



February 2024



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The PONY EXPRESS

Nellie Gail Ranch

Community Newsletter



The Godfrey Group

Celebrate Valentine's Day with these Fun Ideas:

**Fullerton Arboretum,
Cal State Fullerton**
(657) 278-3407
fullertonarboretum.org

**Botanical Reserve,
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niguelbotanicalpreserve.org

**Duffy Rentals,
Newport Beach**
(949) 650-4633
duffyboats.com

**Farm-to-Table Dinner,
Irvine**
tanakafarms.com

**Disneyland Sweetheart's
Night, Anaheim**
disneyland.disney.go.com/
events-tours/after-dark/

**Line Dancing at North
Paseo, Mission Viejo**
cityofmissionviejo.org

**Kids Club Valentine's
Cookie Crawl
Bella Terra,
Huntington Beach**
bellaterra-hb.com



"Annika Godfrey and her group did an exceptional job selling my parents' house I grew up in when we moved to Mission Viejo in 1976. My dad passed away in November of 2021 so the house and yard were way too much for my mom to maintain without hiring outside help. Annika went way beyond our expectations... I recommend Annika to all that read this review and she will provide the best results for you and your family." - Mike B.



"Annika and her team were outstanding in every way! We had listed our house with another agent and were not successful in getting any offers that were right for us... Annika understood that selling a home in a challenging market can be a challenging experience, so clear, proactive communication kept everyone up to speed, avoided surprises, and gave us the information we needed to make quick decisions to get to close. If I am ever in the home buying or selling market in SoCal again, Annika is our first choice! If asked by any friends still in California, Annika is our first recommendation--you cannot go wrong with her and her entire team of professionals!" - Sam S.

SOLD - \$1,305,000



25091 Woolwich St, Laguna Hills

SOLD - \$1,600,000



29841 Weatherwood, Laguna Niguel

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ANNIKA GODFREY

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Annika@AnnikaGodfrey.com

www.AnnikaGodfrey.com

CalRE# 01322358



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BANKER
REALTY**



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Friday Night Live
Featuring Matt Squared -
Foot Tapping Fun
6:30pm - 9:30pm

.

2/9/24

Friday Night Live
Featuring Mark Wood -
Island Music
6:30pm - 9:30pm

.

2/11/24

Super Bowl Watch Party
All Day Long

.

3/30/24

Easter Egg Hunt
at Gallup Park

.

On The Cover:

Brownie Troop 590. Photo
by Loree Blough

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Board of Directors


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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

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(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

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(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 **February 20, 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
- Historical Committee - Pending Appointments

MANAGERS MESSAGE

VOLUNTEERISM

By Brian Mitchell



Volunteerism is alive and well in Nellie Gail Ranch! Every January the Board approves annual appointments to the Committees and this year at the January 16th meeting 29 homeowners were appointed to seven committees. These Committee volunteers, and

the elected Board Member volunteers bring their life and professional expertise to create a benefit for all who call Nellie Gail Ranch home.

Much of what our volunteers do is unseen and unnoticed but collectively they make a huge difference. When you look close you may notice a new fence go up on a trail that enhances safe travel that was recommended by the Trails & Safety Committee. Or a new event is scheduled by the Events Committee and enjoyed by hundreds who attend. Community aesthetics are protected by the Architectural Review Committee as they review 250 plan submittals annually. The Events Committee presents emergency preparedness seminars and the Security Committee provides opportunities to join Neighborhood Watch programs. The Equestrian Committee schedules clinics and provides equestrian expertise at The Equestrian Center. And you may see new plants, new trees and slope planting renovations as the Landscape Committee prioritizes where to use the landscape replacement funds. This is just the briefest of summaries of the extensive work these Committees are engaged in! Countless hours are dedicated to the community to the benefit of all.

As new needs arise, new committees may be formed. This past year an Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the Feasibility of Gating was formed with fourteen volunteers. They put in eight months of research and

their efforts and findings presented to the Board at the January meeting are included in this issue of The Pony Express.

At the January 16th meeting the Board approved forming a Historical Committee. We are soliciting candidates for appointment to this Committee for February 20th appointment. As Nellie Gail Ranch moves into its 48th year we want to gather information and details on Nellie Gail Ranch milestones and significant events. When was the first home built? When was the Recreation Center purchase approved and who was involved at the time? What did Nellie Gail Ranch look like at the start of 1980, 1990,

2000, 2010 and 2020? Can we capture some living history interviews with some of our original homeowners? And what might a 50th year celebration look like in 2026? The opportunities are endless for volunteers interested in digging into our Nellie Gail Ranch heritage. A potential outcome of the Committee may be a

presentation and/or photo collection. One thing we know, whatever vision we have in place as we form the Committee is almost certain to be far exceeded once committed volunteers step forward. That's the way it has always worked at Nellie Gail Ranch. We start off suggesting the color blue and we end up with a rainbow.

Thank you! Not just to our current volunteers, but to all who have volunteered the past 47 years who have shaped Nellie Gail Ranch into the community you all call home!

"The heart of a volunteer is never measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others." - Deann Hollis

If you are interested in volunteering for the Historical Committee, or any of the Nellie Gail Ranch Committees, please **e-mail admin@nelliegailranch.org** to request an application.

CALIFORNIA PEPPER ARMORED SCALE INFESTATION

We have become aware of a number of California Pepper trees in proximity to our Equestrian Center becoming infested with "Armored Scales". Trees heavily infested with armored scales often look water stressed. Leaves turn yellow and drop, twigs and limbs may die and the bark cracks and gums. Armored scales can kill trees and must be controlled when their populations rise. Trees are more susceptible to disease when ants and dust disrupt beneficial predators from controlling scales.

We have engaged Pacific Coast Arborist to inspect and develop a treatment plan. They will be treating 71 of our trees with an Imidacloprid soil injection to suppress the infestation of affected trees and assist in preventing scales on trees without visual signs. We will also be treating the foliage with a horticultural oil via foliar spray.

We have met with the City of Laguna Hills Landscape Maintenance Inspector to identify some trees they have affected as well. If you have California Peppers on your property you may want to inspect in order that you can identify any concerns early and protect your mature trees from potential long term harm.



TENNIS CENTER NEWS

COMPETITION RESULTS AND UPDATES FROM OUR YOUNG MEMBERS

Congratulations to the stellar performers from our elite junior program! Sophia Dumitrascu clinched the gold, showcasing exceptional skill and determination, while Myna Medicetty secured the silver with commendable prowess. Their achievements at last month's USTA L5 event reflect not only their individual talent but also the dedication and excellence fostered within our program.

Congratulations to Sophia Linstrom, a shining star in our elite junior program, for an extraordinary feat at the L3 USTA event in Phoenix, Arizona last month! Sophia's exceptional talent was on full display as she clinched gold in both singles and doubles. Her outstanding performance is a testament to her hard work, dedication, and the exemplary training provided by our program. Well done, Sophia, on this well-deserved double victory!





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ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS

JANUARY 9, 2024 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 annual budget, audit and other important information by e-mail instead of printed mailed copy please complete this authorization via the QR Code below...



Nellie Gail Ranch



Valentine Round Robin

PICKLEBALL
EVENT

Super Bowl
viewing in the
watering hole.

Sunday
Feb 11th

11am - 2pm

\$75pp



Appetizers &
drink included!



Holiday Rock 'N' Ride Dressage Show

by Cassie Cherry Nolte

On Saturday, December 16th Nellie Gail Ranch's dressage instructor Cassie Cherry Nolte of Cherry EquiSports Dressage hosted the Holiday Rock N' Ride Dressage Show. There were over 25 rides showcasing all levels of dressage – from Walk/Trot all the way to FEI Grand Prix. This time we also had Eventing riders performing dressage tests as well as Hunters and Jumpers riding Prix Caprilli dressage tests (dressage tests with small cavaletti jumps incorporated). A stick horse class was held during the lunch break so even the littlest "riders" could join the fun! Nellie Gail's own Jan Curtis and Nicole Bhathal served as our esteemed judges.



Residents and equestrian spectators alike came out to enjoy the show, take in the festive holiday décor, and grab delicious food from Alexa's Catering. We even had a few riders from local Orange County stables trailer over to join the fun and current Mission Viejo Council member Wendy Bucknum was in attendance!

The Rock 'N' Ride Dressage Shows have had such



a fantastic response from the community that they will become annual events for Nellie Gail Ranch equestrians. These schooling shows have been thoughtfully planned to mimic larger events with multiple judges, great prizes, gorgeous tri-color ribbons to all, and competitor swag bags but in a much smaller, casual and supportive atmosphere. The goal is to provide an opportunity for competition riders to get additional practice while also serving as a confidence-building experience for horses and riders new to dressage and showing.

A big thank you to Dover Saddlery of Laguna Hills and Equivont for their generous sponsorship of the show prizes. Also a big thank you to several of Cassie's personal sponsors including Platinum Performance, Redmond Equine, and Allivet for their contributions to the holiday stocking goodie bags that each competitor received.

Congratulations to all the riders that participated – Natalie Banis, Marcus Bhathal, Debi Brum, Cara Chadwick, Cassie Cherry Nolte, Jenni Coury, Jen-

nifer Elia, Nicole Garcia, Jamie Heim, Kristina Huff, Marie Kenney, Estella Lindsey, Emma Mabry, Johanna Paine, Annika Randrup, Lori Southworth and Kathleen Tetreault. A great big thank you to all the volunteers that kept the show running smoothly throughout the day, our 4H scoring runners, judges Jan and Nicole, official show sponsors Dover Saddlery of Laguna Hills and Equivont, the Nellie Gail Ranch Equestrian Committee, Brian Mitchell, Equestrian Center Manager Nikki Garcia, and the amazing staff that ensure our center is well cared for.

Keep your eyes out for a future Rock 'N' Ride Dressage Schooling Show date in June!



UPDATE REGARDING COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE FEASIBILITY OF GATING

The Board of Directors approved appointing a Committee to Evaluate Feasibility of Gating at its May 16, 2023 meeting. Nine homeowners were initially appointed with an additional seven joining the following months. The Committee evaluated historical gating efforts, member balloting, and correspondence with the city related to gating. After careful review the Committee prepared a draft model for access control and submitted it to counsel they selected with municipal and public agency expertise to determine if gating the Nellie Gail Ranch public street entries would be legally feasible. The analysis determined the following:

We are of the opinion that any option to gate NGROA Areas would be inconsistent with applicable State statutory and case law and, even if approved by the City of Laguna Hills, likely to be rescinded if challenged in court.

The Committee also considered alternative options to check ID and screen vehicles and their passengers which was also confirmed to be prohibitively restrictive to free access to the public streets.

The full analysis is provided on the following pages. It is the Committee's finding that unless and until state and local laws change, gating of Nellie Gail Ranch public streets is not legally feasible to implement. With the question of gating being put to rest we again have the prospect of exploring crime prevention opportunities that may be available to us. These opportunities may include Neighborhood Watch, cameras and consulting. More information to follow in coming months.

***Proud to be a Nellie Gail Homeowner for 39 years!
No broker residing here has sold more Nellie Gail Homes.***



Rancho Mission Viejo \$1,295,000



Laguna Hills \$1,314,000



Nellie Gail Ranch \$3,238,000

THERE IS A CHANGE IN THE AIR !!! IS IT TIME TO SELL ???

If you have been considering selling your home, now may be the best time in many years. And it may be the best time for several years to come. The inventory of homes for sale is exceptionally low, and buyer demand remains high. Despite the doubling of interest rates, prices are holding strong for now. Please give me a call to discuss the details of moving up to a new home, or downsizing if the time is right for that lifestyle change.



Marty Samuel
(949) 643-1321



DRE #00452321

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Nellie Gail sales based on MLS data since Oct 1989

Attorney-Client Privilege and Attorney Work Product

TO: Mark Fisk, President
Brian Mitchell, General Manager

FROM: Fred Galante, Esq.

DATE: December 6, 2023

RE: Legal Issues with Seeking to Gate Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association Areas

I. Introduction and Summary of Conclusion.

This opinion analyzes whether Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association (“NGROA”) could legally pursue having the NGROA-controlled areas (“NGROA Area”) gated so as to restrict public access. We are informed that NGROA is not seeking to privatize or be responsible for repair or maintenance of the streets, but instead, only impose access control. We further understand that a predominant goal of this access restriction is to provide security to the homeowners from potential crime and vandalism.

We are of the opinion that any option to gate NGROA Areas would be inconsistent with applicable State statutory and case law and, even if approved by the City of Laguna Hills, likely to be recinded if challenged in court.

II. Background.

All 11 entrances to NGROA Areas are sought to be gated with motorized gates. Some of the entrances may have staffed 24/7 guardhouses. All of the motorized gates would be controlled by electronic access control devices, possibly using RFID or a similar technology.

The general public and any non-resident invitees of residents would have unrestricted access to NGROA Areas requiring each adult and vehicle seeking access to either: (a) be subject to a prior validation of their identity and licensing (think TSA pre-check), or (b) present to a staffed guardhouse a valid Driver’s License, Identity Card or Passport and have their vehicle and face photographed. Anyone that has not complied with either (a) or (b) would be denied entry to NGROA Areas.

The company engaged by the NGROA to provide guardhouse staff would be contractually obligated to comply with and train its employees with best practices to satisfy applicable laws regarding the privacy of personal identification information, data security, and the collection, use, and handling of all personal identification information collected.

All gates would have “Emergency Preemption Devices”, “Knox Key Devices” or otherwise comply with applicable Fire Codes for access by Fire and Sheriff Departments’ vehicles. If requested, all members of the fire and law enforcement communities would also be offered electronic access control devices for their governmental vehicles. Siren-activated access controls will also be considered if the technology is determined to be reliable and “spoof” resistant.

The desire is for all streets to remain public. No streets would be abandoned or vacated. All costs of insurance, maintenance, and repair relating to the streets, curbs, sidewalks, other public works, and similar items would remain the financial responsibility of the governmental or utility entities presently responsible for the cost of such insurance, repairs and maintenance.

All costs of constructing the guardhouses, gates, turnaround lanes, double entry lanes, exit lanes, exit spikes, any required utilities needed to be run to the gates and guardhouses, etc., would be paid for by either a loan obtained by NGROA or one-time assessment to the NGROA residents.

II. Analysis.

Courts treat any action limiting access to public streets in accordance with the provisions of the California Vehicle Code, commencing with section 21101. A city’s right to authorize restricting access to public streets requires the city to find that the streets are no longer needed for vehicular traffic. However, cities cannot partially close a public street for the exclusive use of nearby residents because there is no legislative authority for a city to restrict the right to use public streets for some people and not for others. (*City of Lafayette v. County of Contra Costa* (1979) 91 Cal.App.3d 749, 754.)

Following the *Lafayette* case, the California Legislature adopted Vehicle Code section 21101.6, which provides:

Notwithstanding Section 21101, local authorities may not place gates or other selective devices on any street which deny or restrict the access of certain members of the public to the street, while permitting others unrestricted access to the street.

This section is not intended to make a change in the existing law, but is intended to codify the decision of the Court of Appeal in *City of Lafayette v. County of Contra Costa* (91 Cal. App. 3d 749).

Courts have found that a city may close a public street to all vehicular traffic if it finds that the street is no longer needed. (Veh. Code, § 21101(a)(1).) For example, in *Citizens for Improved Sorrento Access, Inc. v. City of San Diego (“Sorrento”)* (2004) 118 Cal.App.4th 808, the court addressed the City of San Diego’s right to close a one-mile portion of a public street to all public vehicular access. The city there had found that permanent closure of the street, which had been

temporarily closed during a Caltrans construction project, would preserve water, drainage, biological resources, noise and landform and that re-opening the street would irreversibly harm the environment. (*Sorrento*, at 811.) The city also found, based on traffic studies, that opening the street would not reduce traffic congestion in the area as there were numerous alternatives. (*Sorrento*, at 812.) Based on these findings, the court concluded that the complete closure of the street to public vehicular access was justified. It then distinguished its holding from other cases finding that a partial street closing was improper by explaining that those cases “concerned a local entity’s authority to decide *which* members of the public could use a particular public street, and not the issue here involving a legislative judgment that a road has become unnecessary for the entire public.” (*Sorrento*, at 818.)

Case law has been clear that a city cannot authorize the partial closure of a public street for the exclusive use of nearby residents because there is no legislative authority to do so. (*Lafayette*, , 91 Cal.App.3d at p. 754 [State law authorizing the closure of a public street to vehicular access does not “allow a city to close a street, or part of it, to the state’s citizens generally but not, as in the case at bench, to its own residents or other ‘exempted drivers.’ ”].)

The California Supreme Court approved *Lafayette’s* reasoning and held that the City of Berkeley had no authority to place traffic barriers on city streets permitting only local residents to use the streets. (*Rumford v. City of Berkley* (1982) 31 Cal.3d 545, 551–552 [Vehicle Code section 21101(a) does not provide a city with the authority to partially close a public street, and specifically noted that Berkeley did not “claim[] that any street ... is ‘no longer needed for vehicular traffic’ ”].)

The court in *Citizens Against Gated Enclaves v. Whitely Heights Civic Assn.* (1994) 23 Cal.App.4th 812 similarly held that the City of Los Angeles had no authority to permit traffic gates to partially block public streets. There, the city had entered into an agreement with a homeowners association to permit the association to install the gates and to permit only residents of the residential development to use those public streets. The court found that the agreement essentially converted public streets into private roads and therefore was invalid because the city had not made a finding that the streets “were no longer needed for vehicular traffic.” (*Whitely Heights*, at 821.) The court explained, “the [c]ity cannot ... wave the magic wand and declare a public street not to be a public street” without “a finding that the property in question is unnecessary for present or future uses as a street.” (*Id.*)

In the present proposal for NGROA to gate 11 entrances to the NGROA Area, the City of Laguna Hills would not likely have authority to approve the proposed limitation of public access. Any action by the City to limit access would be subject to the provisions of Vehicle Code section 21101.6 prohibiting cities from approving the placement of gates or other selective devices on any street to deny or restrict the access of certain members of the public, while permitting others unrestricted access. As such, even if approved by the Laguna City Council, the approval would

likely be rescinded by any court in response to a challenge based on Section 21101.6 and the above cases.

This result is distinguishable from any new development that seeks to have private roads and gated access to its residents. Unlike the option considered by NGROA to limit access to public streets, new gated developments do not start with public streets, but instead subdivide their private land to create new lots and private streets, thus not triggering the provisions of Section 21101.6 or the above cases.

Please let us know if you have any questions or require further analysis.



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As the sun begins to shine brighter and the temperatures rise, Evolution Swim Academy is thrilled to announce a lineup of exciting seasonal programs for the Nellie Gail Ranch community in 2024. These programs are designed to provide a perfect blend of fun, skill development, and water safety. Whether you're looking to enhance swimming skills, join a seasonal swim team, or engage in a summer sports camp, Evolution Swim Academy has something for everyone.

Junior Guard Prep Program:

One of the highlights of our seasonal offerings is the Junior Guard Prep program, tailored for young individuals eager to improve their swim skills to pass the junior lifeguard swim test. This program helps strengthen swimming skills while also instilling confidence and responsibility in participants. There are three sessions and we offer multi-session discounts.

Seasonal Swim Team:

For those with a competitive spirit, our Seasonal Swim Team is the perfect avenue to showcase swimming prowess. Open to swimmers with a working knowledge of freestyle and backstroke, this program emphasizes teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal improvement. Participants will have the chance to refine their strokes, build endurance, and compete in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. The Seasonal Swim Team at Evolution Swim Academy is not just about racing; it's about fostering a love for swimming and building lasting friendships.

Seasonal Swim Lessons:

Our Seasonal Swim Lessons cater to individuals ages 3-12, providing personalized instruction to help participants become more confident and proficient swimmers. Whether you're a beginner learning the basics or an experienced swimmer aiming to refine your technique, our certified instructors are dedicated to guiding you on your aquatic journey. With small class sizes and a focus on individual progress, Evolution Swim Academy ensures a positive and effective learning experience for all participants.

Summer Sports Camp:

Evolution Swim Academy is excited to host our Summer Sports Camp for the 10th year at Nellie Gail Ranch. The Summer Sports Camp is a comprehensive program that combines open swim with various land-based sports and activities. This camp offers a holistic approach to physical fitness and recreational enjoyment. From archery to soccer, participants will have the opportunity to explore a range of sports, fostering a well-rounded and active lifestyle.

Registration Information:

Mark your calendars! Registration for all these fantastic programs opens on February 1, 2024. To secure your spot or gather more details about the programs, we encourage families to visit our website at www.evolutionswim.com. Additionally, our dedicated team is ready to assist you, and you can reach us by phone at 949-388-4545.

Evolution Swim Academy is committed to providing the Nellie Gail Ranch community with enriching and enjoyable seasonal programs in 2024. Whether you're diving into the Junior Guard Prep program, making waves with the Seasonal Swim Team, refining your skills in Seasonal Swim Lessons, or embracing the diversity of sports in our Summer Sports Camp, we invite you to join us for a summer filled with learning, laughter, and aquatic adventures. Don't miss the opportunity to make this summer unforgettable with Evolution Swim Academy!

The footer banner features a blue and white geometric background. On the left, there is a circular photo of Felipe Delgado, a man with short dark hair wearing a blue polo shirt. To the right of the photo, the text "FELIPE DELGADO" is written in a large, bold, orange font. Below this, in a smaller blue font, it says "FOUNDER, EVOLUTION SWIM ACADEMY" and "TEAM DIRECTOR, EVOLUTION RACING CLUB". Further down, contact information is listed: an email icon followed by "felipe@evolutionswim.com", a phone icon followed by "949.388.4545", a globe icon followed by "www.evolutionswim.com", and two location pins followed by "23854 Via Fabricante Unit G4 Mission Viejo, CA 92691" and "28206 Airoso St. Rancho Mission Viejo, CA 92694". On the far right, there is a stylized logo consisting of a grey circle with a red and white striped 'R' inside. The Evolution Swim Academy logo is also present in the top left corner of the banner.



PROGRAMS 2024



OUTDOOR SEASONAL SWIM LESSONS

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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

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

SURVIVING THE EARTHQUAKE, STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE IT HAPPENS

Written by Dr. Kenneth S. Cheng

This is one article in a series written by your Emergency Preparedness Committee to help you prepare, be self-reliant and be of assistance to your neighbors in the event of a regional emergency. Every month we see and hear in the news of natural disasters (earthquakes, tornados, floods, and hurricanes) that should remind us of the importance of preparation. By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail (Benjamin Franklin).



The information provided is not meant to be exhaustive or complete, but instead is a good starting point in your planning process of preparation. These articles, and additional information, can also be accessed and downloaded through the Nellie Gail website (www.nelliegailranch.org) by signing in, clicking on the Resource Center tab, and opening the Emergency Preparedness Folder.

Last month we described the likelihood ("inevitable" according the USGS) and possible magnitude (7-10 times stronger than Haiti) of an earthquake striking the Southern California area. Despite that devastation, earthquakes are very survivable with simple preparation. You can minimize the damage within your home and improve your chances of rescue and full recovery by taking some very simple steps. This month's focus will be an overview of what should be done BEFORE the earthquake occurs. The

Boy Scouts say it best in their motto, "Be Prepared." In order to minimize injury and inconvenience, we must prepare ourselves, our home and our community. Below are some basic, yet essential steps to becoming prepared.

Most of us have our water heater strapped to the wall, but are the straps sturdy and attached to studs? Water heaters weigh anywhere from 600 lbs to over 900 lbs. Check your water heater straps to make sure they can support this weight (the old "plumber's tape" and nails are woefully inadequate.) This is important for several reasons: it lessens the chance of a gas leak and fire, it minimizes your chances of flooding from broken water pipes, and it preserves 75-100 gallons of usable drinking water should you need it. Water heater straps are available at any hardware store and can be easily installed with minimal effort. If you are not sure how to do this, a handyman can easily accomplish this in about an hour.

Attach a gas and water shut off tool on your gas meter and practice how to use it. Attaching it to the meter with a lightweight chain or thin cable is important so it won't get lost nor will you waste time searching for it through the mess and devastation in your garage while gas is leaking from your water heater (which is probably in your garage as well.) Practice shutting off your water from the meter (at the street) and/or from the entry point in your home (usually found at the base of your front yard hose bib.)

ALL unsecured items on your walls and shelves WILL BE on the floor. Most of our homes have a hallway or two with family pictures hanging on it. The floors in these hallways will be littered with broken glass. Secure your pictures (especially ones over or near your beds) so that they can't fall off. This is easily done by placing two or more finishing nails into the wall immediately above the frame of the hanging picture. These nails will prevent the picture from coming up

AN EARTHQUAKE FAULT IN OUR OWN BACKYARD?

and unhooking from the picture hanger. Kitchens are also notorious for being extremely vulnerable to earthquakes. Contents from your cabinets and drawers will likely be on your floor, including food, cooking utensils, pots and pans, broken jars, etc. This can be minimized by having childproof locks on the cabinets. Yes, this is

inconvenient and most will not do this but at least consider this for lesser used cabinets and glass containing pantries. It is strongly recommended that the cabinets containing household chemicals (cleaning supplies, etc.) be childproofed as the chemicals can be hazardous by themselves, possibly fatal if mixed with other chemicals. The lock will prevent these chemicals from spilling and mixing with each other.

Tall furniture, book shelves and refrigerators should be attached to the studs behind them. Rescue teams have seen refrigerators that have "walked" from their location, travel 6 feet across the kitchen floor and take out large chunks from a granite countertop (Northridge Earthquake, magnitude 6.7, 1994.) These furniture attachment straps are easy to install and readily available at Home Depot or other hardware stores.

With all the broken glass described above, you should have closed-toed shoes under your bed (some also recommend that you store one of your emergency flashlights in these shoes so that it will always be nearby.) You do not want to be running down a dark hall in bare feet or slippers with broken shards of glass on the floor as one of the most common injuries from earthquakes is from victims cutting their feet on broken glass within their own home. Avoid the temptation of running to different rooms or running outside; FEMA research shows that most earthquake injuries happen when one is entering or exiting a structure.

Prepare by having adequate food, water and supplies. This is a whole topic in itself and will be thoroughly covered in a future article, but to summarize, one should have one gallon of water per person per day, canned or dried foods that require little or no preparation, and shelter (tents, tarps, blankets, etc.) in the event your home is uninhabitable.

On Monday, April 23, 2012, a 3.9 earthquake stuck much of south Orange County. This quake's epicenter was located in Laguna Niguel (specifically near the corner of Crown Valley Parkway and La Paz). Most of the readers of the Pony Express won't remember this earthquake, and although no injuries or property damage occurred and having startled only a few residents, it definitely startled the geologic community. This small earthquake brought to light a little known "thrust" fault, the San Joaquin Hills fault. Thrust faults are difficult to identify because unlike the San Andreas Fault where the fracture of the earth's crust is visible and on the surface, thrust faults have fractures deep beneath the surface. One might ask, "Since these faults are under the surface, aren't they less dangerous?" Geologists feel that these blind thrust faults are likely more dangerous since their boundaries can't be identified. Geologists were not aware of the faults that caused the 6.7 magnitude Northridge Earthquake (1994) and the 6.0 magnitude Whittier Narrows Earthquake (1987) until the ground started shaking as both were caused by these blind thrust faults. We now know a blind thrust fault lies literally in our backyard. All the more reason to be prepared.

NEW EARTHQUAKE KIT OPTION

As many of you know, I have assembled a very extensive earthquake kit that should easily sustain my family in the event of an emergency. I chose to assemble my own (vs. purchasing a pre-made kit) because I could customize it and to insure that I had high quality items in my kit. All too often, pre-assembled kits cut costs by using inferior products (and you certainly don't want inferior products when your life may depend on it.) Additionally, these kits often contain items that sound good, but are of limited usefulness. For these reasons, I have always directed our readers to sites to assemble your kit (using the previously published list of items for an earthquake kit), but I have not recommended pre-made earthquake kits.

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Recently, I had a chance to evaluate a high quality, pre-assembled earthquake kit that made its debut at the Los Angeles County Fair. The company is actually a local Orange County company, Emergency Case (www.emergencycase.com). It should be noted that my evaluation below of Emergency Case is done so without their knowledge or input, and that this author and other members of the Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee have no financial interest in Emergency Case, nor do we receive any financial considerations from them.

Most impressive is that much thought went into developing this particular kit. The items in the kit are of high quality (including some Stanley-branded tools that I want to include in my current kit.) They have designed this emergency kit around five basic components: Food and Water, Shelter and Sleep, Advanced Medical, Tools and Safety, and Health and Hygiene. Each of these five components are packaged separately within the case and easily identified as such. These kits include a sleeping bag and bivouac sac, shelter/tent, water filter, head lamps and a number of items not found in the cheaper pre-made kits. Of particular interest to me was the Advanced Medical component. The supplies found here are more robust than your basic first aid kit. These "advanced" items include a SAM splint, hemostatic gauze, burn relief ointments, etc.

One of the inherent difficulties with pre-made kits is that one size doesn't fit all. Emergency Case addresses this by allowing you to purchase additional components based on your needs. One can purchase a "food vault" for additional food and water, and/or purchase a 2 person add-on kit (the standard kit accommodates a family of four). There are still items that one will need to add to have a fully ready emergency earthquake kit, but these items (toilet paper, eating utensils, etc.) are minor and not difficult to acquire.

The other impressive part of this case is the case itself. This is not a bucket or soft-sided bag; Emergency Case uses high quality, hard sided, waterproof cases that can be wheeled along much like luggage (in the event you need to move.) On their website is a video showing the ruggedness of their case. Another plus is that these cases are made in "rescue orange" for easy identification and are stackable in your garage.

In summary, this kit is ideal for the non-do-it-yourself individual but still desires a high quality, ready-made earthquake kit. It should be noted, however, that having even a high quality earthquake kit alone does not make you truly prepared. You will need to add knowledge; something that you will continue to receive from your Nellie Gail Emergency Preparedness Committee and these articles in the Pony Express. Future articles will address what to do DURING and AFTER an earthquake, as well as how to turn off

utilities, if necessary. As always, please feel free to contact us with your questions at the email emergencypreparedness@nelliegailranch.org.

About the Author:

Dr. Kenneth Cheng is a 24-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.





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**SOLICITATION FOR BOARD CANDIDATES AND
NOTICE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION
(NOTICE DATE FEBRUARY 2, 2024)**

Annual Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Location: 25281 Empty Saddle Drive, Laguna Hills, CA 92653

Registration & Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Solicitation For Board Candidates:

The Association is soliciting candidates for the upcoming 2024 Board of Directors election to be held on **Wednesday, June 5, 2024**. Candidate applications must be received by the Association by 5:00 p.m. March 22, 2024 to be nominated and listed on the pre-ballot notice that will be posted prior to April 1, 2024. The pre-ballot notice will include all names that will be included on the ballot to be mailed by April 30, 2024.

Candidates whose nominations are received after March 22, 2024 may still run for election but will not be included on the ballot.

1. Subject to Civil Code §5105, all Candidates for the Board must meet the following qualifications:
 - a. The Candidate must be an Owner. If title to a separate interest is held by a legal entity, such entity may appoint a natural person to serve or vote on such entity's behalf by delivering evidence of an appropriate written appointment to the Association;
 - b. The Candidate must be current in the payment of all regular and special assessments. For the purposes of these election rules, "current" means no regular or special assessment is past due by more than thirty (30) days, or such period of time as is specifically defined in the Association's collection policy;
 - c. The Candidate may not hold a joint ownership interest in the same separate interest as any other candidate or incumbent director; and
 - d. The Candidate is not eligible to run if the Association is aware or becomes aware of a past criminal conviction that would, if the Candidate were elected, either prevent the Association from purchasing the fidelity bond coverage required by Civil Code §5806 or terminate the Association's existing fidelity bond coverage.

Additional information regarding the Associations Election Rules and Procedures is provided in the Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association Election Rules adopted March 15, 2022 and are available on-line at nelliegailranch.org or by request to admin@nelliegailranch.org.

Notice of Board of Directors Election

The Annual Meeting of the Members and Election of Board of Directors is set for **Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.** If there are more candidates than positions open (three) the meeting will be held at the Nellie Gail Ranch Clubhouse at 25281 Empty Saddle Drive, Laguna

(i.e. 704 out of 1407 members) must vote. In the event that less than 50% of the membership participate in the Annual Meeting, either by returning their ballot or appearing in person, then those in attendance may adjourn the meeting to a date not less than 5 nor more than 30 days thereafter, and the quorum at such adjourned meeting shall be lowered to twenty-five percent (25%) (i.e. 352 out of 1407 members). The Reconvened Election meeting date, if necessary, will be **Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.**

This year three (3) seats are up for election. The pre-ballot notice listing candidate names to be included on the ballot will be posted prior to April 1, 2024. Check the May 2024 issue of The Pony Express for candidate bios and information. For any questions regarding the Annual Meeting and Election of Board Directors, please call the Association office at (949) 425-1477.



25211 Empty Saddle Drive
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
949.425.1477 Phone – 949.425.1478 Fax
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.

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





2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE RESUMÉ / NOMINATION APPLICATION

The Association is soliciting candidates for the upcoming 2024 Board of Directors election to be held on **Wednesday, June 5, 2024**. Candidate applications must be received by the Association by 5:00 p.m. Friday, March 22, 2024 to be nominated and listed on the pre-ballot notice that will be posted prior to April 1, 2024. The pre-ballot notice will include all names that will be included on the ballot to be mailed by April 30, 2024. Please provide a full face, digital photograph to be published in the May 2024 issue of The Pony Express. Below word totals per category may be adjusted by candidate, however, the total statement may not exceed 350 words. Please return this application by mail to 25211 Empty Saddle Dr., Laguna Hills, CA 92653 or e-mail to the Association's office at admin@nelliegailranch.org. Attention: Nominating Committee.

Property Owner's Name: _____

Address: _____ Homeowner Since: _____ (year)

Current Occupation or Occupation at time of Retirement: _____

Civic Activities – Organizations, Positions, Etc. (50 words or less): _____

Nellie Gail Ranch Activities – Organizations, Positions, Etc. (50 words or less): _____

Biographical Information (100 words or less): _____

Statement – Why do you want to serve on the Board (150 words or less): _____

If elected I pledge to do my best for the benefit of the Association as a whole and will abide by and enforce the Association's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and CC&R's, Architectural Guidelines, published policies and all applicable California and Federal Laws.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Gary Sipota and friends celebrating his birthday



Neighbors Gathering for an evening out at The Watering Hole



"Dinks and Drinks" – A Pickleball Birthday Celebration



Congratulations to Nellie Gail Ranch resident Genevieve Schei Engelhorn on her surprise engagement to Brendan Huiberts. Friends and family gathered at The Watering Hole just days before.

COMMITTEE RECOGNITION *Dinner*

The Board of Directors hosted a dinner on Saturday, January 20, 2024, to express gratitude to all committee members for their dedication and selfless service to Nellie Gail Ranch. The committees play a crucial role in ensuring that the needs and concerns of the residents are addressed effectively and make the community a better place in which to live. A delightful social gathering and a delicious Italian buffet prepared by The Watering Hole was enjoyed by all who attended.





THE
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Wednesday, February 14, 2024

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choice of

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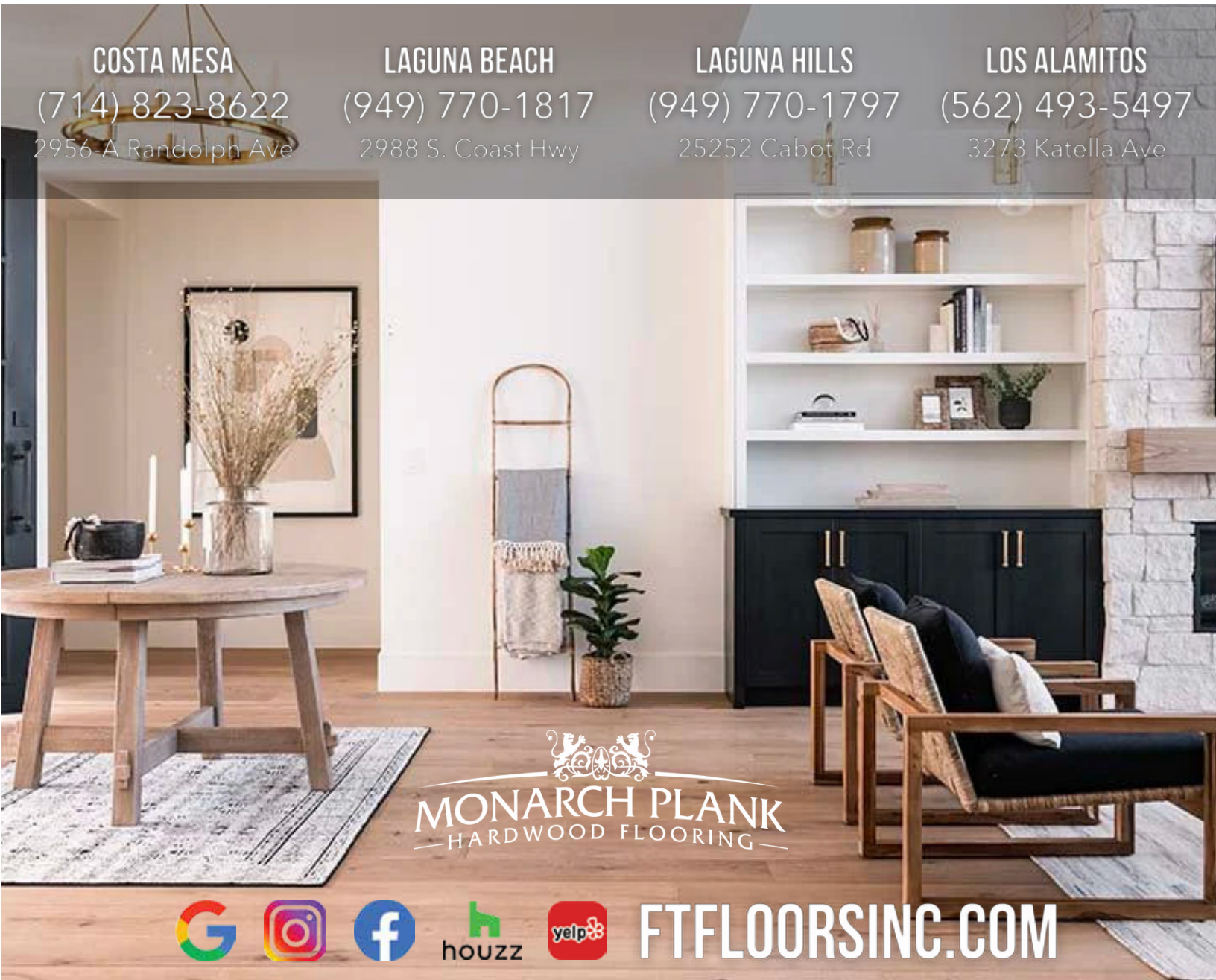
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Passionate individuals supporting Illumination Foundation through volunteering and events. Email Anna Murphy-Duehring at amurphyduehring@ifhomeless.org to join. Visit ifhomeless.org for more info.

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Part-time science fiction graphic novel writer sought. Pay: \$15/hr. Attend weekly Zoom meetings, write 2-3 pages weekly, and email progress. Apply at bettsm15@gmail.com with name, contact info, availability, resume, and writing samples.

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Grant, a licensed therapist, specializes in teens and young adults. Call (714) 276-8957 for a free consultation or visit www.grant-waggoner.clientssecure.me. Office in Dana Point. License: California / 125452.

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Expand yoga knowledge with Brittney Trujillo. 200hr Yoga Teacher with 10+ years experience. \$80 per person for an hour session. Contact at 714.234.7627.

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HEALTH / PAIN MANAGEMENT / HUMAN & EQUINE

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Bridge partner wanted to play social bridge from 12:00 - 3:00 on Mondays Please call (949) 395-6000 if interested

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Reza Dolouei & Elham Arghami

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Nellie Gail Garden Group

By Tina Corso

Now that the holidays are over, many of you have been asking me; what do we do now in the garden? And the best answer is to tell you what I have been doing.

First thing I have done is totally allow all the leaves to just lay where they fall. The leaves will keep the roots warm and compost into the soil. You can rake them around the base of the tree but do not pile them on the trunk, you always want your trunk to stay dry thus preventing root rot.



I test the PH of my soil. It's usually more alkaline than I want it to be close to 8 instead of 7 which is neutral. Avocado's like 6.5. I added some sulfur pellets to each tree. I will retest again. You can also add some peat moss to the canopy as well. Its acid will help balance our higher alkaline numbers we have here in Nellie Gail. <https://nutrientstewardship.org/implementation/sulfur-the-4th-major-nutrient/>

I will also add some aged steer manure mixed with mulch around the base to add cover for the leaves and roots. A slower amount of nitrogen is released using steer vs. chicken. If you have chicken from your own birds you must age it with mulch and leave it out

to compost, turning it once a month to break down the purines and the higher nitrogen content vs. steer. I would compost this for a year to be safe if you have a lot of chicken manure. And keep on adding organic matter to it along with Red Wigglers and it will break down faster.

Now that the leaves have almost fallen all off I will prune the dead twigs and look at the health of the trunk and push away any soil buildup around the trunk. I still keep the ground damp. We don't want our trees to freeze and keeping them slightly damp is ok as long as they are not soaking. Now we are watering once a week while it rains.

This might sound strange but we only get a few inches of rain and that is really not enough to get to some of the roots of our fruit trees. Avocado's always need the most water.

We don't want to fertilize yet with anything heavy because we don't want our trees to start growing and budding too soon. Even though right now my Mexican Grande is flowering.

Now is also the time to prune our roses (I did mine in December). If you are afraid to do it now you can wait till February. I try to get some of the clean up of my yard done before the holidays. But I do start pruning in September. It takes a lot of work to go through all of the plants, trees, bushes and flowers.

I won't fertilize until March I think this year and it kills me to wait but too early budding is not good with the past cold springs here in NG. We need to allow these trees to stay dormant if possible so it's best not to give them anything else.

My goal using Red wigglers worms is to have a slow steady supply of fertilizer constantly working on feeding the trees. They eat all the surface bacteria, fungus and viruses that occur with the decay and break down of organic materials. While digging holes to supply oxygen to the roots and pathways for them to grow into. I have noticed high growth rates using the worms in my

homemade soil compared to not using them.

Our soil here in Nellie Gail needs amending if you want to produce fruit. Many of our trees are heavy feeders and constantly have needs. And if that isn't difficult enough we have climate change to figure out. Fertilizing later in Spring, using self-pollination methods, making sure the trees have organic matter on top of their base to keep them warmer and feeding the worms is really one of the easiest ways to have fruit.

Mulch, compost, dead leaves, twigs, and straw: all this organic matter helps feed our trees.

Why it is so important to have a worm bin. Mine is on the side of my kitchen door. I take out my egg shells, coffee grinds, apple core, avocado seed, empty toilet roll, veggie scapes and feed the worms. They also need plant cuttings and soil to live in. Greens and browns is a common expression you will hear about composting. My bin is pretty full now for winter feeding. They love a damp environment as well. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/alkaline-soil#>

So what is next after I added organic matter, water the trees once a week, pruned them enough. What you can do now if you really need to know is get a soil test kit. You can buy these on Amazon and see what minerals you might be lacking in your soil. Take a sample and send it in or do it yourself. This really is the sure way to know what is missing from your soil.

I can already see from my citrus I need to add iron to them as they tend to yellow a bit in the leaves. Our leaves will tell us what we need and citrus are heavy feeders especially for iron. <https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/horticulture/attachments/pnw0121e.pdf>

So now down to the hard question: what to add to an empty bed?

Well as much organic matter as you have to start. Twigs, old soil, old plants, leaves, mulch and sand for drainage. That should be about a third and next add some of your own clay soil. It does contain some minerals but not too much a good layer of that will help. And next buy some organic soil, worm castings, mushroom compost and

aged steer manure all will help enrich your bed. I would buy some worms and add them in as well. Get this bed cooking!!!! Keep on adding organic matter to the bed all winter long while it compacts down. Keep it damp a bit we want the products to decompose and the worms to multiply and live through the rest of winter. Gently till a bit in your bed we want everything mixed together enough for great drainage. It is utmost important to have drainage so the roots of your plants won't rot.

I have two large beds I started last year and now I need to start adding soil to it again along with mulch. It was filled with tomatoes, onions, strawberries and peppers. I grow products I use along with a few pots of basil and turmeric.

While your bed decomposes and acclimates you can think about what you would like to grow in it. I would start in March after we have our last frost and yes we do get frost here in Nellie Gail. You can even wait till April or May. We have a nice long growing season for some of these plants that only need a few months to harvest. Some of the easiest to grow are the small cherry tomatoes, yellow pear tomatoes too. I love green onions so I grow a lot of them. Pepper are usually later in the summer. But you can always try a few seeds to see what grows in your garden. Collect seeds from the vegetables you buy and plant them. It's actually fun to see what you can grow!

Happy Gardening folks • Nellie Gail Garden group!
tlc8386@gmail.com



THE PUZZLE PADDOCK

Valentine's Day

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RANCH RECIPE



VALENTINE'S FILET MIGNON

INGREDIENTS:

1. 2 TABLESPOONS OF FOOD CLUB OLIVE OIL
2. 4 (6-OUNCE) PIECES OF FILET MIGNON
3. KOSHER SALT, TO TASTE
4. FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER, TO TASTE
5. 4 TABLESPOONS OF FOOD CLUB BUTTER
6. 1 TABLESPOON OF ROUGHLY CHOPPED ROSEMARY

PREPARATION:

1. PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 400 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT. HEAT OIL IN A LARGE SKILLET OVER MEDIUM HEAT.
2. SEASON BOTH SIDES OF THE STEAK WITH SALT AND PEPPER. ONCE THE OIL IS NEARLY SMOKING, ADD THE STEAK.

3. SEAR THE STEAK FOR ABOUT 5 MINUTES ON EACH SIDE, THEN ADD BUTTER AND ROSEMARY. BASTE THE STEAK WITH BUTTER AND CONTINUE COOKING FOR AN ADDITIONAL 5 MINUTES.
4. TRANSFER THE SKILLET TO THE OVEN AND COOK UNTIL THE STEAK REACHES YOUR DESIRED LEVEL OF DONENESS, APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTES FOR MEDIUM. REMOVE FROM THE PAN AND ALLOW IT TO REST FOR 5 MINUTES BEFORE SLICING.

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Friday Night Live Featuring Matt Squared 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm @ The Watering Hole	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 Friday Night Live Featuring Mark Wood 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm @ The Watering Hole	10
11 Super Bowl Watch Party @ The Watering Hole All Day!	12	13 ARC Meeting at 6:00 pm @ The Association Office	14 Valentine's Day 	15	16	17
18	19 Presidents Day 	20 Board Meeting 7:30pm @ Clubhouse	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 ARC Submittal Deadline for March 12th Meeting	28	29		

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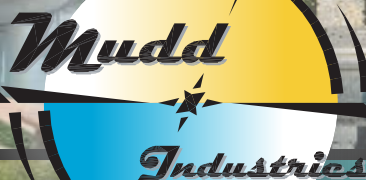


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