CASA COASTER

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

March 6, 2023 | Volume II, Issue Three | CasaCoaster.com

Parking garage sees steady action, not always planned







FROM LEFT: J.T. HARRINGTON; DANILO CAJINA; DANILO CAJINA

From left, workers scramble to repair shoring on the first floor ramp after a vehicle collided into the supports, a crew raises a replacement balcony railing after major fire damage 12 months ago and awning suppliers deliver for the townhome lanais.

What's News

Neighborhood

★ **A local food hall** closes to revamp. **A8**

★ **Commissioner Hay** runs for re-election. **A1**

Casa Costa

★ **Violations** result in fines and worse. **A4**

★ **New restaurants** open downstairs. **A7**

Committees ready to face busy year

Formed just over a month ago, representatives from some of six Board committees shared their short-term plans.

With East Coast Facilities hired as the community's new landscapers, the Building & Grounds Committee looks to identify a landscape architect to study pool deck options.

A Decorating Committee is set to finalize materials for hallway paint and carpeting for ten floors; owners surveyed previously voted for a color palette by a 3-to-1 margin.

The Social & Welcoming Committee intents to ramp up its orientation efforts for new residents while the Amended Documents Committee tackles the building's outdated declaration – a legal form that still calls us "The Promenade."

* * *

The building is upgrading its phone system so residents can reach the management office more reliably during the day.

* * *

The elevator consultants hired to oversee upgrades to our equipment identified over $150,000 in savings by salvaging existing engines, hoist wires and door parts as they solicited vendors for the project. The Board plans to select a vendor in early April after candidates tour the property and submit bids.

* * *

On Mar. 14 Boynton Beach voters will elect the commissioner for Casa Costa's District 2. Incumbent Woodrow L. Hay faces three opponents for a three-year term. Our polling location is 1 ½ miles north at the Intracoastal Park Clubhouse.

– Staff reports

OPINION

No struggle, no progress

By Roberta Mann



It will all be worth it in the end.

Having lived at Casa Costa for the last eight years, I've gained some perspective on living in a high-rise condominium community that has undergone many changes over its 13-year history.

Over the years, I have highlighted the building and all of the amenities as I am an area realtor who has sold many units here. I've also been part of our social and welcoming committee for the past several years, which has given me a chance to plan events. It's also a way to meet people who just moved in and who are a bit lost.

I enjoy sharing information on the luxury amenities and wonderful landscaping that Casa Costa offers. There have been many changes over the years – some good, some challenging. I remember when there was a car service that took us to and from the beach. And, once we were at the beach, chairs and umbrellas were reserved for residents. The car service and beach chairs were initially provided by the developer, but the company that ran the program eventually canceled the deal.

Later our association's Board sued the developer after discovering that some areas of the building were not holding up as they should. The Board was able to secure a sizable monetary award to fix the problem areas, eliminating the need for an assessment. The repairs have taken longer than anyone expected, but once everything is completed, we will once again have two exceptional pools, beautiful landscaping and elevators that are updated. It is frustrating now, and I have heard some complaining about these changes, but it will all be worth it in the end, and we will be safe.

My husband Don and I enjoy the ever-evolving Casa Costa. Through all the changes, one thing has remained constant: the wonderful people that I have met. I have loved living here, from the time I spend around the pool, to interactions at the front desk, to the activities with the social committee. I cannot imagine living anywhere else.

Ms. Mann wants to know who keeps throwing out her business cards in the mail room.

LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

Almost famous by association

I've never been inside the mansion ("The millionaire next door," Feb.1) but I can tell you a little something about filmmaker Brett Ratner. Brett is the son of my female cousin who raised him in Miami Beach near me. Brett became close with Alvin Malnik and indeed saw considered him a father figure.

Brett subsequently moved to California to pursue his Hollywood dreams, and brought along his grandparents (my aunt and uncle) to live in his guest house. He also brought my other cousin into the business, eventually forming RatPac Entertainment with his friend Mariah Carey's billionaire husband James Packer. I was invited to the grand opening of one of the *Rush Hour* movies in Miami Beach. Afterwards we had dinner at the Malnik's restaurant The Forge.

Also never in the mansion, but Valerie Wildman, an actress from *Days of our Lives* and *Beverly Hills 90210* was a classmate of mine, as was Mickey Rourke. Andy Garcia and Barbara Walters are also alumni of Miami Beach High.

Cesar Stone

What about the almost millionaires next door?

Reading the extensive and compelling article about Malnik and the Beaux-Arts mansion, I began to wonder about Briny Breezes and all the rumors about million-dollar buyouts and why a deal didn't happen. I would find that to be an interesting article if you all would so endeavor to unveil the history and current affairs of Briny Breezes.

Gary Green

Email submissions to casacoasternews@gmail.com. All content is subject to editing.

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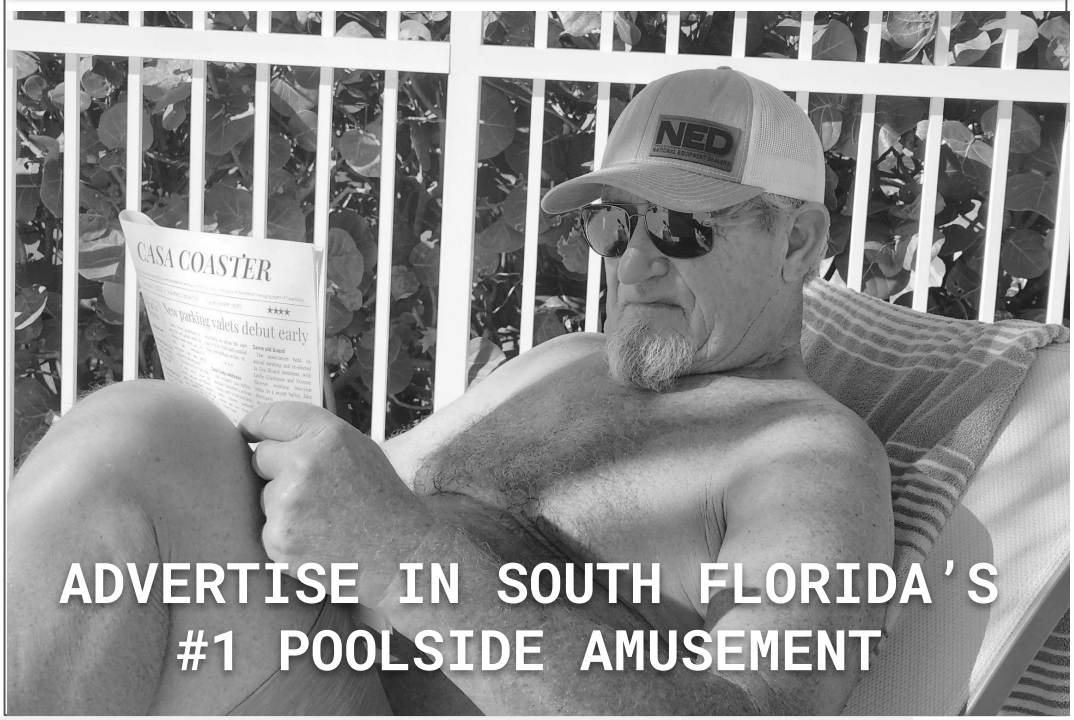
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Violations, consequences a hot topic

How can residents be fined? Let's count the ways

"Kramer, these people work and wait their whole lives to move down here, sit in the heat, pretend it's not hot, and enforce these rules."

Jerry Seinfeld reminded his pal that Florida condominium living comes with regulations and consequences in an episode that originally aired in 1998.

Casa Costa's rules are written to enhance everyone's quality of life and keep things running smoothly, said Chenine Stropp, assistant property manager and office representative to the Grievance Committee since 2020.

A Board representative says it plans to hold a workshop to review fines and discuss how to simplify enforcement. Florida law limits penalties in condominium properties to $100 per violation and up to $1,000 for a continuing violation. Managers have collected 75 fines over the last three years, including 35 in 2022.

Technically, the Board may enforce any violation of the property's bylaws with a $100 fine against a resident – whether owner or renter – or their guest.

The Board plans a workshop to review fines and simplify enforcement.

Some violations are curable, such as displaying a parking tag, while others are not without the benefit of time travel. Over two years ago the Board adopted a schedule of certain fines, said Leslie Gladstone, the current Board secretary, who was also an elected member when the Board made the list official.

"Prior to that, we only had the original developer's documents that set the rules of the road," Mr. Gladstone said. "Every allegation was brought before the Board and we'd assign a dollar value. It made sense to make things consistent and fair."



@SEINFELDTV YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Kramer makes headlines in the *Boca Breeze* for being caught barefoot in the club room, a violation that threatened his candidacy for board president of Del Boca Vista Phase III during season nine.

Boards have introduced additional rules to address a changing climate. In the early days of the pandemic, the Board pared back the operating hours of various amenities and adjusted procedures for people moving in and out. Fearing that some residents or guests might resist lockdowns or other government restrictions, the Board adopted a $100 catch-all fine for failing to obey executive orders on Apr. 14, 2020. According to records from the Grievance Committee, no one has yet been fined for this offense. The Board lifted the COVID-19 restrictions by split majority vote on Jan. 27, 2022, but the enforcement of executive orders remains.

Last year, the Board enacted another catch-all fine for making threats after several staff members reported that a resident was verbally abusive and physically hostile – acts that video cameras captured. The Board sought a zero-tolerance policy for such abuse, according to meeting minutes.

For twelve of the offenses, the management office first alerts the resident of the problem. The rationale is that some things are unintentional such as parking without a tag, said Ms. Stropp. "We give seven-day notice to fix the problem." The office has issued over 500 warning letters in the last three years. Other fines are levied without warning, but the rule for the rules provides the alleged offender at least 14 days notice before he can appeal the fine.

Casa Costa court

Florida law requires Casa Costa to maintain a Grievance Committee of at least three owners not on the Board to review fines and to which residents may appeal at a meeting open to all owners.

Katherine Bach "doesn't particularly care" to run the committee, but she was recruited in late 2020 after the group

Please turn to page A5

CASA COSTA SCHEDULE OF FINES
(last revised Feb. 23, 2022)

***** indicates that initial seven-day warning letter precedes fine;
italicized items are temporarily waived

Trashing the property

- ❑ Failure to properly dispose of trash: **$25***
- ❑ Failure to properly dispose of recycling or bulk trash: **$50**
  - ❑ Additional offenses: **$100**

Dangers in the garage

- ❑ *Storage of personal property in garage: **$25 per day****
- ❑ Speeding: **$100**
- ❑ Failure to stop at stop signs: **$50**
- ❑ Parking without tag: **$25***
- ❑ Parking without registering: **$25***

Bad behavior

- ❑ Causing a nuisance: **$50***
- ❑ Making threats or other inappropriate behavior: **$100**
- ❑ Violating posted pool rules: **$25***
- ❑ Failure to obey executive order by government or Board: **$100**

Continued from page A4

disbanded in frustration when a Board member attended a meeting. (All owners are permitted to attend.) Ms. Bach has served as its chairperson ever since.

"We don't want to fine people," said Ms. Bach, adding that the current committee doesn't "go around looking for problems" as previous iterations had.

She said that a resident's demeanor during an appeal is persuasive. "People aren't perfect, circumstances aren't perfect," she said.

Ms. Bach recalled one appeal of a fine for inappropriate behavior during which the accused showed up to the meeting in a rage and eventually threw five $20 bills on the table. While the accused was not slapped with another fine for his actions, Ms. Bach said the fear of violent confrontations has convinced her to join.

meetings virtually.

The committee has overturned approximately 12 percent of the cases it has reviewed in recent years, according to records from Ms. Stropp, the office representative. The most common themes are failure to pick up after dogs, misuse of elevators by moving furniture on weekends or without reservations and noise complaints. The Grievance Committee holds meetings every month when there are fines to review.

Unpaid fines are serious business

Because condominium association fines are not real estate liens, some owners may thumb their nose at the association and refuse to pay.

"This is almost always a bad choice," writes William G. Morris, a real estate attorney. "The association can go to court and obtain a judgment … and that judgment can be a lien against the unit."

When an owner is over 90 days delinquent on monetary obligations – including fines – staffers shut off his cable television and key fobs, he loses access to the building's common areas and he cannot run or serve on the Board. If the balance is at least $1,000, the owner cannot vote either. Ms. Stropp notes that only two unit owners have been so late to pay in the last five years.

Request an investigation with:

- ❏ Date and time (or time range)
- ❏ Precise location
- ❏ Description and/or photo

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Intransigence



- ❏ Transient unit stay without proper permit: **$100 per day** plus denial of guest access and referral to authorities
- ❏ Transient unit stay without registering guest: **$100** plus denial of guest access

Bad doggies



- ❏ Barking dog: **$25***
  - ❏ Additional offenses: **$50** plus possible removal of dog
- ❏ Dog off leash: **$25***
- ❏ Failure to clean up after dog: **$100**
- ❏ Pet on fifth-floor outdoor space: **$25***
  - ❏ Additional offenses: **$50**

Not keeping track of your stuff



- ❏ *Storage of personal property on balcony other than furniture: **$25 per day****
- ❏ Failure to follow package rules: **$25***
- ❏ Failure to remove furniture from balcony in hurricane warning: **Flat fee based on staff time to remove items**
- ❏ Items falling from balcony: **$50***
  - ❏ Additional offenses: **$100**

Bad leases



- ❏ Tenant without association approval: **$100** per day plus attorney's fees
- ❏ Long-term lease with actual rental of fewer than six months: **$100** per day plus loss of amenity privileges and no new lease till original lease term expires
  - ❏ Second offense: Above, plus additional six month restriction on new lease
  - ❏ Additional offenses: Above, plus additional 12 month restriction on new lease

Tenant scofflaws may face eviction

Fines are not the only consequence when leaseholders break the rules at Casa Costa. An agreement that all incoming tenants and their owners sign when applying allows the association to terminate leases and pursue owners for the cost of evicting nuisance tenants if the owner doesn't take action.

"We introduced the form in 2019," said Leslie Gladstone, who is Board secretary and a retired attorney, in reference to the agreement. "We had renters who habitually violated the rules. On behalf of the 99 percent of residents not causing problems, we needed to be more hands-on."

The most common tactic with problem tenants is for the Board to prohibit the owner from renewing the lease, said Chenine Stropp, assistant manager, who recalls seven such instances. "Owners are usually fine with non-renewal because they also have their own problems collecting rent."

Ms. Stropp estimates the Board has filed four evictions since 2019.

– Staff reports

CASA COASTER INVESTIGATES

Have there ever been alligators or dangerous snakes in Mangrove Park Pond?



Do you have a local mystery that needs sleuthing? Email **casacoasternews @gmail.com**

Signs surrounding the pond warn about dangerous wildlife. Since the pathway around the pond is a popular walking trail for Casa Costa people and pets, some worry about what might lie beneath the water.

Tammy Sapp, a representative for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, responded to public records request. The agency has no record of any alligators or snakes at the pond.

The commission created the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) to manage the 1.3 million alligators across Florida. To be a "nuisance," the alligator must be at least four feet long and pose a threat to people, pets or property. When called upon, licensed trappers catch and kill the animal. The commission says that other methods of removal are impractical: a relocated alligator often returns to its capture site while moving it to a remote area introduces it to an already healthy alligator population with an established social structure.



CANDACE AYERS

Nearly 10,000 nuisance alligators were removed in 2021, the last year for which the agency released statistics. Of these, 471 were over 10 ft. long. In addition to SNAP, in 1988 the commission established an annual "alligator harvest program" for recreational hunters certain weeks between August and November. Hunters that obtain permits may use crossbows, harpoons, spearguns and "bang sticks" – a type of firearm on the end of a pole.

Some hunters sell harvested gators to professional processors, but the agency includes details on do-it-yourself skinning and butchering. It notes that "alligator meat is a delicious and healthy choice" and publishes recipe tips: "Leg meat is best when it's chopped fine or ground to make patties, sausage or used for tacos or spaghetti."

Every county in Florida has alligators, which prefer slow-moving rivers, swamps and marshes. But gators can get lost. A 12-ft. alligator was found last October in the waves on Delray Beach.

While both are reptiles, alligators are not related to the iguanas that frequent Mangrove Park Pond. Iguanas can grow up to six feet long and fall out of trees when they are paralyzed from cold weather. Native to Brazil and Mexico, iguanas came to South Florida in the 1960s as exotic pets and today are considered an invasive species and their digging destroys sidewalks and seawalls. The wildlife commission says there is no restriction on humanely killing the spiny-tailed reptiles but does not suggest extermination methods.

Iguana meat is considered a delicacy in Central and South America, and it sells in the U.S. for upwards of $20 per pound, according to Caroline McKinney, the author of a website on iguanas based in Boca Raton. McKinney's website references a state bounty of $8 per tail through the wildlife commission's Iguana Removal Service, but the commission denies that it offers money to the public for removing iguanas, and is not aware of any such program in Florida.



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Say *bonjour* to four new restaurants downstairs



Mister B's Neighborhood

Last month, as my wife and I were taking our daily walk, I noticed someone cleaning the windows at the on-again off-again Bond Street Pizza restaurant downstairs. What a difference clean windows makes for an inviting environment! We hoped that something new and consistent would be coming to that space. A week later, I sat down with the new guard about the future of that space – and the other two commercial spaces that everyone at Casa Costa sees on a daily basis.

Mohamed Kaada and his wife, Karima, sat with me to discuss their plans. The couple, along with partner David Zaoui, founded Simple Virtual Kitchen, which began as an online ordering channel for restaurant owners in West Palm Beach. They developed the concept when restaurants were closed during the pandemic, starting with Just Chicken Wings. Customers ordered online and cooks prepared and packaged the food for pickup or delivery – they promised more orders without extra staff or overhead costs. The company expanded with NYPD Pizza, providing pizzeria owners with proven recipes.

A friend told him about an opportunity with the commercial units here. The owners of Bond Street Ale and Coffee had leased four commercial spaces with hopes of repeating their success bakery off Woolbright Rd. The new location suffered from delays, inconsistent operating hours and little publicity.

Now, the Kaada team is consulting with Bond Street owner Peter Cooksey to rejuvenate the three spaces between Casa Costa's south tower and N. Federal Hwy. and one in the corner east of the south garage ramp.

NYPD Pizza opened in mid-February and offers New York-style pizza, subs, pasta, salads, beer and wine. A 14-inch cheese pie is $12.95. Mr. Kaada has plans for the space beyond cleaning the windows. He is replacing flooring, adding new outdoor tables, updating the awning, and has firm hours of operation.

He plans to open a French bakery and coffeehouse – possibly to be called *Paris Je t'aime*, which means Paris, I Love You – later this month with croissants, baguettes and other baked goods.

What's more, he has designs for a steak and seafood restaurant to replace the Mexican food concept in the largest space. A chef whose résumé includes kitchens at The Breakers Palm Beach Resort and the Four Seasons is joining the team to run the high-end steakhouse, Mr. Kaada says. They plan to add "terrace" seating outside the space with new furniture. Finally, in the space facing Mangrove Park Pond, plans call for a sushi fusion lounge.

The Kaada family moved from France five years ago and is putting over 25 years in the French restaurant business to use. Ms. Kaada, as culinary director with 20 years of experience in fine dining restaurants in France, is behind many of the recipes for these new storefronts.

Mr. Kaada clearly has passion for his work. He wants to be part of our community, and says he plans to offer Casa Costa residents a VIP loyalty card for discounts once all the establishments open. He was quick to offer to host us for a Social & Welcoming Committee event with a discount on food. On Feb. 24, we brought over 60 residents.

The feedback is encouraging. Residents Flo Rosof and Emily Stepner visited NYPD Pizza the first week it was open. "The pizza is the best I've had in Florida and that says a lot coming from a New Yorker," said Ms. Rosof. "I am a fan!"

"I opened my first restaurant in France in 2004 and learned from my mistakes along the way," he said. "I want you to feel that these places are part of your community and that we can all talk about how to make things better."

He says his focus is on growing his business with decades of experience guiding him along the way.



JOHN BATTISTA

VIRTUAL TO REALITY: Mohamed and Karima Kaada.

I look forward to all of the pizza – and someday soon the coffee, steaks and whatever fuses with sushi. Just as important, I look forward to getting to know our new neighbors as they grow. Their success is good for all of us.

John Battista is a member of the Social & Welcoming Committee.

Florida's largest food hall shuts

With great fanfare in April 2021, real estate investor Craig Menin unveiled a food hall off Atlantic Ave. in nearby Delray Beach. The 60,000-sq. ft. space included 25 food and bar vendors, neon signs and a tropical vibe.

Now less than two years later, Menin has closed Delray Beach Market and abandoned the large food hall concept.



THE PALM BEACH POST

The $65 million food hall closed after less than two years and its owner is shrinking the concept to a third its former size.

According to *The Palm Beach Post*, foot traffic suffered and vendors cycled out as they lost money. The pandemic forced the developer to make last-minute changes before opening that spread out seating and undercut the vibe of a bustling hall. Some diners avoided indoor seating entirely.

Others blame the failure on poor marketing and the food hall's steep 30 percent revenue cut from vendors. A restaurant consultant said the commission is high by food hall standards, which typically range from 22 to 25 percent. "Those five points are impactful," he said.

Menin plans to reopen in the summer with a more traditional approach, having two tenants in large spaces on both ends of the building: a greek restaurant and Bounce Sports Club, a bar. He plans a scaled-down food hall in smaller quarters.

"I think if we tighten it up, it will have that energy you want," Menin said.

Menin also owns Lionfish restaurant, Johnnie Brown's grill and The Ray Hotel – all in Delray Beach, where he bought a $17 million oceanfront mansion in 2015, according to *Business Insider*.

Andrew Blake, a Casa Costa resident, said he tried the food hall a few times, and said the space didn't live up to its promise. "It is the size of an airplane hangar with the experience of waiting in an airport terminal," Mr. Blake said. "When I went, there were families with kids wandering around, looking for places to sit."

Benny's expands

The popular Lake Worth fixture Benny's on the Beach opened a sister restaurant a three-minute walk away in the iconic Lake Worth Casino building, which has not featured gambling since the 1920s.

Local events

MOVIE NIGHT
Mar. 8 @ 7 p.m.
Pool Deck | Free
Elvis (2022)

BLARNEY BASH
Mar. 11 @ 4 - 9 p.m.
Downtown | Free
Live music, craft beer, Irish food, costume contests and a Lucky Gold Hunt featuring local businesses

MARCH MADNESS
Mar. 12 @ 5 p.m.
NYPD Pizza | Free

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CASA COASTER
EST. 2022

Boynton Beach, Fla.

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