

August 2026



The **PONY EXPRESS**

Nellie Gail Ranch

Community Newsletter



Please Submit your
responses to the
Livestock Survey.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: PONY CAMP • FIRE PREPAREDNESS • TEAM DARKHORSE

HIGHER STANDARDS | BETTER RESULTS

FEATURED LISTINGS BY THE BRAD FELDMAN GROUP



FOR SALE

24852 BUCKBOARD LANE

6-BR | 3.5-BA | APPROX. 5,075 SF
NEED SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$4,995,000



FOR SALE

26041 SPUR BRANCH LANE

8-BR | 11-BA | APPROX. 7,372 SF
15,525 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$4,500,000



FOR SALE

25402 GALLUP CIRCLE

4-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 5,000 SF
17,000 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$4,200,000



FOR SALE

25761 HIGHPLAINS TERRACE

5-BR | 6-BA | APPROX. 5,805 SF
19,350 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$3,660,000



FOR SALE

25901 NELLIE GAIL ROAD

6-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 4,700 SF
10,496 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$2,995,000



UNDER CONTRACT

25582 RANGEWOOD ROAD

4-BR | 3.0-BA | APPROX. 2,865 SF
19,800 SF LOT
LISTED FOR \$2,500,000



SOLD

27070 HIDDEN TRAIL ROAD

5-BR | 6.5-BA | APPROX. 5,733 SF
36,340 SF LOT
SOLD FOR \$4,310,000



SOLD

27773 HIDDEN TRAIL ROAD

5-BR | 4.5-BA | APPROX. 3,886 SF
21,600 SF LOT
SOLD FOR \$3,072,500

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Brad.Feldman@elliman.com
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**BRADFELDMAN
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 **Douglas Elliman**
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08/07/2026
Summer Concert Series
Redneck Rodeo
At Gallup Park
starts at 7:00pm

08/11/2026
Architectural Meeting
At Association Office
starts at 6:00pm

08/18/2026
Board Meeting
At the Club House
starts at 7:30pm

On The Cover:
Tennis Summer Camp
Participants

Please Submit your
responses to the
Livestock Survey.



Community Contacts



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Equestrian Center EMERGENCY: (949) 533-7282

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

(949) 425-1477	Association Office
(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 **August 18, 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

Nellie Gail Ranch Historical Society

Landscape Committee

Security Committee

Trails Committee

MANAGER'S MESSAGE



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE UPDATE: HELPING HOMEOWNERS BUILD WITH CONFIDENCE

By Brian Mitchell

Each year the Board confirms volunteer appointments to Nellie Gail Ranch Committees. **At the July Board Meeting there were 42 appointments to nine Committees.** We are grateful for the time and commitment each of our volunteers puts into their committees in behalf of the Nellie Gail Ranch community. **We can see the positive impact they have all around us!**

This month we would like to spotlight the Architectural Review Committee's efforts. In 2026 we are trending toward 140 plan reviews down from 215 in 2025. The approval rate is trending at 76% the past five years.

Plan Reviews

Most denials result from the following missing information:

- Color and material samples not provided for painting and hardscape improvements (pavers, driveways, planters, walls, decks etc.)
- Plans should include measurements reflecting dimensions, height and setbacks from easements and property lines.
- Submittal of renderings in place of items 1 and 2 above. While renderings can assist with visualizing a planned improvement, they do not accurately portray materials, colors or dimensions.

The www.NellieGailRanch.org website has a comprehensive checklist to guide you along the path to approval. Search for **"ARC Submittal Checklist" to locate the Exhibit B Form.**

<https://nelliegailranch.org/wp-content/uploads/Exhibit-B-Submittal-Checklist-4-2014.pdf>

Conditions of Approval

The Committee often approves plans with conditions to bypass the need for requiring resubmittals. Typical

conditions for drainage would be a requirement to drain toward the front of the home. A typical condition for fencing includes the requirement that they be installed outside of the easement. For planting a typical condition is a requirement that "sufficient plants are to be placed to provide a minimum ground coverage of 75 percent within 12 months".

Solar panels always receive the following conditions

1. Wiring is to be routed through walls and attics or housed in conduit painted to match the adjacent surface.
2. The frame of the solar array is to be a dark color, not a clear anodized aluminum.
3. Supporting electrical equipment (e.g., AC disconnect, combiner, inverter, batteries, etc.) is to be housed inside or screened from the street and adjacent properties.
4. The solar system must be installed flush / parallel to the roof.
5. A minimum of 1 course of roof tile is to be placed between the solar panel edge and the drip edge of the roof.
6. No trees are to be removed or trimmed to facilitate the installation and operation of the panels without prior Committee approval

Notice of Completion for Return of Deposit

After you complete your project it is time to submit your Notice of Completion to get your deposit back. The top three reasons for not approving return of deposits are the following:

1. Submitting the Notice of Completion before all items are complete including removal of porta-potties and construction equipment.
2. Not building in compliance with the approved plan.

3. Not meeting conditions of approval.

Wine and Design Complimentary Consultation.

The ARC appreciates the many homeowners who are investing in their homes and wants to help improve the review process and increase first review approvals. **Our Wine & Design Consultation provides an opportunity for homeowners to enjoy a complimentary glass of wine while meeting with the ARC consulting architect Jeff Smith to walk through your project concepts and the submittal process.** Consider also bringing your architect and/or proposed contractor in to meet with Jeff Smith to receive guidance on what the plans should include, what setbacks may need to be incorporated and what materials and colors should be provided. This meeting can potentially give you some great ideas to incorporate and will help streamline the review process. Contact the business office at 949-425-1477 Tuesday through Thursday to schedule your Wine & Design appointment.

Postcards and Signs

Prior to ARC review, our office posts signs in front of homes identifying a plan has been submitted

for review. Additionally, postcards are mailed to homeowners directly adjacent to the property. If you receive a postcard or see a sign, you may contact Diane Goodchild at the business office at 949-425-1477 Tuesday through Thursday to schedule an appointment to review the plans.

Closing Comments

Our commitment to you is to provide guidance to facilitate the review process. If you have been holding off doing any projects because you aren't sure how to move forward, please give us a call.



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Mission Viejo \$1,960,000

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

**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

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
July 2026
QR Code



Minutes
June 2026
QR Code



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FIRE PREPAREDNESS

Fire Extinguishers:

What Every Nellie Gail Ranch Homeowner Should Know

Having the right fire extinguisher—and knowing how to use it—can help stop a small fire before it becomes a major emergency.

Types of Fire Extinguishers for Home Use

- **ABC Dry Chemical** – Best all-around extinguisher for homes. Effective on wood, paper, trash, flammable liquids, and electrical fires.
- **Water (Class A)** – For wood, paper, and cloth fires only. Never use on grease or electrical fires.
- **Foam (AFFF)** – Works on ordinary combustibles and flammable liquids but is less common for residential use.
- **CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide)** – Ideal for electrical fires and flammable liquids. Leaves no residue but is less effective outdoors.
- **Kitchen (Class K)** – Designed for cooking oil and grease fires. Recommended if you cook frequently.

How to Use a Fire Extinguisher (P.A.S.S.)

- **Pull** the safety pin.
- **Aim** the nozzle at the base of the fire.
- **Squeeze** the handle.
- **Sweep** from side to side until the fire is out

How Long Are They Good For?

Disposable home extinguishers generally last **10–12 years**.

Rechargeable extinguishers can last **20 years or more** with regular inspections and servicing.

Check the pressure gauge monthly and inspect annually. Replace or service any extinguisher that is damaged or has lost pressure.

How Long Will One Last?

Most home fire extinguishers discharge surprisingly quickly:

- ABC Dry Chemical: approximately 10–25 seconds
- Water: approximately 30–60 seconds
- Foam: approximately 30–60 seconds
- CO₂: approximately 8–20 seconds

Because discharge time is short, use an extinguisher only on small, contained fires while keeping a clear

escape route. If the fire continues to grow, evacuate immediately and call 911.

Join Us at the 50 Years of Nellie Gail Ranch Then and Now Celebration!

Stop by the **50 Years of Nellie Gail Ranch Then and Now** celebration to learn how to protect your home and family from fire. Fire safety experts will demonstrate the proper use of a fire extinguisher, answer your questions, and share valuable wildfire preparedness tips specific to our community.

Plus, you'll have a chance to win a **FREE** home fire extinguisher in our prize drawings!

Whether you've never used a fire extinguisher or simply want a refresher, this is a great opportunity to gain hands-on knowledge that could make a difference in an emergency. We hope to see you there!

NELLIE GAIL REALTY

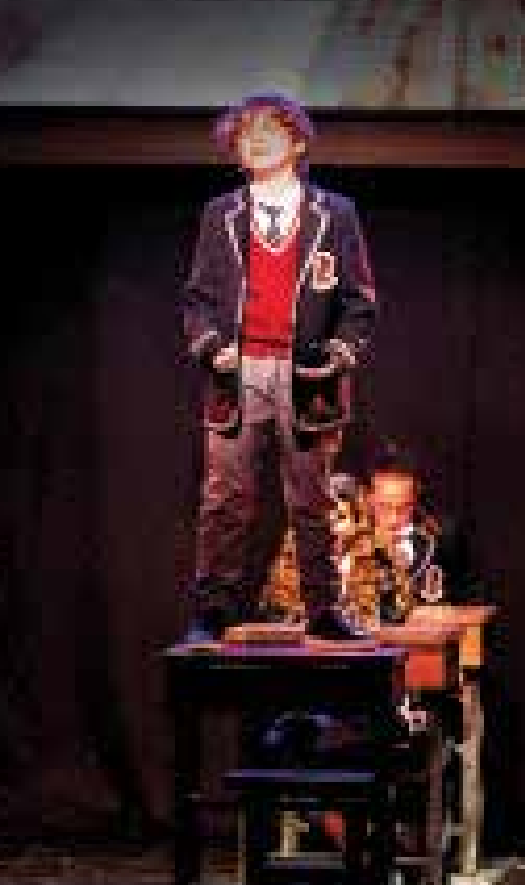
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photos by

Chaunie

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NELLIE GAIL RANCH PONY SUMMER CAMP

This summer, young riders at the **Nellie Gail Ranch Equestrian Center** enjoyed a fun-filled Pony Camp, where they learned the fundamentals of horseback riding and horsemanship in a safe and encouraging environment. From first rides in the dressage arena to caring for their ponies and building confidence in the saddle, each day was filled with new skills, new friendships, and unforgettable memories.



A Moment in the Ring: Beneath beautiful summer skies at the Nellie Gail Ranch Equestrian Center, a young camper experiences the thrill of her first ride during Pony Camp. Sitting tall and proud atop her pony in the dressage ring, she's ready to ride—well on her way to building confidence, learning horsemanship, and creating unforgettable summer memories.



Getting Grounded: A young camper takes her first steps on horseback in the dressage arena, learning proper posture and control under the watchful eye of her instructor.



Learning Horsemanship: Beyond the saddle, camp life is all about bond-building. Here, a camper practices mounting techniques as she builds a bond with her four-legged partner.



Guided Steps: One-on-one coaching gives young riders the encouragement they need, ensuring safety and confidence every step of the way.



Camp Complete: Smiling bright at the end of a rewarding session, a proud camper celebrates a fun-filled day of horsemanship, friendship, and equestrian skill-building.



Building Confidence: Sitting tall and proud atop her pony in the dressage ring, a rider pauses for a quick photo—ready to ride and make lasting summer memories



Mastering the Ring: With focused eyes and steady hands, a young equestrian prepares to guide her pony through a series of exercises, perfecting balance and steering in the arena.

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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

Is a Roth Conversion Right for You?

Over the past year, one of the most common conversations I have had with clients has been about Roth conversions. In fact, I have helped more clients evaluate and implement Roth conversion strategies recently than at almost any other point in my career. The reason is simple: many successful professionals, executives, engineers, and retirees are becoming increasingly concerned about future taxes.

For decades, Americans were encouraged to save aggressively into traditional IRAs and 401(k)s. Those contributions often provided valuable tax deductions along the way. However, many investors are now discovering that while they received tax benefits during their working years, they may have unintentionally created a significant future tax liability.

As retirement approaches, many people begin asking the same question:

“How much of my retirement account do I actually get to keep after taxes?”

That question often leads to a discussion about Roth conversions.

What Is a Roth Conversion?

A Roth conversion is the process of moving money from a traditional IRA, rollover IRA, SEP IRA, SIMPLE IRA, or certain employer-sponsored retirement plans into a Roth IRA. The key difference between these accounts is taxation. Traditional retirement accounts generally allow money to grow tax-deferred. However, every dollar withdrawn in retirement is generally subject to ordinary income taxes.

A Roth IRA works differently.

Once money is inside a Roth IRA, it can potentially grow tax-free, and qualified withdrawals are generally tax-free as well. A Roth conversion essentially means paying taxes today in exchange for potentially avoiding taxes on future growth and future withdrawals.



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COMPASS

SECURITY COMMITTEE

AN ADDED LAYER OF PROTECTION FOR YOUR HOME

With large windows and abundant California sunshine, many Nellie Gail Ranch homeowners are looking for ways to improve home security, reduce heat and protect their interiors. Safety and security window film can offer several benefits without requiring the replacement of existing windows. Often referred to as “shatterproof,” the more accurate term is shatter-resistant. The film does not make glass impossible to break. Instead, it is designed to help hold broken glass together and make the window more difficult to penetrate.

• Improved Safety

If a window breaks because of an accident, impact or attempted break-in, the film helps hold the glass fragments together. This may reduce the risk of sharp glass scattering into the home.

• Additional Home Security

Security film can make it more difficult and time-consuming for someone to enter through a broken window. It is not burglar-proof, but the added resistance may discourage an intruder or provide additional time for an alarm to activate. For stronger protection, homeowners should ask whether the film will be installed with a security attachment system that connects it to the window frame.

• Reduced Heat

Certain security films also include solar-control technology that reduces the amount of solar heat entering the home. This can make rooms with significant sun exposure more comfortable, particularly during warmer months. Not every security film provides meaningful heat reduction, so homeowners should confirm that the product includes solar-control properties.

• Less Glare

Solar-control film can reduce glare on televisions, computer screens and other surfaces while still allowing natural light into the home. Different shades and levels of light transmission are available.

• Protection From UV Rays

Many professionally installed window films are designed to block more than 99 percent of ultraviolet

rays. This can help slow the fading of flooring, furniture, artwork, rugs and window treatments. Window film cannot prevent all fading, since heat and visible light also contribute to damage, but it can provide an additional layer of protection.

• Potential Energy Savings

By reducing solar heat entering through the windows, certain films may reduce the amount of time an air-conditioning system must operate. Actual savings depend on the type of film, the home's windows, sun exposure, insulation and energy use.

• Possible Insurance Benefits

Some insurance companies provide discounts for approved home-security improvements. Security window film does not automatically reduce homeowners insurance premiums, and discounts vary by carrier. Homeowners should contact their insurance provider before installation and ask whether the specific product or security upgrade qualifies for a discount.

• Maintains the Appearance of the Home

Clear and lightly tinted products are available for homeowners who want added protection without significantly changing the appearance of their windows. Reflective or darker films may be more visible from outside the property. Before installation, residents should confirm whether approval is required by the Nellie Gail Ranch Architectural Review Committee.

• Professional Installation Matters

The performance of security film depends on the quality of the product, the type of glass, the window frame and the installation method. Homeowners should select an experienced installer and request written information regarding product testing, warranties, film thickness, heat reduction and compatibility with their existing windows.

Security window film is not an unbreakable barrier. However, when properly selected and professionally installed, it can provide homeowners with an added layer of safety, security, comfort, and protection.



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Children's Eye Health & Safety Month

Back-to-School Vision

August is Children's Eye Health & Safety Month, making it the perfect time to prioritize your child's vision before heading back to school. Healthy eyesight plays a vital role in learning, reading, sports, and everyday development, yet many vision problems can go unnoticed because children often don't realize they are not seeing clearly.

Early Detection Matters

A comprehensive eye exam can detect conditions such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, lazy eye, crossed eyes, and other eye health concerns early—when treatment is often most effective. Ensuring your child has clear, comfortable vision can help set them up for success both in and out of the classroom.

Expert Pediatric Eye Care

At Tayani Institute, our board-certified pediatric ophthalmologist, **Dr. Majid Roubach**, specializes in diagnosing and treating eye conditions in infants, children, teens & adults. With compassionate, family-centered care, Dr. Roubach is dedicated to helping patients of all ages achieve their best possible vision in a comfortable environment. Dr. Roubach completed fellowship training in cornea research, pediatric ophthalmology, and strabismus surgery at University of Illinois at Chicago.

Schedule Before School Starts

As you prepare your back-to-school checklist, don't forget to include your child's eye health. Whether your child is due for an eye exam or you've noticed signs of vision changes, the team at Tayani Institute is here to help keep their eyes healthy for the school year ahead.

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TEAM DARKHORSE

WHO IS TEAM DARKHORSE?

- by Karen L. Robbins

HEY, KAREN, HOW WOULD TEAM DARKHORSE LIKE TO DO A FUNDRAISER AT THE CONCERT FRIDAY NIGHT?

Local real estate broker Trent Mason, enthused as ever, had called regarding supporting us in our mission. He and his partner, Brad Feldman, sponsored the concert but would be out of town. As they have in the past, they invited us to be there with our team, promoting our cause. And we thank them for that!

Meanwhile, with new families moving in and new friends attending the concerts, there are many who are not familiar with our goal. So we'd like to refresh your memory and describe what we do below.

Team Darkhorse is the all-volunteer, IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit formed in 2010 following the Laguna Hills City Council's formal vote to "adopt" 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. Our organization is comprised of board members and other supporters who assist us in setting and accomplishing our mission of supporting, encouraging, and comforting our adopted Marines. We actively seek and welcome new members and guarantee you a rewarding experience!

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF 3RD BATTALION, 5TH MARINES?

3/5 as the Battalion is informally called (and whose self-given nickname is Darkhorse, is a U.S. Marine Corps infantry battalion comprised of up to 1,000 Marines based at Camp Pendleton, whose missions may be on land or at sea. When deployed, the Battalion serves both military and humanitarian roles, depending on current needs.

WHERE ARE THE 3/5 MARINES NOW?

The Battalion deployed in April as the infantry element of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (11th MEU), serving aboard U.S. Navy ships.

From the official website:

The Boxer ARG and 11th MEU carries approximately

5,000 Sailors and Marines across three ships: Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS *Boxer* (LHD 4), San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS *Portland* (LPD 27), and Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS *Comstock*. Operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, it is capable of launching and landing helicopters and amphibious landing craft, making it critical to





(Photo of our President Doug Tennant presenting a check to Cynthia Martinez, Chairman of Words of Comfort, Hope and Promise.)

both combat power projection and humanitarian assistance efforts across the Indo-Pacific region. While the Marines are deployed, we aim to support and encourage them by shipping highly valued "comfort" items that we at home often take for granted. Examples include fresh pairs of socks, protein bars, hydration powder, and personal hygiene supplies. These items are both practical and morale boosters for the young Marines. We strive to serve with the same spirit they have demonstrated throughout their proud history—**Semper Fi**.

Most recently, we were able to support a shipment of care packages, containing protein bars, beef jerky and other treats by partnering with another organization (Words Of Comfort, Hope and Promise) in order to guarantee that every Darkhorse Marine receives a package.

Meanwhile, the Battalion remains deployed through September or longer, and we welcome donations to support the cause!

TEAM DARKHORSE - 3D Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Division Support Committee is the (all volunteer) IRS 501 (c) 3 non profit org formed in 2010, following the Laguna Hills City Council formal vote to adopt this Camp Pendleton Infantry Unit. For more information, to volunteer, or make a donation please contact President, Karen Robbins at 35robbins@gmail.com



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My name is Jessica. I am a preschool teacher with 9 years experience that lives in Nellie Gail. I offer occasional and overnight babysitting services. Contact 949-295-2602 or jjayess9418@gmail.com.

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My daughter who's a junior in high school and lives in Nellie Gail would love to babysit and/or pet sit. She is responsible, good with kids, and loves animals. \$20/hr. Rosemary (949)-633-4194.

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Vine + Dandy, a Nellie Gail floral design studio, creates unique arrangements for same-day delivery, weddings, and events. Check IG: @vinedandy or www.vinedandy.com. Contact Michelle at 714-756-0412.

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MON-FRI	SAT-SUN
6am - 10pm	6am - 7pm
6am - 10pm	6am - 7pm
9am - 8pm	9am - 7pm

[illegible]

Nellie Gail Garden Group

By Kase Rogers.

So many people wonder why we all just love California. Well, it truly is the weather.

It's June 15th today, and I woke up to 67 degrees. It will be 82 degrees this afternoon. While much of the United States is experiencing extreme heat, we can open our windows and doors every morning and let the cool air in. This is what I do every day. We really do live outside

Sometimes I think we forget how fortunate we are. While much of the country deals with freezing winters, humid summers, tornadoes, hurricanes, snow shovels, or months spent indoors, we can step outside almost every day of the year. We drink our morning coffee on the patio, work in our gardens, take evening walks, and enjoy fresh air flowing through our homes.

The Dutch even have a word for this: "luchten." It refers to airing out your home with fresh air, something many Dutch families do daily to improve air quality and reduce humidity. We are lucky that we can do the same thing almost every day of the year.

And because of our climate, we can grow all kinds of fruit trees and vegetables.

That is one of the great gifts of living in California. We don't just enjoy the weather—we can grow food almost year-round. While many gardeners around the country are waiting for spring or preparing for winter, we are harvesting avocados, lemons, guavas, apples, tomatoes, and lettuce from our own backyards.

I often write about what can be grown here, but what grows best?

One of my favorites is the loquat. Ask your neighbors for seeds from their sweetest tree because some varieties are much sweeter than others. If you find a good one, grow it. In about four years, you can begin harvesting fruit. Every spring, loquats are ready to eat, and they need less water than many other fruit trees. This makes

them one of the best trees to grow here in Nellie Gail. Number two would be avocados. They love growing on our slopes because they enjoy water but also require excellent drainage. You will need to amend our soil and feed them regularly. Nursery varieties such as Reed, Hass, Gem, Lamb, Gwen, and Carmen all do well here. My personal favorites are Mexicola, Mexicola Grande, and the always delicious Fuerte.

If you have productive avocado trees, try planting a seedling. The pollination of your trees may create a completely new cultivar. It takes patience—five years or more—but the reward can be unique fruit unlike anything sold in stores. I currently have four seedling trees, all named after my grandchildren.

Apples grow very well here too. The Anna apple is usually the first to fruit in late spring. Gala, Fuji, and Pink Lady all perform well in our climate. One of my neighbors has a tree called Beverly Hills apple, and it is absolutely delicious.

Mulberries are another excellent choice. Pakistan, White, and Everbearing mulberries all grow well here. There are many varieties to choose from, and most are drought tolerant once established, much like the loquat.

Blenheim apricots can also thrive here because we receive just enough winter chill for them. I have one tree that produces heavily every year. Plant apricots in the colder areas of your yard if possible. They appreciate slopes and good drainage. After harvest, prune lightly to maintain shape and encourage future production. You can even grow them from seed. I usually have plenty available because I make jam from the fruit and freeze some as well.

Citrus can be a little more challenging. They enjoy slopes and drainage but are heavy feeders. I fertilize mine about four times a year and supplement with iron and minerals to keep the foliage deep green. Even

with all that effort, citrus can sometimes be finicky for me. Still, I wouldn't want to be without my Meyer and Eureka lemons.

Guavas are another easy fruit tree for Southern California gardens. Most begin fruiting within about three years once established. They are not nearly as thirsty as avocados or citrus, and there are many excellent varieties available.

My favorites are Mexican Cream and Pink Tropical guava. Lemon guava and Cherry guava are fun to eat fresh, but the fruit is often too small for making jam. If you only have room for one or two trees, I would choose the larger-fruited varieties instead.

Don't Forget the Vegetables

One of the greatest advantages of living in Southern California is that we can grow vegetables almost year-round. During the cooler months, lettuce, kale, spinach, Swiss chard, and radishes thrive. As temperatures warm, tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, cucumbers, eggplant, and green beans take over the garden. My favorites are green onions and basil because I use them daily when preparing meals.

Many of these vegetables are easy to grow from seed and can be planted successively for continuous harvests. Whether you have a large yard or a few containers on a patio, there is almost always something you can be growing and harvesting.

That is one of the true joys of gardening in California. While much of the country is waiting for spring or preparing for winter, we are often harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables from our own backyards.

On **Saturday, September 26, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**, Nellie Gail Ranch will celebrate our **50th Anniversary** with interactive and informational booths and activities. A concert and line dancing will follow from **3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.** Our garden group will participate by showcasing a variety of drought- and fire-resistant plants.

Happy Gardening, Tina Corso tlc8386@gmail.com





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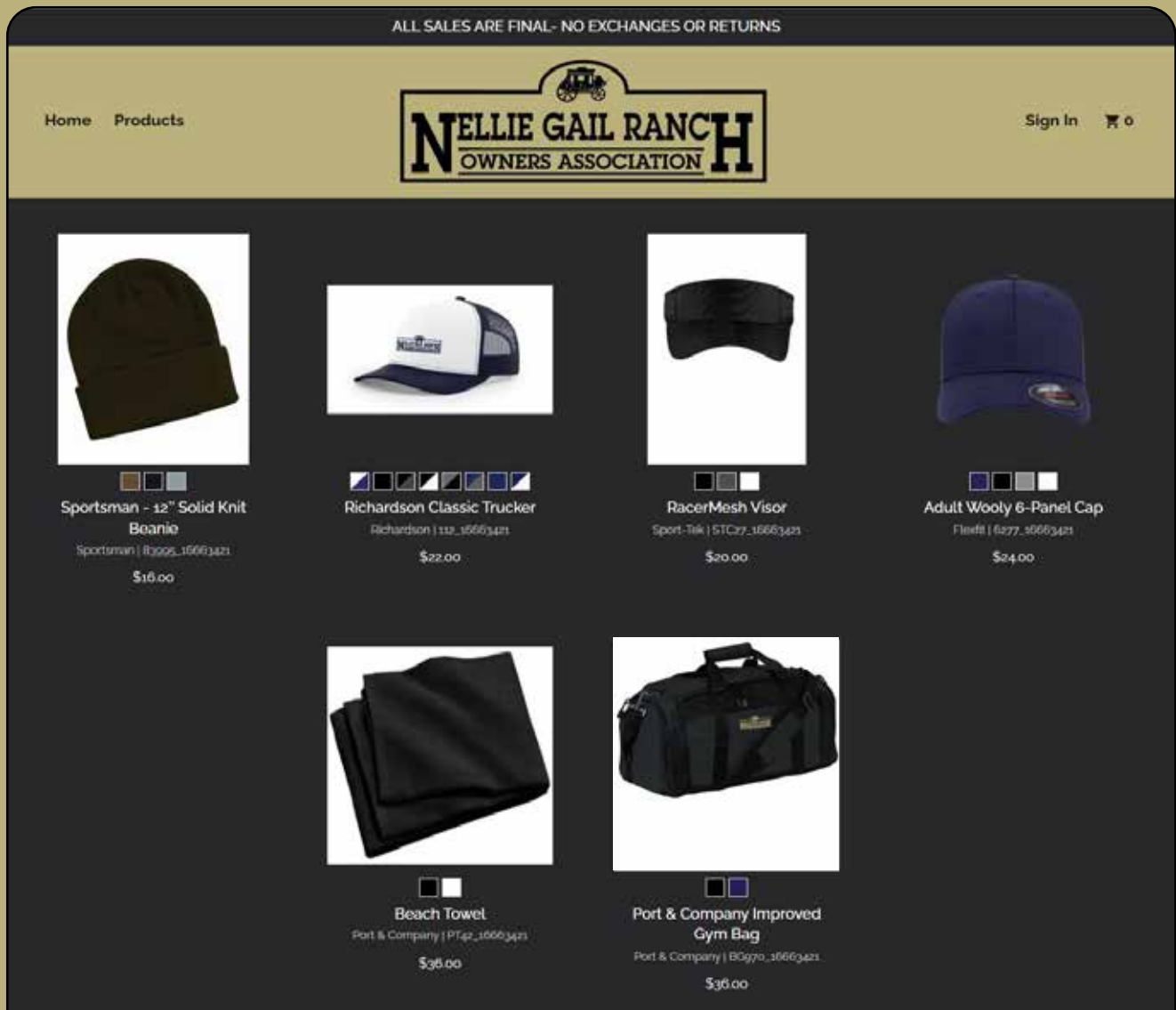
SHOW YOUR PRIDE NELLIE GAIL RANCH

The new Nellie Gail Ranch online store is open! The store features a variety of community-branded apparel, hats, bags, and accessories designed for residents of all ages.

Whether you're looking for a comfortable shirt for everyday wear, a stylish hat for outdoor activities, or a unique gift for a friend or neighbor, there's something for everyone. The collection offers a fun way to celebrate our community while showcasing the pride that makes Nellie Gail Ranch such a special place to live.

We invite you to browse the store, discover your favorite items, and show your Nellie Gail Ranch spirit wherever you go. Happy shopping!

Visit Store



PUZZLE PADDOCK



RANCH RECIPE



SUMMER CLASSIC BBQ RIBS

INGREDIENTS:

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2. 2 TBSP BROWN SUGAR
3. 2 TBSP BBQ DRY RUB (OR YOUR FAVORITE SEASONING BLEND)
4. 1 CUP BBQ SAUCE
5. 2 TBSP APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

PREPARATION:

1. REMOVE THE MEMBRANE, THEN SEASON THE RIBS WITH BROWN SUGAR AND BBQ DRY RUB.
2. WRAP IN FOIL AND BAKE AT 275°F FOR 2½-3 HOURS UNTIL TENDER.
3. BRUSH WITH BBQ SAUCE MIXED WITH APPLE CIDER VINEGAR.
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