Townhomes add new bright spot to beach

Since the first two of her resort-inspired townhomes on Corpus Christi Beach have been built and painted, developer JoAnn Gilbertson has been hearing comments like, “Oh look! Corpus Christi Beach has a little bit of Port A -- that’s exactly what it needed.”

The first two of five “Beachcomber Cottages,” painted Humorous Green and Zaney Pink, are not only visible from Highway 181 four blocks away but dramatically stand out against the subdued shades of beige that have characterized the neighborhood until now.

“I chose a tropical color pallet for the townhomes because that’s the character of the project I’m creating -- it’s a vacation resort. Every time I walk up those stairs, it makes me feel like I’m on vacation. I really had to go out on a limb and think outside the box to pick those colors,” she said. Although the color choices raised a few eyebrows at the onset, JoAnn says that “once the whole resort is done and people see the whole thing, they’re going to get it and go, ‘You know, that girl really had it going on!’”

Continuing with the tropical color pallet, JoAnn plans to paint her next three townhomes Awesome Violet, Daisy Yellow and Celestial Blue. The fenced resort, which sits on a 100-foot by 130-foot lot, will include a pool, bathhouse, outdoor kitchen and fire pit.

JoAnn got the idea for the tropical colors during her honeymoon in French Polynesia where she and her husband Robin were married in 2004. The over-water bungalows in Tahiti are built on stilts right on the water and painted bright tropical colors, like the colors of a parrot in the rainforest, she said.

JoAnn and Robin plan to live in the pink townhome and use the green one as a model. Once they sell one townhome, they plan to start construction on the next three. Robin, a roofer by trade, is installing the metal roofs himself and will do some of the interior work as well.

Each 950-square-foot townhome is priced at just under $140,000, which is less than most new vacation homes in Port Aransas sell for. “Port Aransas is out of some people’s price range,” she said, “but with my townhomes they can live in a place like Port A...”
Ziegefest returns to North Beach for June 13 concert

Organizers look to CCBA

In a recent email sent to *North Beach News*, Casey Lain, the Corpus-based promoter for the music event called Ziegefest, wrote, “We are amped up and looking forward to coming back to North Beach with our 2nd Ziegefest event.”

The outdoor beach concert is set for Saturday, June 13, at the Burleson area on North Beach. The music stage will be set up in the fields just inland of the beach, while a sand volleyball tournament will be held on the beach. A fajita cook-off will also be held.

In an effort to streamline the event, organizers changed it from two days, like last year’s event, to one day. The headline act will be the band “Blue October” and the line up will include Cross Canadian Ragweed, Roger Creager, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Larry Joe Taylor, Wade Bowen and more.

“I am going to be looking for people to help out with the box office again,” Lain wrote, adding that ZiegenBock will make a donation to CCBA. Last year, several CCBA members helped with the box office for two nights and the organizers made a $2,000 donation to the CCBA, which CCBA then donated to the City of Corpus Christi’s Parks & Recreation Department to help with construction of an ADA-compliant sidewalk that leads to the new playground at the north end of North Beach.

On the event’s website, www.ziegefest.com, a note at the bottom states: “Our goal at Mustang Music Group is to raise money for local charities by bringing quality music to the fans located at fan friendly locations and offering ticket, beverage and food prices at a competitive rate. Over the years, the ZiegenBock Music Festivals has raised close to $100,000 for local charities ... With the support and contribution to charities by our key sponsor, Anheuser-Busch, along with the commitment and hard work from volunteers, Ziegefest has grown over the years to become one of the premiere music festivals not only in Texas, but the country.”

CCBA members interested in volunteering can contact Carrie Robertson who is organizing the volunteer list. Contact her via email her at thirdcoastphoto@gmail.com or by phone at (361) 883-7245. Volunteers work the box office but still get a chance to hear the music and enjoy the event, which rivals the Fourth of July as the biggest annual event on North Beach for the year.

... Townhomes

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A but at an affordable price – it’s beach living that you can afford,” she said.

After experiencing delays during the permitting process due to some hurdles at the city’s Development Services Department, all her city inspections during the construction phase have passed with no delays and the townhomes went up quickly.

The biggest roadblock during construction was the weather, as high winds blew almost every day for more than a month, delaying the painting and roofing, which had to be finished before interior work could begin. JoAnn and Robin hope to move in to the pink house in June.
Corpus Christi Beachwalk concept gains momentum

CCBA member JoAnn Gilbertson’s idea of creating a pedestrian route that follows the waterfront along Corpus Christi Bay is moving through the steps needed to turn her concept into a reality.

It all started about a year ago when Gilbertson sent out an email to various business leaders and political leaders explaining her idea for the “Corpus Christi Beachwalk.”

“I can envision being a tourist in the San Antonio Airport and picking up a brochure that says, Corpus Christi Beachwalk. It would be right there beside a brochure for the San Antonio Riverwalk,” Gilbertson said.

“If I were a visitor in San Antonio that loved doing the Riverwalk, I wouldn’t think twice about driving 150 miles to come do the Corpus Christi Beachwalk next.”

Over the past year, she has taken her idea, illustrated on a large foldout display board, to several of the city’s citizen advisory committees, where the idea gained support.

Sally Gavlik, head of the City’s Parks & Recreation Department, reported on May 13 that the Beachwalk route idea has moved through several steps of the approval process, including being approved by the City’s Marina Advisory Committee, the City’s Watershore & Beach Advisory Committee and the City’s Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee.

However, due to a slight change in the wording, the Beachwalk idea may need to be presented to the committees again, Gavlik said. The change came when it was pointed out that an already-existing pedestrian route called the Corpus Christi Bay Trail runs along the seawall and connects to an extensive hike/bike system that runs throughout the city.

With the Bay Trail incorporated into the plan, the Beachwalk would start at the north jetty on Corpus Christi Beach and proceed down the beach sidewalk to the Harbor Ferry water taxi dock at the Texas State Aquarium, cross the ship channel on the ferry, landing at the Ortiz Center under the Harbor Bridge. From there, the Beachwalk would meander through the Water Garden, past the museums, joining the Corpus Christi Bay Trail near the American Bank Center.

As part of the formal process required, Parks & Rec staff members have sent out notification of the Corpus Christi Beachwalk concept to owners of businesses and stakeholders along the route and are currently receiving responses.

If the idea is formally approved by the City (ultimately the decision will rest with City Council), the sidewalk on North Beach would be part of the Corpus Christi Beachwalk and could therefore have the Beachwalk as its official name. Bond 2008 approved funding for finishing the last phase of the sidewalk, currently called the Promenade, making it encompass the entire length of the beach.

Before starting construction on the final phase of the sidewalk, Gavlik said she is looking into using the Bond money for matching funds for a state grant she is applying for, which would allow the city to do more than just finish the sidewalk. Other improvements to the north end could be a kayak launch, a new bathhouse and bird watching area.

At press time, a group of North Beach business owners presented a new marketing plan called, “Cross Over to the Fun Side! Discover Corpus Christi Beach,” to City Council. Their press release read: With a variety of accommodations, easy beach access via the new “Beach Walk,” plenty of parking and activities to suit any age and budget, the mile and a half long, vehicle-free Corpus Christi Beach is the natural choice for family fun.

JoAnn Gilbertson’s Beachwalk idea is catching on.
Donna Bodine recalls Heydays of North Beach in 1940s

CCBA member Donna Bodine is the daughter of long-time North Beach resident Sarah Halder who, at age 94, passed away October 27, 2008.

In the following account, Bodine shares her memories of North Beach in the 1940s and 1950s, when as a teenager she lived with her parents and then later with her husband, Donald. Her parents eventually bought and ran North Beach RV Park, also known as the “Milk Bottle” due to the giant-sized stucco replica of an old-fashioned milk bottle that graces the RV park’s entrance. The family still owns and operates the RV park today.

Some of Bodine’s finest memories of North Beach are from the first two winters that she and her parents camped in their trailer at the Gulf View Trailer Park, which was located near the beach close to where Surfside Park is today.

In the summer months, young Sarah Halder and her husband Tony ran a traveling carnival in North Dakota. In the winters, they came south to escape the cold weather, becoming some of the original Winter Texans.

“Mama wanted to travel,” Bodine said. “She never wanted to be kept in one place. They had a good life – Mama and Daddy. Daddy died when he was 86, and Mama died at 94. My Daddy was a real hard worker, Anthony Joseph Halder, and they called him ‘Tony.’”

“I was born in 1931, delivered by my great-grandmother in my grandmother’s house in La Moure, North Dakota, a Mayberry RFD type place, even to this day. I grew up there, and it’s a perfect little place to live,” Bodine said.

“Some friends of my parents had recommended that my parents spend winters down in Corpus Christi. So we drove down here and parked at the Gulf View Trailer Park that winter, and I started the 11th grade at Roy Miller High School. The kids would congregate at the Milk Bottle to wait for the bus. That was the heyday for all of us. The trailer park was full. We had the fishing pier. Lots of people from the north came down. They had the big shuffleboard courts at the trailer park. It was a real busy time. Everyone seemed to be congenial and happy.”

“Just down the beach a ways we could see the big Breakers Hotel and the skate rink and the old saltwater pool. The town was full of Navy boys back then. You could go downtown and see nothing but white uniforms walking around. North Beach was more of a Florida beach place then with small one-story cabins, just loaded with people.”

“One year, a hurricane hit that took everything down. Then the City Council put building restrictions on, and the larger condos started to be built. The Breakers Hotel should have been rebuilt, but they bulldozed it down. On the north end of the beach, there was a little restaurant and club that blew down but the city wouldn’t let them rebuild.”

Sarah and Tony eventually bought the North Beach Trailer Park. “My family bought the trailer park from Grandma Anderson in the 1950s, after running it for her for a while. At that time it was filled with older people from up north who came down in the winter.

I married Donald in 1952. He was going to college in Austin and we lived in a trailer park with 52 trailers filled with students near the Colorado River off 5th Street. I got pregnant Donald’s senior year, and we had our son Brian in 1957.

After Daddy passed away, Mama lived 12 years by herself and ran the North Beach RV Park all that time, even survived a trailer fire in the 1990s. We got her all fixed back up again after that, because she didn’t want to leave. She was very adamant that she wanted to live in the trailer park,” she said.

“I’m planning on keeping the property as long as I have good people in there – I have the nicest bunch of people and a good manager. I’m praying the beach will erupt with some excitement. I’m not that old yet. I don’t go by age. I’m kind of like Mama. I’m gonna do what I want to do when I want to do it. I’ll keep doing that til the Lord says it’s time.”

While her mother, Sarah, attended CCBA meetings regularly, Donna seldom can since the meetings are held the same evening as the South Texas Opry in Tulsos-Midway, where Donald is one of the volunteer organizers of the show. This year marks the 20th year for the family show, which consists of a 10-piece band performing Country & Western music on the third Thursday of every month from 7:30 pm to 10 pm. Proceeds from the door ($5 per person) are donated to the Shriners burn unit in Houston. “There’s no smoking and no drinking,” Bodine says, “It’s a pretty nice bunch of people.”
Sarah Halder poses in front of her milk bottle, which has graced the North Beach RV Park since the 1940s. It has been used as an ice cream store, phone booth and storage room. Photo published in *Texas Highways* magazine, 2006.

Old postcard depicts the Gulf View Trailer Park on North Beach, trailers and a fishing pier.

Sarah and Tony Halder at their North Beach RV park in 1987.
Summer crowds mean more trash on beach

Four different groups on North Beach have volunteered this year through the city’s Adopt-A-Spot program to clean their respective section of the beach. Summertime, when many more people use the beach, is the most crucial time to conduct clean-ups, since the City Parks & Rec crews often cannot keep up with the large amount of trash that is left behind.

“It gives people a horrible impression on our neighborhood and our city for the beach be full of trash,” says Carrie Robertson of Third Coast Photo, one of the groups that adopted areas on North Beach. “I adopted the section of beach near my home and business because having a sandy stretch of beach free of trash allows my family and me to breathe in the fresh air and enjoy the beauty of nature that the beach offers. I get depressed when I see trash, so I just have to clean it up before I can really enjoy the beach. It’s especially important in a tourism-based economy for visitors to have a clean environment to enjoy.”

Usually, Adopt-A-Spot clean-ups are held on the first weekend of the month but it’s best to check with each site’s organizer to make sure. To volunteer for a clean-up, contact any of the following organizers:

- The Beach Place (Sylvia Alvarado) - 887-4988
- Third Coast Photo & Web (Carrie Robertson) - 883-7245
- The Breakers (Phyllis Thedford) - 883-7433
- Halliburton Grinding Plant (Raymond Pena) - 883-8609

CCBA member Susan Zimmermann of The Harbors development often participates in the clean-ups and, like many residents, also cleans the beach during her daily walks. “Every day there is beach to clean, whether it is an organized project or not ... it is our responsibility, unfortunately, to clean up after others less reverent of our beach,” she wrote.

North end park update

The north end of North Beach has received a lot of attention lately. First, city crews installed a new playground in March purchased by Nueces County.

Second, a request to change the name of the area from “North Facility” to “Dolphin Park” is currently in the process of moving through city government and has tentatively been added to the City Council agenda for discussion on May 26. To go along with the name change, City Parks & Recreation Department is looking into purchasing concrete dolphin sculptures which double as benches to be placed near the playground. County Commissioner Mike Pusley has taken the lead to contact manufacturers about replacing the new playground’s defective slide which is not slippery enough to slide on.

Third, the north end bathhouse is in line to receive some updates, starting with some trim on the outside of the bathhouse which was recently repainted (although the entire building really needs to be painted). Developer JoAnn Gilbertson has requested that the full-length doors, which are in a state of disrepair, be replaced with shorter doors in order to minimize the amount of privacy they offer, since some individuals have used the bathhouse for sexual encounters. The city did order new doors but, “due to privacy issues they have to be full doors,” according to Sally Gavlik, head of Parks & Rec. A new bathhouse funded by Bond 2008 is being planned for the south end of the beach.

Fourth, Parks & Rec is looking into placing bollards to control traffic flow in the large dirt area on the north end. “We will be placing bollards on the north end of the beach but we cannot block off the entire area as the beach is open to the public and there must be accessibility for parking. This should be done by the end of May,” Gavlik wrote in an email on April 16. On May 8, staff met to schedule the installation of the dome posts.
Code Enforcement at work

May 7 - Shane Price works to remove a rusted chain link fence surrounding the property bordered by the streets Gulden, Gulfbreeze and Sandbar.

After being notified by the City’s Neighborhood Services Department that the rusted chain link fence surrounding their one-square-block lot near the north end of North Beach was out of compliance, the owners of the property hired workers to start removing the fence on May 7. The three men removed the chain link sections but left the posts standing.

The city’s new Code Enforcement Officer for North Beach, Cindy Cortez, is handling the case and said that she will contact the owners to make sure the posts are removed and that the job is finished. She also sent notice to the owners of the property on the corner of Timon Boulevard and Beach Avenue that their field needed to be mowed and the owners complied. In addition, she notified owners of Villa Sorrento Apartments of trash that had accumulated in the alley behind their business. As a result, the trash was removed.

To contact Cortez about other code enforcement issues, call 361-826-3037.

North Beach on phone book

CCBA member Carrie Robertson, owner of Third Coast Photo, provided four photos for the cover of the 2009 AT&T Yellow Pages. One photo was shot on North Beach and features CCBA member Roiann Selsor and former CCBA member Cindy Holmes walking their dogs on the beach with the Lexington in the background.

Read this newsletter in color at thirdcoastphoto.com/newsletters.html
North Beach senior softball league going strong
The Corpus Christi Senior Softball Association has been playing ball Monday through Thursday near the Kiwanis Center all spring and will continue through fall. Games are full of action and free to watch.

CCBA to take summer off
This will be the last issue of North Beach News published until the Corpus Christi Beach Association meets again in September. Due to many members leaving town during the summer, it has been a tradition of the organization to not meet in June, July or August. The next issue of North Beach News will be published prior to the September 17 CCBA meeting.

CCBA goes green - newsletters available online in PDF
Help the environment and help CCBA cut costs by opting to read your newsletter online instead of receiving a printed newsletter in the mail. The current issue and all back issues of North Beach News are available on the web at: http://thirdcoastphoto.com/newsletters.html

MEMBERSHIP FORM ~ Join or renew your membership today

CORPUS CHRISTI BEACH ASSOCIATION
Mail form and check to: CCBA, PO Box 2361, Corpus Christi, TX 78403

Name: __________________________________________________________

Company: _______________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: ________________________________________________

Dues are $20/year for an individual, family or a business. Dues paid now cover all of 2009. Regular monthly meetings are held at 4:30 pm on the third Thursday of each month at The Breakers Condominium, Lanai Room, 4242 Gulfbreeze Blvd, Corpus Christi Beach

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