

CASA COASTER

This publication of the Social & Welcoming Committee does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors nor managing agent of Casa Costa.

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What's News

Casa Costa

- ★ The latest lineup at the front desk includes would-be stars in soccer and bowling. **A5**

Neighborhood

- ★ The city is still without a CRA director, following a dramatic ouster six months ago. **A7**
- ★ New electric shuttle services are set to debut. **A5**

FEATURED

MISTER B'S NEIGHBORHOOD

As the PGA Tour rolled through, I was along for the ride. **A4**

MARNA'S FAMILY

On the front lines of the friendly skies, and other kinds too. **A7**

EST. 2022

CASA COASTER

Boynton Beach, Fla.

CasaCoaster.com

**SOUTH FLORIDA'S #1
POOLSIDE AMUSEMENT**

Ready to roll



VEGAS STAYCATION: The Social & Welcoming Committee organized a casino night March 1 as contractors organized for building repairs. **A3**

License (plate) to chill

* * *

State to recognize late songwriter and merchandising wiz

Jimmy Buffett named his fifth studio album *A-1-A* and now Florida lawmakers are naming the road after him.

Mr. Buffett, a tropical rock singer, died Sept. 1 at age 76 of a rare skin cancer. In January a government panel unanimously approved a bill to designate State Road A1A as "Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway." The road runs over 300 miles along the Atlantic Ocean from Key West to north of Jacksonville. The panel also agreed to create a specialty "Margaritaville" license plate. Proceeds will benefit one of the late

Please turn to page A6

BOYNTON BEAT

City fires HR director after back-and-forth accusations

Tennille DeCoste has left the building.

As the *Coaster* reported in February, the Boynton Beach human resources director was under fire for allegedly campaigning for a seat on the Delray Beach City Commission, where she lives, while Boynton was paying her \$188,000 per year to manage personnel at city hall.

Ms. DeCoste fired back, claiming that the trouble began only after she complained that a city administrator criticized her for "hiring too many black women." She emailed Mayor Ty Penserga and her complaints were the subject of a special meeting in December.

City commissioners decided to wait for an independent investigator's report before taking action, while Ms. DeCoste said "the investigation was predetermined, tainted and completed by the City Attorney's friend."

The commissioners received the report in February. It was penned by an attorney in Gainesville who interviewed Ms. DeCoste and also claimed to have no ties to Boynton; "I have no knowledge of its local figures or politics," the attorney said. It finds that Ms. DeCoste's campaign for a Delray seat indeed leaked into aspects of her job and violated city policies.

It claims Ms. DeCoste used a city-issued credit card to buy tickets to a formal LGBTQ ball and used city resources to ask other city employees to contribute to her political campaign in Delray Beach.

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OPINION

What's the scoop? You're reading the right news

BY J.T. HARRINGTON

This one falls in the told-ya-so category. *The Coastal Star*, a 17-year old monthly newspaper out of Ocean Ridge with a paid staff of 20, wrote last month in a front-page “special report” that rising costs are “a storm that no one living in a beachside condo could have seen coming.”

Six months earlier, we detailed in these pages that very storm. Using over 4 ½ pages, we explained the impact of Florida Senate Bills 4-D and 154 that closed loopholes condo associations have used to “kick the can down the road” on building safety. New state-mandated inspections are forcing building repairs and the fundraising to pay for them.

We quoted an insurance expert on a very tight insurance market; he said some “master condo associations are now paying two to five times the rate for coverage they were paying two years ago.” We found a condo data analyst who said: “Special assessments

are definitely coming.” We even cited the trend of investors singling out older buildings in need of repairs to buy out owners and bulldoze.

The *Star* mentions several nearby condo associations facing special assessments on top of large increases in monthly dues. Units in one building face

assessments of \$200,000 apiece. “There were more assessments than I have shoes – and I have lots of shoes,” one owner said. The president of one condo association said: “We understand insurance

increases, we understand the importance of recertification and we understand the need for reserves, but everything is coming at us all at one time, like a tsunami.”

Tidal waves are usually caused by unpredictable earthquakes. But this “sudden storm” of rising costs was easy for readers to predict. Thanks for supporting the local newspaper that pays attention. **CC**



LETTER TO THE PUBLISHER

Don't say the T-word

This month marks my 9-year anniversary living at Casa Costa. As the water aerobics instructor for awhile, I'm on the pool deck quite a bit, so I meet the resort guests often (I'm no longer using the “T” word). Some are repeat visitors, some are confused first-timers who thought they'd reserved a hotel room and asked me for a drink menu.

Builders intended the 77 units on the lower floors here to be sold fully-furnished and operated by a full-service hotel operator. But Related Group bought Casa Costa in a market downturn and never hired a hotelier, so guests have zero consistency. Based on the recent conversation in these pages, I researched how other South Florida communities are designed with both owners and short-term guests in mind.

Related Group recently sold all 343 units at District 225 in Miami in two months, but they've set it up better: “List the availability of your residence on Airbnb with the guidance of our expertly trained concierge.” They have an “on-site cafe offering delivery service” and “on-demand housekeeping.”

Another one is Okan Tower with Hilton-owned rooms on some floors, but as a condo-hotel, unit owners can choose to put their units into the hotel's rental program to “benefit from the hotel's marketing programs, maintenance staff, housekeeping services and other onsite staff support,” including the Hilton reservation system.

Investors bought small units at YotelPad for nearly triple the price as Casa Costa because the professionals are in charge and they integrate technology well. A “VIP Suite” is over \$900 some nights (parking extra) for the same space as we have.

We don't need to be a five-star Miami hotel, but if I'm subsidizing check-in services, I'd like a cut of the profits.

ROBERT HALL

CASACOASTERNEWS@GMAIL.COM

What happens in Casa Costa...



HIGH RISE, HIGH STAKES: As contractors filed permits, 120 residents flooded the promenade to kick off a busy construction season in style. Casa Costa's first-ever casino night brought slots, roulette and table games sponsored by contractors and consultants. Winners took home over a dozen raffle prizes from local businesses.



CASACOSTA SOCIAL ABPLUS
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Better than most: the perks of golf volunteerism

On a beautiful, bright day in March, I had the pleasure of accompanying a friend from Casa Costa to the PGA Cognizant Classic in Palm Beach Gardens. Jim Brousseau snagged tickets from fellow residents Carla and Steve Geiser, who earned them as a reward for volunteering at the event. As someone who had never experienced a pro golf tournament firsthand, I was thrilled at the opportunity. We began the day by trailing a group of golfers for numerous holes before exploring the rest of the course and enjoying the various activities on offer.

We ventured to a pavilion overlooking the world-famous Bear Trap, three of the most treacherous holes in golf and named after Jack Nicklaus, who redesigned the course. In 2007, the Honda Classic moved to PGA National Resort and Spa, and it was renamed the Cognizant this year. Organizers built an impressive viewing area for 6,000 fans overlooking the Bear Trap. That's 1/3 of an NBA stadium capacity!

The temporary structure offered food and drinks from a remarkable vantage point of these distinctive holes. I couldn't help but admire the numerous structures erected throughout the tournament grounds to provide guests with opportunities to rest and see the tournament from a great perspective. Among these structures were exclusive hospitality areas such as The Chalet, The Sky Suites and Championship Club. The Sky Suites, strategically positioned near the 17th and 18th greens, provide open-air hospitality with premium views of two signature holes. Companies pony up for access to these venues for their employees and customers, though the Championship Club entrance is available for individual purchase by anyone with a ticket, and there's also a designated viewing area for veterans.



**MISTER B'S
NEIGHBORHOOD**

At one of these hospitality areas, I met up with Carla and Steve. The two golf enthusiasts have volunteered at this tournament for the past six years.

Carla's role this year was bouncer at the Sky Suites, checking credentials. Over 1,600 volunteers pay a nominal fee and receive perks such as tournament attire, meals and tickets for family and friends. According to Carla, volunteering is not only rewarding but also a source of camaraderie and fun. "We all have a good time when we volunteer. I got to know the people I volunteer with and we make the day fun," she said.

Steve, an avid golfer of 67 years, has been a "walking scorer" for several years.

Assigned to a group of golfers, Steve tallies their shots along the course and communicates with rules officials as players have questions or need a ruling. He averages 6 1/2 miles per day as he walks the course with the players. "The pros are all so nice," he said. "Every one of them thanked us for being there."

This year, one of the players was Keith Mitchell, who recognized Steve from five years ago when the pro won it all. Keith told Steve: "You were with me when I won in 2019. You are my good luck charm." He ended up tied for ninth place this year for the tournament without Steve at his side. Steve calls himself a "golf junkie" and also serves

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DRIVEN TO SERVE: Carla and Steve Geiser volunteer in Palm Beach Gardens under hospitality tents and on the course.

Pro (watching) tips

Continued from page A4

as a rules official for the Florida State Golf Commission at various tournaments across the state.

Witnessing professional golf in person was so much more thrilling than watching it on TV. Inspired by the camaraderie and passion of volunteers like Carla and Steve, I'm contemplating applying to volunteer for next year's event. It's good to be retired. 

Sign up to volunteer at thecognizantclassic.com/volunteer.

CONCIERGE CAROUSEL

Meet the latest team at the front desk



ALEX BERNARD

Weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Mr. Bernard has been at Casa Costa for the past two years. He continues to play soccer in his free time. As always, he brings a positive attitude and kind demeanor to his new work schedule.



LYNN MAKAS

Tues. to Thurs. from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Raised in Miami since she was six, Ms. Makas gradually moved northward, raising her family in Boca Raton before settling in Boynton Beach. She is a proud grandmother of two and relishes the newfound freedom of weekends off. She loves live music and hits up local bands whenever she can.



LUIS RIVERA

Fri. to Mon. from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Mr. Riviera started here two months ago. Originally from Connecticut, Luis relocated to South Florida at the age of eight. While he initially pursued studies in barbering, he determined it wasn't his calling. He gained experience

working at another property managed by Castle Group. Outside of his professional life, Luis is an avid and competitive bowler, participating in tournaments across South Florida.



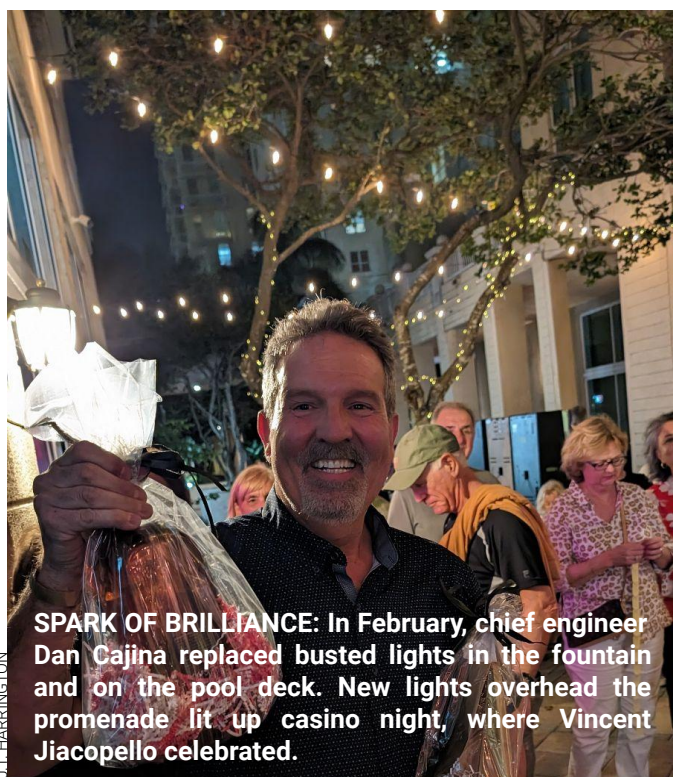
ABBY GOOD

Weekends from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ms. Good began her role at the front desk in January. A native of Palm Beach County, Abby leads a busy life as a paralegal during the week. As a single mother to a 14-year-old boy, she devotes much of her time to supporting her son's sporting life, as he competes on a

traveling baseball team. She has enjoyed a positive rapport with residents and guests alike.

— John Battista



SPARK OF BRILLIANCE: In February, chief engineer Dan Cajina replaced busted lights in the fountain and on the pool deck. New lights overhead the promenade lit up casino night, where Vincent Jiacopello celebrated.



CASACOSTA SOCIAL



CasaCostaBB.com

Margaritaville to live on

Continued from page A1

songwriter's charities that provides disaster relief for communities across Florida.

Although he began as a country singer, Mr. Buffett described his musical style as "drunken Caribbean rock 'n roll." When he received an honorary doctorate in music from the University of Miami in 2015, he told graduating seniors about his

affinity for the area:

"Needless to say, my life took a big and wonderful change towards South Florida, which has a lot to do with why I'm standing here today," he said, while wearing flip-flops below the academic robes.

Though he was nominated for two Grammy awards, it was his marketing acumen that

made him one of the world's richest musicians, with a net worth of \$1 billion, according to *Forbes*. After seeing his name misspelled on a T-shirt in 1985, he opened a store selling branded trinkets.

That enterprise spawned a sprawling empire of apparel, home decor, pool floats, salad dressings, salsas, pickleball sets and margarita mixes. He licensed his name to a *Margaritaville at Sea* cruise to the Bahamas, a Broadway play about a part-time bartender and a volcano called *Escape to Margaritaville* and a satellite radio station. His company lent its name to casual dining restaurants, casinos, hotels and retirement communities. He worked with Anheuser-Busch to create Land Shark Lager and for eight months, the Miami Dolphins stadium was named Land Shark Stadium. One of Mr. Buffett's songs refers men attempting to seduce women in resort towns as land sharks.

In 1986, the artist founded a non-profit with a former Florida governor to conserve aquatic sea cows, including the creation of "Save the Manatees" license plates to benefit the organization. In 2015, his hometown in Mississippi named a bridge after Mr. Buffett and researchers last year named a newly discovered parasitic crustacean *gnathia jimmybuffetti*.

Perhaps the most famous songwriting reference to A1A comes from rapper Vanilla Ice when he referred to Miami's section of the road in the 1990 chart-topping release "Ice Ice Baby," where "girls were hot, wearing less than bikinis," and you know the rest. Vanilla Ice is the stage name of Robert Van Winkle, now 56, and is

currently developing a bar and pop culture museum in Lake Worth Beach.

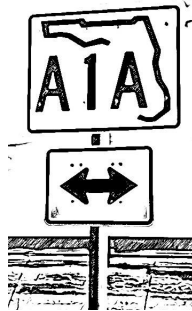
Some Casa Costa residents make the case that A1A would be better off named after the one-hit wonder.

"I still chant 'A1A, Beachfront Avenue!' everytime I turn onto that road. My cousin does the same thing," said Steven Mills of the south tower, referring to a line in the song's third verse. "That highway doesn't remind me of margaritas."

"More time has passed since Vanilla Ice's corniness than will ever pass before Jimmy Buffett deserves more publicity," said David Royce, who also resides in the south tower.

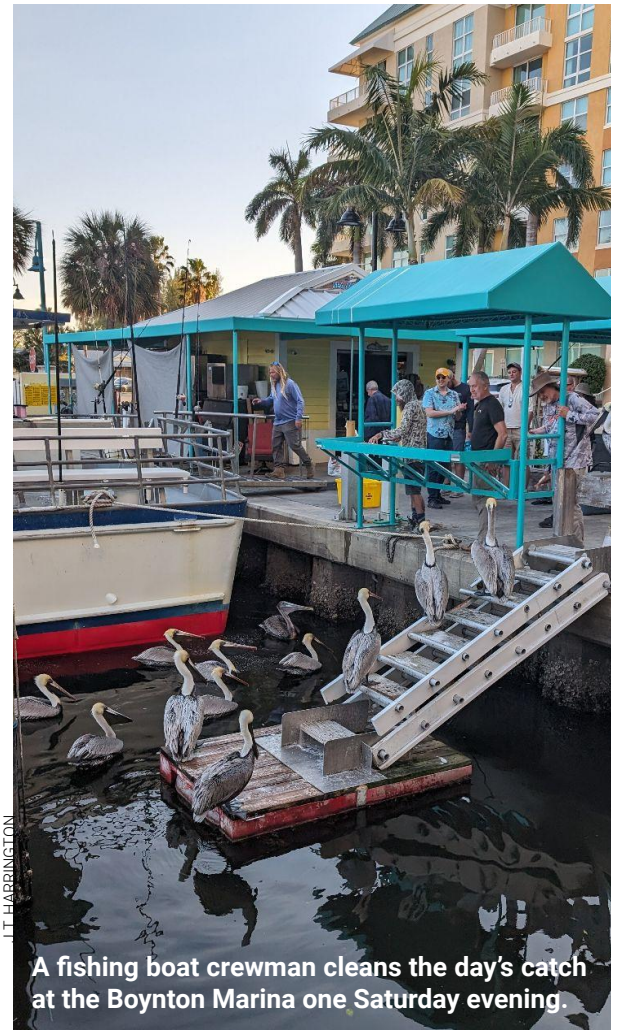
Mr. Buffett sang that he'd once made enough money to buy Miami. "Sure, he fleeced old people with margarita machines and casinos and retirement homes with his name on them," Mr. Royce said.

"Florida's coastal highway is awfully long to dedicate to one dead guy from Mississippi," he said. CC



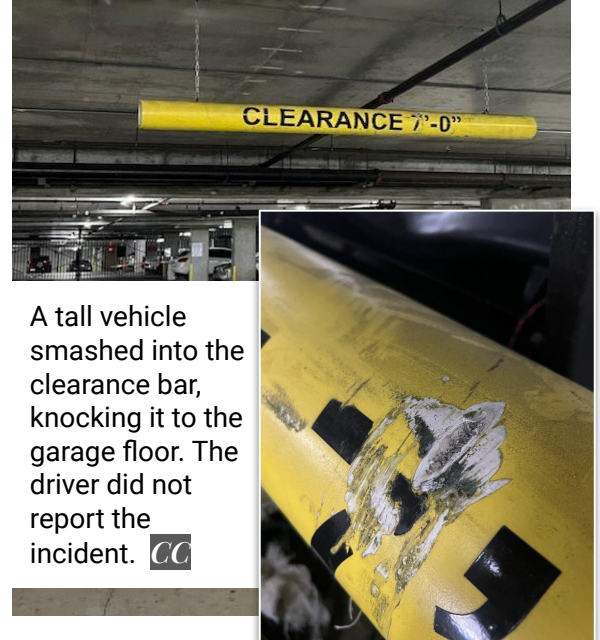
In memoriam

A pouch of hungry pelicans



A fishing boat crewman cleans the day's catch at the Boynton Marina one Saturday evening.

DUNCE OF THE MONTH



A tall vehicle smashed into the clearance bar, knocking it to the garage floor. The driver did not report the incident. CC

HR drama, new shuttle dominate city news

Continued from page A1

Boynton officials fired the HR director on Feb. 23. She later lost the Delray election on March 19.

Still, not everyone is satisfied that the air is clear. *The Palm Beach Post* wrote in a Feb. 29 editorial that the investigation launched by the city manager and attorney “still carries a hint of bias favoring the city” and urged the county’s inspector general to weigh in.

AFTER SIX MONTHS, CRA STILL WITHOUT NEW LEADER

After a tumultuous meeting last October where the CRA board fired its director, the job is still open. According to interim director Timothy Tack, 64 candidates applied and the city has narrowed the pool down to four. During the job search, the board raised Mr. Tack’s salary 20% to \$167,852.

COASTAL CRUISER SET TO DEBUT

Some real estate advertisements for Casa Costa still mention a free shuttle with reserved chairs and umbrellas at the beach. The building’s developers indeed operated a “beach jitney” but in 2016, the board called it “a marketing ploy” and later chose to sell the van and discontinue the service, citing lack of demand.

Now the city is taking up the slack with four on-demand electric vehicles. The ride-share service will soon be available to pick up riders at over a dozen locations in East Boynton including Casa Costa. Rides cost between \$1 to \$3 and destinations include Ocean Front Beach Park.

Service will be provided by Circuit, a fleet of vehicles that began in East Hampton and operates in over 30 cities including Boca Raton and Lake Worth Beach. Similar to Uber or Lyft, riders request a trip using an app, but Circuit’s fees are heavily subsidized by advertisers and city coffers. Vehicles will be available from 10 a.m. till 8 p.m. (10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays) and the local fleet will include electric vehicles – two Teslas and two GEMs. **CC**

As more than 40% of Americans plan travel this year, I decided to consult with our resident air travel expert in the north tower: Emily Stepten.

Emily has been a flight attendant for 51 years for one of the world’s leading carriers. The airline, [REDACTED], made her sign a non-disclosure agreement prohibiting her from sharing the juicier aspects of her career, but she revealed plenty.

Although she has been to 56 countries, she truly doesn’t have a favorite. Each country and each city has something distinctive to offer. Whether scuba diving off the island of Palau, riding a camel in Mt. Sinai, riding a pony up Mt. Everest or hiking with lions in Africa, every city and country has its own special flair.

Emily had no intention of becoming a flight attendant. On a fluke in the 1970s, she accompanied a friend to the interview and decided to apply on the spot. She got the job (her friend did not) and suddenly it’s five decades later.

Her current title is purser. The role is named after the officer on a ship in charge of the money. She is the lead flight attendant on every flight: the liaison between the captain, ground crew, maintenance staff, caterers, entertainment and emergency services. Above all, she says, it is safety first.

When I asked her what her least favorite part of the job was, I expected her to complain about unruly passenger behaviors, but she said it’s more that passengers blame her when airplane systems



MARNA'S FAMILY

like wifi aren’t working perfectly. Even the veteran purser can’t fix some technology glitches, and the job is primarily reacting in an emergency – saving someone from choking or giving chest compressions.

Remarkably, one of the positive changes she sees is how flight attendants are respected as champions of safety and not just aboard for service. However, while her airline is above the rest, she would prefer better compensation for flight attendants.

They face physical and emotional challenges every time they board a flight. It is a demanding position that involves sacrifices of family time and missing important milestones.

Although many celebrities fly private, over the years Emily has met some very famous people, including Andre Agassi, Tommy Smothers, Arthur Ashe and Ali MacGraw. Her favorite star, by far, is Danny Thomas. The comedian and founder of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital chatted with the flight crew about his family and career.

Emily is thankful for the opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life and cultures. In her words, every trip has its own story, sometimes beautiful and sometimes not. **CC**



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