

April 2026



The PONY EXPRESS



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Nellie Gail Ranch

Community Newsletter



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NGR LEGACY TRAIL
TEAM DARKHORSE
PALM SKINNING

HIGHER STANDARDS | BETTER RESULTS

FEATURED LISTINGS BY THE BRAD FELDMAN GROUP



FOR SALE

24852 BUCKBOARD LANE

7-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 5,075 SF
34,848 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$5,500,000



FOR SALE

26041 SPUR BRANCH LANE

8-BR | 11-BA | APPROX. 7,372 SF
15,525 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$4,700,000



FOR SALE

25761 HIGHPLAINS TERRACE

5-BR | 6-BA | APPROX. 5,805 SF
19,350 SF
LISTED FOR \$3,999,900



FOR SALE

25281 DERBYHILL DRIVE

5-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 5,018 SF
20,000 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$3,995,000



FOR SALE

25901 NELLIE GAIL ROAD

6-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 4,700 SF
10,496 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$3,370,000



FOR SALE

27773 HIDDEN TRAIL ROAD

5-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 3,886 SF
21,600 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$3,195,000



SOLD

24972 BUCKBOARD LANE

4-BR | 3.0-BA | APPROX. 2,826 SF
27,090 SF LOT
SOLD FOR \$2,582,500



LEASED

25152 ANVIL CIRCLE

5-BR | 5.5-BA | APPROX. 5,576 SF
20,656 SF LOT
LEASED FOR \$16,995/MONTH

CURIOUS WHAT YOUR NELLIE GAIL HOME IS WORTH?

Scan the QR code for a free
comparative market analysis on
your property today!



BRAD FELDMAN

Partner | 949.678.5198
Brad.Feldman@elliman.com
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JACCI PEARCE

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TRENT MASON

Partner | 949.322.6977
Trent.Mason@elliman.com
DRE#: 02018104

BRADFELDMAN
GROUP

AT DOUGLAS ELLIMAN REAL ESTATE

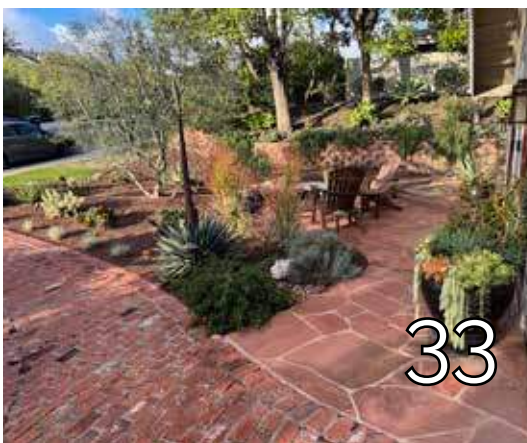
 Douglas Elliman

Broker #01947727



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Save The Date



04/04/2026
Annual Easter Egg Hunt
at Gallup Park
10:00 am - 12:00pm

04/10/2026
Live Music Friday
Two For The Show
at The Watering Hole
6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

04/24/2026
Trivia Night Disco
Two For The Show
at The Watering Hole
6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

On The Cover:
Annual Easter Egg Hunt 2025

Community Contacts



25211 Empty Saddle Drive, Laguna Hills CA 92653

Phone: (949) 425-1477

Brian Mitchell | General Manager
bmitchell@nelliegailranch.org

Rob R. This | Operations Manager
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Jeff Hinkle | Facilities & Compliance Manager
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Diane Goodchild | Community Associate
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Brenda Weber | Financial Transactions Coordinator
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Molly Weber | Events Coordinator
mollyw@nelliegailranch.org

David De La Mora | Communications Coordinator
ponyexpress@nelliegailranch.org

www.nelliegailranch.org



25281 Empty Saddle Drive, Laguna Hills CA 92653

Phone: (949) 831-6660

Clubhouse Reception
clubhouse@nelliegailranch.org



25202 Nellie Gail Road, Laguna Hills CA 92653

Office: (949) 425-1477

Cell: (949) 371-1595

Nikki Garcia | Equestrian Center Manager
ngarcia@nelliegailranch.org

Equestrian Center EMERGENCY: (949) 533-7282

Board of Directors

Mark Fisk	PRESIDENT
Loree Blough	VICE PRESIDENT
Dan Sparks	SECRETARY
John Park	CO-TREASURER
Holly Perme	CO-TREASURER

DISCLAIMER: The paid advertisements contained within the Pony Express magazine are not endorsed or recommended by Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association (NGROA). Therefore, NGROA may not be held liable or responsible for business practices of these companies. Any use of the "Nellie Gail" name in said advertisements is not affiliated with Nellie Gail Ranch Owners Association. Opinions expressed within are not necessarily the views of NGROA and takes no responsibility for content or claims made within.

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.

Renovation
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Important Numbers

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(949) 831-6660	Nellie Gail Ranch Tennis and Swim Club
(949) 533-7282	Nellie Gail Ranch Equestrian Center
(657) 825-8930	The Watering Hole
(949) 533-7282	Equestrian Center (Emergency)
(949) 439-2251	Quezada Professional Landscape
(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 **April 21, 2026**, 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

Fire Prevention Committee

Historical Committee

Landscape Committee

Security Committee

Trails Committee

GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE



LEGACY TRAIL

By Brian Mitchell

Each year's budget sets aside some funds to use for common area improvements. In 2025 the Board utilized a portion of those funds to construct a concrete walkway around the perimeter of the volleyball court at the Association Clubhouse to create a hard surface walkway. Trudging through 115 feet of volleyball sand is no longer required to access the Equestrian Center stairs. This path now eases access for homeowners, boarders and summer camp youth to travel between the Equestrian Center and the clubhouse and parking lot.

While a basic concrete walkway might offer a straightforward utilitarian solution, Director Loree Blough had a loftier vision. How could the walkway better represent the Equestrian heritage of Nellie Gail Ranch and the primary use of the path leading to and from the Equestrian Center? The answer was

horseshoes. Solicitations went out to homeowners offering an opportunity to contribute a horse shoe and \$50 toward the walkway. Forty-one horseshoes are now embedded in the walkway that serve as a lasting personalized tribute to loved ones. A group photo of some of our horseshoe contributors was taken last month and can be seen on this page. After the photo op, many went up to The Watering Hole to meet, visit and build friendships. The path, newly named Legacy Trail, also serves as a lasting representation to all homeowners of the Nellie Gail Ranch equestrian heritage.

If you have any suggestions for common area improvements please pass them on to us at admin@nelliegailranch.org.





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ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE ON-LINE

The Architectural Review results are accessible online for your convenience. You can easily view them by scanning the QR codes provided below:

Architectural Review
March 2026
QR Code



Minutes
February 2026
QR Code



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2025 **BEST-IN-STATE TOP**
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- Wealth Management

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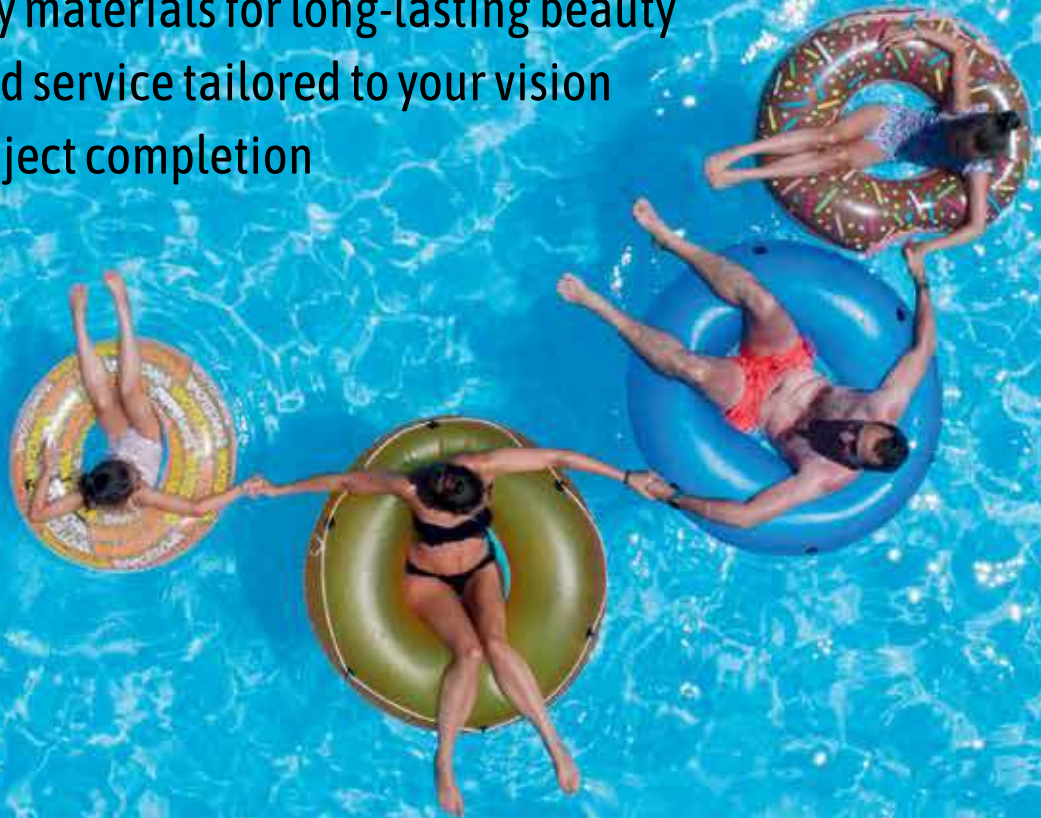
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THE WATERING HOLE

WHERE NEIGHBORS GATHER

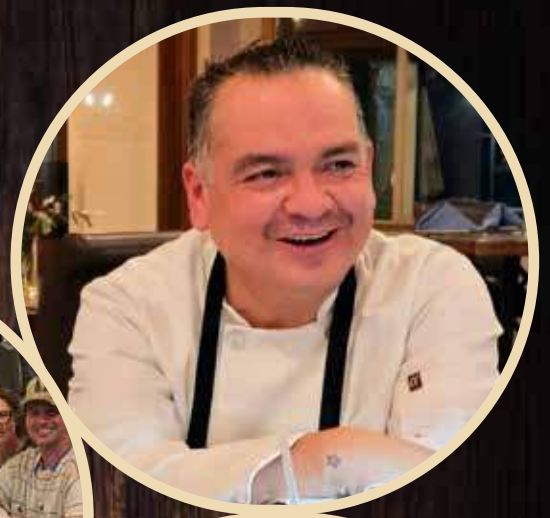
The Watering Hole has been host to a number of live music evenings this year. We started January 6th with our favorite local Nellie Gail Ranch duo Two For The Show followed by Clif Miller January 31st and The Welcome Matts February 20th. The variety of musical styles was enjoyed by our Watering Hole Guests each evening. **Thank you to Amy Moossavian of the Megan Bixler Group for her contributing sponsorship** of those acts as well as an opportunity to test our knowledge of Music Mania 80's Trivia March 27th and an **upcoming Friday April 24th Disco Trivia night.**

On **Friday, April 10th Two For The Show** will be back with thanks going out to contributing sponsor Brad Feldman Group.

We also look forward to multi-instrumentalist **Jeff Sisil** who will put on an evening of exceptional music **May 8th.**

On March 13th DJ Daniel Arthur entertained guests with favorite hits while The Watering Hole's Chef Luigi treated guests to complimentary pizza along with any purchased beer, wine or cocktail.

With great evenings behind us and others in front, we look forward to more gatherings of Nellie Gail Ranch neighbors and guests.





Comprehensive Eye Care, All in One Place

At Tayani Institute, we are proud to provide comprehensive eye care from A to Z, including routine eye exams, advanced diagnostic testing, cataract surgery, glaucoma management, retina care, strabismus treatment, eyelid surgery, upper facial reconstruction, LASIK, dry eye therapy, and more. Our team is equipped to care for every stage of your visual health. With multiple locations throughout Orange County, we make expert ophthalmic and optometric care convenient and accessible for our community.

Leadership Rooted in Expertise

At the heart of Tayani Institute is Dr. Ramin Tayani and longtime associate, Dr. Joson, who have worked side by side for many years building a practice rooted in excellence and patient-centered care. **Dr. Tayani** specializes in oculoplastic and reconstructive surgery of the eyes and upper face, offering expertise in both functional and cosmetic procedures. **Dr. Joson** is a dedicated glaucoma specialist focused on preserving vision through advanced medical and surgical treatment options. Together, their leadership has shaped Tayani Institute into a premier destination for comprehensive ophthalmic care.

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Our team of ophthalmologists brings a wide range of subspecialties to serve every patient's needs. **Dr. Nuthi** specializes in providing care for retinal conditions. **Dr. Roubach** is a pediatric ophthalmologist and strabismus surgeon dedicated to treating children and adults with eye alignment disorders. **Dr. Karageozian** and **Dr. Kurteeva**, along with our other skilled ophthalmologists, perform cataract surgery and use upgraded lenses to help patients reduce or eliminate their dependence on glasses. By offering both traditional and advanced surgical solutions, we tailor every treatment plan to support long-term visual clarity.



Dr. Joson & Dr. Tayani receiving the Chief of Staff Award from MemorialCare

Comprehensive Optometry & Dry Eye Care

Our optometric team plays an essential role in delivering personalized vision care. **Dr. Moin**, **Dr. Berke**, and **Dr. Cook** specialize in fitting advanced contact lenses, including Ortho-K and scleral lenses for unique vision needs. **Dr. Guck** leads our Dry Eye Clinic, providing targeted therapies to improve comfort and ocular surface health. In addition, all of our providers, including **Dr. Ng**, **Dr. Mulick**, **Dr. Tran**, **Dr. Hsieh**, **Dr. Kang**, **Dr. Bozner**, and **Dr. Alanis**, are experienced in the diagnosis, treatment, and co-management of a wide variety of eye diseases, ensuring seamless, coordinated care across specialties.

Style Meets Vision: Our Optical Boutique

Our optical boutique offers a curated selection of eyewear to suit every style and budget. From designer frames to everyday readers, our knowledgeable optical team helps patients find the perfect fit for both vision and fashion.

When it comes to your vision, trust the team that does it all. Whether you need a routine eye exam, surgical care, specialty lenses, or new frames, Tayani Institute is here to serve you. Our expert providers use advanced technology to protect and enhance your sight. Schedule your appointment today and experience the difference in comprehensive care at Tayani Institute.



SECURITY COMMITTEE



Hello Neighbor!

We are excited to invite you to join our Nellie Gail Ranch Neighborhood Watch Program!

Neighborhood Watch is a proven way to reduce crime and build trust between neighbors. By joining, you'll be part of a network of residents who look out for one another and help keep Nellie Gail Ranch a safe and welcoming place to live.

What it includes:

- Staying alert to unusual or suspicious activity in our neighborhood.
- Looking out for one another's homes, families, and property.
- Receiving timely safety updates and crime-prevention tips.
- Strengthening connections with neighbors while building a safer community together.
- Opportunities to join safety workshops, and community events.

Why join?

- Create a safer environment for our families, homes, and property
- Improve reporting and response to crime or safety issues
- Build a stronger sense of community and connection

Take the first step today!

Be part of the Nellie Gail Ranch Neighborhood Watch. Every resident's involvement matters!

Email our Neighborhood Watch Coordinator: Norm.Dangelo@cox.net

Call or text: **949-466-4599**

Let's work together to keep Nellie Gail Ranch safe and thriving!



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

NEW STRUCTURE FOR EMERGENCY BLOCKS

Building a strong, connected neighborhood is one of the most effective ways to enhance safety and preparedness. To make communication easier and more immediate during both everyday situations and emergencies, we're introducing a simplified "Block" structure designed to keep neighbors informed, engaged, and ready to support one another when it matters most.

Our new Block structure is very simple-groups of approximately 6 homes. For example: Start with your own home, add your next door neighbor on each side, then add the folks across the street. You probably have all the information you need already!

Experience with **Neighborhood Watch** has shown that this block structure works because

1. All the homes in your block are line of sight.
2. You probably already know and keep in touch with these folks.

3. In emergency situations, you can see these neighbors quickly without being too far from your own home.

HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR BLOCK

To get started:

1. Choose the homes in your block.
2. Set up a Block text string using your neighbor's phone numbers
3. Send out a text to your block. Explain that this is your method to communicate with each other when important neighborhood information needs to be shared. This would include Neighborhood Watch, Emergency Preparedness, Fire Prevention, lost pets, neighborhood gatherings, and anything else that is important to you and your neighbors.

If you would like help establishing your block, please contact Julia Scholtes at juliascholtes7@gmail.com or 949-466-8038.





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ENTRY**

EASTER

• EGG HUNT •



SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH, 2026

FROM 10AM - 12PM

EGG HUNT TO BEGIN AT 10:30AM

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PALM SKINNING! WHAT'S THAT?

By Lulu Hallenbeck

We've heard of skinning our knees and elbows, but skinning the palm trees in our yards??

What is palm skinning and is it the same as frond removal? The answer is no! Palm skinning and palm frond removal are two different things. Trimming a palm tree means removing the dead fronds from the palm tree trunk. Palm tree skinning, sometimes called "skinning the trunk," is the process of removing the rough, fibrous bases of old fronds that remain attached after the fronds are trimmed. Over time the old frond bases harden and create a layered, textured trunk. "Skinning" strips away these bases, leaving the trunk smooth. Both dead fronds and old frond bases are flammable. Removing them can reduce fire risks during hot, dry seasons.

There are many kinds of palms: tall, short, skinny, round – and their fronds vary vastly in size and shape. Smaller types of palms can be easily trimmed and cleaned by the homeowner but others do require professional skills.

With hot weather coming and the fire season with it, now would be a good time to check your palm trees and their condition. Please closely monitor palm trees adjacent to trail easements and areas out of your normal view. Want to know more about palm tree skinning and frond removal? Contact a professional tree service for complete advice.



MUSIC MANIA DISCO

TRIVIA NIGHT

Join us at The Watering Hole for a fun night of trivia with thought-provoking questions, great music, fun prizes, and entertaining hosts!



FREE TO PLAY!



FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026 | 6:30-9:00PM

FOR NELLIE GAIL RANCH RESIDENTS, MEMBERS, AND THEIR GUESTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
657-825-8930

 **THE WATERING HOLE**
WHERE NEIGHBORS GATHER

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10.30am - 2.30pm

\$280

Week 1 - June 8th

Week 2 - June 15th

Week 3 - June 22nd

Week 4 - June 29th

Week 5 - July 6th

Week 6 - July 13th

Week 7 - July - 20th

Week 8 - July 27th

Week 9 - August 3rd

Week 10 - August 10th

Challengers | 9 years+

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As a managing director at Pence Wealth Management, Mai is backed by an advisory team that manages over \$2.7 billion in client assets and offers comprehensive services in retirement planning, tax strategy, estate coordination and investment management. She was recognized by Forbes as one of America's Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Highlights

- Wealth Management
- Retirement Planning
- Tax-Efficient Strategies
- Portfolio Construction

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRM.

I founded Mai Park Capital to gain the freedom to create fully customized portfolios for clients, and to access a breadth of investment vehicles. Partnering with Pence Wealth Management gives me access to an actively managed and tax-harvesting platform.

WHAT IS YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE?

Goals-based wealth planning. I create personalized strategies that align every financial decision with a client's life goals. Rather than focusing solely on market movements or short-term performance, I help clients define what truly matters to them—whether that's retirement readiness, funding education or leaving a legacy—and then design tax-efficient, diversified portfolios to support those objectives. It's about turning wealth into a tool for living with purpose.

HOW DO YOU ESTABLISH TRUST WITH NEW CLIENTS?

Trust is earned through consistency, transparency and genuine care. We start by listening and understanding what truly matters to each client before offering any advice. Education and clarity are key. When clients understand the "why" behind their strategy, confidence naturally follows. And above all, we lead with integrity. Every recommendation we make is guided by our fiduciary duty to put clients' best interests first.

WHAT'S THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED FROM ADVISING OTHERS?

True wealth isn't just about numbers; it's about purpose. Clients' goals, values and life experiences shape their definition of financial success. My role is to listen deeply, understand what matters to them and build strategies that align their wealth with their lifestyle.



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Let's Talk.

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GROUP



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THE
WATERING HOLE
WHERE NEIGHBORS GATHER



LIVE
MUSIC

Friday



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APRIL
10

6:30-9:30

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AT DOUGLAS ELLIMAN REAL ESTATE



CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

Now Accepting Class of 2026 Submissions



Last year, we were proud to highlight an incredible group of students in a special community spread, showcasing their hard work, achievements, and exciting plans for the future. It was truly inspiring to see the dedication and perseverance of these graduates, and to celebrate such an important milestone together as a community.

As we look ahead, we're excited to continue this tradition and are now accepting submissions for our Class of 2026 Graduates. Whether your student is graduating from high school, college, or beyond, we would love to recognize their accomplishments and share their story.

To be included, please submit a photo and short bio of the graduate to PonyExpress@nelliegailranch.org

Let's come together once again to celebrate the next group of graduates and the bright futures ahead. Your community is cheering you on every step of the way!

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Marty Samuel
(949) 643-1321



DRE #00452321

**Want to stay updated on all Nellie Gail listing & sales activity?
Email me for a free personalized MLS Portal: marty@martysamuel.com**

Nellie Gail sales based on MLS data since Oct 1989

L I V E

MAY

8

MUSIC

6:30-9:30

Friday



JEFF SISIL

Jeff Sisil is a professional conductor and musician featured in a Disney+ Original with Billie Eilish and the LA Phil, television productions, and elite live events. He also brings decades of international conducting experience and works on major TV and film productions as a certified safety diver and set medic.

 MOULTON MUSEUM™

Paint & Sip

A Watercolor Session with
Aldo Fucinari



On April 16th, join skillful local watercolor artist and enthusiast Aldo Fucinari at the Moulton Museum for a night of Moulton Wine and beginner-friendly artistry. (Supplies will be provided!)

Time: 5:30 - 8 PM
Place: Moulton Museum
Price: \$15

RSVP!



Spots are limited!



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TEAM DARKHORSE

TRAGEDY OVERCOME BY COURAGE HUMILITY THE SEED OF GRACE

- by Karen L. Robbins

16 Years have passed since Team Darkhorse was incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 support group for 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines — following the city of Laguna Hills' formal adoption of the Camp Pendleton unit.

15 years ago the Battalion our city adopted deployed to Afghanistan and there, in the toughest fighting of that war, 25 Marines were killed in action and more than 200 injured. Mid-way through the deployment, the Board of Team Darkhorse were invited to a meeting held on Camp Pendleton for the families of the deployed Marines. It was meant as reassurance and communication. A young Marine officer Lt. Cameron West, walked into the room on crutches, one leg now missing. He stood up and talked to the families, to reassure them, to tell them that their loved ones were well and showing no loss of courage or resolve even as they had to accept the loss of their brothers. All around me were young wives, some holding babies; there were also older mothers, those whose sons were the ones now in harm's way. Tears were failing to be held back, but courage kept the meeting from descending into sobs and anger. I felt numb. I felt like an intruder. Our son Jack had served 4 years, two deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and returned home safely. What possible help or difference could I or our group make to these strangers?

The story I am about to share is one which has become familiar — a young man at the cusp of adulthood chooses to serve his country, and not only serve but chooses to serve in one of the most dangerous MOS (military occupational service) there is, during a time of military conflict. He endures and graduates from either Boot Camp or OCS (Officer Training School); gets sent to an Infantry Battalion, deploys to the Middle East, witnesses violence, loses brothers in combat, ultimately is injured himself often-times losing a limb, or two.

When that young man comes home he faces another battle, arguably tougher than the one he left — an arduous physical recovery, learning to do without

a leg or arm, or sometimes two, accepting a new physical reality, the loss of a military career he perhaps envisioned, and an uncertain future unlike any he had imagined until faced with his new reality now.

Our community rallied to do all and whatever we could to show remembrance and respect to those who were killed, and to be supportive in ways we could to those who returned. Doing so brought us into contact with some of the finest young people in our country; many of whom we still stay in touch with to this day. I tell this story now not to be maudlin, nor as a political statement, or a diatribe against the military. I tell it to bear witness to their character, strength, faith and determination. And to say that even though I felt hopeless and weak and at a loss of how to begin to help any of them — the truth as it has turned out is that if a community stands up and puts forward their hands, their love and their respect to our Marines, we can make a greater difference than we might ever have imagined.

Each Memorial Day since 2013 we have invited one of the prior injured veterans to serve as our race Grand Marshal. Their presence is a reminder of the courage of those who died serving our country, and these veterans' mantra is always "Run for those who can't, and live lives that honor their sacrifice."

This year's Grand Marshal is Navy Corpsman Red Ramos. His story is featured here. Please come if you can to the Memorial Day Race, and/or the EXPO following the race, on Memorial Day, May 25 to greet and meet this fine man, and his family.



REDMON RAMOS BIO

Redmond Ramos is one of four brothers who all served as Navy Corpsmen with the Fleet Marine Force supporting Marine Infantrymen in combat. On March 26, 2011, near the end of a combat deployment to Sangin, Afghanistan with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, a fellow Marine stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED). Red was maneuvering to assist the injured Marine when he triggered another IED. He lost his left leg below the knee and sustained other injuries in the blast.

A California native, Red credits his love for the ocean with helping him recover, calling the hours he spent surfing and scuba diving his "greatest therapy."

Red enjoys spending time with his wife Krista, a former LA City firefighter, and their two children, Aspen and Redmond.

We are honored to have Redmond Ramos with us today, representing 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, and Corpsmen who serve by their side, and encourage you to come meet Redmond at the EXPO after the race!



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Nellie Gail Garden Group

By Tina Corso

Many of us are encouraged to choose drought-tolerant plants in Southern California to help save on water usage. We chose the drought-tolerant direction because of the plants themselves and our fondness for succulents. Along the way, I learned that many succulents don't like the sun as much as I originally thought, and it took time to discover which ones work and which ones don't

We made changes to our yard during a remodel of the house and started with a plan that had to be approved by our HOA. A color palette was established to complement the design and colors of the house. We looked for plants that were drought tolerant, fit within our color palette, and offered a variety of textures

Existing plants that were kept included day lilies, agapanthus, bougainvillea, and rosemary. We then added one of my favorites, Santa Barbara sage, along with birds of paradise, cowboy cologne, dwarf bottlebrush, lavender, lavender merlot, lantana, society garlic, dracaena, a ponytail plant in a pot, and some flax. For the succulents, we added blue agave (pictured), paddle plants, fire sticks, swan agaves, coral agaves, and aloe, to name a few.

I have grown to love working with succulents and find them fun to use for gifts and for creating arrangements in pots throughout the yard. They are very prolific and give back continually. One thing I learned the hard way was that I didn't want to plant succulents that spread by runners. Those types of plants were either removed from the yard or placed into pots. The ones that remain are the ones that passed the test, so to speak.

An important part of the plan that I haven't mentioned yet is the base we planted in. After the grass was removed, the ground was leveled to ensure adequate drainage. Irrigation tubing was laid, landscape fabric was installed, and decomposed granite (DG) was added on top. To plant, we selected each spot, cut through the fabric, and added cactus mix for good drainage.

We also built a wall using material from Fallbrook to create a patio space. A large boulder was selected and repurposed as a fountain at the entryway to the house.

Hopefully, after reading this article, anyone who may have doubts or hesitation about using succulents or transitioning to a drought-tolerant landscape will see that the change is achievable. Not only are we saving water, but we can also be creative by choosing plants that are fun to work with.

— Gail Fellers







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April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Wine & Design by appointment only	3	4 Annual Easter Egg Hunt @ Gallup Park
5 	6	7 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole	8	9	10 Live Music Friday Two for The Show @ The Watering Hole 6:30 pm-9:00 pm	11
12	13	14 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole · ARC Meeting at 6:00pm @ The Association Office	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole · Board Meeting 7:30pm @Club- house	22	23	24 Trivia Night Disco @ The Watering Hole 6:30 pm-9:00 pm	25
26	27 ARC Submittal Deadline for May 12th meeting	28	29	30		



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| Outdoor Kitchens | Pools / Spas | Fencing | Drainage | Pavers | Pool Houses | Fountains |
| Outdoor Living Rooms | Fireplace / Firepits | Retaining Walls | Irrigation | Lighting | Putting Greens | Storage Sheds |

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