MARCH

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 newly formed Construction Committee gears up for a busy year of projects indoors and out. **A4**

★ A crew has its own version of elevator music. **A5**

Neighborhood

★ City officials repealed segregation laws enacted a hundred years ago, burned them and served lunch. **A5**

FEATURED

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I met the most interesting woman in the world. **A6**

MARNA'S FAMILY
My addiction started in Albany. **A7**

EST. 2022
CASA COASTER
Boynton Beach, Fla.
CasaCoaster.com
SOUTH FLORIDA'S #1 POOLSIDE AMUSEMENT

Clarity and balance at last





PADMINI NARAINE

STRIKE A POSE: Casa Costa's inaugural yoga class wrapped up yesterday after six weekly sessions thanks to resident Robin Naraine. He looks to continue in-person classes in April after his returns from teaching in Trinidad.

Builder doubles down on Boynton

Affiliated Development is planning its second workforce housing apartment project in Boynton Beach despite setbacks in its first effort across the street from Casa Costa.

The Fort Lauderdale-based firm recently paid $12 million for a 4.3-acre assemblage that includes a two-story office and retail building and a vacant lot 1 ½ miles south along Federal Hwy. Records show that the seller paid $3.2 million in 2016. The land is just north of the Homing Inn, a motel which itself changed hands last summer.

As lawsuit puts new downtown on hold, developer looks south

Affiliated president Nicholas Rojo said "We enjoyed working with the city, and we like the market there. This new planned project will be pretty similar to The Pierce."

The firm won approval in 2021 to build 236 apartments in a mixed-use development replacing the strip of aging storefronts along Ocean Ave. including Hurricane Alley and extending to Boynton Beach Blvd. through formerly city-owned parking lots.

Ty Penserga, now mayor, said how The Pierce would "transform our downtown." It is among several approved plans to add over 2,000 apartments within three blocks of Casa Costa.

While the city later agreed that Affiliated could increase the unit count to 300, the owner of a small parcel (where the current tenant is The Boulevard Italian Ice & Creamery) filed suit in what city officials called "nothing but a shakedown," as his parcel isn't part of the redevelopment plan.

Affiliated fired back with a lawsuit alleging interference with firm's contract

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OPINION

The secret to Marina Village isn't what you think

BY ANDRE APICELLA

One of the most asked questions at my real estate office is: "Why do the condos at Marina Village sell for high prices?" The bottom-line answer is simple: Marina Village condos are in higher demand. The not-so-simple answer is why?

My goal is not to compare two premium resort-style waterfront properties. I simply want to highlight some aspects that Marina Village offers that contribute to high values. They are all achievable at Casa Costa.

For those of you who have not stepped inside Marina Village, the first impression for most buyers is very good. Built in 2006, it's a very well-maintained property that feels clean, crisp, modern – and younger than its age. This sentiment carries throughout the property from the lobbies to the pool and all of the amenities. Throughout the years, Marina Village owners have updated nearly all of their common areas including the lobbies and elevators, and even added some such as the poolside lounge. From all appearances, the management of Marina Village is excellent – this is something that catches buyers' attention.

Less obvious drivers to demand are financial and flexibility: reserves, financing, pet policies, rental restrictions. A major factor in our area is rental restrictions – the ability for an owner to lease his or her condo for months or years. I have many more buyers walk into the office looking for properties with appealing rental policies than those looking for strict ones. In fact, I have never had a single buyer come into the office and ask for a community with strict rental restrictions. It's simply not in demand for Florida waterfront condos. The opposite is true.

You may be surprised the learn that Marina Village allows owners of its 348 condos to rent out units for a minimum term of 30 days and up to 12 times a year.

Undoubtedly, you may think, "Who would ever want to live there?" The reality is buyers pay more to live there. Of course at Casa Costa, we have 77 units with rights to rent short-term (less than half do), and the remaining 318 can be rented – but it must be for at least six months at a time.

Believe it or not, buyers appreciate the opportunity to generate income from their Florida condos EVEN IF THEY NEVER DO. That's right: many buyers have no intention of ever renting their condo, but they like the idea that they can if they want to. The actual percentage of rentals there is roughly the same as at Casa Costa.

Rental policy flexibility is a little-known value-add for buyers that increases demand. Even if owners never become landlords, the option has powerful appeal.

Andre Apicella is the broker at Waterfront Homes and Condos LLC, the top-selling real estate office for Marina Village and Casa Costa combined in 2023. Also, congratulations to Danilo's wife Ester for graduating with honors from FAU's accelerated nursing program.

LETTER TO THE PUBLISHER

Join the club. Everyone's in it

If you've walked along Old Ocean Blvd. or taken a drive between Boynton Beach and Boca Raton along A1A, you may have noticed scaffolding, markings and that beautiful blue covering over glass doors and windows.

As has been shared, these building repairs are a part of our area for the foreseeable future. It might to help prepare ourselves if we have some visuals of how it might look and comforting to know we are not alone – and most importantly – in the queue to get this done.

KARA PAIGE LANDRY





These photos were taken in February along Old Ocean Blvd. in Ocean Ridge.

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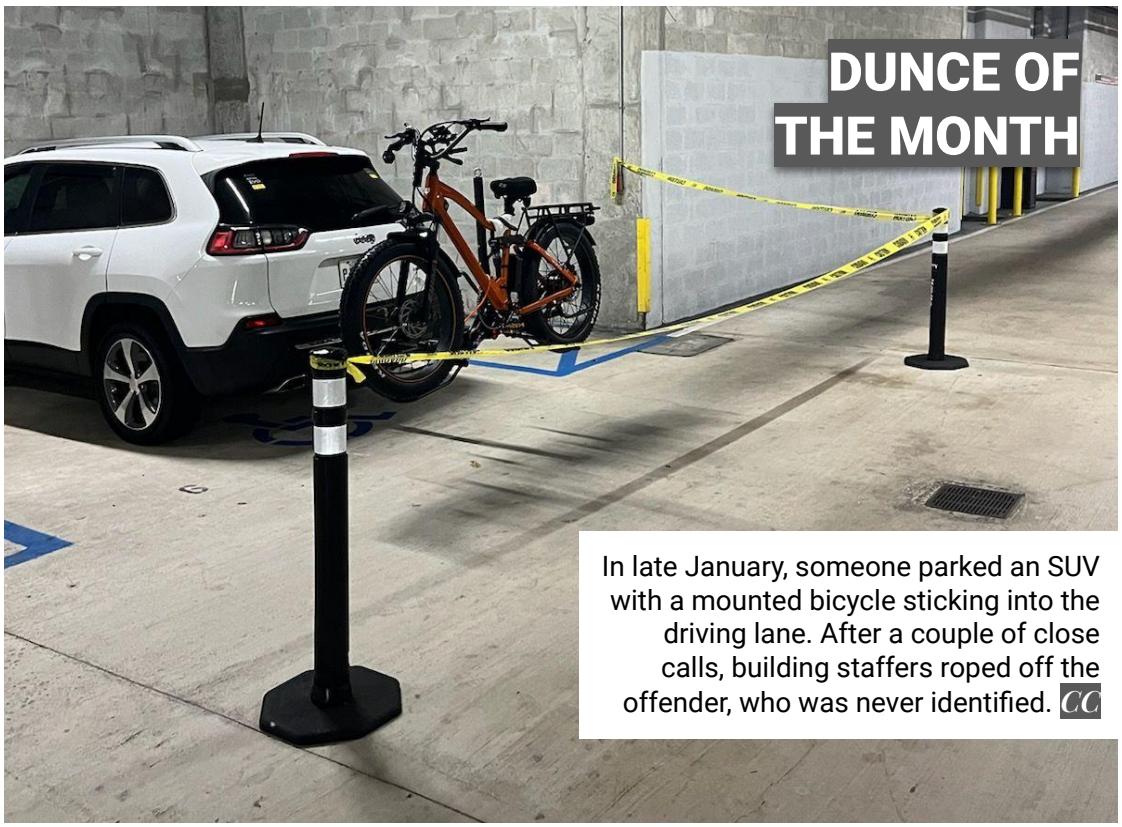
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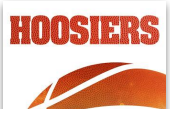
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In late January, someone parked an SUV with a mounted bicycle sticking into the driving lane. After a couple of close calls, building staffers roped off the offender, who was never identified. CC

CASACOSTA SOCIAL



MOVIE NIGHT V
Thur, Mar 7 @ 7pm
Pool deck



MARCH MADNESS
Tues, Mar 19 @ 6pm
NYPD Pizza

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

"We're gonna hold all these guys accountable"

Albert Einstein said that "insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." No strangers to the wisdom of theoretical physicists or the ire of fed-up residents, the board created a committee in the hopes of preventing the delays and cost overruns that plagued a project to repair construction defects on the pool deck. Casa Costa faces three simultaneous plans to fortify and improve the property in the coming months and years.



Jim Brousseau, not Ned

"Clear communication is key," said Jim Brousseau, the chair of the newly formed Construction Committee. "We need to assist the board and managers to keep everybody in the loop about what's scheduled and how it might impact their lives."

"It's a three-ring circus, but it's all important work."

The elevator project to modernize the equipment – jargon for fixing obsolete components and software – kicked off in January when a team from Nouveau Elevator began with one cabin in the north tower. The company previously retrofitted the existing model with new wiring and hallway call buttons to keep two cabins in service. The temporary measure followed dozens of failures with no easy fix since the manufacturer discontinued the model in 2012 and stopped making spare parts.

After the first cabin is complete and operating, Nouveau plans to work on both towers simultaneously to speed up the job. They estimate that each cabin will take nine weeks to complete, including time to install new interior panels and mirrors, but two elevators per tower will always be in service. The project is scheduled to wrap up in November.

Sure to complicate elevator congestion in the meantime: Valcourt Building Services, Paint Pros of the Palm Beaches and Kelly Carpet Services. The board gave the green light to these three vendors to repair and paint the face of the building and replace carpeting in 20 hallways.

"It's a three-ring circus, but it's all important important work," said Mr. Brousseau. "Our committee members will meet with the contractors regularly to help keep things on track, and field any questions from residents on the work that's being done or coming up."

Mr. Brousseau serves with five other Casa Costa owners selected by board liaison George Dobrinski – all with real estate, construction or engineering experience. They join specialist consultants hired by the board that managed the bidding process and have a hand in managing the projects: New York-based Clarkson + Varick for the elevators and AB Plus Engineering & Restoration, based in West Palm Beach, Fla., for the restoration.

"We're gonna hold all these guys accountable and also translate what's happening for Casa Costa's residents," said Mr. Brousseau, adding that the committee plans to host an informal monthly forum for residents to hear progress and planning in person. CC

Contact the Construction Committee at CasaCostaProjects@gmail.com.

CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Conducts regular meetings to review progress by the contractors and report any issues to the board.

- ❏ Attends regular project meetings and reports back to the board
- ❏ Reviews payment applications
- ❏ Reviews change orders
- ❏ Addresses questions from residents on project progress, scope and schedule

George Dobrinski, liaison

Members:
Jim Brousseau, chair
Steven Geisler
Gary Green
Wolfgang Nitsch
Andy Raichle
Rod Sarvis

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CASACOSTA SOCIAL



CANASTA NIGHT
Thurs, Mar 28
@ 6pm
Club room
$5

CasaCostaBB.com

Meet the duo from Nouveau



KARA PAIGE LANDRY



If you travel the elevators in the north tower you may have seen or even spoken to David and Jeff (left to right).

The duo from Nouveau Elevator will made Casa Costa their work home for months. They are super friendly, happy to have a quick chat – and every now and then you might catch Jeff carrying a tune. I asked David if he was ready as a backup vocalist, but it seems not just yet. They are both native Floridians and when they aren't working, they both enjoy hitting the gym.

I include a preview of the swanky new elevator interiors. Maybe Jeff can provide a soundtrack.

– Kara Paige Landry

"Nothing but a shakedown"

Continued from page A1

with the city's Community Redevelopment Agency, records show. The holdout owner, F. Davis Camalier, tried and failed to get Affiliated to buy his land at an inflated price, according to the lawsuit. The Pierce was expected to have broken ground by now, but is now on hold.

For decades, Mr. Camalier also owned the empty block directly south of Casa Costa, part of which was given to him by the city in exchange for developing housing and a hotel called Ocean One. After a series of extensions, he eventually flipped it to a developer for $12 million. He also owns the lot between St. Mark Church and the road just north of Casa Costa.

Affiliated's plan farther south is for 38 townhomes with garages, an eight-story apartment building with 336 units, plus retail and a 401-space parking garage. *CC*

City repeals century-old segregation laws

Boynton Beach city commissioners voted to repeal three ordinances known as sundown laws at a Feb. 20 meeting.

The laws created "The Negro District" and "The White District," and made it a crime to be in the other race's segregated district after 9 or 10 p.m., depending on the month.

Last Saturday, community members joined in a symbolic march to Sara Sims Park, located in what is now known as the Heart of Boynton neighborhood. After the march, the commissioners burned the ordinances, held a block party and served lunch. The event was part of the Unity Project, which concludes with a festival in April in front of city hall.

"These ordinances are part of our history, but they won't be a part of our future," Mayor Ty Penserga said. *CC*

Swiss renaissance woman brings sparkle



MISTER B'S NEIGHBORHOOD

Over the past year, I've penned numerous pieces celebrating the virtues of life at Casa Costa – from the friendly faces among our building's staff to the array of amenities and activities here, and, most significantly, the diverse and engaging community of residents. Indeed, the best parts of residing here are the remarkable people who call this place home. I've had the pleasure of meeting individuals with extraordinary backgrounds and talents, each adding their own unique flavor to our shared experience.

While enjoying a coffee at Café Prélude, I encountered Verena Schock Karr. Our initial conversation made clear that she was someone I needed to know better.

Verena is a Swiss-born renaissance woman who speaks seven languages (Swiss, English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Romansch, the language spoken in St. Moritz, Switzerland). Educated in Switzerland and Canada, she has traveled all over the world, picking up the languages of the places she lived and worked. Her early years living in Basel, Switzerland did not offer the opportunities she desired, so she went to Zurich to start a career in the jewelry business.



Golden Child

Always looking for the next adventure, she left Switzerland and jumped from England to Spain to Canada at various jobs, seeming to always come back to the jewelry business in Zurich. She eventually bought the jewelry store in St. Moritz known as Embassy, and it became the first Swiss shop to sell the Cartier line of watches and jewelry from the French designer. To this day, Embassy is an important partner for some of the world's most prestigious brands. After 17 years, Verena was ready to sell and move on, and a brazen multi-million dollar robbery at Embassy sealed the deal.

Verena booked a ticket to the South Pacific: Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji. Ironically, it was during these overseas travels that she met her future husband: Bruce Karr, an American-born Paralympian. Bruce competed in five Paralympics, winning 12 gold medals in a variety of sports, including wheelchair basketball, archery, table tennis and swimming. He was inducted into four Halls of Fame including the USA Wheelchair Sports Hall of Fame. After traveling together for a short time, Verena and Bruce went their separate ways, Bruce back to Chicago and Verena back to Switzerland. The romance of Bruce and Verena might have ended in the south seas, but fate had other plans.

A former colleague asked Verena to help set up a jewelry store on Worth Avenue in Palm Beach. On her way to Florida, she made a stop in Chicago and met Bruce during the layover. The pull was too great and she ended up moving to Chicago for a short time before moving with him to Palm Beach. Bruce and Verena married in 1989.

While living in Palm Beach, they began a 23-year tradition of organizing and hosting the National Wheelchair Tennis Tournament. Named the Florida Open and held in Boca Raton, it became one of the largest events on the International Tennis Federation's tour for disabled athletes. In 1986, Verena and Bruce founded the non-profit National Wheelchair Sports Fund to provide financial assistance to certify coaches and for travel equipment and competitions. The contributions that Bruce and Verena made to this sport and to the Paralympian cause is monumental. Bruce died in 2021 and Verena left the home they shared in Boynton Beach and moved to Casa Costa.

Traveling the world, pioneering a jewelry business in one of the glitziest spots on earth and creating the country's preeminent para-sports event would be enough for several lifetimes. But Verena was not done yet.

Not content with mere coverage in the pages of the *Casa Coaster*, Verena is an author of two published books with a third in progress. Naturally, the works capture her life story spanning the globe.

Eleven years ago, she wrote her first book, *Arme Mutter-Goldenes Kind* (translated as *Poor Mother-Golden Child*) in German. It describes her mother, born out of wedlock and forced into indentured child labor as a "Verdingkinder," or "contract child." The cruel practice of snatching Swiss children born into poverty or to unmarried parents began in the late Middle Ages and continued until the 1960s. The kids were sent to work at



farms with new families, who often mistreated them severely. In parallel, the book tells Verena's story as a successful businesswoman in St. Moritz, straining to give back what was taken from mom as a child: time, attention, love.

Her second book from 2017 offers a captivating glimpse into the glamorous world of St. Moritz. *Goldenes Kind: Geschichten aus St. Moritz* (*Golden Child: Stories from St. Moritz*), also penned in German, invites readers into the luxurious realm of the Swiss town. The autobiography includes tales from the renowned Embassy jewelry store, where Verena rubbed shoulders with luminaries like the Austrian conductor Herbert von Karajan, the King and Queen of Greece, Ivana Trump, Greta Garbo and the Onassis family.

Three hours had flown by and I glanced at my stack of notes, knowing that nothing I transcribe will do justice to Verena's remarkable life.

Verena is wrapping up her third book that chronicles her life with Bruce in the Wheelchair Sports Association. This book, which she's writing in English, will be out later this year.

Something tells me it won't be the final chapter. CC



MARNA'S FAMILY



Shortly before I moved to Florida, a friend from my hometown of Albany, N.Y. asked if I'd like to learn how to play Canasta. I was never a card player or mahjong player. Most of my friends who played had mothers who played and that's how they learned. My mother didn't so this was all new to me.

I said, "Sure, that sounds like fun." Little did I know that I would become addicted to this game. I learned with four other women up north, and we played regularly.

There is so much to learn in Canasta. In addition to the actual rules, there are "table" rules so depending on who you're playing with, some of the rules can vary. I used to lie awake at night, thinking and worrying about the "sevens." Anyone who plays Canasta will understand that (well maybe not the lying awake part). I used to study the rule sheet until I knew it backwards and forwards but what I didn't realize until I started playing here in Florida, was that you needed strategy. That's something you can only learn, not just by playing, but by playing with better players.

Luckily for me, a few very good players at Casa Costa invited me to play with them. Looking back on it now, I think they were sorry. I made so many blunders. I knew the rules but until I played with much better players, I didn't realize how to effectively apply those rules and use the many different strategies. They were patient and understanding and taught me so much. I was deathly afraid of making mistakes and made it my mission to get better. In Canasta, you have a partner so when you make a mistake, your partner suffers too… especially when you're playing for money! I can honestly say, thanks to them, I am a much better player.

I now play in two games a week, one at Casa Costa and one with my now-relocated Albany friends, and I occasionally sub in another game. Sometimes someone in the building will put together an impromptu game, for which I'm always ready! I've even helped to teach a few people in the building and loved watching them learn and enjoy it.

Whenever someone tells me that they're moving to Florida, I tell them that they must learn to play Canasta! It's as important down here as sunscreen. CC

The Social & Welcoming Committee is holding Canasta Night on March 28. All players are welcome to join by registering at casacostabb.com/events.

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