



January 2024



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# The **PONY EXPRESS**

Nellie Gail Ranch

Community Newsletter





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## Save The Date



**3/30/24**  
EASTER EGG HUNT at  
Gallup Park



**On The Cover:**  
Dolores Caringella  
with Zane  
her 24 year-old Missouri  
Fox Trotter



# Community Contacts



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## Board of Directors

Mark Fisk	PRESIDENT
Loree Blough	VICE PRESIDENT
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Joyce Taylor	CO-TREASURER
Holly Permeah	CO-TREASURER

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The *Pony Express* publishes articles that are relevant to the community or are directly related to property maintenance and community activities in NGROA and are in support of the Association's purpose to preserve property values within the community. The Editor reserves the right to refuse, edit or modify any submitted material and the editor's decision is final. Submissions selected for publication by the Editor may be edited according to the space limitations of each specific issue. Publisher cannot be held responsible for copyright breaches arising from any materials supplied by a third party. NGROA Board of Directors and employees are not responsible for any errors, inaccuracies or claims in articles or advertisements printed herein. Any opinions stated herein are solely those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of NGROA or its representatives.

**NOTE:** When community events take place, photographers may be present to take photos that may be used in this publication.

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## Important Numbers

(949) 425-1477	Association Office
(949) 831-6660	Nellie Gail Ranch Tennis and Swim Club
(949) 371-1595	Nellie Gail Ranch Equestrian Center
(949) 533-0241	Equestrian Center (Emergency)
(800) 696-0678	Sunset Landscape (Irrigation Leaks)
(877) 728-0446	CR&R (Trash Pickup)
(949) 831-2500	Moulton Niguel Water District
(800) 411-7343	SDG&E
(800) 427-2200	Southern California Gas Company
(949) 470-3045	Animal Control (Mission Viejo Shelter)

## County of Orange

911	Emergencies
211	County Service Information
(949) 770-6011	Sheriff's Dispatch - Non Emergency
(949) 707-2600	City of Laguna Hills
(949) 707-2650	Laguna Hills City - Weed Abatement
(800) 611-7343	SDG&E Emergencies/Outages
(714) 573-6000	Fire Authority
(714) 971-2421	Vector Control

## Assessment Remittance Address

Please remit all assessments to:  
P.O. Box, 30354, Tampa, FL 33630-3354  
or drop off at the Association Office.



## Mission Statement

To take all reasonable and necessary steps to preserve and improve the unique value of living in Nellie Gail Ranch and to enhance the overall sense of community.

## Board of Directors Meetings

The next Open Session Board Meeting and Open Homeowner Forum is scheduled for **January 16, 2024** and will be held at the Association Clubhouse.

### Executive Session starts at - 6:00 pm and Open Session - 7:30 pm

The agenda will be posted in the Association Office and on the NGR website on the Friday prior to the meeting, or you may contact the Association Office to obtain agenda information. All homeowners are welcomed and encouraged to attend the meetings.

## Architectural Review Committee

Architectural Review Committee meetings are generally held the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm. Completed applications must be submitted to the Association Office at least 10 business days prior to the ARC meeting. Please check the calendar in each issue of the Pony Express for exact submittal deadlines and ARC meeting dates.

## Association Committees

The Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association has several committees comprised of Homeowners that provide support to the Board of Directors on selected Community topics. For more information or to join any of our Committees, please contact the Association Office at (949) 425-1477.

Architectural Review Committee

Emergency Preparedness Committee

Equestrian Committee

Events Committee

Landscape Committee

Security Committee

Trails and Safety Committee

Committee to Evaluate Feasibility of Gating (Ad Hoc)

# MANAGERS MESSAGE

## NGROA PICKLEBALL TURNS FOUR!

*By Brian Mitchell*



The Nellie Gail Ranch Pickleball courts opened in January 2020 to rave reviews and instant membership enthusiasm. The program has grown to 247 memberships representing 372 players. While the sport is often

referenced as a favorite new sport for seniors, it has its origins as a family game and all age groups are represented by our members. USA Pickleball reports the sport has grown from 40,000 members when we opened to over 75,000 by this year-end.

But those are just numbers. What sets our program apart is the passion for the sport and sociability displayed by our club members. The passion is evident on misty mornings as players gather at 9 am and try to dry the court surface. Sociability is on display everyday as players gather adjacent to courts and in The Watering Hole to mingle after play. Competitiveness is demonstrated when our Holiday Round Robin Tournament spots sold out within a few days of opening registrations. And club prominence is reflected in the accomplishment of our club members competing in the recent USA Pickleball National Championships in Dallas Texas winning a Silver medal in the Woman's Pro Doubles division and a Gold medal in the 4.5 Woman's Doubles 70's division.

If you are looking for a New Years Resolution that you can actually enjoy accomplishing then pick Pickleball. Our memberships are currently capped for non-homeowners but homeowners have priority to immediately join. You can sign up on-line at <https://nelliegailranch.org/recreation/pickleball>. Your 2024 can be filled with new friends, new skills and participation in a great sport! And if you aren't quite ready for Pickleball come on down to The Watering Hole and meet your neighbors for dinner and a beverage. It's your recreation center and we look forward to serving you here!





## NEW TRACTOR AT THE EQUESTRIAN CENTER

The Equestrian Center tractor is put to use for many heavy duty jobs. The Equestrian and Association arenas are dragged to keep the footing at an appropriate depth and consistency to provide surface stability for equestrian use. On a monthly basis 54 pallets of shavings weighing 1,900 pounds each are unloaded from delivery trucks. Annually we use the tractor to remove old footing and add and level new as needed to keep the arenas maintained. And finally, after rains the tractor regrades equestrian center paths of travel and adds gravel to resolve runoff and erosion.

It is a major adverse impact to operations when the tractor is down for maintenance. After ten years and 7,500 operational hours it became time to replace our 2013 John Deere. After an extensive review process looking at John Deere, Kubota, Case, New Holland and CAT, we purchased a 2023 CAT skip loader tractor. Funds came from the Equestrian Center Cost Center reserve funds which are funded by Equestrian Center boarding fees. We look forward to years of reliable operations on our new tractor.





# TENNIS CENTER NEWS

## **PACSUN TRIUMPHS: B1 TEAM DOMINATES MIDWAY POINT, JUNIOR TENNIS STARS SHINE, AND NATIONALS AWAIT**

As PACSun reaches its midway point, there's a buzz of excitement surrounding our B1 Team, which currently reigns supreme at the top of the league. The remarkable performance of our ladies is a testament to their dedication and skill, and we encourage them to maintain the momentum in the upcoming matches. The competitive spirit is alive and well, and we eagerly anticipate the second half of PACSun with high hopes for continued success on the court.

Meanwhile, our Junior Tennis stars, Imani Shah and Myna Medicetty, have been making waves, securing titles at recent USTA Events. Their achievements reflect not only individual prowess but also the strength of our junior program. Additionally, the commendable efforts of Matteo Johnson and Sophia Linstrom have earned them coveted spots at Sectional training camps, a well-deserved recognition of their status as top players in the Section. As we applaud these accomplishments, we extend our best wishes to Myna and Sophia as they embark on a journey to Arizona to compete in the Winter Nationals at the end of the month. May their talent and hard work shine on the national stage, bringing further pride to our PACSun community.







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# MINUTES & ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS

## DECEMBER 12, 2023 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS AVAILABLE ON-LINE

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance convenience and save space, the Minutes and Architectural Review results will be accessible online for your convenience. You can easily view them by scanning the QR codes provided below:

### Architectural Review QR Code



By utilizing these QR codes, you can conveniently access the information and view both reports online. Thank you for embracing this digital initiative, and we hope that it contributes to a more efficient and eco-friendly way of accessing important information. Should you have any questions or encounter any issues while using the QR codes, please feel free to reach out to us.

To receive your 2023-2024 budget and other important information by e-mail instead of printed mailed copy please complete this authorization via the QR Code below...







## **PROGRAMS 2024**



### **OUTDOOR SEASONAL SWIM LESSONS**

REGISTRATION OPENS 2/1/2024



### **SPRING SWIM TEAM**

REGISTRATION OPENS 2/1/2024



### **JUNIOR GUARD PREP PROGRAM**

REGISTRATION OPENS 2/1/2024



### **SUMMER SPORTS CAMP**

REGISTRATION OPENS 2/1/2024

FOR PROGRAM SPECIFIC START DATES AND FOR PRICING INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE





# WINNERS!

## 2023 HOLIDAY HOME DECORATING CONTEST

The community truly lit up this year with 44 amazing entries! The judges had a tough time selecting only 10 winners among them. We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who participated, and give a big **CONGRATUATIONS TO THE WINNERS!**

27212 Lost Colt Drive



27431 Lost Trail Drive



27322 Lost Colt Drive



27361 Lost Trail Drive



27796 Hidden Trail Road



25261 Stageline Drive







26192 Bridlewood Drive



25326 Gallup Circle



25111 Buckboard Lane



25662 Dillon Road



Special thanks to our Contributing Sponsor, BRAD FELDMAN GROUP, whose team will be delivering special prizes to this year's winners!



**Family  
Assistance  
Ministries**



## **ADOPT-A-FAMILY IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING**

Our Nellie Gail Ranch Community adopted 15 families in need this year and helped provide a joyous holiday for many children by donating Christmas gifts that were dropped off at FAM for distribution.

**Thank you to the following families for donating:**

Moss, Storie, Wallace, Herman, Connor, Byrd, Okada, Scifres, Burleson, Van Auken, Smith, Bloome, Guerrero, and Weber.







## TENNIS AND PICKLEBALL PASSES

We encourage you to come on down to the Nellie Gail Ranch Association Recreation Center to enjoy a game of tennis or pickleball. **Included in this issue are six (6) passes homeowners may use to reserve a tennis court or join open play pickleball during peak hours (subject to availability).** No passes are required for non-peak hours **11:30 am to 3:00 pm** as tennis and pickleball courts are available for homeowner use without separate membership in the club during those hours.

After a fun game of either sport come on in to The Watering Hole for a snack, meal or beverage and meet your neighbors or club members. We hope to see you soon!!

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*Happy Holidays* and best wishes for the New Year



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**Marty Samuel**  
**(949) 643-1321**



DRE #00452321

**SEARCH THE ENTIRE MLS FOR FREE - CALL FOR DETAILS**

## COYOTE CAUTION

Nellie Gail Ranch by virtue of its open space design is a haven for wildlife, and one of our abundant wildlife guests is the ever present coyote. We have had recent reports of coyote's in close proximity to homes. Coyotes play an important part in our eco-system helping to keep rodent and rabbit populations under control. However, the more access they have to human food, garbage or easy prey like chickens or pets, their behavior may change. They may become more brazen and more aggressive especially during the late winter / early spring mating season.

The City of Laguna Hills contracts with Mission Viejo Animal Services to respond to reports of nuisance animals. Animal Services provided us with the following information for our homeowners to be aware of:

For service requests and complaints including wildlife concerns, please call the Animal Services Center directly at (949) 470-3045. Reports may also be submitted via e-mail to [ask-shelter@cityofmissionviejo.org](mailto:ask-shelter@cityofmissionviejo.org). Please provide Animal Services with the following who-what-when-why-where information via either the phone message or e-mail:

- **Date and Time of Encounter**
- **Where did encounter occur?**
- **Type of Encounter:** Example: Sighting from car, Sighting while walking, Human interaction, Pet interaction
- **Did your encounter involve a dog or a cat?**
- **Details: Example:** Coyote advanced toward me or threatened my pet.

Animal Services will evaluate the reports and specific circumstances and decide what action may be appropriate. For sightings, no action is taken as sightings are common occurrences. If a domestic animal comes in contact with a coyote and survives a bite or scratch, the interaction should be reported and the animal should be quarantined at home for 30 days or longer depending upon vaccination tim-

ing. If the domestic animal does not survive the interaction, it should be reported and the animal tested to determine if the attacking coyote has rabies in which case Animal Services would have heightened concern which may lead to trapping. Of significant concern to Animal Services are also interactions where people have been threatened. For instances of aggressive behavior near homes, Animal Services may engage in hazing to encourage the coyote to relocate away from the area to a nearby more natural habitat. Coyotes that are reported to be sick, injured or deceased will also receive a response from Animal Services.

The following is the link to Mission Viejo Animal Services website: <https://cityofmissionviejo.org/departments/animal-services>

The following are some simple precautions all homeowners can take:

- **Don't allow small children to play unsupervised in unmaintained portions of your property**
- **Always, keep pets on leash on trails and in parks**
- **Keep domestic animals sheltered and protected**
- **Don't leave food sources available for wild animals**

Our natural environment can sometimes present some discomfort, but the benefits when we weigh them out are so much greater!





# NAVIGATING RAINY SEASONS: SAFETY TIPS FOR NELLIE GAIL RANCH RESIDENTS

As the rain season approaches, it's essential for Nellie Gail Ranch community residents to be well-prepared to ensure safety and minimize potential risks. While the rainfall brings much-needed relief to the landscape, it also poses challenges that require careful consideration. Here are some crucial safety tips to help navigate the rainy season with confidence:

## 1. Keep Drains Clear:

One of the primary concerns during heavy rainfall is potential flooding. Take the time to clear drains around your property to prevent water buildup. This simple step can significantly reduce the risk of localized flooding and safeguard your home and surroundings.

## 2. Maintain Landscaping:

Regular landscaping maintenance is key to rain season safety. Trim tree branches and clear debris from gutters to prevent blockages. This not only protects your property from potential damage but also contributes to the overall safety of the community.

## 3. Monitor Weather Updates:

Stay informed about weather forecasts and updates, especially during periods of intense rainfall. Being aware of potential storms or heavy downpours allows you to plan ahead, whether it's adjusting travel plans or securing outdoor belongings.

## 4. Drive Safely:

Rainy conditions can make roads slippery and decrease visibility. When driving, reduce speed and increase following distances to ensure a safe stopping distance. Avoid flooded roads, as it can be challenging to assess the depth of standing water, leading to potential hazards.

## 5. Emergency Preparedness:

Have an emergency kit ready, including essentials such as flashlights, batteries, non-perishable food, and a first aid kit. Familiarize yourself with emergency evacuation routes and communicate them with your family. Being prepared can make a significant difference in the event of unforeseen challenges.

## 6. Secure Outdoor Items:

Strong winds often accompany heavy rain. Secure outdoor furniture, garden tools, and other loose items that could become projectiles during a storm. This proactive measure helps prevent damage to both your property and the community.

By following these safety tips, Nellie Gail Ranch residents can enjoy the rainy season with peace of mind. Remember that preparedness is key to weathering any storm, and a united effort within the community ensures a safer and more resilient neighborhood. Stay safe and make the most of the rejuvenating rain season in Nellie Gail Ranch.





25211 Empty Saddle Drive

Laguna Hills, CA 92653

949.425.1477 Phone – 949.425.1478 Fax

[www.nelliegailranch.org](http://www.nelliegailranch.org)

Consistent with Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association By-Laws Article VI, Section 1, the Board of Directors will be appointing a Nominating Committee at the February 20, 2024 Board Meeting. This letter is a solicitation for Nominating Committee candidates. If you have an interest in serving, please complete the below form and return by Monday, February 12, 2024. Attached is the adopted Charter that describes Nominating Committee responsibilities.

---

### Application for Nominating Committee Appointment

I wish to be considered for appointment to the Nominating Committee:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

If appointed I pledge to do my best for the benefit of the Association as a whole and will abide by the Committee Charter, Election Rules and Procedures, Bylaws and applicable California laws.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You may submit your application and request for appointment to the Association Clubhouse office or send by e-mail to [admin@nelliegailranch.org](mailto:admin@nelliegailranch.org).

You may also submit your application via the following QR Code:







## **Nominating Committee Charter**

### **Purpose**

The Nominating Committee ("Committee") shall solicit and recommend candidates to fill vacancies for election to the Board of Directors of not less than the number of vacancies that are to be filled.

### **Committee Function**

1. The Committee shall be comprised of a chair person, who shall also be a member of the Board of Directors, and two (2) or more Members of the Association appointed by the Board of Directors.
2. Members of the Committee shall not also be candidates for election to the Board of Directors (during their time of service on the Nominating Committee).
3. Members of the Committee shall be in "good standing" with the Association. A member who is not in "good standing" for purposes of this Committee shall mean that the Member is more than ninety (90) days late in the payment of assessments to the Association, is currently in violation of the Association's governing documents which remains unaddressed for more than thirty (30) days following notice of the violation, and/or is currently, or within the past three (3) years, has been in litigation with the Association in which the Association was the prevailing party.
4. The Committee shall solicit and recommend candidates to fill vacant positions to the Board of Directors of not less than the number of vacancies that are to be filled.
5. Nominations to fill vacant positions to the Board of Directors shall consist of qualified Members who are in "good standing" with the Association as outlined above.
6. The Committee shall determine whether any and all candidates meet the qualifications for candidates as set forth in the Election Rules.
7. Nominations shall be made by the Nominating Committee prior to a ballot printing deadline to be set annually by the Board of Directors.
8. Quorum for each Committee meeting is established by the attendance of at least a majority of the Committee members.

### **Budget Allocation**

There is no budget associated with Nominating Committee functions.

### **Term of Office**

The Board of Directors makes Committee Member appointments annually.

**Adopted February 21, 2017**

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## A DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE IN CALIFORNIA?

*Written by Dr. Kenneth S. Cheng*

Nearly every month, we hear of significant earthquakes or other disasters in other parts of the country (and of the world). Some time in the future, these other parts of the world may hear about OUR earthquake; about how the San Andreas Fault has ruptured causing a 7.8 earthquake in southern California, about how thousands may be missing or dead, how buildings have collapsed, how the resources are spread too thin and how thousands will be without water, food, and electricity for weeks to months.



Recall that we live on the Pacific's "Ring of Fire" where 90% of the world's earthquakes occur, and where 81% of the world's most devastating earthquakes occur. Living in California, earthquakes are commonplace and most of us take them in stride. Now imagine an earthquake on the San Andreas Fault with a magnitude 7.8 striking Southern California. Can this happen? It is not a function of "can it happen," it is a function of "when will it happen." According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), an earthquake of this magnitude is inevitable.

What many residents don't realize is that the southern portion of the San Andreas Fault is long overdue for a major earthquake. Historically, a magnitude 7.2 or greater earthquake strikes this portion of the fault

every 200 years, yet it has been over 300 years since this last occurred. An earthquake of this magnitude is likely to happen within our lifetime. Based on the high probability of this occurring, the USGS recently released the findings of a 2008 study, "The Shakeout Scenario," which include the following:

- A magnitude 7.8 earthquake will cause the San Andreas fault to shift up to 23 feet,
- Over 10 million people will experience significant shaking,
- Despite the epicenter of this earthquake likely being in the Inland Empire, downtown Los Angeles will experience 55 seconds of shaking (8 times longer than the Northridge earthquake) and some areas in southern California will experience up to 5 minutes of continuous shaking,
- Over 1800 lives will be lost and there will be over 50,000 serious injuries,
- Electricity and gas will be unavailable for weeks to months, and water will be unavailable in some areas for as long as six months,
- 2/3 of all hospital beds in Orange County, Los Angeles County, Riverside County and San Bernardino County will be non-operational,
- There will be over 1600 significant fires with hundreds of city blocks completely destroyed, and
- Economic damage to the area will total \$200-\$300 billion dollars.

These are not meant to be a doomsday, extremist views; these are likely scenarios developed by over 300 scientists and disaster experts. What is equally amazing is the number of residents the Emergency



Preparedness Committee has spoken with who are unaware or unprepared. Some have even stated, "Well, I pay my taxes. I'll just call 9-1-1." Unfortunately, there are several problems with relying on this method of getting assistance: 1) the phones are unlikely to work (including cell phones), 2) if they do work, they will be jammed with others trying to call, and 3) if the phones do work and you happen to get through to emergency services, you will not see any assistance for several days because they will be inundated with calls. We can look to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, or more recently, Superstorm Sandy to see how long it takes to get assistance. Emergency Preparedness Coordinators and first responders in Orange County have already stated that we should all be self-sufficient for the 72 hours after a disaster. Your Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee cannot emphasize enough: In the event of a major disaster, do not expect outside help for at least 72 hours and likely longer.

Dr. Lucy Jones, the world-renowned seismologist from Caltech and the US Geologic Survey, stated that the key to preparing for an earthquake is to network with your local resources before the earthquake occurs. This is precisely what has developed with the Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee. Are you a part of it? Do you have a 30-days of supplies in your earthquake kit? Have you contacted your Block Captain?

Over the past several years, your Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee has been providing you with information through the Pony Express and the Nellie Gail website ([www.nelliegailranch.org](http://www.nelliegailranch.org)) on how to prepare, be self-reliant and be of assistance to your neighbors. Currently, community volunteers include over 40 Block Captain, 6 Area Coordinators and 7 Committee members, all of whom are here to help you better prepare for the inevitable regional earthquake. In the coming months, you will see articles that will help you in preparing before the next earthquake, how to respond during an earthquake, and what

to do immediately after the earthquake. Additional articles will include the proper selection and storage of food and water, communications during disasters, proper shelter, light rescue techniques, and other information. Your committee's goal is to help you prepare, because "failing to prepare is preparing for failure" –Benjamin Franklin.

## Emergency Preparedness Committee Seeking New Members

Help support the Nellie Gail Ranch community by participating as a member of the Emergency Preparedness Committee. The Committee is chartered to provide information and guidance to homeowners to help them prepare in advance for an emergency. The Committee may also help individual homeowners during an emergency by disseminating information and helping connect homeowners with other individuals and organizations who are specialized to address a homeowner's particular emergency need(s).

Please submit your application via the following QR code or call the office for an application. Committee appointments will be made at the January 16th meeting.



**About the Author:** Dr. Kenneth Cheng is a 25-year resident of Nellie Gail Ranch and a member of the Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC). For the past 13 years, he has also been a volunteer deputy sheriff with the Sheriff's Department where he has also received the designation as an Expert Pistol Marksman. The opinions expressed by the author are his alone and do not represent the Nellie Gail Homeowner's Association, any committees of the HOA, or any specific law enforcement agency. Additionally, the contents of this article are for informational purposes only and should not be construed to be complete or comprehensive for the reader's individual security and protection needs.

# *HAPPY NEW YEAR!*

# COMPASS

IN ESCROW



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# Christmas Party with Santa and Mrs. Claus



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at The Watering Hole on Sunday, December 10, 2023. While families eagerly waited for their turn to take photos and chat with Santa and Mrs. Claus, little ones transformed into elves in the craft room, and everyone enjoyed complimentary hot cocoa, hot cider, coffee, and sweet treats.

We are grateful to our Contributing Sponsor, Anvil Real Estate/Melody Smith & Associates, and to everyone who contributed gifts to support Toys for Tots.

The night was filled with joy and merriment and many smiling faces!

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(as of January 2023)	Large \$2500	Medium \$1500	Small \$750
# of expected guests	200+	60-199	1-59
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Banner display at event	3 large	1 large	1 small



# Senior Horse Appreciation Day





A special tribute was enjoyed by Nellie Gail boarders, residents, and friends at the Senior Horse Appreciation Day for horses aged 20 years and older. Many participants attended the festivities, including horses over 30 years old. To provide perspective, the average lifespan for wild American Mustangs is only 15 years at best. Various breeds, such as Quarter horses, a Missouri Fox trotter, Warmbloods, and a Mustang, were all present and acknowledged with their owners or handlers. Horses hold a special place in Nellie Gail's history, and we relished sharing the day with our wonderful senior companions.





# TEAM DARKHORSE

## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

*By Karen Robbins*

At Camp Pendleton a merriest of Christmas' and Happy New Years came early - in mid December — when the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines returned from their 7 month deployment to Okinawa . Their arrival comes in "waves" of 3, bringing Marines on planes then buses in about 300 Marines each wave, and Team Darkhorse volunteers were set up and on hand at each.

The homecomings are much anticipated, and also often quite late. Although arrival times are noted, as one can imagine unexpected circumstances often result in hours of delays, and for the families eagerly waiting, especially with small children, this can be challenging. Volunteers on hand with snacks, drinks, and welcoming appreciative faces go a long way in supporting the waiting families, and boosting their morale.

The reward for our volunteers comes when we see the Marines pour off the bus, tired and loaded with their gear, but grateful and joyous to greet loved ones. Sometimes those loved ones include babies the young fathers will hold for the first time. Others include small children holding signs welcoming home their Daddy. And for the single Marines for whom no one is waiting, our volunteers are there with smiles, and snacks and encouraging praise.

Following their return, the Marines will have a short leave, and most can be home in time for Christmas. Included are some of the great moments captured at December's homecoming. We continue to be grateful for our adopted Marines!







#### **TEAM DARKHORSE -**

3D Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Division Support Committee is the (all volunteer) IRS 501 (c) 3 non profit org formed in 2010, following the Laguna Hills City Council formal vote to adopt this Camp Pendleton Infantry Unit. For more information, to volunteer, or make a donation please contact President, Vanessa Kon at [vanessakon@cox.net](mailto:vanessakon@cox.net).

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## Welcome to Nellie Gail Ranch

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# Nellie Gail Garden Group

By Tina Corso

The garden group had such a nice Halloween and Christmas party. We decorated pumpkins and wreaths with succulents. We used a container filled with soil and sand. We glued it to the pumpkin tops and then filled them with succulents from our yards. All we had to do was water them once or twice a week and they grew!! We supplied moss to tuck around the containers or ribbons to make them so festive. I still have one on my kitchen table.



For our Christmas/ Holiday party we all bought a gift and exchanged it with each other. That was more fun than I thought!! Afterwards we all had a really nice

baked ham lunch with wonderful side dishes and treats! The garden group had a wonderful year for our first year back from covid.

There is always so much to talk about. I will try and recap some of our questions.

**A recap for worm composting:** never use meat or dairy products because red wigglers don't eat them. (And you will have insects you don't want besides the smell). They only digest the bacteria/virus and fungus from leaves, brown cardboard, grass, fruit scrapes and vegetable leftovers. Also coffee grinds and eggshells. In your bins, add old soil or new soil, steer or chicken manure so the worms can use this as their bedding. When they finish all the organic products they will give you back wonderful soil to use in your garden. Worms are totally ok to add to your yard. They will drill tunnels to add oxygen to our clay, where the roots will follow with mycelium that will accumulate and produce a healthy environment for our roots to uptake the nutrients in. Red wigglers do so much for our soil.

They will create healthy soil by eating the bad pests and bacteria and viruses. <https://burnabyredwigglers.wordpress.com/2021/04/01/the-close-friends-and-predators-of-red-wigglers-or-compost-worms/>

The next thing I want to talk about is our climate change and what we can do to help our fruit trees. Smoke is very bad for our leaves; it prohibits photosynthesis due to coating our leaves with ash. What you can do is wash them (neighbors' fireplaces are often a culprit) with water but this ash is still very much a pollutant which will go into your soil. I wish this were illegal. Along with adding smoke to our lungs. Folks, consider a space heater or use gas or electricity to heat your homes. Please.

For water I still catch mine from the shower and use it on my bananas along with water from the roof. I feel every little bit helps. We were so fortunate last year





I can shovel them over the fence and sure enough the birds are flying above happy to have something to eat.

Our weather and temperature changes are very difficult because our subtropicals are having a tough time with all the fluctuations of degrees. Figs, cherimoyas, sapotes, guavas, bananas, and avocados will struggle. Even our citrus trees are not too happy this past year. If it's very cold under 40 degrees just make sure your tree has been watered lightly and even wet the leaves lightly. This will provide some protection from frost. What can also help is make sure you have mulch or any ground covering around the base of your tree to protect its delicate roots.

to have so much rain. But who knows what climate change will create for us here in Southern California.

The colder springs have convinced me to hand pollinate my avocado trees since our bees do not pollinate until it's over 58 degrees and for three years now we have had very cold spring temperatures. This is done by using a painters brush and collecting pollen and distributing it to other flowers. I do this over and over again. I did get around 15 Fuertes on my tree once I hand pollinated. I should have had closer to a hundred. My total this year is around thirty avocados from many trees. So if you drop too many flowers, hand pollinate right away. I will be on guard this following Spring.

The squirrels were crazy this year and what this tells me and worries me greatly is our hawks. Please don't use rat poison, use traps instead. Rat poison will get eaten by the hawks and kill them and we so need hawks to kill our squirrels. This unbalance in nature will produce way too many rodents and they will eat all our fruit. I have traps I set up and with the dead rat I feed those healthy creatures to our hawks.

It's very hard to not have rats when we have a lot of animals here in Nellie Gail, chickens, horses, and even goats. These traps are easy to place food inside (peanut butter) and they walk in and it releases down on them to kill them. You just step on it to pull the trap off of them and they slide out to the ground.

Climate change is with us and we must diversify our orchards. I have prickly pear and sabra cactus growing that fruit. Hubby loves to peel these with gloves and knives and juice them. I can always give a piece of them if anyone wants some to grow. Our garden group is all about sharing our cuttings and growing flowers as well. We will have a sale on items at the Easter Egg hunt this coming year as we did before covid. That will help support some of our future activities.

Any questions email us and if you like to join let us know. Email to **[tlc8386@gmail.com](mailto:tlc8386@gmail.com)**



## FIND YOUR WAY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN





# RANCH RECIPE



## WINTER CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

### INGREDIENTS:

1. SAUTE VEGETABLES: IN BUTTER AND OLIVE OIL, COOK 2 CUPS ONION, 1 CUP CARROTS, AND 1 CUP CELERY UNTIL SOFTENED WITH 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  TEASPOONS KOSHER SALT.
2. MAKE ROUX: STIR IN 3 TABLESPOONS FLOUR, THEN GRADUALLY ADD 4 CUPS CHICKEN STOCK AND 2 CUPS WHOLE MILK.
3. COOK NOODLES: ADD 4 OUNCES WHOLE-WHEAT EGG NOODLES AND SIMMER UNTIL TENDER.
4. ADD CHICKEN: MIX IN 3 CUPS CHOPPED ROTISSERIE CHICKEN BREAST.
5. FINISH WITH PEAS: STIR IN 1 CUP FROZEN GREEN PEAS AND COOK UNTIL HEATED THROUGH.

### PREPARATION:

1. SAUTE VEGETABLES: MELT BUTTER AND OLIVE OIL, COOK ONION, CARROTS, CELERY, AND SALT UNTIL SLIGHTLY SOFTENED.
2. MAKE SAUCE: ADD FLOUR, THEN STIR IN STOCK AND MILK, BRINGING THE MIXTURE TO A BOIL.
3. COOK NOODLES: ADD UNCOOKED NOODLES, COVER, AND SIMMER UNTIL AL DENTE, AROUND 8 MINUTES.
4. FINISH DISH: STIR IN CHICKEN AND PEAS, COOK UNTIL PASTA REACHES DESIRED DONENESS, AND SERVE IMMEDIATELY.

# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> New Year's Day 	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> ARC Meeting at 6:00 pm @ The Association Office	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Board Meeting 7:30pm @ Clubhouse	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> ARC Submittal Deadline for February 13th Meeting	<b>31</b>			



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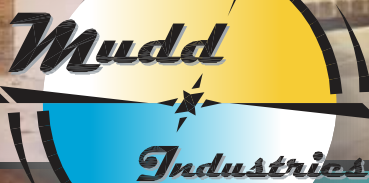


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