

The Casta Courier

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

A Call for Candidates for Four Board Seats

By Jeff McCoy, Election Committee Chair

A seated woman in the mural “Government” by Elihu Vedder holds a tablet inscribed with Abraham Lincoln’s famous phrase, “A Government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Those indelible words that Lincoln delivered in his Gettysburg’s Address can be used to describe Casta del Sol’s Board of Directors. The homeowners who serve on the Board are elected by the people (homeowners) to serve the people. Casta del Sol, like most homeowner associations, has its own set of covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs), and Board members are responsible for enforcing the CC&Rs

by “...providing a clear vision for the community image and culture, protecting and preserving the association’s assets, minimizing the financial risks to the association, maintaining the community’s property values, and enhancing the living experience for all residents.” Developments like CdS cannot function unless dedicated homeowners step up to help govern their community.

This year, four Board of Director positions are up for election. Becoming a Board member offers you the chance to take part in decision-making

Continued on page 8

Women’s History Month Profile: Adventurer Annie

By Parizad Sethna,
photos by Jeff McCoy

Meet Annie Studner. A Casta resident since 2022, she is gratified to say that last summer, at age 77, she hiked the French Alps to the base of Mt. Blanc and the Swiss Alps to the base of the Matterhorn for seven days nonstop. What a remarkable achievement! Hiking has been her passion since her father first took her on a long hike in the beautiful mountains of Alsace-Lorraine in Eastern France when she was 14.

Growing up, she trained with her dad, and with each hike, they reinforced love for each other and their

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The Facilities Committee: Keeping Casta Up to Date

By Liz Rickett, photos by Jeff McCoy



Pool 2 Renovation Project Group: Patty Oldakowski, Bryan Spafford, Sharon Whelan

If you enjoy using the amenities and facilities of Casta del Sol, you can thank the Facilities Committee. This 11-member Committee, chaired by Nancy Cunningham, is charged with the task of providing recommendations for and review of maintenance, engineering activities, and capital improvements of the Homeowners Association facilities. It also monitors the repair, maintenance, and preservation of Association assets.

As with all established committees in Casta del Sol, the Facilities Committee holds monthly meetings. Members

also participate in special project group meetings. They often walk the community, inspecting completed work or work to be done. In addition, they research capital im-

provements and maintenance project proposals. There has been little turnover on the Committee since members are a dedicated team. They focus on keeping

also participate in special project group meetings. They often walk the community, inspecting completed work or work to be done. In addition, they research capital im-

Casta’s facilities and amenities the best they can be while dealing with aging buildings, inflation, and ever-changing building codes.

Patty Oldakowski and Bryan Spafford are among the longest serving members, having joined in 2009. Patty has a background in business/accounting. Her six years serving on the Architectural Committee gave her expertise as to what the “look” of Casta should be. She also served as Committee Chair of the Master Plan Committee. Bryan is Vice Chair of the Facilities Committee. He was a



Building D Project Group: Liz Rickett, Nancy Cunningham, Bryan Spafford, Sharon Whelan, Carol Favreau

teacher, coach, and school district administrator. At the same time, he had a construction company, giving him first-hand knowledge of how to maintain and improve facilities.

The newest member on the Committee is Sharon Whelan. She felt her background of evaluating systems and budgets would benefit Casta and the Committee. In the short time she has been on the Committee, she feels she

Continued on page 4

2024 Election – General Notice

Notice of Procedures for Submitting Candidate Nominations for Election of Directors

A General Notice, as required by California Civil Code, providing procedures to obtain and submit an application to become a Candidate in the June 27, 2024 Election for one of four Board Directors, has been posted on the Association Bulletin Board at Recreation Center 1 and on the website: www.castadelsol.com. Login – Select *Homeowners* and then in the drop-down menu, select *Election*.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Message

Linda Silverman,
President



March is the beginning of spring. Daylight savings time returns, flowers are blooming, birds are chirping, and there is new life everywhere. Opening day of baseball season begins, and college basketball is ending with March Madness. These are the rituals of spring.

Many of you may be aware that March begins the application process for the election of the Board of Directors in June. An opportunity exists to choose the direction of the course of action for the community. There are fiscal ramifications of home ownership in Casta del Sol by choosing residents on the Board of Directors whose visions and values are like yours. Casta del Sol is a \$13.7 million corporation and every stockholder has a vote to secure that your Board of Directors continue to sustain, support, and strengthen your very successful community. It is a responsibility to learn as much as possible about each candidate. Your vote represents an informative decision that the views of the Association's direction guarantee the continued success of Casta del Sol.

Casta del Sol will celebrate its 52nd anniversary because of its ability to grow in ideas, values, and leadership. Your diligence to research, vet, and question the candidates is essential. Seven individual Board of Directors must always work solely for the betterment of the homeowners because you are the Homeowners Association. Listen to the words of the candidates, read their resumes, ask questions, and make your decision to *vote* for four candidates in June.

I would like to end with the following important information. As some of you may know, our management company received PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) funds during the Covid-19 pandemic like many other businesses did during that time. Some in our community have expressed concern that those funds did not pass through to Casta del Sol for our benefit. We inquired of management about their use of the funds in accordance with the program, and we are satisfied with the explanation provided to us by our management and the decisions

Continued bottom of next column

Manager's Report

Marilyn Smith,
General Manager



Keeping the Coyotes at Bay

Coyote mating season in southern California is January-March. The gestation period is 60-63 days, and their young are born March-May. To make our surroundings as inhospitable to them as possible, below are some tips on how to do just that:

- Block off pet food, water, birdseed, fruits and vegetables from gardens, and garbage so coyotes cannot access them.
- Keep a close eye on your pets. To ensure your cat will be safe, always keep it indoors. Always supervise your dog when it's outside, particularly at dawn or dusk, when coyotes are most active.
- If you are out with your dog and see a coyote, pick up your dog if possible and leave immediately.
- Do not let your dog play with coyotes. They are territorial animals and may turn on your dog if they feel threatened.
- If you must leave your dog unattended outside, make sure the dog is kept in an enclosed kennel.
- Do not feed or try to engage with coyotes. While they might look like a rugged version of Rover, coyotes are wild animals that can become aggressive and bite. Though they are normally timid toward people, coyotes' natural fear is lessened, and they are encouraged to stay in the area if you feed and try to play with them.
- If you run into a coyote while you're outside, be aggressive. Act big, yell, flail, and even throw small objects at the coyote to indicate it is unwelcome in this area. Do not turn your back on the coyote or run from it, as this will only encourage the coyote to be aggressive towards you.
- If you are bitten by a coyote, make sure you call animal control and get rabies shots. A coyote that has

Continued next column

made by the prior Board in 2020. As a Board, we believe we have done our due diligence in evaluating the matter as it relates to Casta del Sol and consider the matter closed.

Casta del Sol HOA - Board of Directors -

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

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

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

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attacked a human must be put down, and animal control can make sure that is done without putting you in further jeopardy.

While it might feel a bit unnerving to be living so close to coyotes, if we take these precautions, it will be easier to co-exist peacefully with them.

Landscape Notes

Bill Thornton,
Landscape Services
Coordinator



Red Imported Fire Ant

The Red Imported Fire Ant is a small ant less than one inch in length and is native to South America. They are dark red in color with a dark brown shiny abdomen. This ant is considered dangerous because, unlike most ants, this species delivers venom that produces immediate pain, burning, an itching sensation, and raised pustules form in a day or two. This is the website for more information on Fire Ants: www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7487.html

These are not your everyday ants that invade your homes. In areas that are not disturbed, red imported fire ants typically make dome-shaped mounds that are about 18 inches across, about 8 to 12 inches tall, and are a problem for the mowing equipment. A homeowner in Casta recently reported Fire Ants in the Rec Ctr 2 lawn bowling green. The Orange County Vector Control District inspector was out the next day to treat them with a non-toxic bait. He will continue baited treatments as needed for control. Ants that are in the home or on private property are treated by a pest control operator at the homeowner's expense.

Contact the OC Vector Control if you suspect Fire Ants at (949) 654-2421, or at their website www.ocvcd.org.

The OC Vector control, or HOA, does not treat in homes, or for other ant species. The fire ants have been around for a few years and appear to be difficult, if not impossible, to completely eradicate. Like other invasive species of bugs, plants, and diseases, we must be aware of the consequences of contact.

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



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ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Board Meeting Highlights

February 1 and February 15, 2024

February 1

The Board:

- Accepted the Delinquency Report through January 16, 2024. Approved recording liens on four accounts that are in arrears.
- Approved the Insurance Committee roster for 2024.
- Approved the revised charters for the *Courier* and Welcome Committees.
- Approved updating electrical panels at Gates 1, 2, 3, and 4 by OnePlus Electric at a not-to-exceed cost of \$3,300.
- Approved contract with Allure Pest Management to provide vole pest control at Rec Ctr 2 for 25 bait stations. Approved a one-time installation charge of \$775 with a \$245 per month cost for ongoing service.
- Approved the proposed new and/or amended rules to the Casta del Sol Election Operating Rules and authorizes those specific substantive new and/or amended rules for distribution to the membership, notifying them that the Board of Directors will hear homeowner comments at all Board meetings through March 21, 2024.
- Approved the purchase of a multifunctional copy machine for the Administrative Office.

February 15

General Manager Marilyn Smith reported on the addition of Cindy Van Patten as the new Landscape Administrative Assistant. The HOA is currently soliciting tree trimming proposals for specific species of trees 16-25 feet.

Landscape Services Coordinator Bill Thornton reported Great Scott Tree Service will begin trimming trees near Gate 4 in March, weather permitting.

Maintenance Services Supervisor Ed Pedroncelli reported the 2024 paint program is currently delayed due to rain, but should begin soon, weather permitting.

Recreation Supervisor Valerie Hanich that the water exercise program has moved to Rec Ctr 2 while the pool at Rec Ctr 1 is undergoing maintenance.

The Board:

- Approved the addition of twelve smart thermostats for HOA buildings from Lewis Air at a not-to-exceed cost of \$4,899.
- Approved the purchase of a new golf practice cage for use in the chipper area from Parbuster at a not-to-exceed cost of \$1,395.66.
- Approved a contract with GMU, Geotechnical, Inc. Services, to provide pavement evaluation, design, and bid package services for the proposed 2024 Pavement Rehabilitation Project for a not-to-exceed cost of \$24,750.
- Approved the replacement of the fencing at the Gate 1 entrance by Saddleback Fence and Vinyl Products at a not-to-exceed cost of \$30,566.17.
- Approved the replacement of the cushions on the patio furniture at Rec Ctr 1 Fire Pit Area from CFR Patio at a not-to-exceed cost of \$6,874.40.
- Approved the purchase of new display cases/bulletin boards at the entrances of Rec Ctr 1 to be purchased from Displays2Go at a not-to-exceed cost of \$3,150.86.
- Approved the replacement of lights on the steps at Rec Ctr 1 shower to pool/spa area from AquaTek for a total not-to-exceed cost of \$11,079.69.
- Approved the purchase of accessories for the recently purchased maintenance truck from RealTruck.com and Harbor Freight at a not-to-exceed cost of \$1,492.94.
- Approved the replacement of five umbrellas from Amazon.com and five picnic tables from Uline for use next to the paddle tennis courts at Rec Ctr 2 for a total not-to-exceed cost of \$9,154.04.
- Approved the 2024 Ad Hoc Emergency Preparedness Committee Roster.
- Approved the appointment of Mary Kay Crowley for the vacancy on the Board of Directors.

The next regular meetings of the Board of Directors will be **March 7 at 9 a.m. and March 21 at 1 p.m. in the Vista Room.**

Fran Morgan, Courier staff

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

January Treasurer's Report

Total HOA Assets as of January 31, 2024: \$8,822,969

• Operating Cash: \$3,001,429

This includes \$1,577,276 in checking, \$321,326 invested in a money market account, and \$1,100,000 invested in CDs. Two CDs will mature in February.

• Reserve Cash: \$5,191,806

This includes \$307,555 invested in a money market account and \$4,200,000 invested in CDs. One CD matured in January and we invested \$800,000 in four CDs with rates from 4.75% to 4.95%. Also included in the balance is interest receivable of \$57,622 and due from Operating of \$626,629. Reserve expenditures were \$36,079 which included our new chairs and concrete repairs throughout the community.

• Capital Improvement Cash: \$363,679

The expenditure for January was a truck for Maintenance in the amount of \$31,723.

• Outstanding Accounts Receivable (A/R): \$88,707

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

The following are highlights of our Operating expenses as of January 31:

- **General & Administration** has a YTD positive variance of \$15,638. The only two items with small negative variances are Legal Fees and Office Supplies.
- **Land Maintenance (LM)** has a YTD positive variance of \$34,212. Our new landscaper, O'Connell, just got started. Since it has been raining, projects like planting and irrigation repairs have been delayed.
- **Recreation, Repairs and Maintenance, and Traffic Control** have a combined positive variance of \$1,358.
- **Utilities** has a YTD positive variance of \$18,063. The balance for electricity does not include the final invoice for December.

Treasurer's Comments:

The YTD surplus is \$104,006. Please note that during the upcoming months, more 2023 invoices will be paid and will need to be accrued to 2023. The amounts reflected in the January financial statements are not final. You will receive the final audited financial statements in April.

This Treasurer's Report as of January 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*

Free Shredding Event

The City of Mission Viejo and Waste Management are hosting a Free Document Shredding event for only Mission Viejo residents and businesses. Proof of residency is required.

When: Saturday, March 23 from 9-11 a.m. (Or until the truck capacity is reached.)

Where: Mission Viejo City Hall parking lot at 200 Civic Center.

Residents and businesses can bring up to five banker-size file boxes measuring 24" x 12" x 10" worth of paper records for immediate shredding. Please ensure all documents and boxes are free of binders, paper clips, plastic sleeves and metal butterfly clips. Items not accepted include CDs, credit cards, three-ring binders, wire dividers, newspapers, magazines, and spiral notebooks.

For safety reasons, please remain in your vehicle until you are serviced. No walk-ups will be permitted. For more information, contact (949) 470-8458 or email greenmv@cityofmissionviejo.org.

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

The Facilities Committee: Keeping Casta Up to Date

Continued from page 1



Fiesta Room Project Group: Brian McDonald, Bryan Spafford, Dale Jones, Earl Denos

has made a difference with her experience, comments, and commitment.

Recent projects have included the purchase and installation of a new shed at the Golf Chippers Area, the remodeling of the Fitness Center at Rec Ctr 1 which was moved to the old Garden Room, and the remodeling of the old Fitness Center into a multi-purpose room.

Projects for 2024 include the Fiesta Room and Building D. As there are new projects that come about for updating or improvement, the Facilities Committee thoroughly reviews each project.



Do NOT Use the Rec Ctr Dumpsters

The dumpsters at Rec Ctrs 1 and 2 are for recreation center use only. Dumping trash of any kind is not permitted in the Association dumpsters and is a violation of the Casta del Sol HOA Rules and Regulations and could result in a fine of up to \$250. Additionally, Waste Management charges a penalty to the HOA for all non-garden waste that is dumped into the Green Waste-only containers, therefore there is a cost to all residents. If you require a bulk pickup, please contact Waste Management at (949) 642-1191. They allow for three free bulk pick-ups a year.

Join Us In Welcoming Our New Residents - March 2024



Cavanagh, Mary27820 Via Sarasate(480) 273-7951
San Diego, CA
Lenti, Anthony23592 Villena.....(949) 584-4300
Lake Forest, CA

Sadeghi, Majid & Kristy23691 Via Benavente....(925) 518-5445
Walnut Creek, CA
Voskarian, Edward & Anna28072 Calle Casal(949) 344-0033
Laguna Niguel, CA
Directory Change
Maes, Anthony & Lanette.....27741 Via Lorca(949) 274-6504

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27881 Calle Valdes
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1188 Square Feet
Blanca Floorplan
Offered at \$725,000



28272 Yanez
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
Offered at \$1,050,000
IN ESCROW



23541 Via Ventura
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1563 Square Feet
Juautia Floorplan
Offered at \$940,000
IN ESCROW



28078 Espinonza
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1410 Square Feet
Maya Floorplan
SOLD for \$770,000
Sold on 02/09/2024



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



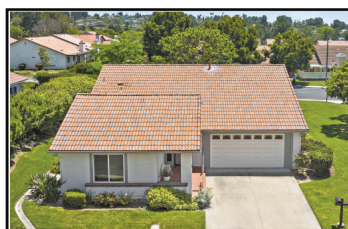
28041 Calle Valdes
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1099 Square Feet
Blanca Floorplan
SOLD for \$680,000
Sold on 12/21/2023



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



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



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



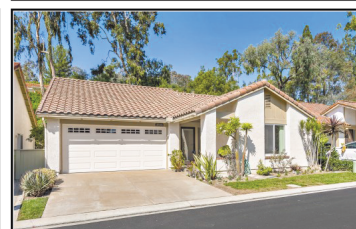
28376 Zarza
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Narciso Floorplan
SOLD for \$770,000
Sold on 7/7/2023



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



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



28145 Espinoza
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1472 Square Feet
Custom Narciso Floorplan
SOLD for \$895,000
Sold on 4/3/2023



23682 Via Benavente
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1431 Square Feet
Guadalupe Floorplan
SOLD for \$665,000
Sold on 3/29/2023



23323 El Greco
2 Bedrooms, 2 baths
1607 Square Feet.
Custom Cypress Point Floorplan
SOLD for \$810,000
Sold on 3/16/2023



28081 Via Enriquez
3 Bedrooms, 2 baths
1346 Square Feet
Lolita Floorplan
SOLD for \$852,500
Sold on 3/9/2023



23692 Via Benavente
2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1,431 Square Feet
Guadalupe Floorplan
SOLD for \$674,000
Sold on 2/14/2023



28356 Zarza
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths
1503 Square Feet
Rosa Floorplan
SOLD for \$740,000
Sold on 01/20/2023

ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Residents Are Asking

Q. What is the Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) that has been referred to in connection with Powerstone Property Management?

A. In 2020, the government offered various types of assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the forms of loans was the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) administered through the Small Business Administration. This was to be used to help finance payroll costs and other specified expenses due to the pandemic.

Q. What were the regulations regarding what the PPP money could be used for?

A. There were very specific requirements about how the PPP funds could be used. These included employee salaries and benefits; mortgage/rent, utilities of loan applicant business; and costs of technology for employees to work remotely. The application for these loans was an extensive process and the rules had to be followed specifically.

Q. Some residents suggested that Powerstone Management could have provided some funds to Casta del Sol homeowners. Was this viable?

A. No. The PPP funds could not be used in any way related to homeowners. This would have been illegal. The funds had to be used for the very specific elements included in the terms of the loan and as provided for on the application.

Casta del Sol HOA 2024 Assessment

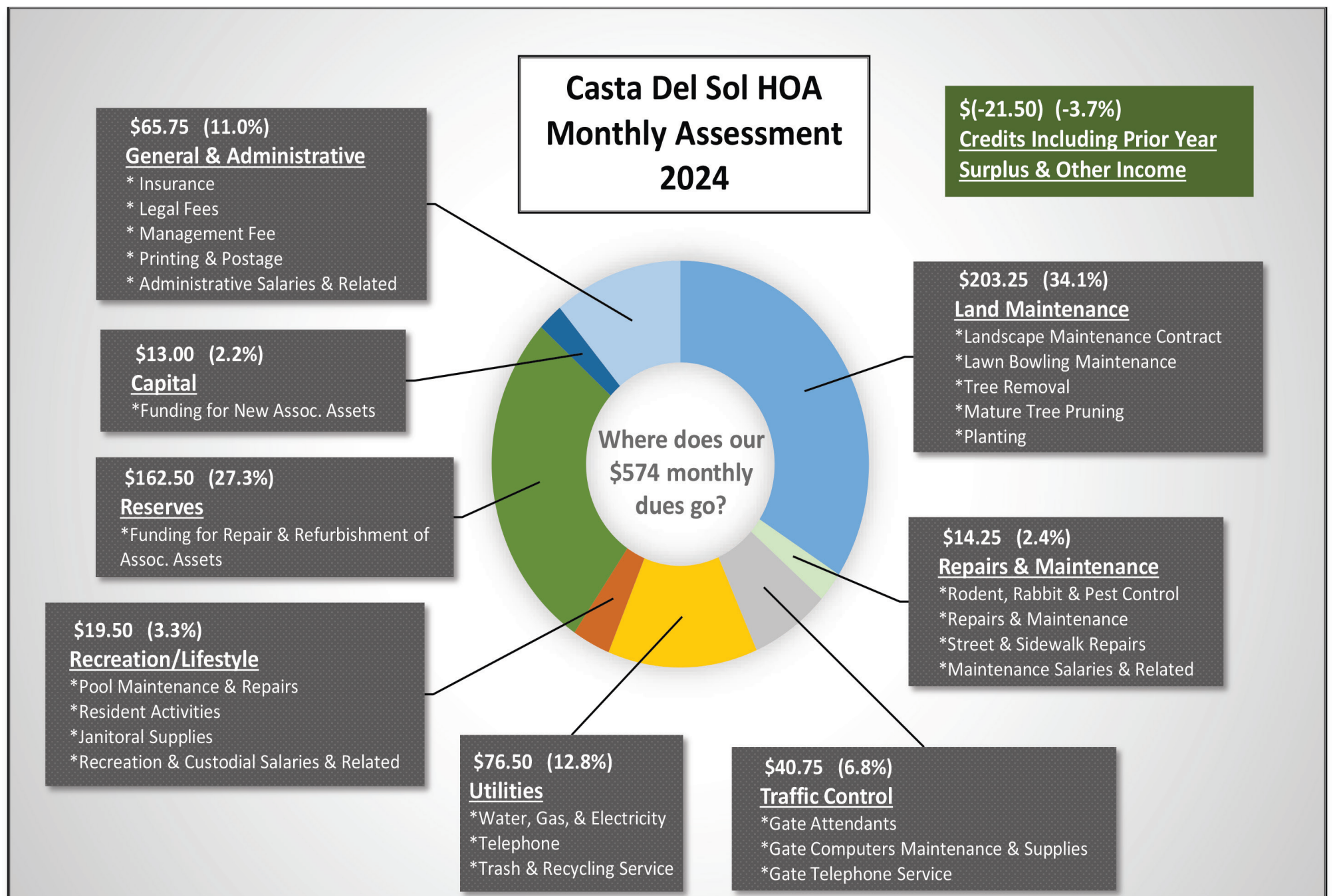
Beginning January 1, 2024, the CdS HOA dues are \$574. At the October 19, 2023 Board Meeting, the Board of Directors adopted a total budget of \$13,771,908 for the 2024 fiscal year. This set the homeowner assessment at \$574 per month, a \$12 increase from 2023. The chart below shows the broader expense categories where homeowners' assessment dollars go.

(The figures are rounded for illustrative purposes and reflects \$21.50 applied credits including prior year surplus and other income).



E-Waste & Household Hazardous Waste Collection

On Saturday, March 16 from 9-11 a.m., residents of Mission Viejo can bring up to 125 pounds or 15 gallons of Household Hazardous Waste per vehicle during this free drive-through event. Each container must not exceed five gallons. Proof of residency is required. For more information, email greenmv@cityofmissionviejo.org.



ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

Maintenance Report

*Ed Pedroncelli,
Maintenance
Services Supervisor*



How do I report a burned-out streetlight?

Streetlights within Casta del Sol are not the Association's property. If you notice a streetlight is burned out or needs repair, please contact Southern California Edison at (800) 611-1911 or online at <https://www.sce.com/outage-center/report-street-light-outage>.

Maintenance Responsibilities Defined

There are two types of spaces within our HOA community. They include separate interests and common areas.

- Separate interests are the individual units. In our community, the separate interest is each parcel of land and any structures that sit upon it.
- Common areas are all areas shared by the members of the community, and to which each member has an undivided equal interest.

The HOA CC&R's section 3.07, Exterior Maintenance and Repair,

differentiates responsibility between HOA repairs and homeowner repairs. Please note: the Association is responsible for repairing, replacing, or maintaining common areas, and the owner of each separate interest is responsible for maintaining their home.

Requests for Repairs, Reconstruction or Payment

If owners believe they experienced an issue(s) or have problems relating to their lots or residences due to Association's common area, or areas which are the responsibility of the Association, they may make a request for reimbursement. Please note: a notice must be provided to the Administration office within 24 hours. The Association will have the right, but not the duty, to inspect any claimed damage.

Important: For complete details, please review the HOA's Policy titled *Policy Regarding Owner Requests for Repairs, Reconstruction or Payment* which is available at the Rec Ctr 1 office.

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

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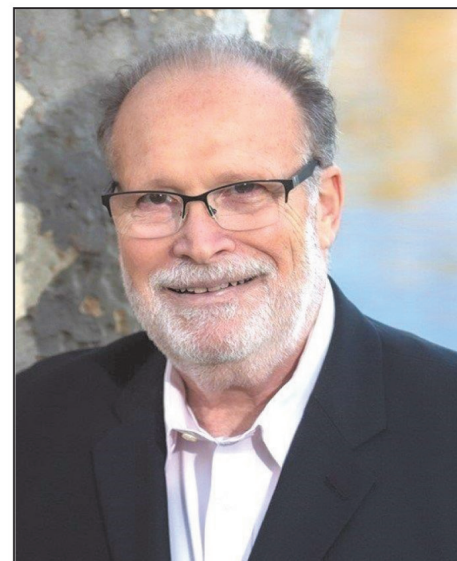
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ASSOCIATION NEWS *Cont'd*

**Women's History Month Profile:
Adventurer Annie**

Continued from page 1

shared passion for hiking, making her physically and emotionally stronger. To this day, she applies her dad's techniques to tackle steep uphill and downhill by remembering to breathe deeply. Reminiscing her dad's joke about getting her ready for hiking Mount Everest brought a smile to her face. Annie relished training in beautiful vibrant forests, deep descents towards pastures, rolling hills, and delightful lunches in mountaineering farm houses in Europe.

Over the years, Annie has hiked many mountains in France (Pyrenees, Vosges, Alps), Italy (Cinque Terre), Peru (Inca Trail to Machu Picchu), and in Spain the 500-mile Santiago de Compostela. Locally, she has hiked Mt. Wilson, Mt. Baldy, San Gorgonio, Mt. San Jacinto, and Eagle Peak. She also climbed Half Dome and Mt. Whitney in the Sierras. She hiked the North and South Rims of the Grand Canyon on the same day.

Since moving to CdS, Annie has been exploring long hikes mainly in the canyons of Laguna Beach. She walks the Oso Creek Trail and



explores the hilly streets of Mission Viejo. She averages approximately eight to ten miles of hiking. Asked about her next big adventure, Annie enthusiastically looks forward to Kilimanjaro, Africa and parts of the Appalachian trails. In Annie's words, "I belong to the new breed of old adrenaline junkies and as long as I can put one foot in front of the other, I will continue to hike."

March is Women's History Month celebrating the contributions and achievements of women. Let's take inspiration from Annie and work on improving our health. If this inspires you, why not give hiking a try?

A Call for Candidates for Four Board Seats

Continued from page 1

ing processes that help the association run smoothly, setting it up for long-term success. With access to financial information and budgetary control, you can have a direct influence on improving the community. As a homeowner, if you like the idea of governing; can commit to a two-year term; can focus on the big picture and what's good for the community; then

you're ready to serve, if elected, as a member of the Board of Directors.

A Candidate Application for a Board of Directors position is available in the Administrative Office or Rec Ctr 1 Office. The deadline to apply is April 1. Each candidate's photo, taken by a *Courier* photographer, and resume will appear in the May edition of the *Casta Courier*.

The Beauty of Casta



Casta Sunset. Photo by Jeff McCoy



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Architectural

It's already March when daylight savings time begins on March 10, St. Patrick's Day is on March 17 and Easter is on March 31. We have one more to add: spring cleaning. Many Casta del Sol residents had to downsize when moving here, and had to park their cars outside in order to keep their treasures in the garage. A good rule of thumb: *if you haven't used it in a year, sell it or donate it.* Tools may go to the Heritage Garden or the Vegetable Garden. Books may be donated to the Mission Viejo Public Library (they sell them to raise money) or to our Casta Library. Charities will take good kitchen items and slightly used clothing. There are organizations that would gladly help find new uses for your items. You will be surprised how nice your patio will look and how easily your car will fit into the garage. So, start spring cleaning and keep those valuable cars out of the hot sun and pouring rain.

*John Nicsinger, Co-Chair,
(818) 261-5316*

*Mary Kay Crowley, Co-Chair,
(949) 412-8735*

Budget and Finance

The Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee reviewed the January financials at our February meeting. In March, we will continue our year-end financial statement review since our fiscal year-end is December 31. We expect to review the draft audited financial statements with the auditor and the Board of Directors in March. The 12/31/23 audited financial statements will be ready for Board review and approval in April.

All residents are welcome to attend the B&F meetings. The Budget and Finance Committee meets regularly in the Vista Room on the third Monday of each month at 1 p.m. Our next meeting will be held on March 18. Please look for eblasts with additional details about our next meeting.

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

Courier

We sometimes have clubs, event leaders, and residents who have been interviewed and ask when the articles will be published. There are stories that require publishing in a certain month's issue, for example, the Board of Director's election information. There are other articles that make

sense for a particular month, e.g. winter holidays. However, many of our articles are what we term "evergreen" articles which do not dictate a schedule or have an expiration date. Timeless content can be created earlier so we always have a content library to pull from as needed.

Determining the content mix in each issue is a puzzle. The majority of each month's *Casta Courier* includes our standard sections of Association News, Committee Reports, Club/Activity Reports, and Casta Community. We then include all the time-sensitive articles. Beyond this, we look at the length of the issue, the room available for "evergreen" articles, color pages for articles that are accompanied by photos, when the articles were received, and a good balance of type of articles. We also consider how recently certain clubs and activities were featured.

Our Editor-in-Chief Charlotte Lassos has extensive publishing experience and does an outstanding job in achieving a beautiful and balanced publication. We are fortunate to have a wonderful, prolific committee who are all very involved in the community to keep abreast of the many activities. Both timely and evergreen articles together provide a full picture of what is going on at Casta. So, if you are awaiting publication, please be patient.

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

Election

The notice on the front page of this month's *Courier* announces that Candidate Applications to run for one of four Board of Directors positions are currently available at the Administration and Rec Ctr 1 offices. Being a board member is a great way to serve your neighbors and actively participate in your community. But what are the qualities one must have to be a good board member? Here are ten traits of successful board members who serve their HOA well: 1) The willingness to dig in; 2) A bent toward consistency; 3) The ability to play fair; 4) A sense of honesty; 5) The good sense to ask for help; 6) The ability to delegate; 7) A flair for openness and conciliation; 8) The willingness to share; 9) The ability to adapt and change; 10) A thick skin. If you might be interested in becoming a BoD member and want more information

about the election process, attend the Election Committee's March 6 meeting in the Fiesta Room at 3 p.m.

At a January meeting, the Board of Directors approved the Election Committee's revised charter. The BoD also approved the Election Committee's updated Candidate Application. At its February 8 meeting, the Election Committee asked the BoD to approve two Election Operating Rules changes: a revised tie-breaking rule and a change in the Civil Code regarding what to do if a quorum is not met at the Annual Meeting. Casta homeowners will have the opportunity to review the rule changes before the approval is finalized.

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

Facilities

Spring is in the air and with spring comes change. Perhaps cleaning out the junk drawer, buying new rugs, or adjusting long held ideas. Over the past months, the Facilities Committee has been working on some major projects: updating the Fiesta and Ceramics/Arts and Crafts Rooms, going out to bid for the 2024 asphalt project, replacing the fencing at Gate 1, replacing the seat cushions on the patio furniture around the fire pits, and updating the Rec Ctr 1 and 2 pools/spas.

A couple of items keep coming up requiring homeowner assistance at Rec Ctr 2. The first item is homeowners or their contractors dumping trash in the dumpsters. While this may seem like a convenience, the HOA is charged by Waste Management for large articles such as: comforter sets, old bedroom sets, microwaves, drywall, excess furniture, and much more. Contact Waste Management to pick up large items at your home. The second item requiring assistance is the removal of shower heads in the Rec Ctr 2 Women's Restroom. Please help in keeping the HOA nice for all homeowners.

The Facilities Committee (FC) needs you! Get involved in making decisions regarding maintenance or repair of the assets of our HOA. The FC is looking for new members wanting to be a part of making change happen. Come check us out. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at 9 a.m. in the Fiesta Room.

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

Greenbelt

In the month of March, the Greenbelt Committee will be submitting recommendations (CR's) to the Casta del Sol Board for review/discussion and potential approval. One project will focus on removing front yard lawns and any front yard trees for safety reasons and potential damage from tree roots to foundation and other surrounding areas. New sod will replace the old existing turf, but no new tree will replace any removed tree. A total of eight homes will be affected by this project. Notification will be provided to all homeowners of the pending project. All Greenbelt agendas are sent out via an eblast that is provided by the association the week before the committee meeting.

There is new California legislation that will have an impact all HOAs. In 2029, AB 1572 will mandate that nonfunctional turf in all HOAs be removed starting January of 2029 with compliance by 2031. This bill makes it the responsibility of the HOA to pay for the removal of all nonfunctional turf. You can find additional information on SMWD's website. Search *California nonfunctional turf*.

As a reminder, if you have a landscape maintenance request (LMR), please use the following contact information from O'Connell. You can phone your request to (800) 339-1106 or use *workorders@oclm.com*. You may also contact Bill Thornton, Landscape Coordinator at *bthornton@powerstonepm.com*. The next committee meeting will take place in the Vista Room on March 12 at 9 a.m. This will be an in-person and Zoom meeting.

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

Library

New Additions to the Library

Regular Print:

Anna O, Matthew Blake

California Bear, Duane Smierczynski
First Lie Wins, Ashley Elston

Martyr, Kaveh Akbar

Mercury, Amy Jo Burns

My Name is Barbra, Barbra Streisand
The Bullet Swallower,

Elizabeth Gonzalez James

The Fury, Alex Michaelides

The Mystery Guest, Nita Prose

Continued on page 10

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD *Cont'd*

Library

Continued from page 9

The Storm We Made, Vanessa Chan

The Waters, Bonnie Jo Campbell

Wild and Distant Seas,

Tara Karr Roberts

You Only Call When You're in Trouble, Stephen McCauley

Large Print:

A Very Inconvenient Scandal,

Jacquelyn Michard

From a Far & Lovely Country,

Alexander McCall Smith

Inheritance, Nora Roberts

Manner of Death, Robin Cook

The Fourth Rule, Jeff Lindsay

The Paris Agent, Kelly Rimmer

Wyoming Proud, Diana Palmer

Audio:

Cold Victory, Karl Marlantes

The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store,

James McBride

Pat Vitti, Chair,
(949) 457-9194

Social

Every day is a celebration in Casta del Sol and Sunday, February 11, was no exception! The Vista Room was packed with spectators watching with

bated breath, cheering with every toss, and having an all-around great time enjoying Super Bowl LVIII. It was the San Francisco 49ers versus the Kansas City Chiefs. The room was awash in red and white jerseys. The potluck buffet was loaded with delicious food. And the fans were quite vocal in cheering their team to a hoped-for victory. And who reigned victorious? Casta del Sol was a definite winner with its residents coming together to watch the game on the big screen. Final score 25-22, Kansas City Chiefs over the San Francisco Forty Niners.

A new event is being hosted by the Social Committee on Friday, March 15. Please join us for Suds and Spuds, a potato bar with an Irish accent. We will be entertained by light music, Irish dancing, and fun and games. Green attire is optional. Ticket sales started on February 14.

The Social Committee meets the first Friday of the month in the Fiesta Room at 10 a.m.

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

Traffic

Residents often ask us, "What's happening at Gate 1 and can't you do

something about speeding, people running stop signs, and ignoring parking rules?" This month we ask not what your Traffic Committee can do for you, but what you can do for your Traffic Committee. Please exit Gate 1 with extreme caution; the posted speed limit is five m.p.h. The Oso Creek Trail improvements will continue bringing increased pedestrian and cycle traffic to this busy gate. Although there is a crosswalk with flashing lights, several residents have almost hit pedestrians or cyclists. We can't control that traffic, especially cyclists who zip across the street without stopping. Hoping to reduce the chances of an accident, we're considering the addition of a stop sign at the Gate 1 exit and have requested input from the city. Please notify us if you observe problems at this intersection.

We regularly conduct site visits to assess residents' concerns regarding speeding, parking issues, and stop sign violations. We utilize the SpeedMinder to gather data and may consider adding signage and more often dispatching our Allied Universal patrol to observe traffic patterns at problem locations. Please remind guests and vendors to obey the posted

speed limit, let them know where to park when coming to your home, and encourage them to stop completely at every stop sign.

Would you consider joining our merry band of rule-followers? Visit any Traffic Committee meeting held on the first Monday of each month and hear what we're up to next.

Elizabeth Wing, Co-Chair
mewinghome@gmail.com

Welcome

A special welcome to newcomers who are in their first year living in Casta del Sol. Over the past year, members of the Welcome Committee met with 120 newcomers and handed out our packets of information in a gift bag. If you have not yet been contacted by one of our members and wish to meet and receive information about the many clubs, committees, and activities in Casta, you may email me to arrange a time and place to get together with one or two of us. Welcome to Casta once again and we hope you enjoy exploring and finding your way around the community. We look forward to meeting each one of you.

Priscilla Tripp, Chair,
ptripp1@gmail.com

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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES

Bible Study

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

The club meets at Rec Ctr 2 every Tuesday morning from 10 to 11:30

a.m. for study and prayer. Come and join us as we sing the old hymns.

We are a no-dues club. All are welcome. For more information, please contact Peter Filakouridis at (949) 305-1935.

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

Billiards

Alright, March is here – no more delay! Why, despite your New Year's

resolution, have you not given the Casta Billiards Room a shot? Let's tackle a few common excuses – see if any of the following sound familiar. I'm sure it's way too physically demanding. I heard that it involves standing, aiming, and occasionally walking around the table. It would provide an opportunity to socialize with friends and family. Didn't I just do that on Thanksgiving, the December holidays, and New Year's Eve? Team playing requires cooperation, communication, and strategy to plan out shots. All that pressure is way too stressful and mentally taxing. I've heard about pool halls being dirty, smoky, loud, and possibly with alcoholic beverages - huh? I think maybe you've seen too many movies.

I get it, you might have your own list of reasons, but why not drop by and give it a shot? I guarantee you won't be disappointed.

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

Bridge

MLB (Major League Baseball) is starting soon. Much of my bridge shuffling and scoring Tuesday afternoons will be done while watching my team compete. One reason I like bridge is that it's a more cerebral exercise and doesn't hurt my knees. If you need exercise, feel free to stop by the Garden Room at Rec Ctr 1 on duplicate Tuesday between noon and 3 p.m. to introduce yourself and perhaps find a partner. Duplicate bridge at Casta del Sol is unsanctioned by the ACBL.

The Wednesday noon party bridge gathering has a generally fixed membership but occasionally requires substitutions. There is apparently no fixed room location available; check with Rec Ctr 1 office for the location each week.

If you would like to be a regular or substitute player, please email me with your availability for party/duplicate, or both. Please include *bridge* in the subject line.

*Tim McCoy,
mccoystest@cox.net*

Canine Companions

Last month's meeting with Linda's pulled pork sandwiches and salad was a great success. We enjoyed having 25 of our best canines as well as their attentive owners. Some brought two.

Most were well behaved in both categories. This was also our traditional Valentine's Day Costume Party, and three dogs were awarded winning prizes. We thank all for their efforts.

This month's festivities will be on Saturday, March 23, from 4-6 p.m. at Lawn Bowling Pavilion for Yappy Hour. Bring your own cocktails. Appetizers, water, and snacks will be served. See you there.

Yours truly has been asked to accept the presidency of the Canine Club. I am honored and thrilled; thank you. I await your vote of confidence. In so saying, I wish to remind you that the dues of \$15 per year per person are merely to offset the expense of food for all the members to enjoy.

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

Casta Creatives

The Casta Creative Club officers are planning our 2024 events including demonstrations, workshops, Paint and Wine events, and field trips to local museums and art fairs. We have scheduled a Collage Workshop with Sue Menchel on March 28 at 2:30 p.m. Members will be asked to sign up for this ahead of time. If you are interested in being a member for 2024 and participating in our activities, please pay your annual dues of \$10 to the front office.

Please join us to participate or to observe on Wednesdays and Thursdays for Open Studio from 2 to 6 p.m. in the Arts and Crafts Room at Rec Ctr 1.


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

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

Ceramics

March is full of wonderful things including the start of Daylight Savings Time on March 10, St. Patrick's Day on March 17, and the Spring Equinox on March 20. Perhaps the most wonderful of all, though, is Casta del Sol's yearly Flea Market hosted by the Ceramics Club on April 12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Think of a block party where everyone sells their slightly used and handmade stuff to one another. There will be a raffle for gift baskets and a bakery table again this year. Rent a table, to display the

Continued on next page



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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Ceramics

Continued from previous page

surplus of your attic, on March 22 no earlier than 8:30 a.m. at the Rec Ctr 1 office gate.

Our Education Ambassador, Claudia, repeated her class on brushes, paint, and color in February. This month Rosalie will teach her hand-built Baby-Bird-Pocket and in May Darrelyn will teach slab-work dinnerware. Watch for dates and sign-up on Cabinet 12.

*Jo Steciuk,
(949) 394-5181*

Crafts For Charity

The Craft Ladies of Casta del Sol delivered Valentine tray favors to the Age Well group at the Norman P. Murray Center, which handles Meals on Wheels in Mission Viejo. The ladies also sent 30 Valentine gift bags to the residents of Laura's House, which provides services to domestic violence victims.

Craft club meetings are on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at Rec Ctr 2. Meetings this month will be on March 6 and March 20.

We'll be starting several new projects for spring, including St. Patrick's Day tray favors. We welcome new project ideas and always 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 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

The last two months at Casta del Sol Democrats Club monthly meetings have been well attended. In January, we hosted two candidates for a local election. In February, we had a lasagna party and began work on the 2024 political campaign. Strategies were discussed to help campaigns such as postcards, canvassing, literature drops, etc. We also discussed relevant speakers for future meetings.

Our next meeting is March 17 at 3 p.m. in the Vista Room. Generally, the meetings take place on the third Sunday of the month at 3 p.m. in the Vista Room, unless there is a holiday. Please bring potluck food or beverages to share as we like to mingle after the business part of the meeting.

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

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



Health & Fitness

Casta del Sol offers three different fitness classes for residents each week, Balance on Mondays 10:30 a.m., Stretching on Tuesdays 10 a.m., and Mat Pilates on Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. We encourage you to come by and observe a class at any time. Each class offers tremendous benefits, but if you've been wondering about Pilates, we asked Danielle Bates, Casta resident and certified Pilates instructor, to give us the lowdown.

Can I do Pilates if I'm not flexible? Yes. Moves can be modified to accommodate a wide range of fitness levels and health conditions. Whether flexible or not, try a Pilates class. With continued classes, you can enjoy an improvement in flexibility, mobility, and joint stability.

Can people with chronic pain do Pilates? If your healthcare professional gives you the okay, you can do Pilates even with chronic pain. Pilates may even help manage or reduce your chronic pain. For info on classes, contact Helen Freedman.

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

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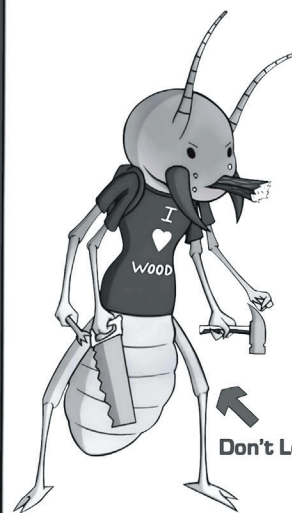


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 <p>Recreation Center 1 Hours: May - Oct: Mon-Sun, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sat & Sun, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Recreation 1 Pool & Fitness Center Hours: May - Oct: Mon-Sat, 7 a.m.-10:00 p.m., Sun, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Nov - April: Mon-Fri, 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Sat, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Sun, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Recreation Center 2 Pool Hours: Mon-Sun 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Rec 2 Heritage Room Hours: Mon-Sun 8 a.m.-10 p.m.</p>				<p>Calendar Coordinator, Valerie Hanich Recreation Director, vhanich@powerstonepm.com (949) 455-4681</p> <p>Note: All meetings are subject to location change or on Zoom.</p>		<p>1</p> <p>10:00 AM Social Committee, F 10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G 6:00 PM Shuffleboard Event, G</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:00 AM Traffic Committee, F 2:00 PM Ad-Hoc Policy & Procedures, F</p>	<p>5</p> <p>1:00 PM Architectural Committee, F</p>	<p>6</p> <p>10:00 AM Library Committee, F 3:00 PM Election Committee, F</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:00 AM CDS BOD Meeting, V, Z 6:00 PM Italian American Bingo, V</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G 7:00 PM Sol Rock N Rollers Event, P1</p>		
<p>10 Daylight Savings</p>	<p>11</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>9:00 AM Greenbelt, V</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:30 AM Courier Committee, F 11:30 AM Las Damas Luncheon, V</p>	<p>14</p> <p>1:00 PM Ad-Hoc Emergency Preparedness, F</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G 5:30 PM Social Suds & Spuds Party, V</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9:00 AM Lawn Bowling, LBP</p>	
<p>17 St. Patrick's Day</p> <p>3:00 PM Democrats Meeting, V 3:00 PM Pickleball Event, TC</p>	<p>18</p> <p>1:00 PM Budget & Finance Committee, V</p>	<p>19 1st Day of Spring</p> <p>10:00 AM Welcome Committee, F 6:00 PM Italian American Dinner, V</p>	<p>20</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>1:00 PM CDS BOD Meeting, V, Z</p>	<p>22</p> <p>10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G 12:00 PM Fishing Club, F</p>	<p>23</p> <p>4:00 PM Canine Companions, LBP</p>	
<p>24 Palm Sundry</p> <p>10:30 AM ARDMI Event, V</p>	<p>25</p> <p>2:00 PM Ad-Hoc Policy & Procedures, F 5:00 PM Military Veterans, V</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Happy Easter</p> 	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:00 AM Facilities Committee, F</p>	<p>29</p> <p>10:00 AM Architectural App Review, G 10:30 AM Courier Stuffing, V 1:00 PM Ad-Hoc Emergency Preparedness, F</p>	<p>30</p> 	
<p>31 Easter</p> 							

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

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

The Magic of Spring in Casta

By Parizad Sethna, photos by staff photographers

Springtime in Casta del Sol is a sun-kissed serenade of birdsongs and blooms. The warm golden sunshine awakens the land from its winter slumber and our rolling hillsides are a feast for the senses as they transform and erupt into a medley of colors. Vibrant bougainvillea, golden poppies, purple verbena, magenta ice plants, bird of paradise, and blush-pink chaparral flowers paint our landscape with radiant hues. Brittlebush explode in a shower of bright yellow daisies attracting bees and butterflies with their sweet nectar. Dancing dandelions splatter our hillsides like tiny suns.

Honeysuckle and fragrant citrus blooms beckon humming birds on emerald wings. The arrival of swallows is a harbinger of spring's beauty. Twittering of birds building their nests blend with the gentle hum of the bees as lizards bask on sun warmed rocks. Pride of Madeira with its massive purple and blue flower spikes and all its charms, spruces up the hillsides on Ribalta. The desert loving saguaro floral crowns burst open with their vernal blooms and purple lupines and hot pink penstemons put on their seasonal show in the Heritage Garden. It is a season that fills our hearts with joy. So what are you waiting for? Grab your hat and sunglasses and experience the magic of spring in Casta del Sol for yourself.



By April Wilsey



By Kip Isbell



By Jeff McCoy



By Jeff McCoy

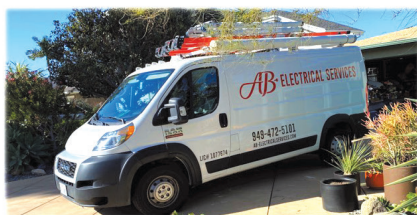


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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Heritage Garden

It is March and our Heritage Garden is getting ready to welcome spring. The signs are easy to spot when you stop, look, and listen. Take a walk and look for tender fresh green dashes of buds sprouting from the ground and overhead on the trees. Enjoy the blossoming splendor of spring and look for early flowering shrubs which are like sunshine to our soul. Take a seat and listen and look for birds performing their courtship displays, while others carry twigs and other nesting material in their beaks. Soon the pollinators will begin to arrive. Buzzing bumblebees that look too large to fly, green grasshoppers, and colorful butterflies will follow soon. Our volunteers are busy getting the garden ready to swing into spring. Stop and have a chat with them as they prune and clean. And remember to bring your recyclable cans, plastic bottles, and glass with CRV to the garden. See you in the garden.

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

Italian American

Bingo will be on Thursday, March 7 at Rec Ctr 1 at 6 p.m. in the Vista Room. The cost is \$5 per person paid ahead at Rec Ctr 1 office. Cards are \$1 each, and there will be a Pot of Gold drawing and a \$100 last game payout. Dessert will be ice cream sandwiches. BYOB.

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

Las Damas

Twill be "Top 'o the Morning" and "Wearin' of the Green" as Las Damas Club enjoys its St. Patrick's Day Lun-

cheon on Wednesday, March 13 beginning 11:30 a.m. in the Vista Room. Members and non-members will be treated to a traditional corned beef and cabbage menu and key lime pie for dessert. Entertainment is provided by Matt Gray, classic soul and Motown artist, who will have you singing along like a real live 1960s Go-Go!

Tickets are on sale through Sunday, March 10 at Rec Ctr 1, \$25 for members and \$30 non-members, payable to Las Damas Club. Important reminder: annual dues of \$20 are due by the March meeting. If not paid, luncheon tickets will be \$30 until membership is current. Thank you for your support. Erin go bragh!

Pat Crowley,
(949) 305-0582

Mah Jongg Mavens

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

For lessons, experienced instructor, Lani Wolff, will schedule a series of four weeks, two hours each starting in April. Email Lani at *lanilobo40@gmail.com* for further details and to register.

Mah Jongg Mavens holds a tournament and potluck lunch on the first Saturday of every month. Bring your card, \$3 to play, and a potluck item to share.

Winners on February 3: Most Mah Jonggs - Jayne Freed; Concealed Hands - Myrna Smith; Jokerless - Ann Loranger and Jean VanDerford; no winners in Quints and Singles and Pairs.

May the Jokers be with you!

Jean VanDerford,
abutterflylady@cox.net

Military Veterans

At our next social gathering, Jim Clements, a VFW Post Scoutmaster will give a presentation about the proper use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which is a sophisticated yet easy medical device that can help the heart re-establish an effective rhythm. CPR and AED are two different procedures. Come and participate in this educational event and discover the difference between the two. Questions and answers will follow.

We will be serving pizza for this event. Beverages will be provided, or you may BYOB. If you are a new resident of Casta del Sol and a military veteran or spouse of a veteran, please join us for a few hours of camaraderie and participate in the 50/50 drawing. The social gathering will take place in the Vista Room on March 25. Please monitor your email or contact me with any questions you may have.

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

Ping Pong

You might ask, "is playing Ping Pong good for you?" Scientific evidence and medical experts around the world acknowledge that recreational table tennis (AKA ping pong) increases concentration and alertness, stimulates brain function, helps with the development of tactical thinking skills, hand/eye coordination, provides aerobic exercise, and social and recreational interaction. Even more reason to join us for a fun, social, and healthy good time on Saturdays.

Our group play (mostly doubles) continues on Saturday mornings in the Garden Room from 9-11 a.m. with open play ending at 1:30 p.m. Ping Pong no longer has access to the Garden Room from 2-7 p.m. on Saturdays; open play continues to be available all day on most Sundays.

Newcomers and/or those who need a refresher are always welcome. Paddles are available for loan at Rec Ctr 1 office. We look forward to seeing you there. For more information contact Sherry Hargrove.

Sherry Hargrove,
(858) 336-5369

Pinochle

The Pinochle Club plays six games of Pinochle every Friday night in the Heritage Room at Rec Ctr 2 at 6:30 p.m. If you know how to play the game, join us any Friday. If you'd like more information about the game or if you'd like to learn how to play, call or email Dawn.

During January, there were eight Double Pinochles, three on January 5. Terry Owen had one on that day and two others in later weeks. The highest total of all games was Linda Owen's 11370; Jane Knesl was second with 10470. Linda Owen's three-game score of 4230 was the best and Jane Knesl had 3840, the next best. Congratulations to all our winners.

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

Republican

The Republican Club officers hope you enjoyed your time at our February 25 Meet the Candidates event. We had great information from our candidates and hope that everyone was able to meet and interact with the candidates personally. Please make sure to go to the polls on March 5 to cast your ballot in the Primary Election.

As the year progresses, we will have more events to meet our local, state, and hopefully federal candidates and discuss issues that will be on the ballot for the General Election in November. Make sure you go to the website *ocvote.gov/registration* to verify your voter registration this year. We need to make sure that our vote counts. It is never too late to sign up. Dues are \$10 per individual and \$15 a couple per year to join us at most events at no additional cost.

Betty Houston,
(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 March, we are planning to meet for lunch on Thursday, March 14 at noon at China Moon in Laguna Niguel. To reserve your seat at the table, please RSVP only to Carol Kowalsky (*cekewpiel@cox.net*) by Monday, March 11. If you would like to join the group and get on our email list, or for more information, please contact Mary Carlson.

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

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CLUBS & ACTIVITIES *Cont'd*

Sol Rock 'n Rollers

Calling all ladies. Coming up, a special Ladies Night Out event (sorry fellows, just gals). Mark your calendar for Friday, March 8 from 7-9 p.m. Music and dancing with an array of lovely desserts in the Vista Room (BYOB). \$10 entry fee with raffle opportunities.

Also mark your calendars for a Cinco de Mayo dinner dance on Sunday, May 5. More details are coming. Hope to see you there as we dance the night away! Even more events are coming up for all to enjoy.

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

Support Group

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

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

Variety

The Casta del Sol Variety Club is planning our next amazing spring show from June 13 to 15, with two evening shows and one matinee. It will be a humorous take on a well-known musical. This senior oriented twist on the musical will be directed by Bear Sanchez and Barb Turino. With this duo, we are sure the performance will be the high quality of the shows over the past few years. Our casting call/first meeting is planned for March 18 at 6 p.m. in the Vista Room. Stay tuned for further announcements. Rehearsals will be once or twice a week throughout April, May, and early June.

The Variety Club is so much fun that we keep adding to our family of performers. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Barb Turino at (951) 858-7350.

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

Vegetable Garden

Spring is coming and we are becoming very busy preparing our gardens.

Some gardeners have started planting seeds at home and will be transplanting them. Last month, we had a Master Gardener talk to us about friendly bugs in the garden. For organic gardening, this is important because we do not want to kill the wrong bug. We have had turnover in the garden. So, at this writing, 15 people are waiting for a lot. Happy Gardening!

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

Water Exercise

Do you enjoy nature in the colder months? At the pool each day nature runs the gamut. We have seen Canadian geese fly in formation over the pool. We have had beautiful bright sunny mornings with cold weather, and other days it looks like the sky is falling. There are gorgeous cloud formations, and we even got to see the moon one day while in the spa. Join us each weekday, Monday through Friday, in Pool 1 at 9 a.m. Not only will you improve your fitness, you will meet a great group of ladies, have good conversations, and a lot of laughs. It is really fun. Register in the office and join us.

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

Woodworkers

Woodworkers Club members had a few resident project requests during February. We divided the projects among the members and easily completed them in our garage workshops. We even had the time to catch up on and check off a few items on the home honey-do lists that the wives so diligently compose. The members also spent time planning projects that will be constructed and displayed for sale at the Ceramics Club Flea Market on April 12 and 13.

A few club members attended the monthly Orange County Woodworker's Association meeting where one of the association members gave a presentation on the special construction of a drop leaf table joint which was invented and extensively used by the famous woodworker, Sam Maloof.

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

*Steve Vallely,
(714) 595-5766*

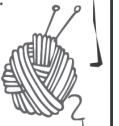
Bulletin Board

Please see club reports for more information.



Book Group #1

We honored the retirement of our founding member Suzanne Popel at our January meeting. We are currently reading *Where the Lost Wander* by Amy Harmon, as our March selection. An epic love story set in the 1850s, it tells the tale of a family and their unlikely protector, as they find their way through peril, uncertainty, and loss. Our meeting is on March 25 at 6:30 pm in the Casta del Sol Library. Contact Amy Lake (516) 263-7941, arlake225@gmail.com.



Yarn Art Group

Calling all yarn crafters! Tired of tangled skeins and lonely projects? Longing for a community of fellow yarn enthusiasts to share your passion with? Join the Casta del Sol Yarn Art Group every Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the Garden Room at Rec Center 1. We welcome all who enjoy crocheting, knitting, looming, and all yarn art. We are not a club and have no dues. Contact Teresita at (949) 716-5072 for more details.

Social Committee

Find your pot of gold at the end of the Casta del Sol rainbow at our Suds and Spuds Baked Potato Bar event on Friday evening, March 15. Join us for refreshing suds and a delicious baked potato bar with your choice of toppings along with some exciting Irish entertainment. Hope to see you all there! Contact Amy Lake at arlake225@gmail.com.

Shuffleboard

The CdS Shuffleboard Club invites residents to come and learn to play or practice Shuffleboard at 10:00 a.m. on the first and third Friday of each month in the Shuffleboard Pavilion. Equipment and instruction are provided. The air-conditioned Shuffleboard Pavilion is located next to the Rec Ctr 1 pool. Contact Bob and Mo Caywood at (949) 916-1972.

Paddle Tennis Club Tournament

March 16 is the first Paddle Tennis tournament of the year. All levels of players who are members are invited to play starting at 9:00 a.m. Contact Dan Viotto at viotto512@gmail.com.

Variety Club Show

Our next Variety Club show will be June 13 - 15. If you are interested in participating by acting, singing, and/or dancing, attend the casting call meeting on March 18 at 6:00 p.m. in the Vista Room. If you need more information, contact Barb Turino at (951) 858-7350.

Casta Creatives Club

Workshop on collages with Sue Menchel on March 28 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Arts and Crafts Room. There will be a small material fee. You must be a member and sign-up ahead of time. Contact Jacki Keller at (949) 293-5487.

Quilters Group

Gather your fat quarters and precut squares and join our CdS Quilters Group for a fun afternoon of learning, sharing and camaraderie. Join us from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Garden Room on March 14 and March 28. We are not a club and have no dues. We welcome all who enjoy needle art. Contact Victoria Crayne at (949) 587-1853.

Flea Market Announcement

Mark your calendar. The CdS Ceramic Club will be hosting their annual Flea Market on April 12 and 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Vista Rom. Vendors can select and rent a table for a nominal fee starting at 8:30 a.m. on March 22, at the Rec Ctr 1 office. Residents are invited to sell their gently used or handcrafted wares. You keep the profits from your sales. NO furniture, electrical items or clothing are allowed. Questions? Call Carol Favreau at (714) 470-8181.

Canine Companions Club

March 23 will be our first "Yappy Hour" of the year. Join us for a fun afternoon 4-6:00 p.m. at the Lawn Bowling Pavilion. BYOB. We will be serving appetizers and snacks. Water will be provided as well. Please RSVP! Linda Brockmiller (949) 412-1083.

Submissions to the Bulletin Board

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

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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 afternoons from 2 to 3 p.m.

We will be having our Pizza Bingo Party on Monday, April 1 at 6 p.m. in the Vista Room. The price for our members will be \$5 and \$10 for guests. Signup will begin on Monday, March 4 and will close on Wednesday, March 27.

Dues will remain at \$10 per year and are now payable at Rec Ctr 1. Our next meeting will be held on Monday, March 4 at 7 p.m. in the Fiesta Room. Following a short business meeting, we will be playing cards.

Carol Zinsmeister, (949) 305-9890

dleback Lanes on Marguerite Parkway in Mission Viejo. If you do not want to commit to bowling every week, you could join our list of subs; we can always use more subs. Just call Donna Miller at (949) 395-8958. If interested in checking out how much fun we have, you can stop by any Thursday at 1 p.m. at Saddleback Lanes.

Van Quinn, (949) 842-9151

Fishing

News on the Lake Mission Viejo fish status is that there are still no plans for transplants in the near future. No fish are surviving in any numbers at this date. The Lake has reached agreement with the City of Mission Viejo to add more recycle stations for less saline water going into the system. That should stifle green algae growth which is the lethal problem for lake fish now. They are shooting for at least one to two more years to consider plantings again. In the interim, Laguna Woods Rod and Gun Club, our sister group, continues to welcome Casta members. There will be three quarter-day boat trips from Dana Wharf twice a month beginning in April when shallow waters are open for rockfishing again.

Continued on next page

Bowling

After seventeen weeks, Pin Pals: Cynthia, Tom, Maureen, and Don have an eight-point lead on Rollin' Soul Mates: Gail, Stu, Pat, and Hugh. There is still plenty of time for any team to catch and/or pass either of these teams.

The Casta del Sol Bowling League bowls on Thursdays at 1 p.m. at Sad-



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SPORTS *Cont'd*

Fishing

Continued from previous page

There will be only one trip in March, with fishing for sculpin and whitefish, the predominant species. Join both clubs and enjoy the ocean until the Lake is again on line.

Nick Morenc, (949) 588-6223

Golf Chippers

Our next Golf Chippers event is Saturday, May 4 at 9:30 a.m. All Casta del Sol residents and their adult guests are invited to play in our quarterly golf chipping events. There are no annual dues because we only meet four times a year. Just \$5 and a white elephant gift for the prize table makes everyone eligible for a take-home item. In addition, several players have found golf clubs from our donated collection that suited their needs and took them home free of charge. Need clubs, a golf bag, or golf balls? Just holler. Mark your calendars for future Golf Chippers events at 9:30 a.m. on May 4, August 3, and November 2. No golf experience is necessary. See you soon.

Bob Hrad, (949) 290-0366

Lawn Bowling

Welcome to March and the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Your Casta del Sol Lawn Bowling Club is always looking for new members, and you don't have to be Irish. We are planning some fun-filled events throughout the year. Most will include snacks, beverages, BBQ's, or fun competitions.

At this time of year, we play Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 1 p.m. We welcome all who would like to try this game. We have members who will be happy to explain the basics. In May, we will hold an Open House with refreshments and free instruction. Come join us so we can show you this interesting game for men and women of all ages.

Roman Swystun, (818) 669-9970

Men's Golf

Our home course, Oso Creek, is modifying holes #10 and #17. Hole #10, a par 4 for both men and women, will now be shortened from 242 to 215 yards from the blue tees, and from 227 to 205 yards from the silver tees. The hole will become a par 3 for men and remain a par 4 for women. Hole #17 will remain a par 3 with the blue tees shortened from 193 to 172

yards and the silver tees from 176 to 149 yards. Par will revert to 59 for men and remain 61 for women. These course modifications are necessary to provide area for the new Garden Grill and restrooms. SCGA Course Rating has surveyed the changes and new score cards are ordered. Good luck as we slowly adjust.

The March games are: 3/6 Blind Nine Holes; 3/13 Individual Low Net; 3/20 Twosome Best Ball; 3/27 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

Paddle Tennis

The Paddle Tennis Club is having our first tournament, Luck of the Irish, on March 16 at 9 a.m. It will be a random draw style at three levels and players won't know their partners until the day of the tournament. Also, partners are switched for each set. Expect some yummy breakfast goodies, raffles, and lots of fun. All are invited to come and watch. If you are interested in participating, please contact Tournament Director Dan Viotto at viotto512@gmail.com or (512) 466-8030.

Open Court times are 9 to 10:15 a.m. Monday through Friday and from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Everyone is welcome to play. For other times, please put your name on the whiteboard outside the courts. Make sure to pay your \$10 dues for 2024 at the Rec Ctr 1 office so you can join us at all our great club events.

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

Pickleball

The Casta del Sol Pickleball Club has planned several tournaments and social activities for 2024. Now is your chance to join the club and be part of these exciting events. Dues are \$10 per person for the year and can be paid by check payable to *CdS Pickleball Club* at the Rec Ctr 1 office.

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

to the game. Come out and be active with your neighbors.

Eric Vanderslice, (562) 712-1225

Shuffleboard

The winter Shuffleboard leagues will continue until March 20. Please consider signing up as a sub. For the Tuesday morning league, contact Jim Kinney at dothemath99@yahoo.com, and for the Wednesday evening league, contact Susan Herrning at susanherrning@aol.com.

The following were winners for the Sunday Supper Shuffle: 1st: Bob Caywood/Cheryl Rowen; 2nd: Mo Caywood/Mary Ellen Marcus; 3rd: Kay Snapp/Carol Zinsmeister. The next date is March 10. Winners for the Sunday Potluck Social Shuffle were: 1st: Debra Friedman/Val Ricci/Cheryl Rowen; 2nd: Susan Herrning/Marlene Solem; 3rd: Myrna Smith/MaryEllen Marcus. The next date is March 24. Sign-ups are available on the bulletin board in the Shuffleboard Pavilion.

The Wednesday Friendly Shufflers meet every week at 10 a.m. All are welcome to play this "no take-out" style. Friday morning lessons by Bob and Mo Caywood take place on the first and third Fridays at 10 a.m.

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

Tennis

The mid-winter tennis season has been a tale of two weathers, ranging from abundant liquid sunshine to terrific actual sunny days. In spite of the weather challenges, most of the Tennis Club's group court activities remain on track, with some schedule modifications. These activities include morning sessions (8 a.m.) on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, along with evening sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are also continuing the very popular first Saturday sessions featuring Clarity Tennis Tips, including coffee and breakfast munchies. We are also continuing our third Saturday program with drills and court fun led by local pro Jimmy Gleason.

In other news, the Tennis Club recently launched a Facebook page with an interesting array of pictures and updates on the various club activities. We invite you to visit the site on Facebook at *Casta del Sol Tennis Club*. Newcomers are always welcome at Tennis Club group events.

Roger Gyger, (630) 430-9045



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CASTA COMMUNITY

On the Road Again San Diego Museum of Art, Art Alive

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



Debra Friedman

Art Alive that takes place every spring at the San Diego Museum of Art has become my annual tradition. What could be better than viewing talented works of art at the same time as breathtaking floral arrangements? And being in Balboa Park with the wonderful ponds, museums, and restaurants tops it off.

The San Diego Museum of Art, in itself, is worthy of a visit. Established in 1926, it is one of the most renowned cultural institutions in Southern California. The museum's mission is "to preserve, exhibit, interpret, and collect outstanding works of art from

around the world." The museum has a diverse collection spanning European, Asian, American, Latin American, and contemporary art. Paintings by El Greco, Francisco Goya, Edgar Degas, and Diego Rivera are highlights. There are also temporary exhibits as well as special events.

For Art Alive, local floral artists are commissioned to interpret an individual painting in the museum's collection. The style and color of the flowers and the vessel used uniquely reflect the artwork. The entire museum is filled with flowers and the elaborate entrance rotunda is spectacular with strands of flowers hanging from the chandeliers. The promotion for this event touts "join us for this expressionistic explosion of color and the elegant beauty of nature during this extraordinary annual event."

The San Diego Museum of Art is open every day of the week, except Wednesdays, with hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Art Alive exhibit will be taking place April 25-28 and you won't want to miss it.

Small Talk Boredom On Noah's Ark

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



Dorothy Frances

Nearly everyone loves the Biblical story of Noah's Ark, although we rarely think beyond Noah gathering animals two by two.

Aside from taking care of all those animals, I can't help but wonder how Noah and his family kept from being bored during their journey. Aside from the fact that they didn't have modern forms of entertainment like television, radio, and computers, there wasn't even nice scenery going by, since the earth was covered with water.

Perhaps they became great conversationalists. But let's face it, they sure didn't have much to talk about:

"Anything new going on with the

giraffes?"

"Eating and pooping as usual. How about the elephants?"

"The same as ever."

Maybe they invented games like *hide and seek*. But hiding places would have been limited, and a bit dangerous to say the least: Concealed behind an elephant's leg? Hanging on a rope with a bunch of monkeys?

Another alternative is exercise. Maybe they raced each other up and down the length of the ark. Noah may even have become the Biblical version of Richard Simmons, commanding his family through exercises: "Bend thee over and touch thy toes!"

How about story telling? Is the ark where stories like *The Three Little Pigs* got their start? Did they haul out three pigs and a wolf to use for visuals?

We'll never know the details of Noah's Ark. But, in today's modern world of disturbing news, sometimes boredom on an ark full of animals doesn't sound so bad after all.

Reflections of a Casta Neighbor

A resident explores the adventures of Casta.



Nevin Valentine

Do you ever fear opening certain letters? I do. In December, the DMV driver's license renewal letter arrived in my mailbox and my heart began pounding as I ripped open the letter to see if I had to take the dreaded written test. The answer was a definitive yes. Oh no! Christmas is ruined because I must study for the exam.

My stressful relationship with the DMV began in 1964 when I inherited a yellow 1960 Opel Kadett station wagon. I was pressured to get my driver's license so I could drive myself to school. The only person willing and able to teach me to drive was my 18-year-old cousin. He wasn't overjoyed at the prospect of driving around Napa in what was the opposite of a cool car. To make matters worse, the car had a particularly challenging stick shift.

My first attempt to take the written test ended in me missing seven questions, thereby failing miserably. It was even worse when I set out on my driving test. As I left the DMV parking lot with the examiner sitting beside me with his trusty clipboard, I drove right in front of a car! The examiner guided me back into the parking lot where he gave me the sheet off his clipboard with the word *failed* written in red. It took almost a year for me to feel ready to try again. Guess what? I passed. Whew.

Fast forward to 2024 and I have good news about renewing your driver's license. The California DMV provides an excellent e-learning course online which helped me pass the knowledge exam. At the DMV office, I was only required to take a vision test. I gushed to the DMV clerk that this renewal experience was the best one I have had in my sixty years of driving. Just then, a young applicant was awarded her very first driver's license. Her parents hugged her and made plans for a celebration lunch. My heart shifted out of fear of the DMV (and my mailbox) as I witnessed such a positive outcome for this first-time driver.

What's Cooking at Casta

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



Linda Brockmiller

Mexican Cornbread

This is delicious with any soup or chili!

- ½ lb. butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 (4 oz.) can green chili peppers
- 1 can cream style corn

- ½ cup grated jack cheese
- ½ cup grated cheddar cheese
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 cup flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup yellow corn meal

Cream butter and sugar, then add eggs one at a time mixing well. Chop peppers and add corn. Mix well, add the cheeses, and salt. Sift flour and corn meal separately, then measure. Sift together with baking powder and add to mixture.

Pour into greased and floured 9 x 13 glass baking dish. Preheat oven to 350 degrees, reduce to 300 degrees and bake for 1 hour.

A Good Read: *The Magnolia Palace*

By Liz Rickett

If you enjoyed the novel *The Lions of Fifth Avenue*, written by Fiona Davis, have lived in New York City, or enjoy reading about history or art, you might enjoy the novel *The Magnolia Palace* also written by Fiona Davis. This book is set in the Frick Library in New York City. It is a mystery involving two women from two different times who find themselves in the library.



PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS

Away Golf: A Club with Clubs

By Liz Rickett

The Away Golf Club is one of the oldest clubs at Casta del Sol. It was formed more than 45 years ago, during the construction of the second group of homes, the Fiesta series.

Co-Chair Joyce Parlin calls it the cheapest club you can join. Lifetime dues are \$10. Once you join, you are always a member, whether you continue to play golf.

Most members belong to neighboring golf clubs, such as the Oso Creek Golf Club, where they play golf regularly. The Away Golf Club was formed to give members the opportunity to play different courses. Some of the recent courses they have played at are: Welk Resort in Escondido, Hidden Valley Golf Course in Norco, Shorecliffs Golf Course in San Clemente, and the St. Mark Golf Course in San Marcos.

The Club plays four to five tournaments a year, all within a 70-mile radius of Casta. While there are 85 active members in the Club, not all participate in all tournaments. Tournaments are all-day affairs with entrants playing at the course in foursomes, after which prizes are awarded. Most tournaments are played on the second Tuesday of the month. The fee to play is generally around \$70.

In order to belong to this Club, you need to have a Southern California Golf Association (SCGA) handicap and own clubs for play.

Joyce Parlin and Jim Peterson are co-chairs of this Club. Hal Steele is the treasurer. If you are interested in joining, call Joyce at (949) 588-0337 or Jim at (949) 770-1253.

March: Green is My Color

By Evelyn Rothert

Martius is the name of the god of war, and where March got its name. At this time, the wars stopped and the celebration between the old and the new year began. The celebration was referred to as the Festival of Mars. Originally, March was always the beginning of the year in ancient Rome due to its association with spring. A time for new promises, new growth, and more sunlight. Spring begins on March 19 this year.

A special day this month is St. Patrick's Day on March 17. One of the

reasons we wear green on St. Patrick's Day is because of Ireland's nickname, *The Emerald Isle*. The green stripe in the Irish flag also plays a role. St. Patrick is thought to have used green shamrocks to teach his people.

I always liked everything Irish. After doing my DNA testing, I found out I'm 1% Irish and I'm an Irish twin.

Have a lovely month. Time to eat corned beef and cabbage, enjoy the daffodils, and don't get pinched for not wearing green.

Sign Up for Eblasts

Please sign up for eblasts for the most up-to-date connection you can have with all that goes on in Casta del Sol, by contacting Valerie Hanich at vhanich@powerstonepm.com. You can also find eblasts on the CdS website, www.castadelsol.com, or by going to the Rec Office and filling out the appropriate form.

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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

From Brooklyn to Hollywood, One Collector's Odyssey

Article and photos by Jeff McCoy



A film fan, Sig Menchel treasures the King Kong poster signed by Fay Wray

It all started innocently enough in an antique shop. Sue Menchel was looking to add to her growing "Roosters and Roses" ceramics collectables. Noting her husband Sig's lack of interest in hand-painted cups and plates, she suggested, "Why don't you start a collection?" New Yorker Sig Menchel thought, "I like the Brooklyn Dodgers, maybe I'll collect some baseball cards or photos." Soon he was adding signed photos of his favorite baseball players including Sandy Koufax and Duke Snider, team photos, and other memorabilia to his collection.

As his collection increased, Sig's interest in history led him to explore the Brooklyn Dodgers' past to a time when they were called the Brooklyn Bridesmaids. That's when he discovered Robert "Parisian Bob" Caruthers who pitched and played outfield for the St. Louis Browns and the

Bridesmaids. A memorabilia dealer Sig knew suggested that he might like to own a "cabinet card" with a signed portrait of Caruthers. Cabinet cards are very rare with the last ones produced in 1908, so Sig agreed and made the purchase. Later when he and Sue were living in Bellevue, Washington, Sig attended a PBS *Antiques Roadshow* in Seattle and had some of his baseball memorabilia assessed by an antiques expert. If you've watched the program, you know the surprise people experience when they discover a family treasure is worth thousands of dollars. Now imagine how Sig felt when he was told his 6x8 cabinet card featuring Caruthers was worth \$10,000! (And, yes, he sold the valuable cabinet card).

During the time Sig was building his baseball collection, he also started collecting 8x10 black and white photos of silent and "talkies" film actors.



A miniature replica of the old Ebbets Field scoreboard

He liked the way black and white photos captured the details of a subject or scene without the distraction of color. The publicity stills and action photos of stars and character actors that Sig has amassed over thirty years now occupy six file cabinets.

As Sig Menchel now knows, col-

lecting is not restricted to a particular stage of life, it's often a lifelong pursuit that may never be completed.

If you have a unique collection that you have been engaged in for many years and would like to be featured in a future article, please contact Jeff McCoy at jmactr1@gmail.com.

Getting to Know our Neighbors: Rita Bernardo

By Sara Henninger, photo by Kip Isbell

Rita Bernardo moved to Casta del Sol from Greenbush, New York in January 2023. She is widowed and has five children, four in California and one in North Carolina. The family decided it was best for her to move to California and began the process of convincing Mom. After all, everything she knew was New York with all her friends and activities there. She eventually came "kicking and screaming the whole way."

She first looked in Los Angeles County but was dismayed. It was then suggested that she look in Orange County. She visited other senior communities in the area and then was introduced to Casta. She arrived with one of her daughters and from the moment they pulled into Gate 1, she felt a serenity sweep over her. Even before seeing the homes, she knew she wanted to live here. The lush green environment reminded her of upstate New York. She found a Rosa model and moved in. She did extensive remodeling and is quite content with the outcome.

She has made several new friends in Casta and likes to walk in the evening

with a neighbor. She goes to lunch weekly with another new friend. She recently joined Las Damas and is interested in joining the Variety Club as well as the Italian American Club. She plays Chinese Mah Jongg and is looking into learning bocce ball.

Rita is of Italian descent and loves to cook. Her four children drive to Mom's every Sunday for homemade Italian delicacies such as authentic spaghetti and meatballs. They come from Los Angeles, El Segundo, and Huntington Beach. She loves that she is able to carry on the tradition of Sunday Italian dinners and is pleased that all nearby family members show up each week.



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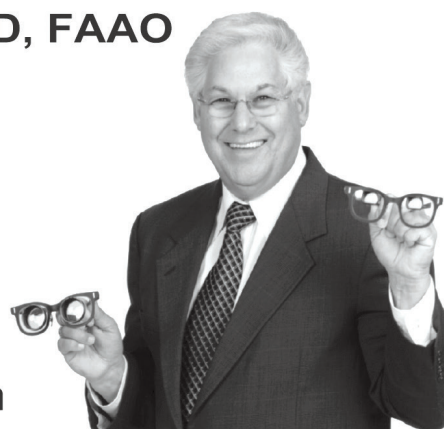
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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Casta del Sol Fishing Club and Annual Turkey Shoot

By Sara Henninger, photos by John Mazurek



Jim Slawson, club secretary and accomplished fisherman

The Fishing Club has had a long history in Casta del Sol. President Nick Morenc explains that the Club used to fish frequently in Lake Mission Viejo. They would have derbies and prizes which would be given for the biggest and smallest fish. However, in 2018, golden algae attacked the Lake, and it is fatal to fish. The City of Mission Viejo is working on minimizing the golden algae. Last fall, they began stocking tilapia again in Lake Mission Viejo; currently the Lake is not being restocked with fish.

Arrangements were made years ago between our Fishing Club and Laguna Woods Fishing Club for a twice a month charter out of Dana Point. Nick explained that various ocean fish are caught during different times of the year. From January through April, scorpion fish and rockfish are predominant with calico bass being primary during the summer months. Tuna is a favorite during September and October.

The Club has 18 members and meets monthly. One of their favorite meetings is in November when they get together for an annual Turkey Shoot luncheon that includes a bingo game. This was a fun event when it was in the Garden Room before it was remodeled. The walls were made of corkboard and a picture of a turkey was placed on the corkboard. Club members would throw darts at the turkey with the winners receiving gift cards. After the remodel, this room can no longer accommodate the sport. They are looking for an alternative to



Nick Morenc holding a California Sheepshead



A tuna caught weighing more than 40 lbs

this long-standing event.

Club members Tom and Mary Ann Driskill travel extensively, often fly fishing in Alaska. Tom also makes custom fishing rods. Another member, John Mazurek, recently moved from the Midwest where he fished in the Great Lakes. He moved to Casta and said he loves the boat charters, especially when they go after blue and yellow fin tuna. He is thrilled with the automatic reel he purchased that really helps to reel in the big ones! Nick Morenc has fished around the world.

If you are interested in the CdS Fishing Club, please contact Nick Morenc via email at morencnk@gmail.com.

“The CdS Fishing Club has an arrangement with the Laguna Woods Fishing Club for twice a month charters out of Dana Point.”

Where in the World: Laughing in Germany

By Evelyn Rothert

Way back when I was a young adult, nine of my family members went to Germany on a tour. We stayed at the beautiful Arabella Hotel in Frankfurt. One of the first things we did with the tour group was a boat ride on the Rhine River. The castles were numerous and the landscape beautiful. We stopped at a cute village where some of us bought Dad a gag gift. A baby bottle filled with schnapps; he loved it.

My parents grew up in Germany. There are a lot of parks in the cities where it feels like you are in a forest. Some have picturesque lakes with ducks and swans. As a joke, while we were walking along the path, my parents pulled some seed pods filled with liquid from some bushes and kept popping them on our necks as we were walking. They used to do that when they were children.


One of the stops on the tour was going through East Germany to Berlin. However, it is 1990, and Germany was in the process of being unified. Gone was “Check Point Charlie.” No more

border crossing. The signs used to say “Berlin – Capital of DDR” (Deutsche Demokratische Republik). The only part not crossed off was the word Berlin.

We stopped at the remains of the Berlin Wall. Most of it had been taken down. A lot of it was broken and you could see the steel barbs. We managed to break off a few pieces of the wall for ourselves.

After dinner at our Nuremberg hotel, some of us were exploring the hotel. We came across the exercise room. My sister got Mom on a back machine that makes you go upside down. We were all laughing pretty hard. Next was jump roping, which Dad did not do very well. In the lobby, some of us pretended to be mannequins but never pulled it off when people came by. *Crazy Americans!*


When the tour ended in Frankfurt at the same hotel as when we started, the family was greeted by the Scottish bellboy with enthusiasm. Actually, his words were “Oh no, you’re back.”



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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

Social Singles Mingle for Friendship and Fun

By Fran Morgan, photos by Jeff McCoy and Fran Morgan

The name says it all. This activity is for all residents who are unattached and looking for friends to socialize with. The group is led by Mary Carlson and Carol Kowalsky, who keep the list of interested residents and send out notifications for activities.

The group has been meeting for more than ten years with membership staying at about 50 singles. The group goes out to lunch once a month to local restaurants. Usually, about 15 singles gather on the second Thursday of each month. Carol manages the reservations at local restaurants that can accommodate that many diners. Carol relates that they have tried other activities, but have settled on monthly luncheons out and annual fall and spring potlucks as the most successful.

Whether newly single through losing a partner or intentionally single, eating alone at a restaurant can be daunting for most people. Mary Carlson related that when she moved to Casta, she began joining activities. "I know everyone was being nice and welcoming, but I was a single person sitting with couples. I felt like a fifth wheel. So, I sought out people in my same situation. The singles group has been a good fit for me."

At a recent lunch at the Outback Steakhouse, the group was asked: What do you like about the Social Singles Group? Arline Chenarides replied, "Making more friends." Leona Brimmer had a one-word response: "food!" Kathleen Herrick said she joined to meet new people. And Leo Restrick summed it up with "friends, food, and fellowship."

Casta del Sol is no different than other retirement communities in that there are more single women than men. But since the object of the gatherings is to meet with friends and share a meal, no one minds.

Both Carol and Mary said that anyone is welcome to plan an activity other than the monthly luncheon. Just send them the details and they will send out an invitation.

To add your name to the list of Social Singles, contact Mary Carlson at marycarlson28@gmail.com.



Social Singles meet for lunch. Photo by Fran Morgan



Each potluck is declared the best ever. Photo by Jeff McCoy



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PEOPLE, PLACES & EVENTS *Cont'd*

A New Chapter for the Book Club

Article by Liz Rickett, photos by Fred Lake



Cover to Cover Book Club

For almost 17 years, Suzanne Popel has led the Casta del Sol Book Club which meets the fourth Monday of each month in the Casta Library. This group is a bit different from most other book clubs. Each year, Suzanne visits the Mission Viejo Public Library and chooses books to be read each month of the year by members.

Each month, Suzanne heads to the library to pick up the book bag which contains 10 to 12 copies to be read and discussed by the group. At each meeting, the book previously distributed is discussed. Then these copies are collected to be returned to the

library and the new title is passed out to members. Thus, no member has to scramble about trying to find a title.

Some notable recent books discussed included *The Dutch House*, *The Personal Librarian*, *Mexican Gothic*, and *Woman of No Importance*. Some have been wonderful, some have been “head scratchers,” but each has led to an interesting discussion. Members have all said how the Club, and Suzanne’s choices, has led them to read about people, experiences, events, and authors they would never have considered.



Suzanne Popel

Suzanne started the group and has kept it going. The pandemic didn’t

stop her; during those months the meetings were held at the Maye Russ Fountain and the Lawn Bowling Pavilion.

After starting the group and keeping it going, Suzanne is now stepping down. Amy Lake will be taking over, keeping the same format. At the January 22 meeting, the group thanked Suzanne for all her time and effort with a cake and a gift of flowers and a plant.

Restaurant Review: In Search of the Best Burger (Part 2)

By Debra Friedman

This is the second in the series of the “Search for the Best Burger.” Build your own burger is an up-and-coming trend. Both of the following are good for those who want choices and for those who want gluten-free options.

I ventured over to Irvine to try The Counter. I loved the logistics of ordering. Not only do you have a choice of protein by weight (including the exotic Bison, Impossible, Turkey), but also a choice of cheese, toppings, doneness of the meat – all while viewing the calorie count. There were seven kinds of buns, 12 kinds of cheese, about 20 topping choices and many sauces. There were also many side-dish options including unusual ones like Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower. This was one of my favorites because it was juicy and delicious. I was, however, disappointed with the

fries that were the thin shoestring style, and cold.

The Stand in Rancho Santa Margarita was similar in concept and the tagline is “American Classics Redefined.” The ordering is done on a wall electronic device and there is waiter delivery. The choice of protein and how to cook the burgers is a huge benefit. Protein choices are beef, chicken, turkey, Impossible, vegetarian, and falafel. As with The Counter, there were many choices of cheese, condiments, and extra toppings – some at a slight charge. Unusual sides included green beans, slaw, and mac and cheese. There was also a vast menu of items other than burgers. A bonus was the complimentary homemade potato chips. The Stand burger was also very tasty at just the right rareness and flavor.

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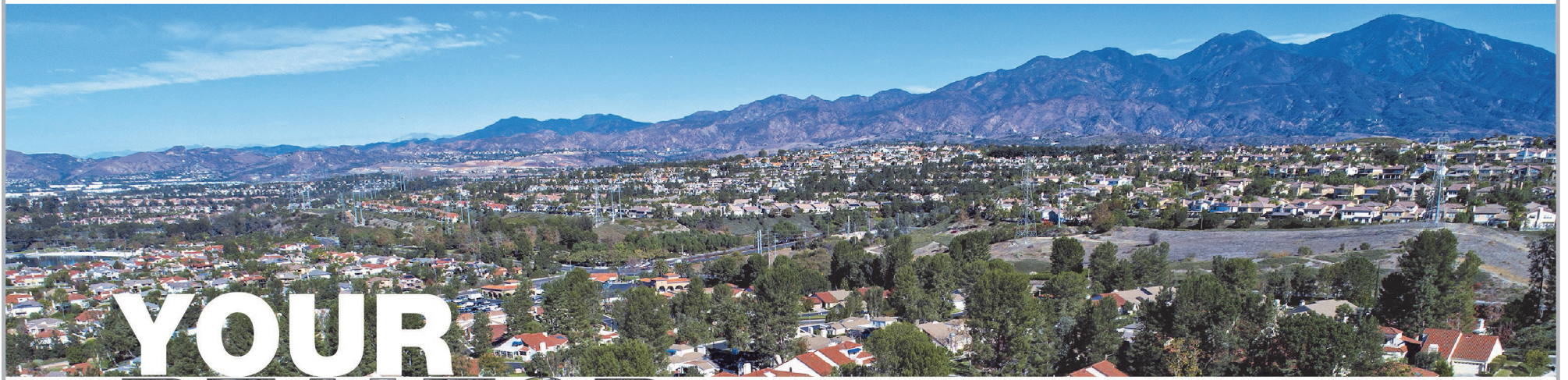


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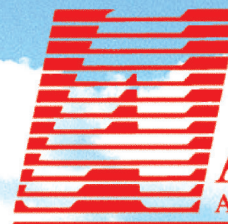
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