homes along Espinoza and Via Torroba and a potential committee recommendation to the Board in July.

The Unamuno and Pedrell turf transformation rebate project will hopefully go to the Board in August. The turf restoration and slope renovation projects are funded from the 2024 Reserves. Discussion of phase 2 of the El Greco and Las Casas slope renovation project will take place at the July committee meeting with a potential recommendation to the Board.

Please attend any Greenbelt meeting to understand what future community projects are being reviewed by the Committee. Owner comments are always welcome at the end of the meeting. The next Committee meeting will take place in the Fiesta room on July 9 at 9 a.m.

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

Library

Library volunteers completed the first phase of our annual inventory. There were too many books that were on the Handy Library Manager (HLM) database but not on the bookshelves or checked out. After a lengthy discussion by the Library Committee on how to fix the problem, it was decided to change the way we do business. From now on, all donated and returned books will be returned through the *Book Return* slots at Rec Ctr 1. Please do not put them on the *Free* cart in the office. The books on the *Free* cart are books that are removed (culled) from the library. Bulk donations can be put into a box and the box placed in the Annex.

New Additions to the Library Regular Print:

Hunted, Abir Mukherjee

Knife, Salman Rushdie

Lies and Weddings, Kevin Kwan

Mind Games, Nora Roberts

One Perfect Couple, Ruth Ware

Continued on next page

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COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD *Cont'd*

Library

Continued from previous page

- Only the Brave*, Danielle Steele
- Real Americans*, Rachel Khong
- Phantom Orbit*, David Ignatious
- The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle & Flying Club*, Helen Simonson
- The Night Watch*, Jayne Ann Phillips
- Think Twice*, Harlan Coben
- This Strange Eventful History*, Claire Messud
- You Never Know*, Tom Selleck

Large Print:

- An Unfinished Murder*, Jude Deveraux
- Clive Cussler's The Heist*, Jack Du Brul
- Crow Talk*, Eileen Garvin
- Darling Girls*, Sally Hepworth
- Feline Fatale*, Rita Mae Brown
- Miss Morgan's Book Brigade*, Janet Skeslien Charles
- The Stolen Child*, Ann Hood

Audio:

- The Excitements*, CJ Wray
- The Demon of Unrest*, Eric Larson
- Sheila Kessler, Vice Chair*, rskessler2@gmail.com

Social

June gloom may have been in the forecast, but at Casta del Sol it's been nothing but smooth sailing and sunshine! Did you see *How We Roll?* Our third annual Car and Cycle Showcase was a blockbuster success. There are so many interesting vehicles in our community, and so many stories behind the wheel. A great turnout, amazing music from Kip Isbell, and delicious ice cream treats from Miss Debbie's ice cream truck made for a fun-filled afternoon for all.

What would Fourth of July be without a barbecue? Help us celebrate the founding of our country with food, fun, and friends. Tickets are \$21 per person, if still available.

Our annual Newcomers Welcome and Community Fair is slated for August 17 from 1 to 3 p.m. Come join the Social and Welcome Committees as we host our clubs, activities, and committees. This is an opportunity to let our neighbors, new and seasoned, see what Casta del Sol has to offer. This is a free event, open to all residents.

The Social Committee meets on the

first Friday of every month at 10 a.m. in the Fiesta Room.

Amy Lake, Chair, arlake225@gmail.com, (516) 263-7941

Traffic

Although our Traffic Minder statistics show most residents drive at or near the speed limit, there are exceptions. Last month, the Allied Universal patrol cited a vendor driving over 50 mph. In my years on Traffic, this is a first. When driving or walking, be alert for a surprise such as a vehicle going at that rate of speed. We also have had vehicle accidents where a common area tree was hit by a vehicle making too wide a turn and a similar wide turn resulted in a parked car being hit and totaled. We don't often think about the safety of a parked car, but these two incidents, and a tree falling on and totaling a car a month ago, gives one pause.

We are monitoring the pedestrian crossing at Casta del Sol Drive from the Oso Creek Trail to the golf course. The city has installed pedestrian crossing signs and a flashing walkway sign pedestrians and/or bicyclists can activate. Casta del Sol is proposing installing a sign warning "pedestrian crossing ahead" on our property just as vehicles exit Gate 1. Summer traffic on the trail will be a challenge for motorists and pedestrians on Casta del Sol drive. We are also working to place signs at the entrance to Gate 2 stating "No Parking, Tow Away Zone." When the fall paving project is in progress, the vendor will paint the Albeniz curb red at no charge; this should also discourage motorists who might park on the street to gain access to the Oso Creek Trail.

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

Welcome

Members of the Welcome Committee contact new residents to arrange meetings and provide packets of information about the many activities, clubs, and committees in Casta del Sol. It is our pleasure to meet with new residents 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, you may email me to arrange a time and place to get together with one or two of our members. We look forward to meeting each one of you and welcoming you to Casta.

The Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month. The first meeting under the new Committee Chairs was held on May 18. This month, the New Resident List included nine households to be contacted by Committee members to set up visits. In addition, this month the Committee was provided with flyers for the upcoming Newcomers Welcome and Community Fair to be held on August 17 from 1 to 3 p.m. at Rec Ctr 1. All residents are invited to attend with a

special emphasis on those who have moved into Casta during the last two years. There will be tables manned by members of clubs and activities where you can ask questions and learn more about each organization. It is also a perfect chance to meet and make new friends with your neighbors. The Welcome Committee encourages everyone to get involved.

Linda Galloway, Chair, Gallowaylinda27@gmail.com

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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.

*Peter and Mary Filakouridis,
mrsfila@gmail.com*

Billiards

What makes billiards so appealing? Let's break it down. This timeless game is accessible to people of all ages and skill levels; a versatile activity for everyone. The Billiards Room serves as a social hub where friends and neighbors gather, chat, and enjoy each other's company. Billiards is a game of strategy and skill. Players learn to think several moves ahead, planning their shots not only to sink balls but also to position the cue ball

advantageously for future shots. This strategic element enhances cognitive skills and provides a mental challenge that keeps players engaged. Beginners can easily grasp the basics, while more experienced players delve into complex strategies, honing their skills with each game. Whether in casual play or organized tournaments, billiards offers a competitive, satisfying experience. Mastering new techniques is incredibly rewarding. Why not experience it for yourself? Come down to the Billiards Room and join the fun.

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

Canine Companions

Our June meeting Yappy Hour turned out to be a very happy two hours of appetizers and drinks. The beautiful weather and warmth have returned. That means our upcoming event on Saturday, July 13, Tom's Hamburgers, will be well attended. Be sure to RSVP. I would like to remind you that your Club is well supported by those who love their animals and care about their well-being. But many also support it here in Casta del Sol because they like the friendship of the owners. That is why Linda enjoys

the preparation of special lunches and appetizers for the members. In the future, we plan on introducing a few speakers from respected institutions that help our dogs stay healthy and safe. Two come to mind: DAWG and a favorite, Doctor of Veterinary. Stay tuned.

*Tom Brockmiller,
Lindabrock1946@gmail.com,
(949) 412-1083*

Casta Creatives

The Casta Creatives Club has been very busy with many events including Art in the Heritage Garden, Wine and Paint Night, drawing and watercolor classes, and a collage workshop. The trip to the Hilbert Museum will be rescheduled and other trips are planned. Don't miss the display of four of our Casta Creative artists' paintings in the library/office: Jacki Keller, Julie Yates, Susan Stanley, and Bonnie Best. We have a wealth of talent among artists residing in Casta del Sol.

There are several upcoming workshops for members that might appeal to those who like to create. These include mosaics, acrylic pour, and collage. Become a member for only \$10 a year if you'd like to participate. Each week our members meet on Wednesday and Thursday for Open Studio from 2 to 6 p.m. in the Arts and Crafts Room. For more information, contact Jacki Keller at (949) 293-5487.

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

Ceramics

Ceramics had both kilns go down almost at the same time. It made us realize how much we enjoy being in Ceramics and doing our skills. By the time you read this, we expect to be up and running again. As always, we welcome new members and hope we will see you soon.

*Shelly Lethiot,
shelly2casta@gmail.com*

Crafts For Charity

The Craft Ladies of Casta del Sol delivered 100 Fourth of July thank you cards to Mission Viejo City Hall for deployed troops they support with gift packages. We also delivered 85 Fourth of July tray favors for recipients of Meals on Wheels in Mission Viejo. The group is now making inspira-

tional cards and journals for Laura's House clients who are dealing with domestic violence.

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

Thank you to all those who attended our monthly meetings this past year. For most meetings, we bring in a knowledgeable presenter and/or a candidate for a local election. We hope to have local candidates, those who attended the DNC, and other knowledgeable presenters for our fall meetings. We will not have regular meetings in July or August but plan on postcard writing gatherings. The dates are July 21 and August 25 at 3 p.m. in the Vista Room. We will send out reminders to those on our mailing list. In this important election year, we want to create a good community within Casta del Sol and always welcome new residents. We are a no-dues club. If you would like to receive emails, please let me know.

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

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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Health & Fitness

Come join our weekly Casta Stretch Class in the Vista Room where our instructor, Sheri Robinson, keeps us limber with easy stretches and good humor. We are fortunate to be guided by Sheri who has certifications in personal training and corrective exercise. Her private practice is in rehab training, post-surgeries, and injuries; her specialty is working with seniors. If you're not sure the class is for you, you are always welcome to drop by and observe. Classes are on Tuesday mornings, 10 to 10:50 a.m. The fee is \$10 cash per class, paid to the instructor. Reservations are not required but are recommended in case we have a change of venue. Contact us for more information. Also, a reminder that the Fitness Center is now closed on Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. for deep cleaning.

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

Heritage Garden

Bathed in the golden light of July, our Heritage Garden comes alive with vibrant blooms and a sweet smell of rosemary and lavender. Humming-

birds dance among trumpet vines, their wings a blur as they sip nectar. The gentle trickle of the fountain in the Redbud Grove harmonizes with the buzz of bees pirouetting on the pollen-laden flowers. Pack a brown bag lunch, find a shady spot beneath the trees, and share stories and laughter with your friends and neighbors. Or, as the sun stretches the evening longer, gather for a board game and enjoy the endless summer sky. This haven awaits, inviting you to simply be present and soak in nature's beauty. Remember to recycle; your plastic, glass, and cans find a new life in our garden. Just drop off your bag of recyclables and we will do the rest. Thank you for helping us nurture the Heritage Garden.

Parizad Sethna,
parizad9@outlook.com,
(949) 298-0076

Las Damas

Summer is in full swing, and we hope Las Damas Club members are enjoying their families and relaxing with Casta del Sol friends and neighbors. Our committees are busy planning new fall luncheon menus and exciting entertainment for the holiday months. Watch for more details in the

August *Courier*. Members are encouraged to invite friends, neighbors, and new residents to join us for a get-acquainted luncheon on September 11 when Las Damas Club resumes its monthly get-togethers. We are blessed to have a vibrant, supportive club in our community, geared to the interests and support of senior women. Las Damas Club provides a warm and friendly environment where members can gather for a good time with neighbors who become fast friends. Happy summer!

Pat Crowley,
(949) 305-0582

Mah Jongg Mavens

Players, join our group any Saturday morning from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room at Rec Ctr 2. Bring the 2024 card and \$3 to play. We are a friendly group and welcome newcomers. For lessons, experienced instructor Lani Wolff will schedule a series of lessons: four weeks, two hours each. Email Lani at lanilobo40@gmail.com for details and to register.

Mah Jongg Mavens hold a tournament and potluck lunch on the first Saturday of every month. Bring your

card, \$3 to play, and a food item to share. Winners on June 1 were: Most Mah Jongg: Joann Hunt and Madeleine Lipofsky; Concealed Hands: Ann Loranger and Judy Paskey; Jokerles: Linda Clark; Quints: Suzanne Moore and Myrna Smith. There were no winners in Singles and Pairs. May the Jokers be with you.

Jean VanDerford,
abutterflylady@cox.net

Military Veterans

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - The Declaration of Independence (1776). As we celebrate the Fourth of July, let's not forget the military soldiers who have dedicated their lives to ensure these unalienable rights stated in the Declaration of Independence. Happy Fourth of July to all Casta del Sol residents.

Our next social gathering will be on July 22 in the pool area for a summer barbecue at 1700 hours. New residents of Casta who are military veterans,

Continued on page 12

“Selling my home in Casta was a bit tricky. As my partners in this difficult transition, Boker and Jaye listened and got to work designing a unique plan to meet my timing and funding needs. I am in my new residence and cannot thank Boker & Jaye enough. Mission accomplished.” I. Lillyman

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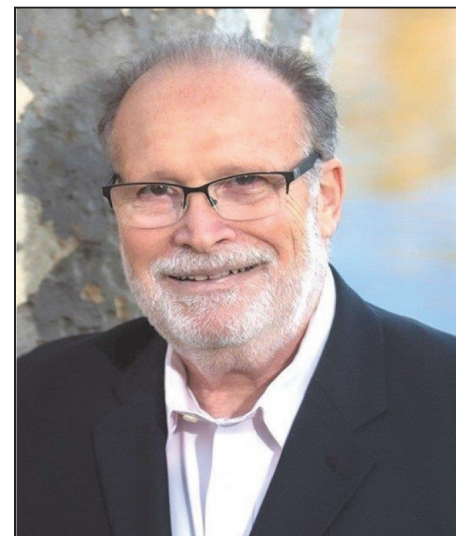
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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Military Veterans

Continued from page 11

or spouses of veterans, are more than welcome to attend. We look forward to meeting you. Please monitor your email for future updates.

*Rod Jordan,
rodjy@rodjordan.com,
(714) 746-1158*

Ping Pong

Join us on Saturday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Garden Room for social and competitive play. There is always a table available for newcomers and/or those who need a refresher. In addition, a table will be available for open play on Saturdays until 2 p.m. and on most Sundays. All skill levels are welcome. Paddles are available for loan in the Rec Ctr 1 office. We look forward to seeing you there. For more information contact Sherry Hargrove.

*Sherry Hargrove,
(858) 336-5369*

Pinochle

We play six games of three-handed Pinochle every Friday evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room of Clubhouse 2. All Pinochle players are welcome to join us. May was an unusual month because we played a five-handed variation on the first Friday. Dawn Hibbs scored the high total of 1,060 and Cathi Joy had second highest at 952. We voted to play partners during weeks 2, 3, and 4. It created a bonanza of Double Pinochles and even a Double Run. Linda Owen and Cathi Joy scored 7,460 with a Double Pinochle and a Double Run. The following week Alice McNany and Cathi Joy had four Double Pinochles to win, but Peggy Torrance and Terry Owen had two and so did Nancy Money and Jane Knesl. It is always a surprise to see these winning combinations.

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

Republican

The Republican Club officers hope you enjoyed our June 2 meeting with our guest speaker Anne Dunsmore with Reform California, Rescue California, and Election Integrity. She spoke on both our upcoming national and California elections. We have

petitions available for anyone who would like to sign. The officers are working on another event in August where we are looking to have several candidates for the upcoming elections as speakers. Since our officer pool has dwindled over the past few years, we need more members to step up and offer their talents and contacts as we plan for future meetings. Please let us know if you are interested and would like to help.

*Betty Houston,
consultantbetty@gmail.com,
(626) 422-0771*

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 July, we will be meeting for a potluck dinner on Friday, July 26, at 5:30 p.m. in the Fiesta Room. To reserve your seat at the table, please RSVP to Carol Kowalsky only at cekewpiel@cox.net by Monday, July 22. 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

Get ready for our next event on Sunday, July 28: Good Morning Casta Sunday Brunch, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The ticket price is \$26 per person. We'll be poolside (BYOB, no glass). Food by Martinez Catering will feature scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, French toast, fruit platter, Greek salad, assorted muffins and pastries, orange juice, coffee, and tea. Calirays will be performing live music.

Mark your calendar for another poolside event: Under the Stars dinner and dance will be Saturday, August 24 from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Menu by Sabatinos and music by the popular band, Sideways. Keep your eyes out for the Casta del Sol eblasts so you know when you can purchase tickets for upcoming events.

*Annie Cabaniss,
Anniecabaniss@gmail.com,
(949) 637-7653*

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*

Variety

The Casta del Sol Variety Club's *GrAnnie* show was outstanding. We had nearly "standing room only" for each of the three shows. Due to the popularity of recent productions, we undertook three showings for the first time. This was also the most ambitious show undertaken, following many weeks of intensive rehearsals. Thanks to the writing and direction of Barb Turino and Bear Sanchez, we had rave reviews. After a well-deserved wrap party where we watched a video of *GrAnnie* and kidded about it, we will recuperate for several months. Stay tuned for an announcement of an upcoming venture around Halloween.

Our newest performers were excited to be part of this family of performers who are all so supportive. 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

Last month brought us the warm weather and sun needed to cause our vegetables and flowers to grow. Blackberries are abundant and the grapes planted in various gardens have formed nice bunches. Fruit on the citrus trees is ripening. With all the flowers, we have a regular stream of hummingbirds and bees who help pollinate our vegetables and trees. We have had a number of turnovers in the garden, however the waiting list at this writing is 17 people waiting for a lot. Happy Gardening.

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

Water Exercise

A great summer is ahead. Each weekday morning we meet in Pool 1 at 9 a.m. for our water exercise workouts. Hopefully we are going to have wonderful weather for the rest of the year. We exercise each day, but we also have a lot of fun. We are planning our summer luncheon by the pool this month on July 25; all members are invited. You will receive an email that will give you all the details. New members can sign up in the office; dues are only \$10 for the year. See you at the pool.

*Nan Rednall,
nrednall@gmail.com,
(949) 584-4321*

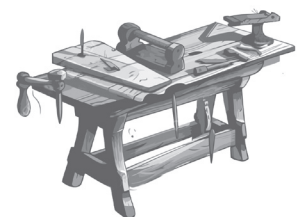
Woodworkers

At this time, Woodworkers Club members are mostly working on personal projects and around-the-house "honey do" lists. We have had very few resident requests for our help with small wood projects or wood-related repairs in the last couple of months.

Members have attended the Orange County Woodworkers Association meetings in Tustin where we meet with other local woodworkers. Periodically, the OCWWA sponsors contests among its members with different challenges making objects of wood. Recently, the challenge was to complete a project made from a Douglas Fir 2 x 4. The result was an amazing range of projects from jewelry boxes to desk lamps. One of our club members made an animal animation project with moving parts; it earned fourth place.

Woodworkers meet each Monday afternoon 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 you are interested in our activities.

*Steve Vallely,
(714) 595-5766*



Need a Copy of the Casta Courier?

If the *Casta Courier* is not delivered to your home, or it was in poor condition, there are copies available each month outside the Rec Ctr 1 office. The *Courier* may also be found on the castadelsol.com website, including the current and past issues.

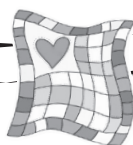
Bulletin Board

Please see club reports for more information.



Cover to Cover – Book Club #1

Cover to Cover will be reading *This Is Your Mind on Plants* by Michael Pollan as our July selection. Focusing on three plant drugs: opium, caffeine, and mescaline, the author discusses the human attraction to psychoactive plants. We are meeting on Monday, July 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the Casta del Sol Library. Contact Amy Lake at (516) 263-7941, Arlake225@gmail.com



Quilters Group

Join us from 1-4 p.m. on Thursday, July 11 and Thursday, July 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. Contact Victoria Crayne at (949) 587-1853.



Yarn Art Group

Join our friendly yarn craft group! We meet every Wednesday from 9-11 a.m. in the Garden Room at Rec Ctr 1. It's open to everyone; no dues or fees required. Contact Teresita at (949) 328-0294.



Canine Companions Club

Please join the Canine Companions for "Tom's Famous Hamburgers" on July 13 from 1-3 p.m. at the Lawn Bowling Pavilion. We will be serving delicious hamburgers with all the trimmings, chips, salad, and dessert. Water and soft drinks will also be available. Bring your doggies out and join the fun. Please, you must RSVP to Linda Brockmiller at (949) 412-1083 or Lindabrock1946@gmail.com



Social Committee

Mark your August calendar! The Casta del Sol Newcomers Welcome and Community Fair will be Saturday, August 17 at Rec 1. Information will be provided and your questions will be answered as you explore all the committees, clubs, activities, and fun that Casta has to offer. Contact Amy Lake at (516) 263-7941 or Arlake225@gmail.com

Pickleball Club

Need a way to beat the summer heat? Come to the Lawn Bowling Pavilion on Wednesdays, July 3, August 7, and September 4 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. to enjoy a banana split or root beer float. Open to everyone! \$5 donation suggested. Contact Eric Vanderslice at (562) 712-1225 or vvslice@aol.com



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 format.
-Jeff McCoy, Bulletin Board Editor, jmactr1@gmail.com

SPORTS

Bocce Ball

If you want to have an hour of laughs, please join us on the Bocce Ball courts. We play on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights from 7 to 8 p.m. On the second and fourth Friday, we play only one game at 6:30 p.m. so that cards can begin at 7 p.m. Please note that we will not be having a meeting in July.

On Monday, August 5 at 5 p.m., we will be having an event just for current Bocce Ball members at Lake Mission Viejo. We will be renting a couple of the party boats followed by a box meal on the picnic tables which have been reserved for our use. Appetizers will be served on the boats. This event will be free for our members. Sign-ups will begin on Wednesday, July 10.

Carol Zinsmeister,
(949) 305-9890

Bowling

The Casta del Sol Bowling League is on hiatus for the summer. We will start the 2024/2025 season in mid-September. We will continue bowling on Thursdays at 1 p.m. at Saddleback Lanes on Marguerite Parkway in Mission Viejo. We will be setting up teams in late August. If you have not already signed up and

want to bowl on one of our teams or be on our list of subs, just call Donna Miller at (949) 395-8958. The Heart and Sol League that many of the Casta del Sol bowlers join has started. If you are interested in bowling, contact Saddleback Lanes at (949) 586-5300.

Van Quinn,
(949) 842-9151

Fishing

There has been no change in the Lake Mission Viejo status. Golden Algae is still preventing fish stocking. In the interim, Laguna Woods Rod and Gun Club continues to welcome Casta members. They have three-quarter day trips from Dana Wharf twice a month. We are currently fishing for rockfish. Bass fishing will start when the water temperature is warm enough.

Our Casta del Sol monthly luncheon meeting is Friday, July 26, at noon in the Fiesta Room. We will conduct a bass fishing seminar at the meeting. We will also discuss tuna and Dorado fishing trips and equipment at the July meeting. Anyone interested in learning about ocean fishing in local waters is welcome to come, member or not. There are always discussions of future plans and reports on trips.

Nick Morenc,
(949) 588-6223

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 12:00 PM Social's 4th of July Party, P1	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 	31	Recreation Center 1 Hours: May - Oct: Mon-Sun, 8 am-10 pm Recreation 1 Pool & Fitness Center Hours: May-Oct: Mon-Sat, 7 am-10 pm, Sun, 8 am-10 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 - July 2024 (All activities are subject to change.)			Recreation Center 1
Bible Study T, 10:30 AM, H	Cribbage..... TH, 6:30 PM, H	Poker Ladies..... 1st W, 6 PM, G	AC = Arts & Crafts
Bocce Ball M, W, F, 7-8 PM, BC	Duplicate Bridge T, 12 PM, G	Quilting..... 2nd & 4th TH, 1 PM, G	B = Billiards Room
Bunco..... 1st T, 6 PM, H	Hand & Foot M, 6 PM, G;	Rubber Bridge..... M, 11 AM, G	BC = Bocce Ball Courts
2nd T, 6 PM, H	W, 12 PM, H;	Scrabble T, 6 PM, L	CW = Ceramics Workshop
2nd T, 6 PM, G	S, 6 PM, H	Shuffle Super..... 2nd Su, 1 PM, SBP	F = Whole Fiesta Room
Bunco Babes 3rd T, 6 PM, G	Jewelry Class F, 1 PM, AC	Strummers M, 1 PM, H	F1 = Fiesta Room Fireplace Side
Casta Creatives..... W, TH, 2 - 6 PM, AC & CW	Lawn Bowling..... M, W, F, 9:30 AM, LBG	Support Group 1st & 3rd TH, 10:30 AM, G	F2 = Fiesta Room Back Side
Ceramics Club..... M, T, W, S, 8 AM - 1:30 PM;	Mah Jongg Mavens S, 10 AM, H	Tennis T, TH, 6:30 PM, TC;	G = Garden Room
AC & CW	Mexican Train T, 1 PM, V or AC	M, W, S, 8 AM, TC	L = Library
TH, 8 AM - 12 PM, AC;	Paddle Tennis M, T, W, TH, F, 9 AM, PTC	Texas Hold'em W, 12:45 PM, G	LP = Lapidary Room
TH, 8 AM - 1:30 PM, CW	Pickleball..... T, F, Su, 8 AM, TC;	Water Exercise..... M, T, W, TH, F, 9 AM, P1	P1 = Pool 1
F, 8 AM - 1 PM, AC,	M, W, 4 PM, TC	Wood Workers..... M, 2 PM, AC; TH, 12 PM, AC	SBP = Shuffleboard Pavilion
F, 8 AM - 1:30 PM, CW	Ping Pong S, Su, 9 AM, G		V = Vista
Crafts for Charity 1st, 3rd W, 10 AM, H	Pinochle..... F, 6:30 PM, H	
			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

A Springtime Symphony of Nature, Art, and Community

By Parizad Sethna, photos by Kip Isbell

The Casta del Sol Heritage Garden unfurled its vibrant petals for its Spring Open House. On April 27, more than 250 guests were greeted with warm smiles and a delightful pairing of complimentary wine and cheese. Adding a touch of flair, the Casta Creatives Club joined the festivities, showcasing their artwork amidst the verdant splendor of the garden.

The morning fog relinquished its hold, revealing an afternoon bathed in beautiful sunshine. The garden, impeccably maintained as ever, shimmered with life. The calming music provided a harmonious counterpoint to the visual feast of nature's creations. A garden fundraiser offered a dazzling array of succulents, giving visitors the chance to bring home a piece of living art. Residents, some accompanied by their families, meandered through the garden, enchanted by its flourishing beauty.

A kaleidoscope of paintings adorned the garden – naturalism, photorealism, and impressionism, all found their voice. Mosaics, pastels, watercolors, oils, and acrylics offered something for every imaginative palate. As visitors strolled, they paused to admire and discuss, sparking lively conversations about the art. Artists, some fresh-faced novices, others seasoned maestros, were on hand to share the stories woven into their creations. The Casta Creatives Club upped the fun factor with a Wine and Paint event ticket raffle. To enter, residents embarked on a delightful quest, collecting signatures from at least three of the exhibiting artists.

Awash in the vibrant natural beauty and artistic expression, the afternoon was a blooming symphony. Lush flora harmonized with graceful art, all set to the rhythm of our exuberant CdS community. A heartfelt thanks to the Heritage Garden Club volunteers! Your dedication cultivates joy with every bursting blossom, making this garden a haven for all to enjoy.



Sipping, savoring, and soaking in the sunshine: A perfect afternoon in the garden



Yosemite's majesty captured on canvas: Susan Stanley exhibits her stunning work.



Showcasing the spectrum: Susan Ashby displays her colorful glass mosaics



Mirroring the Heart: Family portraits by Pat Townsend



Bringing landscapes to life: James Dryer's brushstrokes of beauty

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SPORTS *Cont'd*

Lawn Bowling

Here we are starting the second half of the year, celebrating our independence with BBQs on the Casta del Sol patio or in backyards with family, and enjoying fireworks in surrounding parks. The club is getting ready for our last two tournaments for the year in August and October. We have recently added three new members and, hopefully, this reminds you, if you haven't filled out your applications for membership yet, that there is still time. The questions aren't difficult, and we welcome players of all ages. By the time you read this, we will

also be playing in the mornings at 9 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to take advantage of the cooler weather. Once again, here is your open invitation to join our sport with help from our members on how to play, with fun, a little competition, and great social times.

Ed Tutton,
(949) 584-1638

Men's Golf

Oso Creek Golf Course has announced new green fee rates effective July 1. Non-residents will see an increase of \$8 and Mission Viejo

residents will benefit with a \$6 lower rate. Cart fees will remain the same. The golf course has some critical infrastructure that needs to be addressed and a portion of the increased rates will be used to make planned improvements. No one likes increased costs but let's support our golf course.

The July games are: 7/3, Individual Low Net; 7/10, Team Best Ball – Gross; 7/17, Best 15 Holes; 7/24, Odd/Even Twosome; and 7/31, Team 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

a.m. Club members will be happy to get you started and let you know how you can become a member, too.

Eric Vanderslice,
(562) 712-1225

Shuffleboard

The Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening Pot of Gold leagues are off during the summer and will resume in the fall. If you have any questions, contact Jim Kinney at dothemath99@yahoo.com for the Tuesday morning league or Susan Herrning at susanherrning@aol.com for the Wednesday evening league.

The following were winners for the Sunday Super Shuffle: 1st Marlene Solem/Howard Reafsnyder; 2nd Mo Caywood/Jerry Castro; 3rd Brigid Johnson/Cathy McCoy. The next date is August 11 as there will be a break in July. Winners for the Sunday Potluck Social Shuffle were: 1st Jayne Freed/Val Stover; 2nd Richard Scott/Patti Castro; 3rd Ann Loranger/Jesse Hunt. The next date for the Sunday Potluck Social Shuffle is July 28. Sign-ups for both Sunday games are in the Shuffleboard Pavilion.

Debra Friedman,
debrafriedman0@gmail.com

Paddle Tennis

The following were winners of the Cinco de Mayo tournament that took place on May 11: Competitive Group: 1st Randy Stultz, 2nd Dave Goff, 3rd Nary Kanoor; Intermediate Group: 1st Marci Smith, 2nd Chuck Brown, 3rd tie Kevin Smith and Betsy Malloy; Social Group: 1st Rosendo Castillo, 2nd Suzy Jolley, 3rd Jerry Castro. Great turnout, great enthusiasm, and great fun. Our first social event of the year will be the Pizza Olympics on Sunday, August 4. This is a joint endeavor with the Pickleball Club and always a great event. Sign-ups at the front office will begin on July 7. 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 open court time.

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

Tennis

Despite the vagaries of our weather, the Tennis Club's on-court activities continue with group play on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings at 8 a.m. and Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. The first Saturday group sessions continue with Clarity Tennis Tips, with coffee and breakfast munchies included. The third Saturday program includes drills and court fun led by local pro Jimmy Gleason. The group events can accommodate a variety of skill levels and newcomers are always welcome. The Tennis Club's summer extravaganza is fast approaching so mark your calendars for the return of the band Ortega Highway on Saturday, August 10 at 5:30 p.m. This event should provide a terrific opportunity for your listening, dancing, and eating pleasure. You can catch up on all these events on the Tennis Club's Facebook page. We invite all Casta del Sol residents to visit the site on Facebook at Casta del Sol Tennis Club.

Roger Gyger,
(630) 430-9045

Pickleball

Summertime brings exciting Pickleball Club activities. The first Wednesday of each month, the club conducts a clinic aimed at improving your game. The clinics start at 3 p.m. and will be followed by open play and an ice cream social. We'll be serving sundaes, floats, and banana splits. Come down to Rec Ctr 2 on July 3, August 7, and September 4 to participate. The club also invites you to come and learn more about the sport during any of our open play times. Open play times are Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 6 p.m., and on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8 to 10

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CASTA COMMUNITY

On the Road Again Irvine Regional Park

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



Debra Friedman

I highly recommend this day trip if you have grandchildren. I previously wrote about the Orange County Zoo located within Irvine Regional Park. But there is so much more to do for children as well as for adults.

As a horse lover, I often took my own children and now I take my granddaughter to the pony rides. There are both walking and trotting ponies in an equestrian ring. The choice of type of pony depends on the age, height, and weight of the child. For anyone over eight, trail rides can be booked. This is one of the few facilities left in Orange County.

Another favorite activity is the Irvine Park Railroad. Taking a scenic journey through sections of the park, including a panoramic façade of historic buildings, appeals to all ages. During the winter holidays, the lights are outstanding, and the Santa's Village of games and crafts is perfect for children. Other holidays are observed as well in this village.

There are also paddleboats and surrey bikes available to rent, which is appealing during warmer months. Children can have adventures in the playgrounds and picnic areas where there are grills and picnic tables.

The park is known for its beautiful natural surroundings including many mature trees, rolling hills, and the tranquil lake. For those in shape, there are several miles of trails appropriate for hiking and mountain biking.

Irvine Regional Park, founded in 1928, is 495 acres. It is located in the City of Orange, about 20 minutes from Casta del Sol.

Small Talk Those Grand Old Gals

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



Dorothy Frances

I often think back to my youth when all my maternal aunts and great-aunts were alive. Now and then, like a flock of birds, they would gather at one house or the other for coffee and tea, along with something to eat such as cake or cheese and crackers.

None of these women had much money, some had hard lives, and some had suffered terrible losses and heartache. Yet, when they were together, there was an abundance of laughter. Their strength and endurance were amazing.

Many years later, when my children were grown, my mother lived in Flor-

ida, and twice a year I would spend a week with her. One time, I asked my great-aunt in New Jersey, who was in her late eighties, if she would like to go with me to visit my mom. She accepted with delight, so I flew to New Jersey, and we then boarded a flight to Florida.

That visit turned out to be a memory that I will always cherish. There we were, three generations of women, talking, eating, and most of all, laughing until our sides ached. Nothing had changed from my childhood, except that I had a place at the table.

Now that our aunts and great-aunts are gone, my generation of women have taken their place, filling the air with laughter.

I have just one disturbing question where this story is concerned: How the heck did I get old enough to be referred to as a "Grand Old Gal?"

Reflections of a Casta Neighbor

A resident explores the adventures of Casta.



Nevin Valentine

At Casta, we have the good fortune of living a long life, giving us a wide lens to view our own career trajectories. Many of us began pursuing our vocations 50 or more years ago and recalling connections to our childhood interests and pastimes can be enlightening.

In the spring of 1974, my first child, Reid, was born and my world erupted in technicolor glory. Remembering that time in my life brought back my childhood dream of being a mother. I played with my first Tiny Tears baby doll. I mothered that doll with an intensity that was different than how other children played with their dolls. I cared for her around the clock. I even left my mother a list of instructions on how to care for her whenever I left the house.

Growing up in a large extended family gave me many opportunities to observe how mothers interacted with their babies and young children,

and how assorted styles of mothering seemed to impact the quality of the child's life and well-being. I also knew I wanted to be a mother above anything else and as soon as I could.

When Reid was six months old, I began taking classes in "mothering" with a visionary instructor, Bernice Callahan, who became a defining influence and esteemed mentor. She established the California Parenting Institute and based her curriculum on the work of author and Harvard pediatrician Dr. T. Barry Brazelton. I soon became a teacher and program developer for this Northern California nonprofit organization. We taught the importance of understanding the infant's temperament and how to parent babies so that they form secure attachments. We were parenting pioneers and, in the fifty years since we began, the parenting skills and theories of child development we taught have been validated by neuroscientists and brain technology.

I found meaningful ways to integrate mothering into my chosen profession, which culminated with twenty years as a college instructor in the field of early childhood education. Take some time to consider your work life and how it might have been inspired. Mine began with that Tiny Tears doll.

What's Cooking at Casta

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



Linda Brockmiller

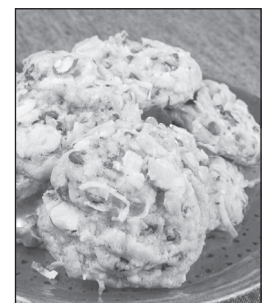
Almond Joy Cookies

- 1 1/8 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
- 3/4 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Whisk to combine flour, baking soda and salt in a small bowl. Set aside.

Using a mixer, cream butter and sugars. Add vanilla and egg and mix just until incorporated. Slowly blend the dry mixture into the creamed mixture. Stir in chocolate chips, coconut flakes, and sliced almonds.

Using a 1 1/2 Tbsp. cookie scoop, drop by rounded spoonfuls onto parchment covered baking sheets. Bake for 9-12 minutes. Allow to cool for ten minutes before moving to cookie cooling racks. Approximately 24 cookies.



Financial Policies and Procedures

The Casta del Sol HOA mailed to all homeowners the 2023 Fiscal Year Audited Financial Statement on April 19, 2024. If you have any questions about the Casta del Sol Financial Policies and Procedures, please go to castadelsol.com or get a Customer Service Request form at the Rec Ctr 1 office.

PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS

O'Connell, A New Landscape Maintenance Company

By Liz Rickett, photos by Fred Lake



O'Connell employees remove a tree stump at Rec Ctr 2



Workers with one of the new vehicles

In 2023, Casta del Sol created a new landscape maintenance contract and searched for companies to fulfill this contract. After receiving bids from seven companies, the contract to maintain the landscape at Casta was awarded to O'Connell Landscape Maintenance. O'Connell is based in Rancho Santa Margarita, specializes in HOA landscape maintenance, and has 53 years of experience. O'Connell

has more than 1,200 employees and contracts with 225 HOAs ranging from communities at the Mexican border to downtown Los Angeles and in the Coachella Valley.

Onsite at Casta, O'Connell has more than 50 employees, working full-time, to maintain the landscape. They are under the supervision of Leo Rodriguez and Reyes Gomez who are onsite full time. Nearly 75% of the

staff who worked with PWLC1, the previous contractor, have been hired by O'Connell to work at Casta.

Jack Rush, vice president of operations for O'Connell, has worked for the company for 34 years. He described the changes residents will see with O'Connell as the CdS landscape company. He indicated that the main change O'Connell is bringing to Casta is a more natural, softer type of main-

tenance with fewer sculpted plants and less constant shearing of shrubs. This is not only more labor efficient but is also healthier for the plants.

There are other visible changes. All O'Connell employees are easy to spot wearing neon green vests as they work. They also use small open vehicles rather than large trucks as they traverse the community.

Continued on next page

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

**O'Connell,
A New Landscape Maintenance Company**

Continued from last page

Like other landscape maintenance companies, O'Connell faces challenges. Labor is a huge expense with steadily increasing mandated minimum wages. In addition, dealing with legislation regarding environmental concerns is a challenge. Gas engines are no longer allowed to be sold. This has impacted the use of lawn mowers, blowers, trimmers, etc. Batteries must be used, raising questions including: where to store them, how to charge

them, where to charge them, and how often is a break necessitated for charging.

Residents also have a new system of requesting landscape maintenance requests by either calling (800) 339-1106 or via email to *workorders@oclm.com*.

We welcome O'Connell and look forward to a great working relationship.

A Good Read: The Brightest Star

Book Review by Liz Rickett

Anna May Wong was one of the most famous Hollywood stars of the '30s. She was set apart from the other film stars by her talent, beauty, intelligence, and style. However, it was not these qualities that defined her, it was the fact she was Chinese. Because of her race, she was denied starring roles. She had to watch Caucasian actresses don "yellowface" to portray Chinese characters in films.

Born in Chinatown, Los Angeles, her family stressed education. She wanted to act, turning her back on traditional Chinese values. Not fully accepted by the Chinese community, Hollywood, or the White community, she never gave up pursuing her dream.

This historical novel by Gail Tsukiyama details Wong's fascinating yet tragic life.

A Good Read: Hang the Moon

Book Review by Liz Rickett

Sallie Kincaid is the daughter of the biggest man in a small town in Virginia. She idolizes her father and wants to be like him. However, in the post-World War I South, it is her younger half-brother who is the heir apparent.

Using her wits, knowledge, and brains, Sallie is determined to forge her own path and realize her dream.

This novel by Jeanette Walls explores family ties and secrets, the burden and blessing of Prohibition in the hill country of Virginia, and the role of race and romance in the town and in the family. This novel is available in the Casta del Sol Library.

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Spotlight on Pinochle

By Liz Rickett

While pinochle has been played for many years, its origin is not certain. It is surmised that it originated in German-speaking regions and that the name is an adaptation of the German name for the game Binokel.

It is a bidding, melding, trick-taking game. When the cards are dealt, each player assesses the cards in his/her hand counting the points for card combinations before bidding begins. A pinochle (a queen of spades and a jack of diamonds) is 4 points, but a double pinochle (two of each) is worth 30 points. The highest bidder names trump and play begins. Here at Casta del Sol, 3 or 4 people per table play using a deck containing 48 cards Ace through 9.

This is a game of strategy. No two games are ever the same. There is a mental challenge in remembering what meld was displayed and what cards were played.

Pinochle is played every Friday from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room. If you are interested in learning more about this game, contact Dawn Hibbs at idgett@cox.net or drop by and watch how it is played. All are welcome.

Spotlight on Cribbage

By Liz Rickett

Cribbage, a card game invented in the early 1600s, is one of the most popular games in the English-speaking world. It is played with a pack of cards and a cribbage board. Two, three or four players can play.

Players are dealt cards. In the first round, the aim is to reach 31. Points are given for various combinations. Scores are kept by pegs moving around the 121 holes on the cribbage board.

At Casta del Sol, the game is played every Thursday in the Heritage Room from 6:30 to about 8:45 p.m. Three or four games are played each evening.

There are no dues to join the club or cost to play, although losers pay 25 cents per game if he/she does not reach the skunk line and another player has won. Big losers may pay 75 cents an evening, but this is rare. Since the number of

people who can play is flexible, there is never a need for substitutes. Anyone who turns up can play, as long as he/she can count to 31.

Kind, experienced players are happy to teach new players during the game. However, if someone would like to know more about the game before trying it out, players are available to come to your home to teach you how to play.

Interested in playing? Contact Susan Herrning at susanherrning@aol.com.

Restaurant Review: Mozambique

By Debra Friedman

No need to fly across the world to get a taste of South Africa. Mozambique is a unique restaurant located in south Laguna Beach on the Coast Highway. It is a prominent building since it is three stories and painted a conspicuous mustard color.

As you are about to enter this historic building, you are greeted by several large birds – toucans and parrots. They set the tone for the journey to foreign lands. I recommend booking a patio table on the top floor for an expansive view of the ocean.

The lunch menu includes some South African specialties including “Peri-Peri” sauce, South African soup, and South African pies with the option of three different fillings. My usual approach to a theme restaurant is “when in Rome,” so I opted for the South African meat pie with chicken and mushrooms. Imagine an elevated level chicken pot pie. The crust was golden brown, flaky, and melt in your mouth delectable. The filling was rich. Friends had other options including blackened salmon salad and peri-peri chicken. For those who might not like curry or other special sauces, they are always on the side. The dinner menu offers many steak choices.

Mozambique can be very crowded, especially during the evenings that they offer live music in their richly decorated bar and lounge. On a weekday afternoon, there is plenty of space for a wonderful and reasonably priced lunch. Located at 1740 S. Coast Highway in Laguna Beach. Telephone (949) 715-7777. If you have a restaurant review to share, please send it to Fran Morgan at fmorgan17@cox.net.

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

CdS Volleys: Net Adventures

By Debra Friedman, photos by Fred Lake



Hedy Kane follows through; partner Rosendo Castillo hopes to win the Paddle Tennis tournament



Metty Thomason hitting a net Pickleball shot during a tournament



Dennis Serrano serving while playing in a Tennis tournament

“A little friendly competition never hurt anyone,” so said a famous sports writer. In Casta del Sol, we have it all: parties, celebrations, numerous sports options, cards, board games, clubs, committees, etc. Each of our paddle sports, comprised of Paddle Tennis, Tennis, and Pickleball, offer several tournaments a year. The players may

be partnered randomly, chosen in advance, grouped by expertise level, etc., as each tournament dictates. Tournaments accomplish several functions including: encouraging camaraderie among the players and their cheering sections, providing an opportunity to party given the delicious refreshments, and spurring players

to improve their games. Boisterous laughter and resounding applause are characteristic of these occasions.

There is strong support among the paddle sports, as many players belong to more than one of these clubs. What wonderful opportunities tournaments afford participants and spectators.

“Each of our paddle sports, comprised of Paddle Tennis, Tennis, and Pickleball, offer several tournaments a year.”

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

**Getting to Know Our Neighbors:
Bob and Janice Phillips**

By Fran Morgan, photo by Jeff McCoy

Bob and Janice have been married for 52 years. They still have a sparkle about them and speak as though they are newlyweds. They celebrated their golden anniversary by going to Paris with 10 of their family members. They have three children, six grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Janice is a third generation Californian; Bob is from upstate New York. Bob was the owner of a new construction plumbing company. Janice worked in health care administration.

Travel is a big part of their life. They have visited all fifty states and many countries. Janice relates that each new year they begin by discussing where they want to travel. They have a trip to Spain and Portugal this year. Last year, they attended their granddaughter's destination wedding in Prague. Still on their bucket list is a trip to Singapore. "As long as we are vertical, we will be traveling," says Janice.

They have lived in Casta for nine years and say they love living here. They moved from Balboa Island where they had lived for thirty years. Among their favorite things about

Casta is the Heritage Garden. They also love their neighbors and hosting block parties.

They both take classes through the Saddleback College Emeritus programs. Janice loves photography classes and they both sign up for anything about new technology. It is evident neither of them wants to miss a thing,

Janice is a deacon in their church and Bob loves woodworking. Janice got her pilot's license at age 40 and she flew family members to Catalina for lunch. It is evident they take pride in each other. Janice adds that Bob has a beautiful singing voice and participated in barbershop quartets. Bob reports that they both attended clown school and when they performed, Janice was Cookie; Bob was Crumbs.

"What is the secret to a long, happy marriage," is a question they are often asked. "Mutual respect and a sense of humor," answers Janice. Their life philosophy according to Janice is "Just Keep on Keepin' On." This lively couple does much more than that.





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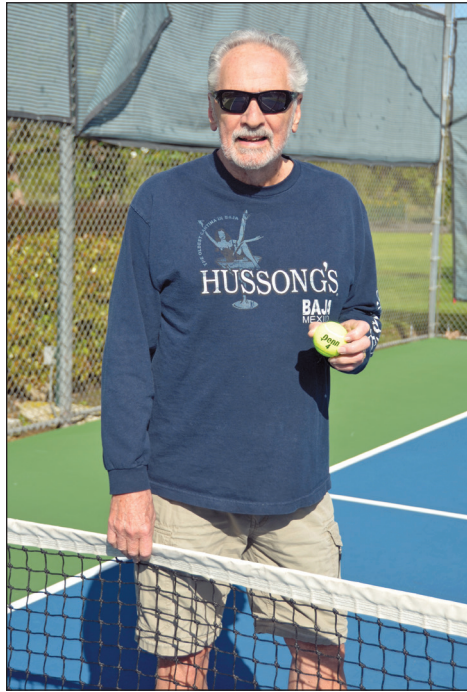
PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Audrey Michaels and Ed Pratt: Ageless Aces

By Liz Rickett, photos by Fred Lake



Audrey Michaels



Ed Pratt

Casta del Sol residents Audrey Michaels and Ed Pratt are on the courts playing paddle tennis, and playing it well, many mornings. Each is also 90 years old.

Born in Nottingham, England, Audrey moved with her parents to Canada in 1952, to Los Angeles in 1961, and settled in Orange County in 1966.

When Audrey lived in England, she

was a figure skater as well as a tennis player. While she didn't keep up with the former, she continued playing tennis. When she moved to Casta in 2000, a friend suggested to Audrey that she play paddle tennis. Audrey gave it a try and has played paddle tennis ever since.

Audrey has been a member of the Board of Directors and the Greenbelt,

Facilities, Traffic, Welcome, and Architecture committees. She attributes her active life to good genes, a love of vegetables, living in Casta, and not having the stress of a husband or children.

Born in Haddonfield, New Jersey, Ed Pratt's family moved to Glendale where he met Nancy in high school. The draft ended their romance; he joined the Air Force, she went to college, and both married other partners.

After serving in the military, Ed had several careers, serving as a police officer in various cities, an investigator for the District Attorney's Office, a computer trainer in Sacramento, and a stint in Oahu where he worked on a user manual for child support enforcement.

Ed and Nancy reconnected at a 35th high school reunion. They exchanged Christmas cards and photos. When he was widowed, he motorcycled past her house, stopped, and they reconnected.

In 2008, they moved to Casta. Ed had played handball and racquetball but never paddle tennis. He saw an article in the *Courier* about the sport, and began playing.

Ed now plays four times a week with a group of three other men. He warns they play to kill. He also enjoys playing in tournaments. He attributes his ability to keep active to the fact he was the first born of three siblings and got all the good genes.

Puns for Fun

Compiled by Jeff McCoy

- My wife thinks I don't respect her privacy enough. At least, that's what it says in her diary.
- My friends and I are in a band called "Duvet." We're a cover band.
- **Q:** What do you call four bullfighters in quicksand? **A:** Quattro sinko.
- **Q:** What do you get when you cross a vampire with a snowman? **A:** Frostbite!

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Getting to Know Our Neighbors: Joanmarie Germeroth

By Liz Rickett, photo by Fred Lake



If you want to learn about the life of Joanmarie (Jore) Germeroth, you'll need a lot of time. This 88-year-old Casta del Sol resident has packed a lot

of experiences in her lifetime.

A 4-H member as a child in New Jersey, it was her job to take the worms off the tomatoes her family

grew and give them to her brother so he could go fishing. This knowledge of vegetables and her love of eating served her in good stead later in life when she became a judge of food entries in various County Fairs.

During her high school years, she sewed all her clothes, some of which she entered into County Fairs. She also loved to cook and submitted entries in the various food categories at these fairs.

As a student at Drexel University in the 1950s she wanted to study civil engineering. However, she was told that since she was "5 foot 2 inches tall and weighed 98 pounds, she would never be accepted in that man's field" and was directed to an economics major.

She got her revenge. At Drexel, she was captain of the women's sailing team. This team took on men's teams, including the midshipmen from Annapolis who they beat handily.

Moving to California in 1961, she

got an elementary teaching credential and taught first grade. Looking for more challenges, she went back to school and got a secondary credential and taught home economics in middle school. A popular teacher, her students begged her to follow them to high school and she did, teaching in Corona del Mar and Newport Harbor high schools.

She continued to sail with her husband. They were the first boat to enter the uncompleted Dana Point Harbor in 1965, having been blown off course on their trip to Catalina.

Moving to the new Deane Homes tract in Mission Viejo in 1971, she began a new career working as a secretary for the Mission Viejo Company. Part of her duties involved checking all the recreation centers in the growing city.

An avid traveler, her home reflects her travels and amazing life.

Where in the World: Antarctica, A Polar Desert

Article and photos by Jeff McCoy



Jeff and Cathy McCoy view Antarctica from their veranda

The continent of Antarctica is shaped like an obese apostrophe. The arm of the apostrophe represents the Antarctic Peninsula, where cruise and exploration ships transport travelers to an icy wonderland inhabited by penguins, birds, seals, and whales. The only human residents, mostly scientists, researchers, and support staff, rarely spend more than four or five months on the continent because of its harsh environment. Antarctica boasts the coldest temperatures (-128.6 F) and the fiercest winds recorded anywhere on earth. A sheet

of ice more than a mile thick covers the continent, which contains 70% of the earth's fresh water. (If melted, the global sea levels would rise 200 feet!)

Although it is possible as a traveler to set foot on Antarctica, my wife and I opted for a sight-seeing experience aboard Holland America's Oosterdam in January 2023. The captain of the cruise ship expertly navigated the waters of the Antarctica Peninsula in search of wildlife. The freezing temperatures did not deter us from viewing the scenery from the ship's bow or our cabin's veranda. We braved



Penguins use icebergs for a rest stop

the cold by wearing gloves, woolen hats, down-filled jackets, and layers of clothing, and were rewarded when we saw Emperor Penguins floating on an iceberg, and whales swimming in synchronized pods. We were also able to view the flightless penguins swimming butterfly strokes with their long flippers and walking on land, where they negotiated rocks, snow, and ice on web feet to bring food to their babies.

Antarctica is a polar desert because it averages less than six inches of precipitation a year, mostly in the form

of snow. The snow accumulates to form giant ice sheets, which, under the force of gravity, move toward the surrounding Southern Ocean creating ice shelves. When shelves begin to break off due to warmer weather, icebergs are formed. These "ice mountains," as the Dutch word *ijsberg* describes them, can be domed, tabular, pinnacle, blocky or wedge-shaped. Only 10% of an iceberg's actual size rises above the water. Besides the penguins and whales, it was seeing nature in its rawest and purest form and those magnificent icebergs that I'll remember most about Antarctica.

PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

The Enchanting Embrace of the Western Redbud

By Parizad Sethna, photos by Jeff McCoy



Tranquility in bloom at the Redbud Grove

For a year now, the Redbud Grove, within the Heritage Garden, has blossomed anew. A gentle fountain whispers secrets to the afternoon breeze, while elegant pergolas cast dappled shade, inviting you to linger. Within this grove, an elegant potting shed, complete with workbench and stools, allows for the propagation of plants that will continue to nourish the garden's life.

Michael and Beth McVey, the visionaries behind this enchanting space, designed it with a purpose: to weave a tapestry of connection within the garden's embrace. "We wanted to create a haven for our residents," the McVeys explained, "a place to gather, unwind, share stories, and celebrate life's simple joys." And their vision has blossomed.

Mornings find strollers pausing to admire feathered friends bathing in the fountain's cool spray. As the sun climbs, bookworms settle beneath the pergolas' shade. And when summer evenings paint the sky in hues of twilight, residents gather, laughter weaving through the air like fireflies.

The grove's true magic unfolds with spring's arrival. The Western Redbuds, undisputed stars of the show, erupt in a vibrant spectacle. Clusters of magenta and rose-pink blossoms unfurl like confetti tossed on an emerald canvas. These delicate pea-like flowers, paint the landscape in a breathtaking display that lasts for three to four glorious weeks.

The Redbuds, however, offer more than just visual splendor. They play a vital role in the garden's ecosystem. Their blossoms beckon a concerto of pollinators:



With a burst of crimson, Redbud blooms take center stage

humming bees laden with pollen, fluttering butterflies, and jeweled hummingbirds skimming on the blooms.

As summer's heat unfurls, the Redbuds transform once more. Their leaves unfurl into a verdant canopy, providing a cool sanctuary from the sun's embrace. It's a powerful reminder of the beauty that blooms when we create spaces for connection. Next time you see Michael and Beth McVey in the garden, stop by and say hello, and be sure to thank them for their labor of love.

Spotlight on Mah Jongg

By Liz Rickett



Mah Jongg is a popular game here at Casta del Sol. It is generally played by four people at one table, each armed with a National Mah Jongg League card. These cards are issued each year denoting all the possible winning hands. It is played with 166 tiles. This describes American Mah Jongg, that differs from Chinese Mahjong, which does not use a card and is played with 144 tiles.

The game originated in southern China in the mid-1800s. It was one

of several male-dominated gambling games. The word "mahjong" means "sparrow" in southern Chinese dialects, referring to the sounds the tiles make when shuffled.

The game was brought to America in 1923 by Joseph Park Babcock who rewrote and published new, simpler rules.

In American Mah Jongg, each player is dealt 13 tiles while the dealer has 14 tiles. The first stage is called the "Charleston" where the tiles are

passed in groups of three, up to seven times. After this initial stage, the remaining tiles are dealt one at a time. The object is to create a winning hand as indicated on the card. Winning involves luck as well as skill.

Mah Jongg is a challenging game to learn. Mid play, you can go from a winning to losing hand, depending on the play of others and which tiles remain to be dealt. An advantage is that there are no partners so no one will yell at you if you mess up. Also, the need to change a hand you are playing helps keep your brain nimble. The Casta players are kind and

welcoming to newcomers, alleviating some of the stress.

American Mah Jongg is played by the Mah Jongg Mavens on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room. Chinese Mahjong is played Fridays at 2 p.m. in the Heritage Room. Everyone is welcome to come to either game, whether you know how to play or not.

If you would like to take lessons on how to play American Mah Jongg, contact Lani Wolff at lanilobo40@gmail.com. Those wishing to learn Chinese Mahjong, contact Jane Chen at yjchen8888@gmail.com.

PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

In Memoriam



John Crum

Only the passing of current residents may be included in the *In Memoriam* section of the *Casta Courier*. A family member, or the person's trustee, needs to call or visit the Rec Office to make a request to include the person's name in the subsequent issue of the *Courier*.

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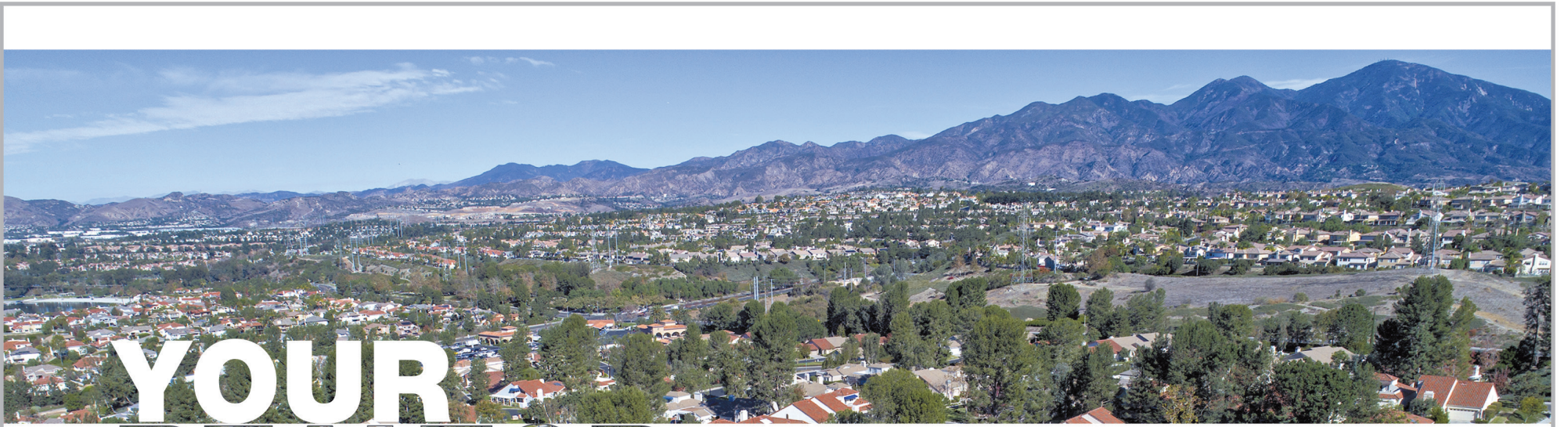
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