CASA COASTER

This publication of the Social & Welcoming Committee does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors or managing agent of Casa Costa.

January 1, 2023 | Volume II, Issue One | CasaCoaster.com ★★★★

What's News

Neighborhood

★ **Rock the Plaza** brings live music and food specials to a nearby strip mall. **A8**

★ **The developer** who rebranded Casa Costa has split with his longtime partner. **A8**

Casa Costa

★ **Survey results** show that residents are sharply divided on the future of the pool deck. **A6**

★ **News leaked** regarding a switch in valet companies, complicating the year-end transition plan to keep the cars parked. **A1**

INSIDE

CASA COASTER INVESTIGATES
A sinking pathway by the marina. **A4**

LETTERS
Renters here are welcome and well-respected. **A2**

New parking valets debut early

Castle Group scrambled to keep the cars parked over the holidays when word got out that the community's long-time valet was being replaced in the new year.

The switch to City Valet was an open secret since the Board's decision in October, when its president pleaded with owners not to tell the news to the valet staff to ensure an orderly transition.

The owner of East Coast Valet, the outgoing company, declined to work through the holidays due to the leak.

Building managers negotiated to adjust the start date of City Valet and installed their new podium on Dec. 18.

* * *

Casa Costa celebrates

106 residents and staffers attended December's sold-out holiday party on the pool deck, where Hotwire sponsored drinks and live music by Visions Band.

* * *

Office reopens

The management office will unlock its doors weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Same old board

The association held its annual meeting and re-elected its five Board members, with Leslie Gladstone and Yvonne Skovron winning two-year terms. In a secret ballot, Jake Harrington was named president and Robert Hall vice president.

* * *

Residents driven to give

Residents overflowed two boxes of toys toward Castle Group's annual collection in the lobby.

– Staff reports

Turf Doctor goes from zero to hero

* * *

The inside story behind the palm stump saga

By J.T. Harrington

Casa Costa's leadership team thought they were getting two for the price of one in late August.

Over half of the fifth-floor pool deck had been closed for months as the project to repair the parking garage dragged on. The time had come to remove four palm trees and roots that were damaging the concrete walls around them, according to the engineers hired to oversee the project.

The Board was encouraged by a related proposal from Turf Doctor, a synthetic grass installer based in Lantana. The bid included replacement of the poolside sandbox with turf – a task that included clearing overgrown plants and a tree – with the gazebo palm job as an added bonus.



Stumped

"Our thinking was that if they are bringing tree removal experts to the property, they could knock it out at once," said Robert Hall, a board member. "After visiting several times to plan, they said they could do it all in a week."

On Oct. 10, four workers arrived in the early afternoon to begin "sitting, chatting or watching a single worker

Please turn to page A3

OPINION

The elevator in the room

By Annie Blake

I own two units in the South tower and have been a Casa Costa resident since December of 2013. While I appreciate proposals for new pool deck designs, foliage replacements and lobby updates, it seems we are ignoring the elephant (ahem, elevator) in the room.

The elevators need to be replaced. We've spent years, and likely entirely too much money, attempting to repair the faulty elevator banks. It's clear that these temporary fixes are just that, and while my health app gives me the thumbs up for climbing ten flights of stairs multiple times a day, my knees and my 11-year-old dog are less than thrilled.

I understand there will need to be a substantial financial investment to replace the elevators, and no one, least of all me, is jumping for joy if it takes more reserve funds to get the job done. That said, we have to accept that putting a Band-Aid on the problem isn't working, and we need working elevators.

I am grateful that climbing stairs is a mere inconvenience for me. For others here, it directly impacts their independence and mobility. I do recognize and appreciate that the staff operates an elevator cabin "on demand" after a phone call when there are breakdowns, but that's hardly a long-term solution.

Additionally, as we want our property values to continue to appreciate, broken elevators will most certainly impact any potential buyers considering investing in this building.

Let's get together as residents and prioritize replacing the elevators. It's the right thing to do for residents, property values, investors and our overall quality of life at Casa Costa.

Ms. Blake owns The Falcon in Delray Beach, where her dog Buddy has been named employee of the month for 65 straight months.

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Calling real estate pros

As the *Casa Coaster* expands in size, we are looking for submissions of all kinds.

At the moment we have a specific interest in hearing from realtors, mortgage brokers, appraisers and other residential real estate professionals regarding their perspectives on the current market and its direction.

Kindly limit your market report submissions to informational and not self-promotional. (We do encourage you to buy advertising space for self-promotion.)

We hope to feature a variety of voices in upcoming editions and welcome your feedback.

J.T. Harrington

Mr. Harrington is publisher of the Casa Coaster.

LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

Renters here are well-respected

In "One third of Casa Costa residents are renters and we deserve respect" (Dec. 1), the author mischaracterizes the nature of board meetings that she seeks to attend. The primary purpose of these meetings is approval of contracts, which a review of the agenda posted in the mail room would reveal. Her statement that renters "are left out of everything" fails to acknowledge that renters and owners are included in board workshops, town hall meetings and weekly emails. If an owner desires their renter to attend board meetings on their behalf, a limited power of attorney is all that is required.

In short, renters are not treated "as second-class citizens" but rather as valued members of the community who have opportunities to have their concerns addressed by management and through their unit owners directly to the Board as may be necessary.

Leslie Gladstone

Mr. Gladstone is secretary of the Board of Directors.

Where's the beef with the paper?

We enjoyed the first issue distributed in December. As you indicate in the newsletter, the views don't necessarily reflect the views of the Board or the managing agent. But there was nothing overly controversial in the publication, in our view.

So we were surprised to see the somewhat sharply worded email sent out regarding the newsletter on Dec. 2. Perhaps there are good reasons behind it, but to a casual observer, the email seemed snarky to us.

Dave Wilson
Liz Wilson

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

Turf company delivers after booting fraudsters

Continued from page A1

digging," according to a letter later sent from the Board to Turf Doctor that was reviewed by the *Casa Coaster*.

One of the workers smoked cigarettes repeatedly in front of a no-smoking sign despite being warned by building staff, according to reports. The crew left the job site filthy on the days they showed up, which totaled six days over three weeks, according to the community's head engineer Dan Cajina.

"They never came close to finishing the job," Mr. Cajina said. "They damaged our property, left one palm tree root ball on our doorstep, and never showed up again. They left us three tree stumps and zero turf."

After the supervisor no-showed for three follow-up meetings, an outraged Board penned a letter to Turf Doctor, demanding a refund and payment for damages to the gazebo and pool deck.

The message came as a surprise to Katie Wilson, operations manager at Turf Doctor. She called the Board president and promptly arranged a meeting with her company's owners and Casa Costa representatives. In a letter to residents, Wilson wrote she was deeply sorry for the "inconvenience and eyesore" left by rogue employees, pledging to remedy the situation swiftly.



DAN CAJINA

The palm roots weighed 300 pounds.

"We kicked into action," Ms. Wilson told the *Casa Coaster*. "I called in a favor and had a dozen guys out the next week. Your community was victimized – and so were we – but I'm not making excuses. I'm making things right."

Ms. Wilson explains that the sales representative and foreman involved in the fiasco are no longer employed by the firm, and Turf Doctor's owners allege that the duo stole company equipment and botched several jobs.

True to her word, a crew from Next Level Maintenance & Landscaping of Lake Worth brought a dozen crew members to remove the palm stumps and 300-lb root balls. Two Turf Doctor owners were on site for the preparation and installation of poolside turf. Both jobs were completed in 11 days.

"I'm not sure we would have taken on the job for any price," she said, referring to the gazebo palm removal, adding "To promise a week for that job plus the turf is not realistic, and when we saw how the original crew had left things, it was worse than we'd feared."

By Dec. 12, the stumps had been removed and the turf was rolled.

"People representing us made a deal." Ms. Wilson said. "We did what it took to make it right, and we hope to be your longtime turf expert."

The former Turf Doctor sales rep had no comment for this story.



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

CASA COASTER INVESTIGATES

The tale of a sinking marina path

Why was the walkway to the Intracoastal by the marina closed?

Popular with fishermen and dog walkers alike, this 500-foot pathway from the traffic circle at the easternmost point of Boynton Beach Blvd. connects to a pier. Unfortunately, the pavers were "built on muck," according to city engineer Gary Dunmeyer.

The area subsequently settled, creating an uneven walking hazard with the bricks pitched at 45-degree angles. City officials replaced the bricks and pavers three weeks ago and finally reopened the pathway on Dec. 16. Future plans call for a public art display along the pathway's fence.



Party Wraps Up Year Hosted by Social & Welcoming Committee





FROM LEFT: STEPHANIE FINZ, MARNA ATKIN

A cool breeze welcomed over a hundred residents and staffers to a holiday party on the pool deck one night after a full moon. It was the committee's final event of the year with live music and bartending sponsored by Hotwire Communications.

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Residents sound off pool deck future

Survey shows divergent priorities for amenities

What belongs on the pool deck? It depends whom you ask.

As they begin to reimagine the collection of amenities and landscaping on the fifth floor, the Board of Directors surveyed residents on their preferences. The results, shared with the *Casa Coaster*, show certain concepts to be definitively popular or not, and feedback for others a mixed bag.

"Let's not get fancy."

The survey focused on the future of the gazebo and an assortment of potential additions such as an outdoor grill and private cabanas. Respondents graded each idea from one to five stars and wrote in additional suggestions.

Residents threw support behind an outdoor grill with 82% ranking it at least three stars, and against a television under the gazebo, which a majority gave one or two stars.

Though respondents were divided on the ideas of encircling the gazebo with water features, artificial turf or trees, 87% agreed that it's important to create poolside shade throughout the day.

In addition to grading concepts that the Board suggested, the survey prompted residents to contribute suggestions. These ideas ranged widely – from favoring a simple design to a luxurious one, and from wanting poolside games to fearing the added noise from them.

A spokesperson for the Board stressed that the 2023 budget does not consider money for major upgrades for the area beyond a small amount for a landscape architect to vet ideas.

– Staff reports



DAN CAJINA

As workers flattened newly installed turf, residents considered what the future should hold for the 50,000-square-foot space.

SELECTED QUOTES FROM RESIDENT SURVEY (edited for clarity and conciseness)

Let's not get fancy. Stay simple with paved areas, loungers and umbrellas. All other items will require maintenance and, honestly, who cares? The pools are great as they are – clean and simple, low maintenance.

Please make it look like a beautiful resort. We have no other beautiful amenities and it would be nice to have a beautiful pool area!

We need to compete with the new high rises going up and down the coast. We need to be bold and modern.

Casa Costa is our home, not a seasonal place for us. While it's nice to have resort amenities, some suggestions like grills and fire pits seem more appropriate for a private home where their use could be more easily managed.

Bocce ball court is the best idea! I drive many miles to play. But, trust me, it must be regulation size with a clay surface just like a tennis court or no one will use it.

Add shaded areas and remove palms on pool deck to avoid problems in the future. Landscaping with low-growing plants, bushes and flowers that are more colorful. It's very important to have areas that are shaded throughout the day.

NO GRILLS! It will be a greasy mess that will also trickle on to the hallway rugs!

Not a fan of bocce ball or corn hole games as this will add to the noise at the pool. Many residents have units facing the pools. It gets very loud and adding games and grilling will add to the disturbance of residents.

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I'm not just a real estate agent, I'm your neighbor!

About Me

For more than 35 years, I have been helping families with their real estate needs. Originally from Pittsburgh and with Coldwell Banker, I was in the Top 100 agents specializing in single-family homes, condos, co-ops, and townhomes.

I am more than just a real estate agent, I have experience working with developers on loft projects and new construction and am a resort and second home property specialist.

In 2012, I relocated to Boynton Beach from Pittsburgh and have worked with many clients in south Florida - closing over $50 million in my real estate career. I am an expert in the local area and look forward to serving you with any real estate needs.

Neighborhoods Served

- Boynton Beach
- Boca Raton
- Delray Beach
- Lake Worth
- Palm Beach
- Royal Palm Beach
- Wellington
- West Palm Beach

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Rock the Plaza returns to Ocean Avenue

Concert series starts January 28

OCEAN PLAZA – Boynton Beach officials hope "some of the hottest bands in South Florida" will bring locals to eat and shop.

Rock the Plaza, a series sponsored by the Community Redevelopment Agency, spotlights business districts where store owners are offering discounts and free samples during the events. The strip mall across from the marina plays host to the year's inaugural concert on Jan. 28.

"In a fun and laid-back setting, community members will enjoy family-friendly activities and become familiar with local businesses they may have previously overlooked," says the CRA, Officials have not yet announced the start time of the Ocean Plaza show, but another plaza event is already on the books at One Boynton, scheduled for Feb. 23.



BOYNTON BEACH CRA

Live music and discounts come to strip mall.

Local events

FIRST FRIDAYS @ 5
Jan. 6 @ 5 - 8 p.m.
100 E Ocean | Free

LEGENDS ON THE LAWN
Jan. 21 @ 6 - 8 p.m.
Canyon Amphitheater
Free

ROCK THE PLAZA
Jan. 28 @ TBA
Ocean Plaza | Free

One of Casa Costa's developers goes solo

Jorge Pérez, the billionaire co-founder of Miami-based Related Group, has parted ways with billionaire developer Steve Ross, who also owns the Miami Dolphins.

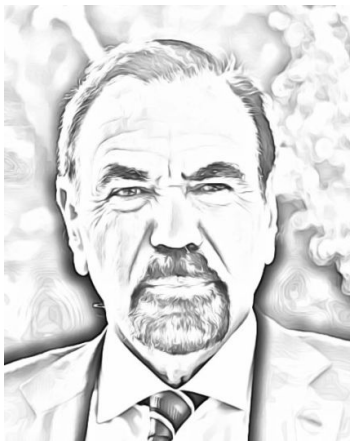
The duo began investing in South Florida real estate in 1979 and acquired 334 unsold units here in a 2012 foreclosure auction. Known then as the Promenade, the property's original developers sold 72 units during the depth of a recession before Related Group bought its troubled loan for less than half the $121 million value, according to reports at the time. The Promenade condominiums started at $160,000.

New York-based Related Companies, which Mr. Ross chairs, owns $40 billion of apartments and offices, and owned a waning stake in Mr. Pérez's business. Though the companies share a name, they are independent and "totally different," Mr. Ross said.

Pérez's Related says it has built 100,000 apartments worldwide and is known as the "condo king" in Miami while Ross's Related has a greater focus on commercial mega-developments in New York and West Palm Beach.

Over the past year, both companies have expanded aggressively in South Florida, and their agreement to cooperate sunsetted this year. Both plan to keep the name Related, even as they compete for deals.

– Staff reports



RELATED GROUP

Jorge Pérez rebranded the Promenade as Casa Costa ten years ago.

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