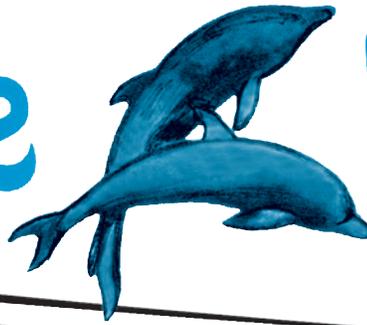


Seashore News



January 2026

Published Monthly by Niguel Shores Community Association

Issue 625

FROM THE HELM

NSCA Board and Rules

As we move into the new year, I want to take a moment to update the community, clarify the role of the NSCA Board, and provide a clear explanation of how decisions—particularly those related to **rules**—are made.

From time to time, differing opinions naturally arise within any community, especially when proposed changes are being discussed. Residents are absolutely entitled to their perspectives and to voice concerns or opposition. That said, it is important that those discussions are grounded in an accurate understanding of the process. Unfortunately, misinformation can sometimes circulate, which can create unnecessary frustration or confusion.

One area that often causes misunderstanding is the **rules process**. There is a common misnomer that the Board “makes up” the rules. That is not the case, and it is important the community understands how this process actually works.

The Board does not create rules. Proposed rules and rule changes are developed and presented annually by the **Rules Committee**. These individuals work hard year-round reviewing existing rules, identifying areas for improvement, and focusing on maintaining Niguel Shores as a safe, fair, and enjoyable community for everyone.

Once proposed, these rules are discussed during **open general session Board meetings**, which the entire community is welcome to attend and listen in on. Following that discussion, the proposed rules are **sent out to the community for comment**. Every comment received is reviewed—each and every one—before the Board takes any action.

After the community comment period concludes and feedback is fully considered, the Board then votes on whether

to adopt the proposed rules. If approved, the rules go into effect for the year.

At that point, the process leaves the Board’s hands. **Rules enforcement is handled by the General Manager and staff**, not the Board. Our security company, **Securitas**, is brought up to speed on any adopted changes and adjusts enforcement accordingly.

The Board’s role is to provide oversight, ensure the process is followed correctly, listen to community input, and make informed decisions in the best interest of Niguel Shores as a whole—not to independently create or enforce rules.

Seeking Candidates

The Association is also currently seeking candidates for the Board of Directors, as **three board positions are up for election this cycle**. Board terms are **two years**, and I would be

happy to meet with any homeowner who has questions about the commitment involved and what to expect when serving.

If you are not quite ready for a Board position, **joining one of our committees is an excellent place to start**. Committees are the backbone of what drives Niguel Shores forward, and we continue to welcome residents with fresh ideas and perspective.

I want to thank all of our volunteers, committee members, and residents who continue to give their time and energy to our community. Your involvement strengthens Niguel Shores and plays a critical role in its continued success.

On behalf of the Board, I wish everyone a **happy, safe, and prosperous New Year**.

Remember, **be kind—we are all in this together**.

—Mark Russell, NSCA President



KATHY SAMUEL

LUXURY REAL ESTATE

Cheers to 2026!

Welcoming 2026 with excitement and gratitude! After an incredible 2025, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our amazing community for your trust and support. Our local market remains strong, and I can't wait to see what opportunities, growth, and milestones this new year will bring. Here's to an even brighter 2026!



SOLD - 5 Marbella \$4,750,000!



SOLD - 23811 Dasya Circle \$4,125,000!



SOLD - 23835 Bluehill Bay \$3,300,000!



SOLD - 23841 Marmara Bay \$2,625,000!



SOLD - 24155 Vista D Onde \$2,540,000!



SOLD - 23895 Taranto Bay \$2,275,000!



SOLD - 23293 Pompeii Drive \$2,220,000!



SOLD - 24202 Vista D Oro \$2,505,000!



SOLD - 33976 Cape Cove \$2,495,000!



SOLD - 24232 Porto Nuovo \$2,175,000!



SOLD - 29372 Christiana Way \$1,290,000!



SOLD - 33441 Spinnaker Drive \$2,050,000!



SOLD - 33972 Cape Cove \$1,750,000!



SOLD - 33554 Halyard Drive \$1,900,000!



SOLD - 8 Dauphin \$1,690,000!



SOLD - 147 Luneta \$1,199,000!



SOLD - 122 Stony Pointe \$1,300,000!



SOLD - 10 Saint John \$1,420,000!



KATHY SAMUEL

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NSCA is not responsible for any work done nor are we recommending any of the advertised companies

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Call for Candidates

You should have received the notice from Accurate Voting calling for members to run for the 2026 Board of Directors' election. There are three open positions in 2026, so if you have an interest in serving your community, please complete the form and return it to Accurate Voting.

Servant Leadership

As a Board member you will act in the best interests of the entire community, not personal interest or the interests of a few. That is referred to as Servant Leadership. It is a leadership philosophy that prioritizes serving others and focusing on the well-being and development of the community rather than on personal advancement.

■ **Definition and Origin**—Servant Leadership is a concept introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in his 1970 essay, "The Servant as Leader." This leadership style emphasizes that the primary role of a leader is to serve their team, fostering an environment where members can thrive and grow. Unlike traditional leadership models that place leaders at the top of a hierarchy, servant leadership inverts this structure, prioritizing the needs of employees, members, and communities.

■ **Key Characteristics**—Servant Leaders exhibit several core characteristics that distinguish them from traditional leaders:

Empathy: They actively listen and seek to understand the needs and concerns of their team members and community.

Self-awareness: Servant leaders are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, which helps them lead with integrity and authenticity.

Commitment to Growth: They invest in the personal and professional development of their team members

HOLIDAY CLOSURE

In honor of **Martin Luther King Day**, the Office will be closed **January 19**, and no construction is permitted.

"Whatever your life's work is, do it so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better ... The time is always right to do the right thing."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

SEA TERRACE I

ANNUAL HOMEOWNER MEETING is JANUARY 13
NSCA COMMUNITY CENTER CLUBHOUSE

and community, providing opportunities for skill-building and advancement.

Stewardship: They view leadership as a responsibility to serve others, acting in the best interest of their teams and community members.

Building Community: Servant Leaders foster a sense of belonging and collaboration within their communities, creating an inclusive and supportive culture.

■ These are the characteristics of exceptional Board members as well.

Pickleball Courts Open

This project took longer than expected due to weather delays, but now the courts are open for everyone's enjoyment. The refurbishment included the installation of an entirely new playing surface and bringing court access up to building code including a new ramp access with handrails. We hope you all enjoy the upgraded facility.

2026 Reserve Projects

■ We will be obtaining bids to mill and overlay the following streets for 2026: Periwinkle, Dasya, Gelidum, and Spindle which represents over 66,000 square feet of streets.

■ The Selva wall along Windward is falling over and the Board has approved its replacement with a composite fencing system. The demolition and replacement will be completed in the first quarter of 2026.

■ Other projects include replacing the flat roof of the clubhouse, handrail replacement at the Breakers Isle stairs, the office HVAC system, the office and clubhouse alarm systems, the ongoing street light replacements, wrought iron fence work throughout the community, Stonehill gates, pool and spa chemical controllers, continued slope and concrete repairs.

—John Muller

WELCOME ABOARD

The NSCA Board welcomes new member **Steve Rhorer**.

Steve is a California native who grew up in Laguna Niguel and attended Dana Hills High School. Deeply connected to the community, he has witnessed its growth and positive transformation over the years. As a Board member, Steve says he is committed to fostering transparency and effective communication, ensuring decisions are made in the best interest of residents.

Steve brings extensive leadership experience, having served on several boards, including the Irvine Public Schools Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to

enriching education for every child. Professionally, Steve has spent 17 years with Konica Minolta, holding roles in sales, marketing, service, and operations.

Steve and his wife, Suzette, have lived in Niguel Shores for five years and are proud parents of three grown children residing in San Diego. He believes our community's people and amenities are truly unique along the California coast, and he is dedicated to preserving and enhancing this exceptional place to live.



COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

2025 Wrap Up

Architectural Application Count:

- Approved Final Applications = 140
- Approved Remodel Applications = 15
- Approved Change Order Applications = 14
- Disapproved Applications = 21
- Applications Still Under Review = 8

Does It Need Approval?

- **Outdoor Televisions and Outdoor Sound Systems**—These items are not considered to be permanent structures and do not need formal approval from the AC. However, these items may become a nuisance for neighbors depending on where they are placed and how they are utilized. Neighbors that are experiencing issues from the use of an outdoor television or outdoor sound system should report the nuisance to the sheriff's office as addressing this type of behavior falls under their authority.
- **Exterior Security Systems**—The installation of a security system does not need approval from the AC. Owners installing security systems must be aware of the current privacy laws regarding recording and use of video footage.

Application Submittal, Review, and Response Times

The meeting dates and submittal deadlines are published in the calendar accompanying the community newsletter every month. Response letters are emailed to the applicant the Friday after the meeting. Responses will not be provided over the phone. However, if you have questions after receiving your response, the Architectural Manager would be happy to assist you.

Consent Item Applications

Consent items are modifications that fall directly in line with the existing rules and do not require formal discussion by the AC in a meeting. When possible, these applications will receive advanced approval, but advanced approval is not guaranteed. In the event an advanced approval is not possible, the application will be approved in a scheduled meeting as per the standard process.

—Karen Decker

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

A New Year

Fifty years ago, in January 1976, Niguel Shores was just starting out as a new community and our nation was about to celebrate its 200th Anniversary. The 1976 January

Seashore News featured a hand-drawn American flag on the front page, showing the numerals “76” for the country’s Bicentennial, and wishing everyone “Happy New Year!”



Now, as 2026 begins, the *Seashore News* again wishes everyone a very happy New Year as our nation prepares to celebrate its 250th Anniversary. Our community and our nation have gone through many changes, but this anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect with gratitude on the efforts of past generations that enable us to live and prosper in a free country. It’s also a time to look forward with hope and encourage future generations to treasure this freedom and honor the ideals set forth by our country’s founders 250 years ago.

A New Committee Member

The Communication Committee is happy to welcome **Joy Justus** to the group. Joy brings several decades of corporate leadership experience, along with a long-standing appreciation for writing that dates back to her college years studying communications and contributing to various publications. When Joy moved into Niguel Shores a few years ago, it was the *Seashore News* that helped her understand how to get connected and involved, and she is excited now to be part of the team that helps bring that same sense of connection to others. She enjoys being part of the community she now calls home, where she lives with her teenage son while her older son is away at college.

—Sandy Homicz

EVENTS COMMITTEE

Holiday Lights Winners—Congratulations to residents on the winning streets in the Holiday Lights Contest:

Sextant Drive, Manta North, Timor Bay, Tasman Bay, Ionian Bay, and Porto Cristo. They earned a **Pizza Party**, courtesy of the Events Committee.

—Events Committee



COMMITTEE REPORTS

4TH OF JULY COMMITTEE

Save the Date

The Niguel Shores **4th of July Committee** is moving forward with plans for a world class celebration to commemorate our nation's **250th Birthday** and to gather as a community for this very important milestone.

We are building on Niguel Shores' wonderful 4th of July traditions of the past and incorporating exciting new events as well. To do this, we could use your help.

Our goal is to tap into the volunteer spirit that is so prevalent here in Niguel Shores. We hope that many of you will lend a hand in planning, supporting, and carrying out this exciting celebration.

- **NEXT STEP:** Save the date and join us for an **Informational/Organizational Happy Hour**.
- **WHEN:** Sunday, February 15 at 3:00 p.m.
- **WHERE:** Niguel Shores Clubhouse
- **REFRESHMENTS:** Appetizers and beverages will be served, in keeping with Niguel Shores traditions,
- **JOIN US:** Come learn how you can be part of **Niguel Shores 250th July 4th Celebration!**

—Patti Staudenbaur, 4th of July Committee

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Our committee is planning a celebration of our longest-term residents. Is there anyone who came to Niguel Shores in the 1970's or early 1980's? Or are you now living in a home that was once your parents or grandparents? We want to hear from you if you wish to share your memories of those early days with all who have come since.

The earliest resident will receive a prize and the early ones will be honored at a celebratory event in April.

In the meantime, we continue with documentation of photographs and collection of pertinent historical items. Please continue to send or deliver photos and/or documents to Karen Decker in the office (kdecker@niguelshores.org).

—Mary Crowl

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE

One of the things that make Niguel Shores so special is our site by the ocean. Another is our gorgeous landscape with mature trees, greenspace and thoughtful drought-tolerant plantings that delight the senses as we walk or drive through the community. And a couple of fun facts: We have more than 241 acres and more than 1800 trees—which is a lot to maintain and protect!

Members of the Landscape Committee, along with Matt Northrop and Harvest, are working to ensure we keep this

valuable asset in good shape. Each area of the community is on an eight-week landscape maintenance rotation for common tasks like trimming, weeding, and replanting when needed. Grass cutting is on a shorter two-week schedule depending on the growth season. Grass scalping and tree trimming are a once-a-year schedule in the fall.

Starting this month, Phase One of the Turf Reduction program will begin. This program was previously presented and explained at a Board Meeting; but, in short, the program helps Niguel Shores comply with California State Law for reducing turf—and water usage—by replacing portions of non-actively used turf with drought tolerant plants. To put our water usage in perspective, our budget for landscaping water alone is \$270,000, so reductions in that cost will be welcome. The overall cost of the turf reduction program is subsidized by the state, with no cost to Niguel Shores.

One reminder to all of us: The Harvest workers are busy doing their jobs maintaining our beautiful community. Please don't interrupt them with questions or other requests. Let them do their jobs and direct any landscaping concerns to Matt in the office.

—The Landscape Committee

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Meet Your New Lead Maintenance Technician: Tom Shimkus!

The Niguel Shores Maintenance Committee extends congratulations to **Tom Shimkus**, who was recently promoted to Lead Maintenance Technician! After 14 years of dedicated service to our community, Tom stepped into his new leadership role in late 2025.



Tom Shimkus

Tom brings a wealth of experience, including previous employment at the Seiko Watch Company. A native of Eastern New Jersey, Tom grew up near Newark with his three siblings—an older brother and a younger brother and sister. His heritage is rich, with his father's family hailing from Eastern Europe and his mother's family from Lebanon. Music runs deep in Tom's life, a passion he inherited from his older brother, from whom he developed an early love for the groundbreaking sounds of the 60s and 70s, counting bands like The Beatles and Cream among his favorites. He played the trombone in his school band and marching band.

Tom's technical skills stem from his father's interest in and ability in engineering and mechanics. He attended Technical School in New Jersey and, after his family moved west, continued his education in an engineering program

COMMITTEE REPORTS CONT.

at El Camino College, an area well known for its extensive aerospace and manufacturing. His love for his work at Niguel Shores comes from the daily challenges. He enjoys the creative process of repairing things with the parts available in the maintenance shop.

Tom now lives nearby with his wife, Haruko. Together, they are avid outdoor enthusiasts, enjoying hiking and camping in beautiful spots like Death Valley, Joshua Tree, and the Anza Borrego area.

We are fortunate to have Tom's skill and commitment guiding our Maintenance Team and look forward to his continued contributions to keeping Niguel Shores beautiful!

—Geoff Dunlevie

VIEW PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The View Preservation Committee worked hard in 2025 visiting properties and reviewing homeowner submitted concerns. We are looking forward to doing it again in 2026. Views are an essential part of living in Niguel Shores. The Committee evaluates concerns regarding potential unreasonable view blockages from private property plantings and trees.

A big THANK YOU to Committee members **Julie Chis, Joan Ingle, Kathy Jones, Kathleen Rosenthal, and Dianne Young** for their volunteerism and service to our community.

—View Preservation Committee

CLUBS

WOMEN'S CLUB

The Niguel Shores Women's Club celebrated with fun and friendship at two seasonal events last month. For our annual **Walk to the Ritz** on December 2, nearly 60 women met at the Cabrillo gate, enjoying refreshments and holiday cheer on their way to the Ritz, where the magnificent lighted tree was as impressive as ever. After admiring the beautiful ornaments and taking time for photos, the group continued to the Ritz Lobby Bar to toast the season. It was a joyful chance to reconnect, welcome new neighbors, and share the season with longtime friends.

On December 11, the Women's Club invited the Men's Club and other guests to join us for **Pinkmas**, an evening featuring food, signature drinks, music, and holiday cheer. The jolly events and pink-themed decorations were exceptional, thanks to the efforts of **Cathy Sherline** and her committee, who created a warm and festive atmosphere filled with positive energy and holiday spirit.

Looking ahead, our January meeting will be held one week later than usual—on **Thursday, January 15** at Noon in the **Clubhouse**. We are honored to welcome Niguel Shores neighbor, **Dr. Kerry Burnight**, a nationally recognized gerontologist, researcher, speaker, and author. Dr. Burnight is the originator of the concept of "joyspan," which focuses not only on adding years to life but on increasing the joy within those years. Her *New York Times* bestselling book, *Joyspan: The Art and Science of Thriving in Life's Second*



Dr. Kerry Burnight



Members stop for refreshments before viewing holiday lights at the Ritz.



Cathy, Cheryl and the Pinkmas decorating group

Half, weaves together scientific research, practical strategies, and meaningful insights to help individuals cultivate greater purpose, well-being, and fulfillment at any stage of life. Her presentation promises to be an informative, inspiring, and thoughtful way to begin the new year.

Upcoming Dates

- **Thursday, 1/8:** Women's Club Board Meeting
- **Thursday, 1/15:** Women's Club Luncheon Meeting with Guest Speaker Dr. Kerry Burnight

—Karey Palmer

CLUBS

MEN'S CLUB

Our December 2 meeting was a wonderful way to head into the holiday season and conclude 2025. Members were especially pleased to welcome spouses and guests, who were treated to breakfast and the festive sounds of the **Dana Hills High School Choir**, led by **Ray Medina**, the Director of Vocal Music. Their caroling set the perfect tone and reminded us just how fortunate we are to live in a community that values tradition, youth involvement, and coming together during the holidays. A sincere thank you to the choir and to everyone who helped make that morning so special.



Dana Hills High School Choir entertained at Men's Club in December, and Club V.P. John Chis was conscripted as guest conductor, surprising everyone with his directorial aplomb. *Photo and caption from Gary Tinnes.*

As we turn the page to January, we'd like to wish all our members and their families a very Happy New Year. We hope everyone enjoyed a relaxing and joyful holiday season, and we look forward to another great year for the Men's Club.

Our first meeting of 2026 will be **Tuesday, January 6**, and this is an important one—it's our **Annual Membership Meeting**. At this meeting, we will be electing board members for the coming year, discussing club business, and hearing from our guest speaker, **Lieutenant Colonel Joe "Pappy" Papay, USMC (Ret.)**.

LtCol Papay served as the Commanding Officer of VMFA(AW)-533, an F/A-18D Hornet squadron stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina. His career as a Marine Aviator spanned nearly 22 years, during which he flew both the F-4 Phantom and the F/A-18 Hornet, logging more than 5,000 flight hours and completing 198 combat missions. We look forward to hearing his unique perspective on military aviation, leadership, and service.

Our second January meeting will take place on **Tuesday, January 20**. As always, we look forward to good fellowship, engaging discussion, and another informative program.

Thank you for your continued support of the Men's Club. We're excited for what 2026 has in store and hope to see you at both January meetings.

—John Yocca

GARDEN CLUB

Last month the holiday season was in full swing—and never more so than at the Garden Club's Holiday Party! It was a very festive event—made even more so by a surprise visit from Mr. & Mrs. Claus, who handed out candy canes and seed packets for all the gardeners.

Santa and JoAnne Webb also treated the crowd to a gardener's interpretation of a famous Christmas poem, with Sharon Stewart reading the poem and JoAnne Webb and Santa acting it out. Needless to say, this provided quite a few laughs for all.

The potluck featured a delicious variety of appetizers, salads and desserts enjoyed by the 60 Garden Club members in attendance. And lastly, there was a gift exchange, sending members home with plants, gift cards, and garden-related items.

A big thanks to co-chairs, Sharon Stewart, Janice Stauffer and JoAnne Webb, as well as the many volunteers who helped to make this a truly memorable holiday party!

January's meeting will feature Monarch butterfly specialist **Susie Vanderlip**, a respected expert on Monarchs who consults, designs, plans and implements Monarch habitats and gardens. Susie will help us determine ways to increase the Monarchs in our area. The meeting is **January 12 at 11 a.m.** in the **Clubhouse**. All residents of Niguel Shores are welcome to attend. If not a club member, there is a \$5.00 guest fee.

—Judi Palladino



Garden Club Holiday Party.

ACTIVITIES

BRIDGE

Betty French, our fearless leader, took charge of our **Christmas Party** last month. The tables were set with Christmas Spode China and beautiful silverware. Thank you to the Unnamed Ladies whose special offerings gave us such a great meal to enjoy.

Now the Christmas lights need to be returned to their boxes, our houses need a thorough cleaning, and a New Year begins. We have a lot to be thankful for. Living in the United States is a privilege and we should not forget this. Our community is very special place with so many volunteers manning so many positions, and because of this we have low homeowners assessments compared to other associations. We have leaders in our community who go the extra mile to insure that we have one of the nicest places to live. Our Board and various committees keep an eye on landscaping, maintenance and traffic and listen to what our community needs. We really have a lot to be thankful for!

Our Winners

11/19: Sallyann King showed us what a tremendous player she is by posting a score over 6,000. Jim Pinola moved up to 2nd place and Bill Imbriale was close at his heels for 3rd. Good playing!

11/26: Muriel Kraszewski won 1st place, while Mike Oliva was pushed into 2nd place by Bob French who surprising came in 3rd.

11/3: Glenda Wilson was a “shoe in” for 1st, while Judy Pellerin maintained a strong 2nd and Muriel Kraszewski made a strong presence for 3rd staying in the winners circle for the 2nd week in a row.

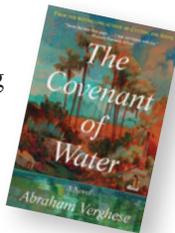
12/10: Mary Biegel made a strong comeback for 1st, and Muriel Kraszewski moved up from last week to 2nd and stayed in the winners for 3 weeks in a row. Glenda Wilson made 3rd place and stayed in the winners circle for the 2nd week in a row.

—Mike Oliva

PAGE TURNERS

Our book club members are busy reading *The Covenant Of Water* by Abraham Verghese. Many readers will remember his wonderful *Cutting for Stone*, a story of complex family dynamics set in Ethiopia and the United States.

In *The Covenant of Water* the setting is Kerala, India with a story covering three generations of a family with a most peculiar trait: one person in each generation dies from drowning! This is a lengthy work (715 pages) but as we did not assign a book in December we have had two full months to digest Verghese’s brilliant novel.



I read *The Covenant of Water* when it first came out in 2023 and look forward to visiting it again. There is so much in this book I cannot begin to describe it, so in the words of one reviewer: “At the turn of the century, a twelve-year-old girl from Kerala's long-existing Christian community, grieving the death of her father, is sent by boat to her wedding, where she will meet her forty-year-old husband for the first time. From this unforgettable new beginning, the young girl—and future matriarch, known as Big Ammachi—will witness unthinkable changes over the span of her extraordinary life, full of joy and triumph as well as hardship and loss, her faith and love the only constants ... A shimmering evocation of a bygone India and of the passage of time itself ... a hymn to progress in medicine and to human understanding, and a humbling testament to the difficulties undergone by past generations for the sake of those alive today. It is one of the most masterful literary novels published in recent years.”

We will certainly be challenged to discuss this book in one session but we will try! For more information on Page Turners, please contact one of the coordinators: **Steve and Ann Morris** at samwrsi@cox.net, **Lisa Buchner** at lisabuchner47@gmail.com, or myself at fozimec@cox.net. New members are always welcome.

—Frances Ozimec

FRIENDS OF DANA POINT LIBRARY

It thrills me to see our beautiful newly refurbished library and bookstore after being closed for almost two years! With the remodel focusing on ADA compliance, we have the same footprint but less shelf and storage space. Hence, the bookstore is brighter and looking bigger.



Our bookstore manager **Ann Strauss** and her team of volunteers have put the bookstore back together in record time. To streamline daily sales, a new credit card tool has been installed and the results have meant larger sales and bigger profits. Every dollar of these profits are turned around to provide support to the library.

Zoe, the new library branch manager, has done a fantastic job navigating the the county and helping us with the reopening of the library and bookstore.

I am so proud of all our nearly **70 volunteers**, many from **Nigel Shores**, who have stepped up to help. We couldn’t do it all without their helping hands. And the biggest reward is greeting many new and former customers to our beautiful new space.

Stop by and check our shelves full of great bargains in books and games with prices starting from \$1. We hope to see you soon!

—Lisa Buchner

PICKLEBALL

Pickleball is back!

After a long break, our brand new and upgraded courts are open again. Our courts became ready for use in late December after months of construction and rain delays. The good news is they are now better than ever!

Playing at other sites for many months was great, but not as great as playing right here in Niguel Shores. I love our players here!

What I have discovered is that every pickleball venue has its own vibe—its own personality, if you will—and most of them are very inviting. I played most of my pickleball at the Dana Point Community Center on Del Obispo on their three outdoor courts (which is an outdoor basketball court when pickleball is not being played). The people were very friendly and the quality of play was good. They also have drop-in EVERY day of the week from 8 a.m. to

noon. So, if you miss one of our drop-in days, which are Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat from 9 to 11 a.m., you can always find more pickleball any morning at Del Obispo.

According to those in the know, pickleball continues to be one of the fastest growing sports in the world, but at some point it will have to slow down. I am not sure we are there yet, but we might be getting closer and only time will tell. Hope to see you on the courts!

—Chris Horpel

LOOKING FOR FITNESS INSTRUCTORS!



Do you know someone who is qualified as a fitness or yoga instructor?

We would like to talk about holding classes here in Niguel Shores.

Contact the Niguel Shores office at (949) 493-0122 for details.



ACCOLADES

Marine Families Collection

Thank you to everyone who donated gifts for Camp Pendleton Kids and Families during the collection drive sponsored by the **Garden Club, Men's Club, and Women's Club**. We are so grateful for your generosity.



Fun and Fitness for a Good Cause

Sunshine and sea breeze marked the start and finish of the **5th Annual Turkey Day 5K**—this year honoring Hobart Bay neighbor **Richard Drewelow**, who is courageously fighting brain cancer. The event was a huge success thanks to more than 175 Niguel Shores neighbors and their families who participated in the run and potluck brunch.

Coordinator **Carey Smith** sends shout outs to **Brian Porter** for shirt, medal and sign design; **Rhonda and Geoff Dunlevie** and **Cathy and Dan Burgner** for rocking the “Basting Station” at **SC Carts**; **Erik Smith** for map, set up, clean up and so much more; **Annabell and Matilda Darnell** and **Eva Rausch** for the finish line ribbon and photos; **Kris Perry** for being gate keeper; **Mark Russell** for drone photos.



GOOD WILL AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Niguel Shores celebrated the holidays by supporting good causes, enjoying good times with family and friends, and looking forward to good things in the new year. Festivities resonated with the positive energy of good-hearted individuals enjoying each other's company. As Jane Austen wrote, *"It's such a happiness when good people get together!"*

Santa at the Bluff

We have dozens of cute photos of families, kids, pets, and games taken December 6 with Santa at the Bluff. If you would like a copy of your photo, contact Matt in the office at mnorthrop@niguelshores.org.



Breakfast Singers

Men's Club members and guests gathered for a holiday breakfast and traditional carols performed by the Dana Hills High School Choir, directed by Ray Medina.



Cheer All Year Round

On Wednesdays, the bridge tables are filled with the laughter, friendly rivalry, and high spirit of this congenial group.



A Bit of Rhyme

'Twas three weeks before Christmas ... a fine time of year ... with **Garden Club** members all in good cheer ... when what to their wondering eyes should appear but **Santa Claus Steve** wearing North Pole gear ... handing out treats and enacting a hilarious Christmas poem with help from **Sharon and JoAnne**.



Pinkmas!

Holidays are times for enjoying the old traditions and creating some new ones too—like the **Women’s Club Pinkmas**. Party planner **Cathy Sherline** and her merry elves mixed the old and new together with rosy holiday decor, spirited drinks, abundant appetizers and desserts, funny



new games and good old fashioned merriment.



Santa Makes a Splash

Santa and his favorite Elf (aka **Gary and Creighton Wall**) surprised the **Water Aerobics** group. All enjoyed their visit and also the delicious luncheon!



Book Fest

Trading books was the focus at the **Page Turners** party, and stealing a book from a friend was a big part of the fun (along with the delicious desserts).



Picklers

Any season is a reason for **Pickleballers** to party, but no better time than the holidays.



A New Year’s Toast

The countdown came with champagne as we raised a toast at midnight: “To the good year behind us, for all it taught. To the good year ahead, for all it promises.”



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

The Cuevas Family and a Living Legacy Rooted in Dana Point

For **Brooke Cuevas**, Niguel Shores is not just home. It is history, memory, and legacy all wrapped into one place. **Brooke** lives in Niguel Shores with her husband **Joey**, their two children **Mehrutz**, age eight, and **Penny**, age two, and their beloved Yorkie, **Flora**. What makes their home especially meaningful is that it is the very same house Brooke grew up visiting as a child, a home that has been in her family since 1972. As a young girl, she spent countless days there with her great-grandparents, **Harry and Teiko Otsubo**. Over time, those childhood visits turned into adulthood, marriage, and eventually raising her own family in the same space where her roots were planted.

Brooke often reflects on what a gift it was to grow up in Niguel Shores. Her mother would drop Brooke and her sister off each day, and the neighborhood felt like a secret garden with space to run freely and a sense of safety that allowed children to truly be children. Even today, Brooke says there is nowhere else she would want to raise her kids. The neighborhood still feels safe and close knit, with the only possible concern being the occasional coyote passing through.

Family life is central to everything Brooke does. Mehrutz attends St. Anne's, while Penny is still at home and very much along for the ride. Penny often accompanies Brooke to work at **Dana Point Nursery** three or four days a week. The nursery has become Penny's own little wonderland, full of carts to climb on, watering cans to carry, and friendly faces everywhere she turns. The staff keeps a watchful eye on her, especially near the koi pond, which Penny finds endlessly fascinating and nearly climbed into more than once.

That koi pond carries its own family history. Brooke's grandfather Harry built it and stocked it with the koi. Some of the fish are forty to fifty years old, the very same ones Brooke remembers watching as a child when she spent her days at the nursery with her grandparents. Every night, the koi are carefully covered to protect them from predators, a small ritual that reflects the care and reverence the family has always shown for the land and what it holds.

Joey, Brooke's husband, runs his own business importing sunglasses and reading glasses across the United States. He is deeply involved with his family and is a very hands-on dad. He



loves animals, and was the one who brought Flora into their lives. He often takes Mehrutz golfing and plays regularly at The Ranch in Laguna Beach. Mehrutz has grown to love the game as well, even practicing with virtual golf to improve his skills.

Strong values are something Brooke and Joey are intentional about instilling in their children. When Mehrutz spends time with his grandparents in San Juan Capistrano on Thursdays, they recycle bottles and cans together. The money he earns goes toward saving for his own car someday. Brooke believes there are no free rides in life, and that learning responsibility and work ethic early is a gift that lasts.

Dana Point Nursery is the heart of Brooke's extended family and daily life. Founded by her great-grandparents, Harry and Teiko Otsubo, the nursery began as a landscape and maintenance business focused on shrubs and trees. Over the years, it evolved as the generations passed. Brooke's grandparents expanded the vision, and her grandmother Kathy brought a refined eye for design that transformed the nursery into what it is today. Decorative elements, thoughtful arrangements, and finishing touches became just as important as the plants themselves. Brooke credits her grandmother for shaping not only the nursery's aesthetic but also her own eye for décor.

Today, Brooke is the fourth-generation owner and operator of Dana Point Nursery. She grew up alongside many of the employees, some of whom have worked there for over twenty years. There are only six employees total, and they are considered family. The nursery is meticulously maintained, from the cleanliness of the grounds to the quality of the plants. Everything reflects a high standard and a thoughtful, old-fashioned approach.

The family owns the land, ensuring that the nursery will remain protected and unchanged. There is great pride in keeping it small, family owned, and true to its roots. There is no website, just a message book for phone inquiries, and an Instagram account managed by Brooke. The nursery operates much the way her great-grandparents envisioned, serving the Dana Point community and nearby neighborhoods with honesty, warmth, and consistency across generations.

Brooke still visits her grandparents three to four times a week. One of her favorite traditions is picking out a Christmas

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

tree together and then helping decorate it, another moment where family and tradition intertwine.

Beyond the nursery, the Otsubo legacy extends into the broader community through the **Harry Otsubo Community Gardens**. Founded by Brooke's great-grandfather, the gardens reflect his lifelong love of gardening and his desire to share the beauty and serenity of growing things with others. Located across from Dana Hills High School, the gardens now include seventy-nine plots, thirteen of which were added more recently. There is currently a waiting list for plots, a testament to how valued the space has become.

Brooke often speaks about her great-grandfather's life and impact at Rotary events, the Niguel Shores Garden Club, and through the City of Dana Point. Harry Otsubo worked closely with parks and recreation and believed deeply in community connection through nature. Brooke continues that mission today. She attends garden registration days where she shares the history of the gardens and provides gardeners with free vegetable and herb plants along with bags of soil. For her, it is about helping people

succeed, being honest about what is sold, teaching people how to grow, and understanding that nurturing plants ultimately nurtures the world around us.

Brooke is at the nursery seven days a week, balancing work and family with the help of her staff, who embrace her children as their own. She describes herself as an old spirit who loves working hard and treasures spending time with family. She travels, and when asked where she is from, she proudly says Dana Point. She loves the beauty, the weather, the familiarity of neighbors she has known her entire life, and the deep sense of belonging that comes with staying rooted.

From her great-grandparents to her grandparents and now to her own children, the legacy continues. Brooke hopes one day Mehruz or Penny will become the fifth generation to carry the nursery forward. Until then, she remains a steward of her family's history, her community's green spaces, and a way of life built on care, honesty, and love for where she lives.

—Joy Justus

The Harry Otsubo Community Gardens— *Did You Know?*

Dana Point residents can rent garden space at the Harry Otsubo Community Gardens, located across from Dana Hills High School. Named after Brooke Cuevas's great-grandfather and founder of Dana Point Nursery, the gardens continue to thrive as a shared community resource.

The City of Dana Point hosts an annual **Registration Day** at the gardens each fall. The gardens are maintained by Dana Point residents and remain in high demand. There is currently a waiting list for available plots.



Plots at Harry Otsubo Community Gardens are open to Dana Point residents.



On Registration Day, residents gather to obtain garden plots.

At this year's registration event, **Brooke Cuevas**, fourth generation owner of **Dana Point Nursery**, welcomed both new and returning gardeners. She shared the history of her great-grandfather and provided every gardener with free vegetable and herb plants along with a bag of soil, continuing her family's long-standing commitment to community and education.

For more information about renting a garden plot or to be placed on the waiting list, residents may contact the City of Dana Point General Services Department at (949) 248-3502.



Brooke Cuevas gives a presentation at Registration Day.



DANA POINT THIS MONTH

FARMERS MARKET AND CRAFT VENDORS

Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
La Plaza Park

WHALE WALK AND TALK

Saturday, January 10, 9 to 11 a.m.
Dana Point Headlands
Docent led interpretive walk focusing on what

types of marine mammals we see, how to identify them, where and when to look for them, and how to responsibly view marine life.
dpnaturalresources@danapoint.org



HERITAGE PARK RETURNING HOME MONUMENT

The City of Dana Point and the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group have formed a partnership to revitalize a public space in Heritage Park to honor the service of men and women of all military branches. The area will include a powerful bronze sculpture entitled *Returning Home* (pictured here) by artist Sutton Betti, along with a Wall of Honor, commemorative bronze plaques and inscribed pavers.

If you would like to support this project, the 5th Marine Regiment Support Group President Terry Rifkin says, "Donations of any amount are deeply appreciated. Every dollar brings us closer to honoring the heroes who protect our freedoms and those families who love them ... We are a volunteer support group, receive no salaries, and keep operating expenses to a minimum so any funds raised beyond the cost of the *Returning Home* monument will go directly to supporting the Marines, Sailors, and families of the 5th Marine Regiment."

See photos and descriptions of this project at DanaPoint5thMarines.com or request more information at info@DanaPoint5thMarines.com.



Wellness - New Year, New Mindset

I was walking up the ramp from Strands Beach enjoying the beauty of the ocean on a bright, sunny day in early January. The sound of the gulls, the breaking waves, and the smell of the salt air were intoxicating. It was gorgeous! I stopped to take it all in, along with the beautiful view, and was reminded of how blessed we are to be here on the threshold of yet another new year. The past twelve months seem to have flown by and here we are, wondering what the New Year will bring.

It's that wondering that can lead us to stop and take stock of where we are and what we want to do with this gift of time on Planet Earth. We only get one life, but along the way are so many opportunities for new experiences and second chances. As this is a column about wellness, we can start with our health, especially coming off of the indulgent holiday season!



Turning the calendar page over to January can mark a fresh start for the year, but it can also make us look back in dismay at the holiday excesses of food, drink, and physical inactivity. Named after the Roman God Janus,

who had two faces—one to look back and one to look forward—January is a traditional point in time to start anew. Janus' skillset of looking back and also forward into the future is a tool that we can use to establish a mindset that will guide us on a path of healthy living. If our clothes are too tight or our blood sugar, cholesterol, or triglycerides are too high, we can look at our recent behaviors, learn from them, and look forward to improved health by making corrections in our lifestyle that will lead to a healthier body and mind. Get some exercise, eat healthy food, stay hydrated, get restorative sleep, hang out with like-minded people, and remain aware of what we do. In other words, pay attention! If we aren't mindful of our decisions and actions, it's very easy to fall back into poor habits.

Maintaining the awareness that supports our health goals is key to long term wellness. Take some time to create your own personal path to good health and walk it every day. Catch yourself when you're headed back to past poor habits and shift your perspective to your new healthy mindset. It will guide you to a healthier new you in the New Year!

To Your Health! Sharon Stewart RN, Wellness Coach, Sharon@SharonStewartRN.com

JOIN UP!

It's a New Year and a time to get out and join a club in Niguel Shores. We have the **Dippy Dolphins** for those who like to get up early for water exercise on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9 a.m. There's **Bridge** on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. and **Men's Club** the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month starting at 8 a.m. serving a healthy breakfast. The **Women's Club** is the 2nd Thursday starting at Noon serving a great lunch. The **Garden Club** is on the 2nd Monday of the month at 11 a.m. while the **Page Turners** groups meet the last Monday or Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. Several more clubs are looking for members along with NSCA Committees who are looking for volunteers. See the Blue Calendar you receive in your monthly newsletter for dates and times. Please reach out and join.

—Mike Oliva

BOARD ACTION SUMMARY

There was no Board meeting in December 2025. Once approved, the General Session Minutes for November 2025 will be posted on the Bulletin Board across from the NSCA Office entrance and on the NSCA website. In addition, the General Session and Executive Session agendas for the next Board Meeting will also be posted on Friday prior to the next meeting.

THE NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE CLUBHOUSE ON THE 2ND WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.

COYOTE SIGHTINGS

Coyotes were reported in December on Manta Court and in the area of Spinnaker and Leeward. Take care!



Happy
2026

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COMING SOON

Kite Hill bonus room on a cul-de-sac, and large yard, pool, and view!



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Ads for the Seashore News must be submitted by the 15th of the month. Include a check payable to NSCA, \$5 for a maximum of 30 words. Advertisers must fill out a form available at the Association office. Neither NSCA nor the Seashore News assumes responsibility or liability for quality of goods advertised.

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CHEERS!



May all your joys be true joys, and all your pain champagne.

BEST WISHES IN 2026!
The Zoch Family



ACTIVE LISTINGS

The active listing inventory in the past couple of weeks plunged by 268 homes, down 7%, and now stands at 3,629. Last year, there were 3,044 homes on the market, 585 fewer homes, or 16% less.



DEMAND

Buyer demand, the number of pending sales over the prior month, sank by 149 in the past two weeks, down 11%, and now stands at 1,247, its largest drop of the year. Last year, there were 1,310 pending sales, 5% more than today.



MARKET TIME

With demand falling faster than supply, the Expected Market Time, the number of days to sell all O.C. listings at the current buying pace, increased from 84 to 87 days in the past couple of weeks. It is the highest start to December since 2018. Last year, it was 70 days, faster than today.



CLOSED SALES

There were 1,928 closed residential resales in Oct, 5% higher than Oct 2024's 1,842 sales, and up 7% from Sept 2025. The sales-to-list price ratio in O.C. was 98.2%. Foreclosures accounted for 0.2% of all closed sales, and short sales accounted for 0.1%. That means that 99.7% of all sales were sellers with equity.

Chris & Kathy Zoch

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