



September 2026

The PONY EXPRESS

Nellie Gail Ranch

Community Newsletter

Please Submit your
responses to the
Livestock Survey.



Join us September 26 as we celebrate 50 years — see inside for details!

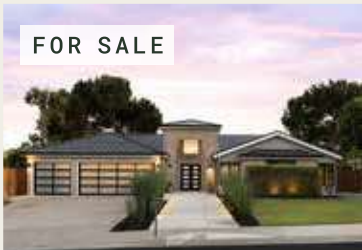
FELDMAN | MASON

THE REAL ESTATE GROUP

A new name. A new chapter. The same commitment to our clients.

We're excited to share that the Brad Feldman Group is now the Feldman Mason Group, and we've joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties. While the name is new, the partnership isn't. We've been building this business together for years, and the new name simply reflects the team we've become.

Featured Listings by The Feldman Mason Group



FOR SALE

24852 Buckboard Lane
7 Bed | 5 Baths | 5,075 Sq. Ft.
0.8 Acre Lot
Listed for \$4,995,000



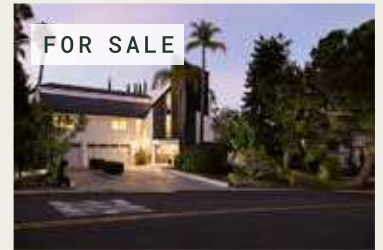
FOR SALE

26041 Spur Branch Lane
8 Beds | 11 Baths | 7,372 Sq. Ft.
15,525 Sq. Ft. Lot
Listed for \$4,500,000



FOR SALE

25761 Highplains Terrace
5 Beds | 6 Baths | 5,805 Sq. Ft.
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Listed for \$3,660,000



FOR SALE

25901 Nellie Gail Road
6 Beds | 4.5 Baths | 4,700 Sq. Ft.
10,496 Sq. Ft. Lot
Listed for \$2,995,000



IN ESCROW

25402 Gallup Circle
4 Beds | 4.5 Baths | 5,000 Sq. Ft.
17,000 Sq. Ft. Lot
Listed for \$4,200,000



SOLD

27070 Hidden Trail Road
5 Beds | 6.5 Baths | 5,733 Sq. Ft.
0.83 Acre Lot
Sold for \$4,310,000



SOLD

27773 Hidden Trail Road
5 Beds | 4.5 Baths | 3,886 Sq. Ft.
21,600 Sq. Ft. Lot
Sold for \$3,072,500



SOLD

25582 Rangewood Road
4 Beds | 3 Baths | 2,865 Sq. Ft.
19,800 Sq. Ft. Lot
Sold for \$2,840,000



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SCAN FOR FREE
MARKET ANALYSIS



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CALIFORNIA
PROPERTIES

FeldmanMasonGroup.com

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09/08/2026
Architectural Meeting
at The Association Office
starts at 6:00pm

09/15/2026
Board Meeting
at The Clubhouse
at 7:30pm

09/26/2026
50th Anniversary Event
at Gallup Park
1:30pm to 6:30pm

On The Cover:
Courtesy of Moulton Museum

Please Submit your
responses to the
Livestock Survey.



Community Contacts



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Clubhouse Reception
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Equestrian Center EMERGENCY: (949) 533-7282

Board of Directors

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Loree Blough	VICE PRESIDENT
Dan Sparks	SECRETARY
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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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(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)

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911	Emergencies
211	County Service Information
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(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 **September 15, 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

OPERATIONS MANAGER'S MESSAGE

A GREAT SUMMER AT NELLIE GAIL RANCH

by Rob This

As the children return to school, it is a great time to pause and appreciate all of the special moments that made this summer memorable. From spending time at the community pool and parks, to attending the summer concerts or participating in one of our many summer camps, Nellie Gail Ranch provided plenty of opportunities for families to enjoy the summer together.

One of the great traditions at Nellie Gail Ranch that always brings out the crowds is our Summer Concert Series. This year's lineup featured a wide variety of musical genres for everyone to enjoy. We welcomed back some fan favorites, including Wayward Sons, 90's Rockshow, and Redneck Rodeo, while also introducing new sounds from Surf City All Stars and K-Tel All Stars.

And, of course, we can't look back at the concerts without mentioning all of the delicious food and dessert trucks that were available throughout the series! The Events Committee, Events Coordinator Norma Lebaron, and all of our contributing sponsors deserve a round of applause for their time and effort in making this year's concerts such a success.

The Nellie Gail Ranch Tennis Club also completed another successful year of one of the largest and most positively reviewed Summer Tennis & Swim Camps. Nellie Gail Ranch also partnered with Evolution Swim Academy to offer a variety of summer programs, including seasonal swim lessons, summer swim teams, and a summer sports camp. Last but certainly not least, Hayden Clarke Sport Horse Summer Camp, introduced a

new generation to the joy of hands-on experience in horse care and skill development.

There is nothing better than seeing groups of children playing at the park, swimming in the pool, learning new skills, making friends, and—most importantly—spending less time in front of a screen. A huge shout-out to DP Tennis Academy, Evolution Swim Academy and Hayden Clarke Sport Horses for providing such well-organized and engaging activities for the children of Nellie Gail Ranch.

As the school year gets underway, don't forget to keep the kiddos involved in some of the great after-school activities available at the Tennis & Swim Club.

Although summer is coming to an end, we still have plenty of warm weather ahead and many exciting things to look forward to at Nellie Gail Ranch.

And this year is especially exciting because Nellie Gail Ranch is turning 50 years old!

We hope everyone will join us for "50 Years of Nellie Gail Ranch – Then & Now" on September 26th as we celebrate this incredible milestone and look back at the history, traditions, and memories that have made Nellie Gail Ranch such a special community for five decades.

We look forward to celebrating with you!

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Wealth Management & Insurance Solutions



CFG is a family-run practice owned by local Nellie Gail residents. We specialize in working with business owners, executive professionals, and families. Our areas of expertise include:

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Harvest IN THE Hills

ENTERTAINMENT-FOOD-FUN

OCTOBER 10, 2026

25555 ALICIA PKWY ~ EVENT STARTS AT 4PM

Join the City of Laguna Hills on the Town Green for an evening filled with fall fun and family friendly activities.

4PM-6PM: Community partners expo, crafts, backyard games, face painting, and more!

4:15PM/4:30PM/4:45PM: Polly's Apple Pie Eating Contest

5PM-6PM: Magic Show at the Gazebo

Food will be available for purchase

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**I Can Academy
TUTORING**

Join the Celebration!



50

YEARS OF

NELLIE GAIL RANCH

THEN

— COMMUNITY, HERITAGE & HOME —

NOW

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026



Gallup Park, 25542 Gallup Circle, Laguna Hills



1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
**INTERACTIVE &
INFORMATIVE
COMMUNITY BOOTHS**

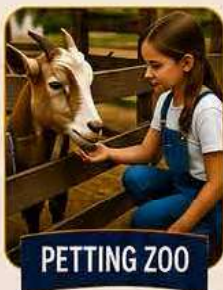


3:30 PM – 6:30 PM
LIVE MUSIC
with **MARK WOOD
& THE WEST
+ DANCING!**

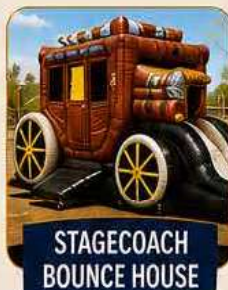
FEATURING
COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Invested in Our Safety & Neighborhood



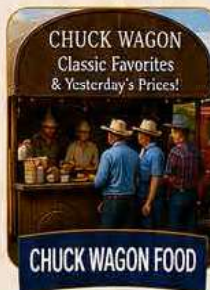
PETTING ZOO



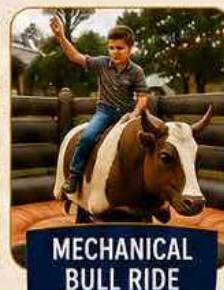
STAGECOACH
BOUNCE HOUSE



DANCING



CHUCK WAGON FOOD



MECHANICAL
BULL RIDE



FIRE PREVENTION
RESOURCES

Fun for
ALL AGES!

**SCAN TO REGISTER
& ENTER GIVEAWAYS!**



★ MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN. ★

Be a part of our
community
celebration!

Join the Celebration!



50

YEARS OF NELLIE GAIL RANCH

— COMMUNITY, HERITAGE & HOME —



Join us Saturday, September 26, as we celebrate 50 years of Nellie Gail Ranch with an afternoon of community, music, food and fun for all ages!



Beginning at 1:30 p.m., enjoy interactive booths with local community partners, safety demonstrations, a fire truck, petting zoo, stagecoach bounce house and slide, face painting, balloon artists, a nostalgia photo booth, garden clubs, beekeepers and more!



Delicious BBQ served at special "Back Then" prices.



At 3:30 p.m., the celebration continues with live music and dancing with Mark Wood & The West.



Be sure to register and enter the giveaways, then stay and enjoy an afternoon of neighbors, music, food and fun.



Come celebrate 50 years of Community, Heritage & Home!



Saturday, September 26, 2026



1:30-6:30 p.m.



Gallup Park



THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS



TAIE | LAMOTT
G R O U P

COMPASS

DP TENNIS ACADEMY

X

Nellie Gail Ranch

**AFTER
SCHOOL
PROGRAM**

ALL ABILITIES | AGES 5+

*"The No.1 After School
Program in OC!"*

FREE TRIAL



Nellie Gail Ranch

IN COLLABORATION WITH



THE PRIORITY CENTER

NOT SO SERIOUS

Smash & Social

- TENNIS & PICKLEBALL - TOURNAMENT



DATE

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 11
2026



TIME

1:00 – 5:00 PM
CHECK-IN OPENS
AT 12:30 PM



FEES

PLAYER
TENNIS OR PICKLEBALL
\$75
SPECTATOR
\$30



FUN
COMPETITION



GREAT
COMPANY



FOOD &
DRINKS



RAFFLES &
PRIZES

SCAN HERE
TO REGISTER



REGISTER TODAY!

Spots are limited.
Don't miss out on the fun!



ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT
THE PRIORITY CENTER
SUPPORTING LOCAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

NELLIE GAIL
TENNIS CLUB
25281 Empty Saddle Dr
Laguna Hills, CA 92653

SUMMER CAMP 2026

Another Incredible Summer!

What a summer it has been at Nellie Gail Ranch Tennis & Pickleball Club! Our 2026 Summer Tennis Camp was one of our biggest and best yet, with every week selling out and hundreds of young players joining us on court throughout the summer.

From first-time players picking up a racquet to experienced juniors developing their games, the courts were full of energy, competition, friendships and, most importantly, plenty of fun. Our coaching team did a fantastic job creating an environment where kids could improve their tennis while enjoying everything that makes summer camp special.

A huge thank you to all of our coaches and counselors who brought so much enthusiasm to the courts each day, and to all of the parents who trusted us with their children this summer. We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of our Nellie Gail Ranch and local community. And, of course, the biggest thank you goes to all of our campers! You made Summer 2026 one to remember.

We're already looking forward to doing it all again next summer. Until then, we hope to see many of our campers continuing their tennis journey through our year-round junior programs and teams. **Thank you for an amazing Summer 2026!**

After-School Tennis Back on Court This Fall!

With another fantastic summer behind us, we're excited to welcome our junior players back to the courts for the Nellie Gail Ranch After-School Tennis Program!

Our after-school program continues to be one of our most popular junior offerings, providing players of all ages and abilities with the opportunity to learn, develop and compete in a fun and positive environment.

Spots fill extremely quickly each season, with many groups selling out, so families interested in joining are encouraged to register early to secure their preferred days and times. Whether your child is picking up a racquet for the first time or looking to take their game to the next level, our coaching team has a pathway designed to keep them progressing and enjoying the sport.

We can't wait for another great season of junior tennis at Nellie Gail Ranch! **Spaces are limited — register early to avoid missing out**





NELLIE GAIL IS ONE OF THE
BEST PLACES TO RAISE A
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YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL
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THAT STANDARD.



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SELECT SPACES AVAILABLE FOR 2026-27.



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SCHOOL**

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7 PURSUIT, ALISO VIEJO



SUMMER CONCERT

2026 RECAP



A SUMMER OF MUSIC,
DANCING, FOOD &
MEMORIES!

OUTSTANDING RESULTS FOR HAYDEN CLARKE SPORT HORSES

The Hayden Clarke Sport Horses team continues to deliver impressive performances in the show ring, with riders and horses earning top honors across the jumper, hunter, equitation, and medal divisions. From major 1.45m podium finishes to Classic victories and National Hunter Derby honors, the results reflect the talent, dedication, and hard work of the entire team.

Lane Clarke delivered two standout performances in the \$24,500 Alliant Private Client Cup 1.45m, finishing second aboard Diarrow and third with Idao De Beaufour. Clarke and Idao De Beaufour also earned seventh place in the 1.30m Jumper.

Melina Nasab Keefe and Mon Chou captured first place in the \$3,500 NAL Jr/Am 1.35m Jumper Classic, along with a third-place finish in the \$10,000 Adequan 1.20m Jumper Classic and fifth in the \$500 Jr/Am 1.30m/1.40m Jumper.

Sydney Prager collected an impressive series of honors with multiple horses. Riding Boy Wonder, Prager won both the \$2,500 USHJA Jr/Am National Hunter Derby and the CPHA Foundation Medal. The pair also finished second in the THIS National

Children's/Ariat Adult Medal and fifth in the NHS Hamel Foundation Junior Medal. With Cover Girl, Prager placed ninth in the National Hunter Derby, won the Junior/AO 3'3" Hunter Under Saddle, and finished second in the Junior/AO 3'3" Hunter Over Fences. Prager also guided Poly D'Or Van De Eedthoek to third- and sixth-place finishes in the Junior 1.10m Jumper.

Lauren Katzenellenbogen and BP Wonder earned fifth place in the \$10,000 HITS Open Jumper 1.40m, while Katzenellenbogen and Chrysolite Fonroy finished seventh in the \$3,500 NAL Jr/Am 1.35m Jumper Classic.

Destiny Stewart also recorded several strong performances. Stewart and El Corazon finished third in the \$3,500 NAL Jr/Am 1.35m Jumper Classic and ninth in the \$10,000 STX Open Speed 1.35m. With I Know De Beaufour, Stewart earned fourth in the \$10,000 Adequan 1.20m Jumper Classic and eighth in the \$2,500 Pyranha/NAL Jr/Am 1.25m Jumper Classic. Stewart and Fergus De Frajus added another victory for the team with a first-place finish in the 1.15m Jumper, along with seventh in the \$250 Jr/Am 1.20m Jumper.





Annie Zhou enjoyed multiple trips to the winner's circle aboard Comanchero M, taking first place in the \$1,000 The League Jr/Am 1.05m Jumper Classic and earning two additional victories in the Junior 1.0m Jumper. Zhou and Eros added two second-place finishes in the Junior 1.10m Jumper and placed fourth in the \$2,000 The League/NAL/WIHS Jr/Am 1.15m Classic.

Rounding out the results, **Nicole Garcia** and OET Pina earned sixth place in the \$1,000 The League Jr/Am .90m Jumper Classic.

The outstanding collection of results showcases the strength and depth of the Hayden Clarke Sport Horses program. **Congratulations to Lane, Melina, Sydney, Lauren, Destiny, Annie, and Nicole**, as well as their talented horses, owners, families, coaches, and everyone behind the scenes who contributes to their success.

With victories, podium finishes, and impressive performances across multiple divisions, there is plenty to celebrate as Hayden Clarke Sport Horses looks ahead to continued success in the show ring.

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THE DARKHORSE MARINES DEPLOY AND TEAM DARKHORSE RIDES AGAIN

- by Karen L. Robbins

August marked the 5th month of deployment for our city's adopted 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. The Battalion Landing Team (3/5) is the Ground Combat Element currently on board Naval ships —the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group. You may have seen this Naval Ship group mentioned in news reports on the middle East.

While the Marines are faithfully serving our country, Team Darkhorse and our supporters and donors, have been faithfully encouraging and supporting our adopted Marines!

In the previous edition of Pony Express we shared the story of partnering with another nonprofit SOCKS FOR HEROES, in order to send 1,000 pairs of fresh socks to the ships. Team Darkhorse's second initiative was to purchase and deliver a healthy snack/protein item into the hand of every one of those hardworking Marines and, and our third and final goal of purchasing and sending hydration packs has just been accomplished too. Although each gift may seem small when one considers how many pairs of socks a Marine runs through weekly; how quickly one protein bar will be consumed, and how insignificant one hydration pack may seem to a thirsty sailor, what we have learned is that the act of purchasing, sending and caring brings to each of them a message of support, appreciation and caring on a scale hundreds of times larger than the actual item itself.

The Marines are always tremendously grateful. And, accordingly, so are we for our supporters and donors who enable us to continue delivering on our mission of showing these hardworking selfless Marines that the citizens of Laguna Hills have their back. You, our donors, and we of Team Darkhorse did uphold the Marine Corps Motto —SEMPER PARATUS!



JOIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



Neighborhood watch programs are a proven way to reduce crime and strengthen bonds between neighbors!



WE NEED YOU!
YOU CAN BE A PART OF A NETWORK OF RESIDENTS WHO LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER AND KEEP NELLIE GAIL RANCH A SAFE AND MORE WELCOMING PLACE TO LIVE.

WHAT DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH DO? X

WARNING



NEIGHBORHOOD
WATCH
PROTECTED AREA

- Stay alert to unusual and suspicious activity
- Look out for each other's homes, families, and property
- Receive timely safety updates and crime-prevention tips
- Strengthen connections
- Build a safer community
- Provides safety workshops and community events

WHY JOIN?

- ✓ CREATE A SAFER ENVIRONMENT FOR FAMILIES, HOMES, AND PROPERTY
- ✓ IMPROVE REPORTING AND RESPONSE TO CRIME AND SAFETY ISSUES
- ✓ CONNECT WITH OTHERS TO BUILD A STRONGER SENSE OF COMMUNITY

There's little commitment, and it's fun to meet your neighbors!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN?

DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR BLOCK CAPTAIN IS?

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

CONTACT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH CO-COORDINATORS:

NORM DANGELO



neighborhood watch
co-coordinator

949-466-4599

norm.dangelo@cox.net

CHARLOTTE WURTH



neighborhood watch
co-coordinator

949-325-5108

cwurth@gmail.com

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

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THE
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WHERE NEIGHBORS GATHER

Friday, September 11 - 6.30p to 9.30p



Chef Luigi

CHEF LUIGI'S BIRTHDAY!

Come celebrate Chef Luigi's birthday at The Watering Hole with live music from Mark Wood!

We're turning up the flavor with a special event menu featuring an authentic taco cart experience!

Enjoy made-to-order tacos with all your favorite toppings.

That's right, it's taco's and music all evening long!



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With more than 20 years of experience in private wealth management, Mai Park works with engineers, executives and families from companies like Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, SpaceX and Tesla. She founded Mai Park Capital, in partnership with Pence Wealth Management, and specializes in developing wealth strategies tailored to the unique compensation structures and financial challenges of the aerospace and technology industries.

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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949-220-1376 | [MAIPARKCAPITAL.COM](https://maiparkcapital.com)

Let's Talk.

Disclaimer: Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor. Member FINRA/SIPC. AUM of \$2.7 billion as of February 3rd, 2026.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY FABIAN & LAURA CASTRO

TATE | LAMOTT

GROUP

66

We've enjoyed living in Nellie Gail for the last 16 years. When it came time to sell our second property, after having had a less than favorable experience with another local agent, our first call was to Jerry, who we learned partnered with Ben and Sarah Tate. Just like Jerry, Ben and Sarah were straightforward, honest, and smart businesspeople. Ben and Sarah priced our property perfectly and, after having garnered the interest of a qualified buyer, were outstanding in every aspect of closing the deal and escorting us through the escrow process. Ben and Sarah's professionalism, commitment to excellence, as well as their always responsive and friendly personalities made the process as simple as it possibly could be.

Doug P.
Seller



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JERRY LAMOTT
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COMPASS



REVISED ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES ADOPTED

The following revised Election Rules and Procedures were adopted by the Board of Directors at the August 18, 2026 Board meeting. They are currently in effect for the 2027 Annual Meeting. The two primary reasons for adopting these revisions are as follows:

- 1.** Provide the option of electronic balloting in the future if it becomes viable for future elections.
- 2.** Forgo the counting of ballots and elect Directors by acclamation if the number of candidates does not exceed the open positions on the Board. Acclamation would be subject to meeting a number of conditions outlined in the proposed rules. The benefit would be to save the Association the approximate \$5,500 expense of ballot mailings and hiring the Inspector of Election to count in instances where the election is uncontested.

NELLIE GAIL RANCH OWNERS ASSOCIATION

ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES

Adopted August 18, 2026

1. **Application of Rules:** These rules shall apply to any meeting of the membership or solicitation of membership approval by a ballot vote (i) regarding matters specified in California Civil Code Section 5100(a), and (ii) any other matter unless the Association's Board of Directors has elected to conduct such vote or solicit such member approval for such other matter in accordance with the California Corporations Code and the Association's Bylaws. The Election Rules contained herein are intended to comply with Civil Code Section 5100 et seq. and should be interpreted as such.

The Association may choose, but is not obligated, to utilize electronic secret ballots in accordance with these Election Rules for any solicitation of membership approval, however, electronic secret ballots shall never be made available for an election regarding regular or special assessments.

Where the Association does not authorize electronic voting for any particular election, the solicitation materials shall identify the email or email(s) relevant to voting in such election.

2. **Membership Voting:** Pursuant to the Association's governing documents, every person or entity who is a record Owner of a fee or undivided fee interest in any Lot which is subject by covenants of record to assessments by the Association shall be a Member of the Association. Each Member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote for each Lot owned. When more than one (1) person holds an interest in any Lot, all such persons shall be Members. The vote for such Lot shall be cast at the Lot owners determine among themselves, but in no event shall more than one (1) vote be cast with respect to any Lot.
3. **Record Dates:** In the absence of a specific resolution of the Board for any given election, the record date for determining the right of a Member to receive notice and to vote shall be the date that ballots are distributed and shall include all separate interests reflected in the Association membership list as of such record date. Members may verify and update their individual information contained in the Association's records anytime up to the date ballots are distributed and are encouraged to review their personal information by the deadline set for submitting nominations of candidates to ensure Members review their personal information at least thirty (30) days before the ballots are mailed. The voter list shall include for each separate interest: (1) name; (2) voting power; (3) the separate interest address, parcel number or both; and (4) the mailing address, if different. The candidate list shall include the name and address of individuals nominated as a candidate for election to the board of directors. The voting period shall start when ballots are distributed and shall close when the ballots are counted. The polls shall close for any Member vote as specified in the ballot materials or as determined by the Inspector(s) of Election at any Member meeting.
4. **Candidate Qualifications:** The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Board of five (5) Directors. The term of office of each Director shall be two (2) years. The term of office for a Director who is appointed or elected to fill a vacancy created by resignation, death, removal or judicial

adjudication of mental incompetence shall be the balance of the unserved term of his or her predecessor.

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.

5. **Director Requirements:** To remain qualified to serve on the Board of Directors, an Owner who has been elected to the Board of Directors must:

- a. Meet each and every of the requirements set forth immediately above to run as a Candidate; and
- b. Comply with all state and federal labor laws with respect to board members, committee members, vendors, the property manager and staff, and any other persons associated with or retained by the Association.

6. **Nominations:** Nomination for election to the Board may be made from any qualified Member. Any Member may nominate themselves as a Candidate. Every qualified Member submitting a nomination by the deadline established in any candidate solicitation shall be included on the ballot and in any associated ballot materials. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the annual meeting. However, if the association opts to use electronic secret balloting for any particular vote, then nominations from the floor are prohibited.

7. **Solicitation Materials:** Every Candidate and Member shall have equal access to the Association mailings, newsletters, and website during a campaign, if any such access is provided, for the publication of viewpoints reasonably related to any issue presented for membership vote.

- a. **Content:** The Association does not edit or redact any content provided by a Candidate or Member. The Candidate or Member creating such content, and not the Association, is responsible for any published statement.

b. **Limitation on Publication Space Made Available:** So long as each Candidate and/or Member is provided the same opportunities for publication, the Association may restrict the availability of any publication by limiting the printing space made available or the number of words that will be included from each Candidate or Member included in the publication. In the absence of any other limitations adopted by the Board for any particular matter, each Candidate and/or Member shall be limited to no more than 200 words for any one publication. The Board may, in its sole discretion, present a candidacy questionnaire with questions for all interested Candidates and/or Members to complete. If such a questionnaire is provided, then the Association will only print the answers to such questions and may impose a limitation upon the number of words for the response to any question presented.

8. **Availability of Meeting Space:** Access to common area meeting space shall be made equally available, at no cost, to all Candidates and/or Members desiring to use such space for any reason reasonably related to a membership vote. The Association may meet the requirements of this section by hosting a "Meet the Candidates Night", or other such special meeting, so long as every Candidate and/or Member is provided with an equal opportunity to participate in the event.

9. **Ballot Distribution:** A ballot shall be distributed to every Member reflected in the Association membership list on the date that ballots are distributed. Replacement ballots will be provided upon request to anyone who was a Member as of the date when ballots were distributed. The Association shall not deny a ballot to a person with general power of attorney for a Member. A ballot submitted by a person with general power of attorney for a Member, if valid and returned by the applicable deadline, shall be counted by the Association. At least thirty (30) days prior to any election, the Inspector(s) of Election shall deliver or cause to be delivered: (1) a ballot to each Member reflected on the voting list; and (2) a copy of these election rules. Delivery of these election rules may be accomplished by posting them on an internet website and including on the ballot the corresponding internet website address together with, in at least 12-point font, the phrase: "The rules governing this election may be found here:".

10. **Electronic Secret Ballot:** If the Association, through a vote of the Board of Directors, has elected to utilize electronic secret ballots Members may change their preferred method of voting from electronic secret ballot to written secret ballot or from written secret ballot to electronic secret ballot no later than ninety (90) days before an election. Electronic secret ballots shall contain the same list of items being voted on as written secret ballots. If the Association, through a vote of the Board of Directors, elects to use opt-out electronic voting then: **OPTING OUT OF ELECTRONIC VOTING:** The Association shall mail a written secret ballot only to a member who has opted out of voting by electronic secret ballot or for whom the Association does not have an email address required to vote by electronic secret ballot. Alternatively, if the Association, through a vote of the Board of Directors, opts to use opt-in electronic voting then: **OPTING INTO ELECTRONIC VOTING:** The Association shall send an electronic secret ballot only to a member who has opted into voting by electronic secret ballot. The Association shall maintain a voting list identifying which members will vote by electronic secret ballot and which members will vote by written secret ballot. Depending which the Association, through a vote of the Board of Directors elects to use, the Association shall include information on the procedures to either opt out of **OR** opt into voting by electronic secret ballot in the annual

statement prepared pursuant to Civil Code section 5310. Members voting by electronic secret ballot shall provide the Association with a valid email address.

11. Proxies: Proxies are not permitted.

12. Inspector(s) of Election: Prior to the presentation of any issue to the Members for a membership vote, the Board may appoint one (1) or three (3) Inspector(s) of Election. In the absence of a specific appointment by the Board, or in the event that an appointed Inspector is unable or unwilling to serve, then the Members in attendance at any duly held meeting of the Members at which a quorum is present may elect an Inspector or Inspectors to serve.

Any Inspector(s) of Election must be an independent third party. An independent third party may not be a person, business entity, or subdivision of a business entity who is currently employed or under contract to the Association for any compensable services other than serving as an Inspector(s) of Election. An Inspector may not be: (1) a Director; (2) a Candidate; (3) a Director's relations; or (4) a Candidate's relations.

The Inspector(s) of Election may appoint and oversee additional persons to verify signatures and to count and tabulate votes as the Inspector(s) of Election deem appropriate, provided that the additional persons satisfy the eligibility requirements for service as an Inspector of Election. Pursuant to Civil Code §5120(c), no person may review any tally sheet before the count, including expressly any member or management

In the absence of a more specific determination by the Inspector(s) of Election, the Association's management company shall prepare and retain the association election materials (i.e., the candidate registration list, voter list, ballots, signed voter envelopes, and any proxies) for such period of time as is required by law.

Inspector(s) of Election shall perform all duties impartially, in good faith, to the best of their ability, as expeditiously as practical, and in a manner that protects the interest of all Members of the Association.

The Association and/or the Inspector(s) of Election shall not distribute lists, or other documentation or information, describing who from the membership of the Association has or has not voted in an election, and said information shall not be distributed to any Member of the Association, including Candidates.

The Association and/or the Inspector(s) of Election shall not distribute lists indicating when a particular ballot was received by the Inspector(s) of Election and/or the Association. Confirmation that a Member's ballot has or has not been received, and the date received, may be communicated to that requesting Member only.

13. Meeting Conduct: Any counting of ballots shall be done at an open meeting of the membership or the Board of Directors. Any Candidate or Member may observe the count but shall stand at least five feet away from the Inspector(s) of Election. No person may harass, cajole, or otherwise interfere with the Inspector(s) of Election while the count is taking place. Persons not specifically authorized to do so may not touch any secret ballot or other election materials. All ballots will be made available for inspection by any Candidate or Member during regular business hours at the Association's

management office once the meeting is concluded. Any person violating this section may be asked by the Inspector(s) of Election or the meeting chair to leave the meeting to prevent further disruption.

14. Election of Directors by Acclamation: Notwithstanding anything set forth in these rules, California Civil Code Section 5100, or any provision of any of the Association's governing documents, if, as of the deadline date for submitting nominations for election of Directors, the number of qualified candidates is no more than the number of positions on the Board of Directors to be filled as determined by the Inspector(s) of Election, the Association may, but is not required to, consider the qualified Candidates elected by acclamation if all of the following conditions have been met:

- a. The Association has held a regular election of Directors in the last three (3) years (the three-year time period shall be calculated from the date the ballots were due in the last full election to the start of voting for the proposed election);
- b. The Association provided individual notice of the election and the procedure for nominating candidates as follows:
 - i. Initial notice at least ninety (90) days before the deadline for submitting nominations, which initial notice must include the following:
 - 1. The number of seats on the Board to be filled at the election;
 - 2. The deadline for submitting nominations;
 - 3. The manner in which nominations can be submitted; and
 - 4. A statement informing members that if, at the deadline for making nominations, there are no more qualified Candidates than there are Director seats to be filled, then the Board may, after voting to do so, seat the qualified Candidates by acclamation without balloting.
 - ii. A reminder notice between seven (7) and thirty (30) days before the deadline for submitting nominations, which notice must include the following:
 - 1. The number of seats on the Board that will be filled at the election;
 - 2. The deadline for submitting nominations;
 - 3. The manner in which nominations can be submitted;
 - 4. A list of the names of all of the qualified Candidates to fill the Board seats as of the date of the reminder notice; and
 - 5. A statement reminding Members that if, at the close of the time period for making nominations, there are no more qualified Candidates than there are Director seats to be filled, then the Board may, after voting to do so, seat the qualified Candidates by acclamation without balloting (this statement is not

required if, at the time the reminder notice will be delivered, the number of qualified candidates already exceeds the number of Board seats to be filled).

- c. The Association provides, within seven (7) business days of receiving a nomination, a written or electronic communication acknowledging the nomination to the member who submitted the nomination.
- d. The Association provides, within seven (7) business days of receiving a nomination, a written or electronic communication to the nominee, indicating either of the following:
 - i. The nominee is a qualified Candidate for the Board; or
 - ii. The nominee is not a qualified Candidate for the Board, the basis for the disqualification, and the Association's internal dispute resolution procedure (California Civil Code Section 5900 *et seq.*) by which the nominee may appeal the disqualification.
- e. The Association may combine the written or electronic communication described in c. and d. above into a single written or electronic communication if the nominee and the nominator are the same person.
- f. The Association permits all candidates to run if nominated, except for nominees disqualified for running as allowed or required pursuant to Paragraph 4 above.
- g. The Board votes to consider the qualified candidates elected by acclamation at a Board meeting for which the agenda item reflects the name of each qualified Candidate that will be seated by acclamation if the item is approved.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

El Niño and Nellie Gail Ranch

The media and reported scientific consensus seems to be an expected strong 2026-27 El Niño weather season. Reports have included descriptions of a "super El Niño" and scientific calculations like "the Niño 3.4 region is already near +2.6°C above normal" and even odds like "strengthening, with a 63% chance of becoming one of the strongest since 1950". The bottom line is, we don't know what will happen. But we do know that as a best practice we can prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

What preparatory actions can we recommend heading into the end of 2026?

1. Historically, during wet winters when it rains several times per week, the trails do not dry up enough to allow access for feed delivery. If we have a particularly wet winter there is a possibility some of our trails could be closed to deliveries for an extended period of time. **If your only access for feed and shavings deliveries for your horses and livestock is via trail access, please consider stocking up for the winter.**
2. If you are in the midst of home construction projects, please prioritize hard to get to areas of your property first. It is likely that trails may be inaccessible for an extended period of time if we have a wet winter.
3. Please remember, trail permits are required for **all** delivery and construction services. This protects you as in the event of damage to the trail or easement being caused by a delivery vehicle, we can make a claim on the insureds vehicle and not the owner contracting for delivery. Every year we have a few vehicles access a wet trail and slip and slide resulting in a need for rescue.
4. If your property has issues with runoff during heavy rains, plan ahead. **Buy and store sandbags now while they are less expensive and readily available.** When placing sandbags, water flow may not be diverted to another lot. Each owner is required to accept water from the "established drainage pattern" over the lot from your property or adjoining lots. The established drainage

pattern is defined as the drainage which occurred at the time of the original grading completed by the developer.

5. Clear your v-ditches, storm drains and rain gutters of debris prior to winter and check them often throughout the rainy season to clear fresh debris.
6. Nellie Gail Ranch has 25 miles of trails. Our trail manager and trail maintenance vendor will have an equally hard time inspecting and accessing trails if this is a wet winter. **After each moderate to heavy rain homeowners are encouraged to inspect their property including the equestrian easement for signs of significant or problematic erosion. Contact our office at 949-425-1477 or e-mail photos to Brent Tickel at btickel@nelliegailranch.org if there is anything you feel needs attention.**
7. If you have a barren or a lightly landscaped steep slope, consider adding jute netting and/or low level ground cover to keep the soil in place.
8. Consider having a geotechnical civil engineer in your contact list in event of significant soils movement on your lot. The time to research who you want to work with is not in the middle of a crisis.

Plan for the worst, hope for the best is our way of encouraging optimism while ensuring preparedness for the winter season ahead!



CLASSIFIED ADS

SEND US YOUR AD - EMAIL [PONYEXPRESS@NELLIEGAILRANCH.ORG](mailto:ponyexpress@nelliegailranch.org) -
NOTE CLASSIFIEDS IN THE SUBJECT LINE - ADS ARE FREE TO NELLIE GAIL
RANCH RESIDENTS | \$10/MO. PER AD FOR NON-RESIDENTS

SERVICES

TWO FOR THE SHOW – MUSIC DUO

Planning an event? TWO FOR THE SHOW/ offers customized playlists, from soft rock to dance hits. Visit "Two For The Show Orange County" on YouTube for samples. Contact at 949.643.0949 (no texts) or twofortheshowsocal@gmail.com.

COMPLETE OFFICE AND BUILDING CLEANING

Trustworthy, insured, and with 30 years of experience, offering janitorial services, building maintenance, floor care, carpet cleaning, and more. Nellie Gail Resident Owned Business. Call 949-310-4996.

SPANISH TUTORING AND LESSONS

Maria provides Spanish tutoring for all ages and levels. With 15+ years of experience, offering services for elementary, high school, college, conversation, and translations. Call or text at 949-836-0846 or email mparser@yahoo.com.

EXPERIENCED AND PATIENT MATH TUTOR

A lifelong Nellie Gail resident with a Master's in Aerospace Engineering, offering math tutoring for high school, community college, and ACT/SAT. One-on-one tutoring for better understanding. Call 949-231-0977 or email ecaiusa@yahoo.com.

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Learn the music you love from Popular, Classical, Jazz, and Blues. Children and adults welcome. I have B.A. Degrees in Music and Child Psychology and have been teaching 25 years. My website is www.thekeyboardlady.com. Email me at marshyvonne13@gmail.com or call 949-637-8208.

CARING FUR ANGELS

Professional pet/house sitting, dog walking, and pet taxi services in South Orange County. Vickie Reyes, caregiver, ensures purrfect care for your companions. Licensed, bonded, insured, with pet CPR and first aid certification. Visit www.caringfurangels.com or call 949-525-1670.

PET SITTING

Seeking a loving, reliable, flexible resident for house/pet sitting. Call 805-714-6153 for active lifestyles and travel. Flexible for visits and stays.

PIANO IS FOR PRESCHOOLERS, TOO!

Piano lessons for children aged two and up, enhancing concentration, memory, brainpower, and listening skills. Develop diligence, perseverance, and confidence for success in school and life. Visit www.PianolsForPreschoolersToo.com or call 949/246-6492.

CALLING ALL EQUESTRIANS

Explore Equivont.com for a one-stop solution to equestrian needs. Find horses for sale, supplements, grooming products, trainers, clinics, and more. A Nellie Gail Resident Owned Business.

BEAUTY COUNTER CONSULTANT

Contact Michelle Hudgins at 949-874-4466 for Beauty counter consulting. Visit <https://www.beautycounter.com/michellehudgins> for Clean and Vegan products.

ALL SUBJECTS TUTOR

Give your child the opportunity to be taught by someone who understands the frustration behind learning new concepts. I'm a 4.7 GPA high school junior that would love to

tutor your kids. Please call or text (949) 516-8078 if you are interested.

LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST

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

BABY SITTING SERVICES

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.

SPRAY TANNING – MOBILE!

EverTan provides mobile spray tanning services in Orange County. Natural, even tan with top-quality organic formulas. Call/text Kaydance at 951-355-8044 or email myeventan@gmail.com. Visit www.myeventan.com.

DOG WALKING

April, a loving, reliable Nellie Gail resident, offers dog walking services. Call 949-310-4996 for a meet and greet.

BABY SITTING

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.

FLOWER POWER

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

SPRING-CLEANING HELP

Is your spring-cleaning project too big to tackle? Let me help take the stress out of your decluttering and organizing project. I provide a patient, judgement free process that will help you see all that is possible at an affordable price. Call Lisa at 714-337-9624.

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In tax and accounting for small to mid-size businesses and high-net-worth individuals. Services include tax planning, preparation, and consulting across CA, NY, TX. Clients include law partners, doctors, dentists, real estate investors. Contact Juliezzhu@yahoo.com or call (949) 627-7688.

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Ability to thoughtfully connect with and care for children of all ages. Early retired HR professional and live nearby. Excellent references. Please contact Kimber at (949) 836-6742

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Patient, outgoing and kind violin instructor for ALL ages. Studying violin @UCLA and available until late September. No experience needed. Please text Leo at 949-899-2245

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High School math/science teacher, 30 years of experience. AP, Honors and Standard classes for math and physics including: Algebra I/II, Geometry, PreCalculus, AP Calculus AB/BC, and Physics A/B. AP/SAT. BSEE, UCLA. Call 714-296-2544 or email dkrutcik@gmail.com, ask for Dave.

BIKE GURU: BIKE BUILDING AND REPAIR.

Nellie Gail resident offering bicycle repair, custom builds, bike boxing. Electric Bikes, trikes, and scooters. Specialize in mountain bike suspension and performance. Fair prices, quick turn around. Ask for Jeff, 949-285-8663.

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Autocad design and Advice with 30 years experience provided by retired Construction Engineer at 949-342-5885 Nellie Gail resident

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Local, reliable, insured, and experienced. Longtime Aliso Viejo resident with a strong mechanical and maintenance background. Detail-oriented, professional, and honest. I provide informed advice, only take on jobs within my scope, and refer out when needed. Call or text John at (949) 527-2210.

SOFTWARE/C++ DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Need a software developer? Email services@alignofcode.com, text or call (949) 216-4146

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From plumbing to electrical repairs, we are here to tackle the small jobs that make a big difference in your home. Providing door & lock installs, drywall patching, painting touch-ups and kitchen / bath fixture upgrades and much more. Call William today at 949-329-8779 for a free estimate

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CAREGIVING SERVICES

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INTERIOR DESIGNER

One Offs + Co. Patricia Shah 310.927.7595 IG: @onesoffandco

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GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

Certified landscape designer to help refresh your outdoor space including yards, garden planters, pots and front porch entrance. If you're in need of a planting design with existing hardscape, we can provide a recommendation. Nellie Gail Ranch homeowner-owner business. Email: alexis-avazianfiore@gmail.com Fiore by Design, LLC

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SWEETS DOODLES

Supreme Golden doodle breeder in South Orange County. Standard size puppies (50-75 lbs) born and raised at home. Professionally trained with a two-year health warranty. Visit www.sweetsdoodles.com or call Mark at 949-228-4606.

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AKC Champion dog and is a female and born June 19, 2023. The sister has been adopted by a Nellie Gail homeowner, and the Breeder would like to keep the sister dogs together. Paperwork is available. If interested please call Floyd at 562-884-4566. The puppy is a kind and gentle dog.

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QIGONG ENERGY SESSIONS AND CLASSES

Craig Cooke, Doctor of Chinese Energetic Medicine provides qigong energy optimization and healing sessions in Nellie Gail. Online qigong classes are also available. Qigong is a powerful healing and self-transformation modality. Visit C2energymedicine.com for more information.

CROSS TRAIN FOR TOTAL BODY WELLNESS

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Master mind and body at home with Iden Shahir. Functional weight training for weight loss/muscle gain. Contact at (949)633-5410 or www.livefitwithiden.com. Instagram: @livefitwithiden.

SWIMMING LESSONS

Learn to swim or improve skills with CPR-certified coach. 2+ years coaching experience and 12+ years in water polo. Text/call Donnie at 949-771-4044.

KURE IT WOMEN'S GUILD

Support cutting-edge cancer research with the KURE IT WOMEN'S GUILD (www.kureit.org/women-s-guild) through fundraising, education, and community outreach. Contact Kerri Hatfield at kckhatfield@gmail.com to learn more about how YOU can make a difference.

PRIVATE YOGA LESSONS

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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AUTOS FOR RENT

2023 Ford Transit, homed in Nellie Gail, for rent, seats 15 or can haul things around after removal of seats. Please contact Patrice 949-813-3938 or Martin 949-813-3938 2019 Lincoln Navigator in red, homed in Nellie Gail, for rent. Please contact Patrice 949-813-3938 or Martin 949-813-3938

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Secular Humanist Jewish Holiday celebrations and other activities. Low cost annual membership includes group events. Nonmembers welcome to gatherings for a nominal fee. www.pccjews.org

NEWCOMERS CLUB OF SADDLEBACK VALLEY

is a nonprofit, nondenominational Women's Club. Groups include book clubs, gadabouts (excursions), cards, walking, golfing, and potlucks. Monthly luncheons at different venues feature speakers or entertainment. Attendance is optional. We'd love you to join us, regardless of residency or duration in the area. Learn more at ncsvonline.org.

LOOKING FOR BRIDGE PLAYERS

Senior gal just moved to Nellie Gail from NorCal looking for a few bridge players on a monthly or maybe every-other-week basis. We could play at the Watering Hole late mornings or early afternoons? If interested, please email me at: marilynbankerville62@gmail.com. Let's get a game up of 4 or more.

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Nellie Gail Garden Group

By Tina Corso

Fire, Floods, and the Right Plants

It's been a long journey discovering what truly grows well in Nellie Gail. I've lived in many places, each with its own soils, weather, and gardening challenges. From the sandy soils and tropical climate of Florida to the cooler Bay Area, and now to Southern California's Mediterranean climate, every move meant learning to adapt.

Here in Nellie Gail, the learning curve was steep. Heavy clay soils, managing water flow, and selecting drought-tolerant plants that still support pollinators became my focus. Saving water was essential because so much of it needed to go where it mattered most—my avocados, citrus, and other subtropical fruit trees.

The first challenge wasn't planting trees—it was protecting the property. My hillside had experienced three mudslides, and I knew I had to find a way to slow, redirect, and absorb the water rushing downhill.

I planted rosemary hedges, lavender, and ice plants across the slopes to stabilize the soil. New drains were installed around the house and pool, gutters were added to the roof, and French drains were built in two side yards. It became a fifteen-year project of redesigning the landscape to work with nature instead of fighting it.

Because my home sits in a natural gully below three surrounding hillsides, the HOA provides sandbags on the above trail every year. During heavy storms, water and mud from those hillsides naturally flow toward my property. The sandbags help slow the runoff, giving the ground time to absorb more water before it reaches the pool and patio.

Over the years, I also planted more than thirty additional fruit trees. Some were grown from seed, others purchased, and many were grafted. Their roots now help stabilize the hillside while producing food for our family.

The result has been remarkable. The mudslides have stopped. Even the pool was lengthened to 42 feet to capture additional runoff and sediment during severe storms.

Then came last spring's storm, when nearly four inches of rain fell in a single day.

I watched carefully and wondered, "Will everything hold?"

Normally, my drainage system easily handles storms producing around two inches of rain. The French drains absorb tremendous amounts of water, the soil becomes saturated gradually, and the pool captures excess runoff. During the largest storms, I can even see the city's storm drains backing up and water collecting on my patio. That is nearly the system's limit.

Yet the French drains continued working exactly as they were designed to do.

What I've learned is that successful stormwater management isn't just about pipes and drains. It's about absorption, and absorption comes from healthy soil covered with the right plants. Deep-rooted ground covers, shrubs, and trees all work together to slow water, reduce erosion, and stabilize hillsides.

As we watched the devastating flooding in Wrightwood, I couldn't help but think that storms of that magnitude could someday affect our own communities as well. Preparing our landscapes now is far easier than repairing them later.

At the same time, Southern California faces another challenge—wildfire.

The question becomes: **How do we create landscapes that help absorb water while also reducing fire risk?**

Ground cover is essential. Green, healthy plants help protect soil from erosion, while well-chosen trees can provide shade, stabilize slopes, and retain moisture. During a visit to my home, our city's landscape contractor, Brad Carrington, and I discussed the importance of selecting trees that improve both fire safety and water management.

The Orange County Fire Authority identifies several

trees that can present a higher fire risk because of their oils, resins, or accumulated dry material:

- * Eucalyptus — High oil content makes it highly flammable.
- * Many pine species — Resinous wood and needles ignite readily.
- * Acacia — Dry foliage can burn quickly.
- * Palm trees — Dead fronds become excellent fuel if not maintained.
- * Cypress — Often recommended for removal in high fire-risk areas.

Fortunately, there are many beautiful trees that provide ecological benefits while helping retain soil moisture:

California Sycamore— Well adapted to local conditions and performs well where additional soil moisture is available.

Coast Live Oak — Deep roots help stabilize soil and access groundwater.

Western Redbud — A drought-tolerant California native that provides spectacular spring flowers for pollinators.

Valley Oak — A magnificent native tree that stores large amounts of water within its living tissue and supports hundreds of wildlife species.

Even banana plants, while not a fire-resistant choice for every landscape, contain significant amounts of water within their stems and leaves, making them an interesting example of how living plants can hold moisture.

Our gardens can do much more than simply look beautiful. They can reduce erosion, conserve water, provide food, support pollinators, help protect homes from flooding, and, when thoughtfully designed, become part of a fire-resilient landscape.

Every tree we plant is an investment. Choosing the right one means protecting not only our own property but our entire community for generations to come.

Happy Gardening,
Tina Corso tlc8386@gmail.com





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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole	2	3	4	5
6	7 	8 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole • ARC Meeting at 6:00pm @ The Association Office	9	10	11 Live Music @ The Watering Hole Mark Wood 6:30pm-9:30pm 9/11 PATRIOT DAY WE WILL NEVER FORGET 	12
13	14	15 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole • Board Meeting 7:30pm @Club- house	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole	23	24	25	26 
27	28 ARC Submittal Deadline for October 13th meeting	29 Taco Tuesday at The Watering Hole	30			



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