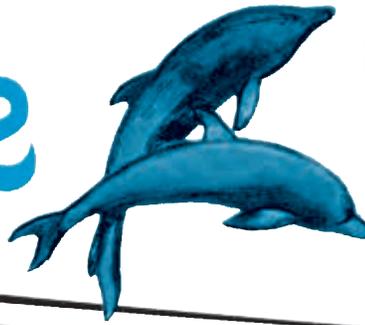


Seashore News



March 2026

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Issue 627

FROM THE HELM

Our Four-Legged Neighbors

On a lighter note this month, let's talk about something many of us see every single day in Niguel Shores—our dogs. Morning and evening, you'll notice it clearly—we are a community of dog lovers. From the bluff to our interior streets and walking trails, our four-legged neighbors are part of daily life. They join us for sunrise walks and sunset strolls, and in many homes they are truly part of the family.

At the same time, dogs are instinct-driven animals. Even well-trained pets can react to energy, body language, or perceived threat. When two dogs meet on a trail, there is often a silent exchange happening before the owners even speak.

A few common canine signals are worth understanding. A tail held high and stiff can signal alertness or dominance. A tail tucked low may indicate fear or anxiety. Raised hackles (the hair along the back) can reflect heightened arousal. Direct, fixed eye contact between dogs can feel like a challenge. Snarling or showing teeth is a clear warning to create space. Even the familiar "butt sniff" is a normal canine greeting—a way of gathering information.

What looks playful to one owner may feel stressful to another dog. Some dogs are highly social. Others may be anxious, reactive on leash, or currently in training. Recognizing this helps us navigate shared spaces more respectfully.

We are fortunate to have beautiful walking paths throughout Niguel Shores. With that privilege comes shared responsibility. A few simple practices go a long way:

- **Dogs must be kept on leash at all times.** Even the most obedient dog can react unpredictably when startled.
- **Respect personal space.** Not every dog—or owner—wants an interaction. Ask before allowing dogs to greet one another. A simple, "Is your dog okay meeting?" can prevent unnecessary stress.
- **Always pick up after your dog and dispose of waste properly in one of our many community receptacles.**
- **Be mindful of children, seniors, and neighbors who may not be comfortable around dogs.** These are not merely rules—they are courtesies that protect everyone and preserve the enjoyment of our shared spaces.

Niguel Shores remains special because we look out for one another. Being a responsible dog owner is not just about caring for your pet; it is about respecting the community we share. Let's continue to make our trails welcoming and safe for both two-legged and four-legged residents.

—Mark Russell



FRIENDS, FOOD, AND A BIT O' IRISH FUN!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. NIGUEL SHORES CLUBHOUSE

Live Comedy Performance

Corned Beef Sandwiches and Other Favorites

Residents are welcome to bring their own beverages (BYOB).

WEAR GREEN! — Costumes Encouraged — Prizes Awarded

FREE EVENT — REGISTRATION REQUIRED! *Residents register in the Office*

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GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Coyote Safety: How to Stay Safe and Coexist Responsibly—Coyotes are intelligent, adaptable animals found in nearly every region of North America. As urban and suburban areas expand into natural habitats, encounters between people and coyotes have become more common. While coyotes generally avoid humans, understanding their behavior and knowing how to respond during an encounter can make all the difference. Coyote safety is about awareness, preparation, and respectful coexistence.

Why Coyotes Appear in Neighborhoods—Coyotes venture into residential areas seeking food such as unsecured trash, pet food, compost, fallen fruit; water from fountains, ponds, irrigation; shelter in brushy areas, under decks, in open spaces; small pets that may resemble natural prey. Recognizing what attracts them is the first step in reducing unwanted visits.

Preventing Coyote Encounters—

- **Secure Food Sources:** Keep garbage cans tightly closed; bring pet food indoors; clean up fallen fruit and outdoor food scraps; avoid feeding wildlife.
- **Protect Your Pets:** Supervise pets outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk. Keep cats indoors whenever possible. Walk dogs on a short, sturdy leash. Use yard fencing at least 6 feet high, ideally with a coyote roller or angled extension.
- **Maintain Your Property:** Trim bushes and remove dense vegetation where coyotes may hide. Close off crawl spaces under decks or sheds. Install motionactivated lights or sprinklers to discourage nighttime visits.

What to Do If You Encounter a Coyote—Coyotes are naturally wary of humans, but they may linger if they've been fed or feel comfortable. If you see one:

- **Stay calm and stand tall.** Do not run—running can trigger a chase response.
- **Make yourself look big.** Raise your arms, wave a jacket, or stand on a rock or curb.
- **Make noise.** Shout, clap, or use a whistle or air horn. This technique is called hazing, and it teaches coyotes to keep their distance.
- **Maintain eye contact and back away slowly.** Give the animal space to leave.
- **Protect children and pets.** Pick up small pets and keep kids close until the coyote moves on.

If a Coyote Approaches Too Closely—A bold or curious coyote may come within a few yards. In that case:

- **Continue hazing** with louder noise and larger gestures.
- **Throw small objects near the coyote** (not at its head)—sticks or gravel—to reinforce boundaries.
- **Move toward a safe area** such as a house, car, or group of people.

Coyotes that do not respond to hazing may be habituated, meaning they've lost their natural fear of humans. These cases should be reported to local wildlife authorities.

Understanding Coyote Behavior—Coyotes communicate with body language and vocalizations. Knowing what you're seeing can help you respond appropriately. Common Behaviors:

- **Curiosity:** A coyote may stop and watch you from a distance.
- **Territorial display:** Raised hackles or a stiff posture means "keep away."
- **Escorting:** Coyotes may follow at a distance to ensure you leave their territory, especially during pup season (spring).
- **Yipping or howling:** Communication with other coyotes, not a sign of aggression toward humans. Coyotes rarely attack people. Most conflicts arise from pets being left unattended or coyotes becoming too comfortable around humans.

Coexisting Safely—Coyotes play an important ecological role by controlling rodent populations and maintaining healthy ecosystems. Coexistence doesn't mean tolerating unsafe behavior, it means setting boundaries that keep both humans and wildlife safe.

When communities follow these practices, coyote encounters become less frequent and far safer.

—John Muller

SEA TERRACE TOWNHOMES

Sea Terrace I

Announcing Sea Terrace I 2026 Board of Directors:

MIKE OLIVA,

President

SANDI STAUFFER,

Paint Chairperson

CATHY TYSON,

Vice President—Elections

SUE KICHLINE, *Treasurer*

GINNY GRAVELY, *Secretary*

Sea Terrace II

Sea Terrace II wants to recognize and thank Adrienne Ruben for her many years serving as the Vice President of our community. Adrienne brought good ideas, enthusiasm and dedication to our residents. Thank you, Adrienne, for your service!



The Sea Terrace II Board will be hosting our annual meeting in May, date to be announced shortly. In addition to a review of our business, we will present several potential projects for owners to garner interest and feedback.

—Sea Terrace II Board

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

New Look—The *Seashore News* now includes a calendar page each month showing community meetings and events. Before this change, you probably remember there was a blue paper calendar printed separately that had to be inserted by hand into each of the 1100 newsletter copies distributed every month. Quite a bit of busy work for our staff and volunteers. But now, just turn to page 14 in this issue and—*voila*—there is the month’s calendar!

Meet Some Neighbors And Serve Our Community—Spend an hour once a month with friendly neighbors and do something helpful for the community as well. We meet at the clubhouse to count copies of *Seashore News* for each street and put them into bags for distribution. That’s it—a quick and easy volunteer opportunity. Email seashorennews@hotmail.com for more information.



Lifeguards?—We’re hoping to find Shores residents who are (or have been) lifeguards at pools, lakes, or beaches over the years. Guards, junior guards, former or current guards—let us hear from you. Send an email to seashorennews@hotmail.com and we will reply with details.

Online Directory—Check our community website at niguelshores.org for the NSCA Directory with contact information for our Association Board, Committees, Management, Clubs, Sub-Associations and Patrol.

—Communication Committee

EVENTS COMMITTEE

Friends, Food, and a Bit o’ Irish Fun!—Niguel Shores residents are invited to a festive **St. Patrick’s Day Party on Tuesday, March 17, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** in the **Clubhouse**. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. This **free** event promises a fun and social evening with neighbors.

You are welcome to bring your own beverages (BYOB) and enjoy a generous charcuterie station, including corned beef sandwiches and other festive favorites.

RSVP Required—Residents may sign up in the office to reserve their spot.

Special Comedy Performance—The highlight of the evening will be a live comedy performance by **Frances**

Dilorinzo, beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m. Frances is an accomplished comedian who has entertained audiences on multiple continents at corporate events and is a featured performer on major cruise lines, including Celebrity, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean, and Holland America. *Frances Dilorinzo* Known for her fun, clean comedy, Frances brings a lively and engaging style that will make this a memorable evening. We are delighted to welcome her to Niguel Shores.



Wear Your Green!—Costumes and festive attire are encouraged. Leprechauns will be judging, and prizes will be awarded.

—Events Committee

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

The Niguel Shores Historical Committee has identified many of our long-time residents and is in the process of meeting with them and recording interviews that will be transcribed and printed. Those interviews will be documented and preserved as part of our collection of Niguel Shores history.

In addition, the Committee continues to collect photos, documents, and other material of interest that will be numbered, digitized and preserved. Many thanks to those residents who have sent items recounting their experiences here.

The Committee is planning a celebratory **Afternoon Tea** in the Clubhouse on April 21 to honor those long-time residents who have contributed over the years to the Niguel Shores that we know today. For this gathering, there will be displays of historical items that have been collected, and we will share the stories of our earliest residents.



Historical Committee members in discussion at the Dana Point Historical Society office (clockwise from left) DP Historical Society member Keith Johannes, Mary Crowl, Sandy Homicz, Tarun Anand, Nancy Tinnes, Laurel Yocca, and Heather Harding.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

We appreciate your contributions of Niguel Shores memorabilia and stories. Thanks to you, future residents will be able to view and read about their past in our collected materials.

If you have something to share, contact nshistoricalcommittee@hotmail.com.

—Mary Crowl

LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE

At our monthly meetings, Landscape Committee Volunteers share reports regarding general maintenance progress observed in their areas as well as requests for additional work that may include removing plants, trimming overgrown shrubs, and treating asparagus ferns, pepper tree branches, and weeds.

We also collaborate on specific projects to improve community-wide landscaping by implementing the new plant palette throughout Niguel Shores.

Next up in this regard? Completing the areas adjacent to the Niguel Shores clubhouse: the area between the clubhouse parking and street level parking along Niguel Shores Drive, as well as the areas adjacent to the pickleball and tennis courts.

Managing our budget is central to our decision making and determines which projects will be completed this year. Stay tuned for our progress!

—Vicki Sheff

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

A Fresh Look for Our Streets: The Signage Refurbishment Project—If you’ve taken a stroll through our neighborhood lately, you probably noticed our street signs looking a bit sharper. After years of enduring the coastal salt air and sun, the iconic wooden signposts were in dire need of a facelift due to significant moisture and weather damage. In addition, many of the solar lights needed repair, so the Maintenance Committee and our Facilities Manager moved to address the situation.

We found that this sign renovation project carries a deep history. Years ago, a talented woodworker within our community created the original dolphin template that gives our street signs their unique character. When the time came to restore the dolphins, the committee initially struggled to find the “perfect,



authentic grey” paint for the dolphins. But **Committee Chairperson Suzanne Enis** proposed a more cohesive vision: matching the dolphins to the signature blue used in universal signage throughout Niguel Shores. **Facilities Manager Bob Everson** tracked down the exact color specifications, Suzanne sourced the paint from Ganahl Lumber, and the work began.

Honoring the Craftsmanship—We owe **Al Glatt** a huge debt of gratitude for all his hard work and effort on this project! While Al and Suzanne originally kicked off the refurbishing project together, the lion’s share of the labor has fallen to Al. He has gone above and beyond, rebuilding the posts and replacing numerous dolphins by hand in his wood work shop at home. Supporting this effort, the Maintenance Team replaced roughly a dozen concrete footings and brackets to ensure the signs will stand level and sturdy for years to come. Al recently provided an impressive update: **78 street signposts have been reworked**. As of this writing, only one post remains for sanding and painting, and two final dolphins are slated for replacement on Ports of Call. **Thank you, Al, for taking on this project with such skill and craftsmanship!**

Looking Ahead—Once the street signs are complete, Maintenance will shift focus to the light poles in the clubhouse parking lot. Following that, we will begin refurbishing our wooden mailbox structures. **We are currently looking for a new volunteer to lead the mailbox phase.** If you have a passion for keeping our community beautiful, we would love your help as we continue to keep Niguel Shores the extremely well maintained community we all love!

—Geoff Dunlevie

4TH OF JULY COMMITTEE

Open House Success—Niguel Shores 4th of July Committee extends many thanks to all the residents who came out to support the February Open House/Happy Hour dedicated to planning this year’s 4th of July festivities. More than 50 residents gathered for a lively afternoon filled with great food and beverages and neighbors ready to hear the Committee’s plans for honoring **America’s 250th 4th of July**. The large turnout was a real testament to the community spirit that is very much a part of Niguel Shores. It shows what an important part of our community the 4th of July Celebration has long been.

The Open House/Happy Hour was a great opportunity for residents to meet with committee members and coordinators of different activities to learn what’s being planned and see where and how they may want to participate. Presently,

COMMITTEE REPORTS

committees are being formed to oversee the parade, games in the park and sport court, the hot dog lunch, the Men's Club Breakfast, Women's Club Bake Sale and Cakewalk, and the grand finale at the Bluff in the evening. There are also sponsorship opportunities for residents to be involved if they choose.

Learn More—If you missed this event and want further information on our plans, please reach out to

committee members via email at niguelshoresjuly4thcommittee@yahoo.com.

Another Open House is in the planning stages, so stay tuned for more information and the many ways you can become a part of our July 4th Celebration in honor of America's 250th. We need your time and talent. After all, "It really does take a village."

—Patti Staudenbaur

CLUBS

WOMEN'S CLUB

February Recap—The February Galentine's social event in our community park was a joyful success! About sixty ladies gathered for rock painting and valentine goody bag making, spreading smiles and a little extra love (and chocolates) throughout the Shores.

At our luncheon on February 12, we welcomed musician and educator **Megan Waters** for a heartfelt and memorable afternoon. Megan, Director of Worship and Arts at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church, shared her gift for bringing people together through music. She led the room in a lively singalong of "You Are My Sunshine," and later she and her husband, **Alec**, treated us to beautiful renditions of the Indigo Girls' "Power of Two" and the 1950s/60s favorite "Fly Me to the Moon."

Megan invited us to think about the "soundtrack of our lives"—those songs that instantly carry us back to a special moment. The room buzzed as women shared tunes tied to love stories, beach days, first dances at weddings, and those after-school sing-at-the-top-of-your-lungs afternoons. Maybe a few of the songs mentioned bring back memories for you, too: "Respect," "Dancing Queen," "On Eagle's Wings," or "Yesterday." As she proved, it's amazing how just a few notes can transport you in an instant.

This Month's Spotlight—Next up, join us on **Thursday, March 12 at Noon** in the Clubhouse, when Women's Club regulars **Nancy Tinnes** and **Anna Kwit** will share stories from their worldwide careers as flight attendants. With a dash of airline history, a little chance romance, high-flying adventure—and a few tales of white-knuckled turbulence—their presentation is sure to keep us entertained from takeoff to landing.



Megan and Alec Waters brought "The Soundtrack of Our Lives" to the February luncheon.



Home Tour—Our extremely popular Home Tour, "It's a Shores Thing," is Thursday, April 9. The sold-out event begins with Coastal Bites at check-in, then features a tour of six beautiful homes, and concludes with a catered lunch.

Upcoming Events

3/12—Lunch Meeting featuring Nancy Tinnes and Anna Kwit

3/24—Social Activity: Movie Outing to *Reminders of Him*

4/9—Home Tour: *Inspiring Spaces: It's a Shores Thing*

—Karey Palmer

MEN'S CLUB

Insightful February Speakers—The Niguel Shores Men's Club hit the ground running this February with two breakfast meetings that were as informative as they were well-attended. We kicked things off with **Thomas Snow**, a Certified Financial Planner, who provided a masterclass in retirement strategy. From navigating long-term goals to the immediate tax advantages, Thomas left us with a vital checklist of questions every member should be asking their financial advisor.

Our second meeting shifted focus toward the water with **Sophia** Sophia Peters



CLUBS

Peters, Development and Donor Relations Coordinator for the **Ocean Institute**. As the Dana Point Harbor redevelopment progresses, Sophia shared an inspiring look at the Institute's future plans, ensuring it remains a crown jewel of our harbor and coastline.

Looking Ahead to March—Our stellar lineup for March starts with breakfast on **Tuesday, March 3**, with the always-engaging **Donna Kalez** from **Dana Wharf Sportfishing**. Whether you're an avid angler or just love harbor lore, Donna is a local favorite you won't want to miss.



Donna Kalez



Donna Kalez

Then, grab your green attire for our **St. Patrick's Day Breakfast, March 17**. We'll be joined by **Caroline Swift** of **Cruise Planners**. If you've been dreaming of your next big getaway, Caroline will be there to provide the spark and the expertise to get you moving.

A Special April Event—Mark your calendars for **April 7**, as we are trading our morning coffee for a **Private Lunch and Wine Tasting** at **The Wine Experience**.

From 12 to 2:00 p.m. members and guests can enjoy a family-style lunch complete with appetizers, dessert, and premium tastings. Tickets are **\$50 per person**, available for purchase at our upcoming meetings. You can also reserve your spot by contacting Club VP **John E. Chis** at johnechis@outlook.com. Guests and "special someones" are more than welcome—come join us for an afternoon of fine wine and great company!

—Geoff Dunlevie

GARDEN CLUB

A Busy February—Last month was busy for the Garden Club! **Kaitai Hoffman**, Vice President of the **Niguel Botanical Preserve**, gave a wonderful overview of the beautiful Mediterranean gardens found in the preserve. Located just off Crown Valley behind the YMCA, it's definitely worth a visit and stroll through the grounds which include a labyrinth, gazebo, butterfly and rose gardens, a Girl Scout tree grove and Boy Scout trail.

Later in the month we hosted a **Milkweed Workshop** on the clubhouse patio, focused on cultivating the Monarch butterfly's habitat in Niguel Shores. Open to all Niguel Shores residents, including children and grandchildren, all participants were provided the supplies needed to pot and plant milkweed seeds, with hands-on guidance by Garden Club members. The result: more than 100 milkweed pots are now in homes throughout the community where participants can watch them sprout, grow, and attract butterflies.

Coming Up in March—Orchids are the focus of our next meeting on **Monday, March 9 at 11 a.m.** in the **Clubhouse**. Orchid expert **Brenda Ward** will share her knowledge on everything you need to know about orchids. One the oldest and largest flowering plant families, orchids originated approximately 66 to 100 million years ago, with early cultivation of orchids in China and Japan dating back to at least 500 B.C. With more than 25,000 recognized species, orchids adapt to almost any habitat globally. Join us at the March meeting and start cultivating your own orchids!

Not a Garden Club member? Non-members are welcome to attend for a \$5 guest fee. Want to become a member? Sign-up forms are available in the Niguel Shores office, or email mariettahannigan@yahoo.com.

—Judi Palladino

Announcing...

MEN'S CLUB ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Niguel Shores Men's Club will award one \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating high school senior who resides in Niguel Shores.



Applicants can attend any local high school.

Applicants must have plans to attend a university, junior college, or trade school.

To receive an application, email Geoff Dunlevie, Men's Club President: gdunlevie@gmail.com

Completed applications are due by April 30.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Meet **Patti and Phil Sollenberger**, who relocated to Dana Point from Pennsylvania several years ago. When they considered places to live after retirement, one overriding factor made their decision easy. All three of their adult children had moved to the west coast. So Patti and Phil headed to California, viewing countless homes from Santa Monica to La Jolla until finally they found what they were looking for here in Niguel Shores.

Patti and Phil were both born in Pennsylvania, Patti in the Philadelphia area and Phil in Harrisburg. **Patti** attended Shippensburg University and then taught for a Headstart Program in Appalachian Pennsylvania—an experience she cherished, one that solidified her love for teaching. She eventually went on to earn both her Master's in Reading and her Doctorate in Psychological Studies from Temple University.

Phil earned a degree in Economics from the University of Pittsburgh and went on to work initially on a desalination project with a power plant and then as purchasing manager for a building and construction firm.



After teaching in inner city Harrisburg and working as a Reading Specialist in rural Lancaster County, **Patti**, a member of the State Reading Council, applied for a \$500 research grant. Thus began her program, **Reading A Family Affair**, featuring leveled books chosen for reading recovery, a literacy intervention helping students reach grade level. Patti then created **Reading Matters**, an enterprise spreading the joy of literacy by providing access to various leveled books. The company grew through word of mouth and appearances at national conferences such as the National Reading Recovery Conference. What started as a reading project in their

basement, moved to the garage and eventually included the purchase of a warehouse and offices. **Phil** also joined the company with his background in business, and **Reading Matters** continued to grow for 20 successful years. They then decided to sell and retire in order to enjoy more time for travel, hobbies, and family.

When we asked how the couple met, Patti said they met in a parking lot. Obviously, there was more to that story. Patti was out one evening with a group of teaching friends and they spotted Phil on the way to his car. Patti thought he looked interesting and decided (with a little encouragement from her friends) to ask if he would join her for a drink. As we so often say, the rest is history.

The Sollenbergers have three children—Randy, Katie, and Kevin. **Randy** lives in LA with his wife and children, **Holden** and **Nora**. In college, he took an internship with Mark Burnett and worked on *Survivor* followed by *The Voice* (giving Patti the opportunity to sit in John Legend's chair). Randy currently works for the NFL producing online content and oversees the photographers on the field (so, yes, Phil has had the opportunity to attend the Super Bowl). **Katie** loved the idea of living in California so she moved to LA and now teaches in Redondo Beach. She and her husband have two daughters, **Waverly** and **Ellie**. Adventurous **Kevin** lives in Portland, loves flying, skiing, and any extreme outdoor experiences.



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

In retirement, Patti and Phil are exploring California, often cruising up and down the coast in their Sprinter van. They also take a couple of international trips a year and enjoy family outings with their kids and grandkids. Something special happens each summer when Patti and Phil, as Tootie and Pop-Pop, host the grandkids at “Tootie Camp” here. The weekend includes invitations, matching PJs, cooking, pool, games, beach time (volcano on the beach!), and a Pop-Pop Workshop (think marshmallow guns and ping pong ball launchers).

The Sollenbergers also make time for their individual interests. **Phil** plays tennis and manages to get in a couple of ski trips a year to Mammoth, as well as an occasional Niguel Shores poker game. **Patti** loves cooking, is an active member of Dippy Dolphins and the Women’s Club, and participates in several wellness retreats a year.



The one interest both Phil and Patti share is their commitment to **CASA of Orange County**. CASA stands for **Court Appointed Special Advocates**, and about four years ago, the Sollenbergers decided to become CASA Advocates. They volunteer to mentor and advocate for children in the Foster Care system, typically spending a couple of times a month with the youths assigned to them. They plan special outings with the kids and also meet with teachers, foster parents, and social workers. An important aspect of their role is

to provide input to the courts on the child’s circumstances and best interests. This is a commitment the Sollenbergers are especially proud of and take very seriously. For more information on CASA of Orange County, email info@cas-aoc.org or phone (714) 619-5151.

—Patti Staudenbaur and Michelle Ralph

WHAT MAKES A GOOD NEIGHBOR?

It’s not simply a one-time grand gesture that defines neighborliness. Being a good neighbor begins with small, steady gestures that make a community feel like home. It’s a wave across the driveway, a shared smile on a morning walk, the quiet check-in when someone seems to need help. Good neighbors listen, lend a hand without keeping score, and celebrate each other’s joys. They respect boundaries while offering warmth, and they offer a space where others feel seen and heard. In a world that moves quickly and often seems impersonal, being a good neighbor is a gentle reminder that kindness still shapes our days, one simple act at a time.

Come Aboard!

**NIGUEL SHORES JULY 4TH CELEBRATION
HONORING AMERICA’S 250TH BIRTHDAY!**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 — 3 to 5 p.m.
NIGUEL SHORES CLUBHOUSE**

**Committees are forming now
for Niguel Shores 4th of July Celebration**

If you would like to help, contact
NiguelShoresJuly4thCommittee@yahoo.com



Moments, Memories, Tales and Treasures

**CALLING ALL LONG TIME
RESIDENTS!**

The Niguel Shores Historical Committee
is seeking stories and material from
the early years of our community.

If you are an owner from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and
you have something to share, we would like to hear
from you!

Contact NSHistoricalCommittee@hotmail.com

TRAVEL TALK — Japan by Seasons

Most people thinking of a trip to Japan find the **fall** and **spring** are popular times to visit. The **summer** offers colorful parades and fireworks displays, though the weather can be hot and rainy. Avid skiers may want to visit Japan's northern island of Hokkaido in **winter** for its excellent snow. However, most travelers will visit either in **fall** when the autumn leaves create spectacular color and villages feature festivals with unique parade floats, or in the **spring** cherry blossom season (sakura season)—Japan's most iconic time. From mid-March through early May, starting in the south and moving northward as the weather warms, the country transforms into a pink and white landscape as cherry trees bloom and people celebrate with picnics, festivals, and evening illuminations.

Japan in Spring

Last spring, Tyler and I slipped away from Niguel Shores with his grandmother to experience Japan's extraordinary cherry blossom season. Tyler, who is 17 and has special needs, embraced every moment with a sense of wonder that made the journey especially meaningful. While the delicate pink blossoms and sweeping landscapes were breathtaking beyond words, it was the cultural immersion that stayed with me most. We participated in a traditional watercolor painting class



inspired by the blossoms and spent peaceful mornings in neighborhood parks watching locals practice yoga beneath the flowering trees. We also visited the Osaka World Expo, where the vibrant energy and spirit of innovation offered a striking contrast to the quiet, timeless beauty of the sakura. Experiencing Japan through Tyler's eyes, alongside his grandmother, made the journey not just beautiful, but deeply personal and unforgettable.

—Joy Justus

Japan in Fall

My husband Ray and I spent several weeks in Japan during the fall a few years ago. We enjoyed beautiful autumn color on the trees, local festivals, parades with "floats" carried by walkers on stilts, gracious polite people, villages preserved as heritage sites, and of course the major tourist places. There were dozens of spots worth mentioning but some stand out: Nara Park with its giant Buddha and friendly deer; Hiroshima Peace Park; bustling Tokyo; the mystic feel at Miyajima's temple and floating Torii gate; Kyoto's ancient cultural heritage, Hakone's swan boats and



view of Mr. Fuji. We rode a sky tram up a sulfuric mountain, tasted black eggs, walked through the famed "1000" red torii gates, climbed to the top of Matsumoto and White Heron castles, walked streets of samurai houses, attended a tea ceremony and kabuki theater, hung paper fortunes on trees or placed them in the smoke

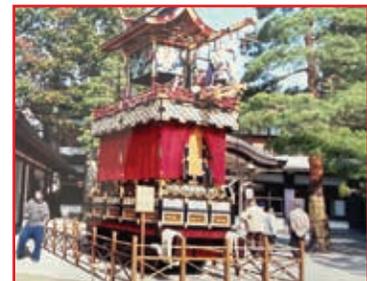


at temples, wore pajamas to communal baths, spotted geishas out at night, visited museums and the Golden Pavillion, stayed both in big hotels and tatami mat-sized accommodations, tried unknown foods, rode the Bullet Train, pondered the unusual toilets, and were amazed to find large shopping malls in transportation stations. There is much to marvel in this country so rich



in tradition and yet so modern in its daily activity. Overall, our advice is to visit and be immersed in *Omotenashi* (spirit of hospitality), *Mono no aware* (awareness of life's fleeting beauty), and *Wa* (harmony, balance, and cohesion).

—Sandy Homicz



West Meets East

Last October, my travel companion Jean and I set off on Road Scholar's 16-day tour to become better acquainted with **Japan**. We were surprised to learn how little we knew about this fascinating country, its history and its culture.

In our defense, much of the former Japanese Empire has been an enigma to the Western Hemisphere throughout history. In part, the country's geography explains why its focus remained internal rather than external: Japan is an archipelago located at the edge of a vast Asian continent, predominantly mountainous in terrain and difficult to traverse.

Although "westernized" since the mid-nineteenth century, a surprising number of Japan's current practices remain rooted in the eastern civilization of its origin. It seemed we needed to walk each day's path with one foot in the Western present and one in the Eastern past.



Our tour, "Cultural Highlights of Japan," took us from **Tokyo**, Japan's current capital, to its ancient capital of **Kyoto**. Kyoto was the realm of the Emperor, while Tokyo, formerly Edo, was the seat of the Tokugawa

Shogunate during Japan's feudal period (1603-1868). Point of interest: Look at the two syllables in the names of Japan's former and current capitals: *Kyo* and *To*. Have you ever juxtaposed them? *Kyo-to* versus *To-kyo*? I hadn't! (Editor's Note: One explanation might be that *kyo* refers to *the capital city* while *to* is a connecting particle but can also mean *east*. Old Edo was east of the former capital Kyo, hence *To-kyo*.)



Our route was picturesque, crossing fruitful plains and pine-covered mountains, snaking through numerous tunnels. The itinerary included historic palaces, feudal castles, Shinto shrines, and Buddhist temples with stunning landscapes and pristinely raked gardens. We strolled Tokyo's Imperial grounds and Kyoto's famed Geisha teahouse

district of Gian. The highly stylized performances of Kabuki and Noh theatre were tour highlights. We also participated in hands-on workshops like roof thatching, silk-screening, and miso fermentation.

The trip reinforced the impression that Japan's artistic heritage is extraordinary, with its meticulous attention to detail and exquisite design sense. From architecture to paintings, textiles, ceramics, floral arrangements, paper and calligraphy—elegant simplicity prevails. Beauty is even evident in the intricately fabricated armor and weaponry worn by Samurais warriors, those fierce defenders of the bygone Shogunate. Modern Japanese artisans continue to respect this legacy, even as they create today for contemporary tastes.



Artistry also appears in Japanese cuisine, renowned for its healthful aspects and beauty. Our multiple-course meals reminded us of edible artists' palettes, where collages of food bites were presented on plates of various shapes and sizes. For those less enamored of various tidbits, rest assured that staples such as steamed rice, noodles and miso are ubiquitous and in plentiful supply. Fish is always available, whether dried, cooked or raw. Coffee-lovers will find it is appreciated as much as tea, and those of us used to steeped tea were startled to sample matcha—a robust, vibrant green, powdered tea made from shade-grown leaves, considered (and tasting) highly medicinal.

Japanese attention to detail is also evident in social interactions. Tea ceremony intricacies are familiar to many. But there is also a correct way to use chopsticks; fold the front of a kimono (one way is reserved for

a corpse); present a business card (or credit card); or greet a new acquaintance with a bow and inclination of head (for heaven's sake, don't extend your hand!).

We also learned to operate multi-function toilets, slide shoes on and off where appropriate, and shed modesty (and all clothing) before entering a communal bath (separated by sex nowadays) to relax in natural hot spring water.



Our traditionally-styled Japanese accommodations were comfortable and well-equipped, but often quite small (sometimes alarmingly so). The quaint Japanese custom of providing pajamas or nightwear for guests came in handy, as Jean realized she had forgotten to pack hers!

While exploring Japan's historic and cultural sites, we experienced countless delights and surprises. We found that travel abroad invites, also forces us, to grow beyond our comfort level. Don't be afraid to be "dis-oriented!"

—Bonnie Myers

Sake with Susan

Before I moved into Niguel Shores 26 years ago, I lived in Tokyo for three years teaching English and traveling the country to absorb as much as possible. I love Japan so much that I try to make it back once a year.



Last year I went once with my three adult daughters along the Golden Route through Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto; and once with my husband to ski the incredible powder in northern Japan and

check off a bucket list item by attending the Sapporo Snow Festival.

I find so much joy in writing about Japan that last year I started a blog called *Sake with Susan*, which focuses on families traveling to Japan with their grown kids, though the information applies to all Japan travelers. You can visit the blog at sakewithsusan.com for



articles like "Japan Travel Costs for Families in 2026," "A Complete 5-Day Tokyo Itinerary," "Must-See Attractions in Kyoto," and "Must-Visit Ski Areas in Japan." I hope you enjoy it!

—Susan Meredith



Players Behind the Paddles

Springtime at Niguel Shores brings more than longer days and warm ocean breezes—it brings new energy to our courts. This month we spotlight a few players in our Pickleball community. From long time family ties to fresh starts in Niguel Shores, each has found something special on our courts—and each has a goal for the season ahead.

Todd Littleworth

What brought you to Niguel Shores?

My parents purchased our home on Hobart Bay when I was 16, back when The Shores was just being developed. We bought an empty lot and would drive in on weekends from Riverside to watch the house take shape. Today, the home is owned by my sister and brother-in-law, my wife and me, and we recently completed a refresh. I've been spending more time here as we finish the work, reconnecting with a place that's meant a great deal to our family for many years.



How did you get started playing Pickleball?

I retired from Chevron in October and started playing Pickleball in November. In the past several weeks, I've joined the group here at the Shores, which has been a great way to meet people since we've always been temporary residents.

What do you like most about Pickleball?

After more than 20 years away from any kind of competitive sports, I have to say I've really enjoyed coming home from the courts hot, tired, and ready for a shower!

What is one part of your game you would like to work on this spring?

I'm going to work on my third shot, which I've learned should often be short.

Denise Gass

What brought you to Niguel Shores?

My husband and I moved to Niguel Shores in 1986.

How did you get started playing Pickleball?

A friend introduced me to Pickleball about three years ago.



After her introduction, I signed up for a beginner's class and have been playing to learn ever since.

What do you like most about Pickleball?

I love the exercise, strategy, and meeting so many nice people. It's joyful fun!

What is one part of your game you would like to work on this spring?

I'd like to work on returning down the line and deep center shots and my strategic placement of the ball.

Stephanie Delirgio

What brought you to Niguel Shores?

I lived in Dana Point years ago and was looking to come back from Northern California now that my kids have grown up. Niguel Shores stood out for location and wonderful amenities, especially Pickleball. Everyone has been so nice and welcoming since I moved here in December.



How did you get started playing Pickleball?

My gym offered indoor Pickleball open play and I took a chance to try it out. I quickly learned the game and met so many great people through the sport.

What do you like most about playing Pickleball?

I love meeting new people and enjoying the wonderful Dana Point weather. Niguel Shores courts are an ideal way to get to know people in our community.

What is one part of your game you would like to work on this Spring?

I'd like to improve my accuracy placing the ball in the intended (and hopefully strategic) spot.

What stands out in each story is something we all recognize: Pickleball isn't just about competing or improving a third shot drop. It's about connection. It's about showing up, meeting neighbors, learning, laughing, and leaving the courts just a little hot, tired and happy.

As we head into spring at the Shores, let's remember to welcome new players, refine your game and enjoy every rally along the way. See you on the courts!

—Susan Whittlesey

ACTIVITIES

CARDS: ANYTIME'S A GOOD TIME

Getting together over a game of cards is great for socializing and honing gaming skills at the same time. Around the neighborhood, we found a ladies's group gathered for a



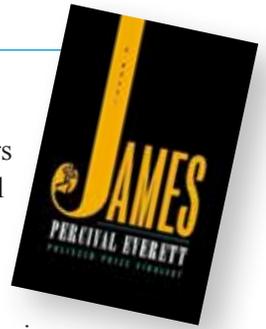
game of Swoosh on a Tuesday evening, and a men's group playing Poker on a Wednesday afternoon. Shuffle, cut, play!



“Like life, a game of cards is really about good company and making the most of whatever hand comes your way.”

PAGE TURNERS

This month, members of Page Turners book club are reading *James* by Percival Everett. This very popular novel retells Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* but from the perspective of the enslaved Jim (known in Everett's version as James). The novel has won several awards, most notably the 2025 Pulitzer Prize.



I found it very interesting to read reviews of this novel because of the varied opinions that reviewers expressed. Most were positive, but a couple were very negative mainly addressing the differences between Twain's story and Everett's retelling. Should make for an interesting discussion.

As mentioned before, the book club consists of three groups of approximately 12 members each. We always welcome new people so feel free to visit one of the groups. Two groups meet the fourth Thursday afternoon of the month and the other group meets the fourth Monday afternoon of the month. For more information you can contact one of the coordinators, **Steve and Ann Morris** at sam-wrsi@cox.net, **Lisa Buchner** at lisabuchner47@gmail.com, or myself at fozimec@cox.net. We look forward to hearing from you.

—Frances Ozimec

Wellness – Metabolic Syndrome (MetS)

I left my doctor's office feeling grateful that most of this old body is still functioning well enough to be considered in good health. That's not to say I don't have anything to pay attention to. I do. But none of it is immediately life threatening, at least as far as I can tell.

However, there is something many of us may have going on that we don't pay attention to—something that we can avoid or correct with lifestyle changes. It's called *metabolic syndrome* (MetS) and defined as having at least three of these five risk factors: high blood pressure, abdominal obesity, high fasting blood sugar,



high triglycerides, and low HDL (the “good” cholesterol which we want to be high). All of these, if ignored, can lead to type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke, none of which anyone wants.

Most of these risk factors slowly and silently creep up over time. But at some point, if not checked, these “chickens” will inevitably come home to roost and start causing trouble, you know, health problems. In order to make positive changes in our health, it helps to identify why these conditions came about, and we've heard it before. MetS is generally due to being too sedentary, eating overly processed food, too much salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats, not managing stress. Sound familiar?

We have the power to turn things around by simply taking a brisk walk if we're able, and eating more fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein. Being aware of overreacting to stress, monitoring high blood pressure, and being mindful of what and why we're eating are also critical. If we practice these consistently, over time we'll experience improvement and see the diagnosis of MetS disappear!

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Sunday
<p>This month, both Lent and Ramadan are in progress with fasting, reflection, prayer, and acts of charity. When Lent and Ramadan coincide, as they do this year, religious leaders see a grace-filled opportunity for solidarity and shared reflection as believers slow down, focus on quiet truths, and realign their lives in renewed faith.</p>					1
2 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 9:00 Architecture Committee	3 8:00 Men's Club	4 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 10:30 Bridge	5 10:00 Women's Club Board Meeting	6 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics 10:30 Communication Committee	7 8 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
9 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 11:00 Garden Club AC DEADLINE - 12:00	10 12:00 Events Committee 3:00 Landscape Committee	11 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 10:30 Bridge	12 12:00 Women's Club Luncheon TENNIS & PICKLEBALL COURTS CLOSED 12 to 3 p.m. FOR CLEANING	13 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics	14 15
16 9:00 Architecture Committee 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 12:00 View Preservation Committee	17 8:00 Men's Club 1:00 Historical Committee ST. PATRICK'S CELEBRATION 5:30-7:30	18 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 10:30 Bridge 6:00 NSCA General Session Board Meeting	19 9:00 Maintenance Committee	20 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics	21 22
23 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 1:00 Page Turners 4:00 Finance Committee	24	25 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) 10:30 Bridge STREET SWEEPING	26 1:00 Page Turners TENNIS & PICKLEBALL COURTS CLOSED 12 to 3 p.m. FOR CLEANING	27 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics	28 29
30 9:00 H ₂ O Aerobics (No Instructor) AC DEADLINE - 12:00	31				

NOTE: The last approved NSCA GENERAL SESSION MINUTES are posted on the Bulletin Board across from the NSCA Office entrance and on the Niguel Shores 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.

REMINDER: THE NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE CLUBHOUSE ON THE **3rd WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026, BEGINNING AT 6:00 P.M.**

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Our clubs and committees bring us together in positive ways that energize, inform, spark creativity, build friendships, and benefit the community.

Women's Club Galentine's Day Social Painting



4th of July Happy Hour Planning Meeting



Committee Chairs Marietta Hannigan, Patti Staudenbaur, John Chis, Tim Williams

Men's Club February Breakfast and Speakers



Tom Snow with club officers Steve Stewart and John Chis



John Gabbard

Garden Club Friends and Botanical Garden Speaker



Sandi Stauffer with February speaker Kaitei Hoffman.

DANA POINT THIS MONTH



ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF WHALES

Friday, March 6 through Sunday, March 8

See festivalofwhales.com for details on this exciting weekend of events.



HISTORY OF THE FESTIVAL

Dana Point's Festival of Whales celebrates the annual migration of **California Gray Whales** along our coastline during their journey between the cold waters of Alaska and the warm lagoons of Baja California. The Festival is a significant community event with activities focused on marine education, conservation, and appreciation for these majestic marine mammals.

A MESSAGE ABOUT GRAY WHALES FROM A NIGUEL SHORES RESIDENT

Where Have All the Gray Whales Gone?

I volunteer on the Explorer Research Vessel of the Ocean Institute in Dana Point and routinely collect and test water samples and plankton levels as part of a long-term study by Scripps Institute. I would like to share a growing concern about the alarming decline of our California Gray Whale population.

Declining Population—According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), the Gray Whale population has dropped to less than 13,000 which is **50% less than their peak levels** of about 27,000 in 2016.

Causes and Effects—The primary reason for this population decrease is the decline in food sources in the Gray Whale's Arctic feeding grounds. In order to store up enough fat and energy for their annual 10,000-mile round trip migration to the Baja Mexico mating and birthing lagoons, and then back to the Arctic with their newborns, each Gray Whale needs over 2000 pounds of food per day. They rely on a diet of amphipods—tiny shrimp-like crustaceans found on the sea floor—filtering them from water and mud through their baleen. However, the tiny crustaceans feed on algae growing on Arctic ice packs—and with ocean warming and the melting Arctic ice packs, the crustacean's algae food source is diminishing as the surface area of ice decreases. This means there is less algae to feed the crustaceans that Gray Whales need to consume in massive amounts for survival.

The shortage of food and resulting malnutrition among Gray Whales requires their adaptation to new survival strategies like finding new feeding areas, going further afield for food, and feeding for a month longer than in the past in order to bulk up for

their migration. They have also shown decreased mating behavior resulting in lower birth rates.

The delayed start of migration has resulted in more babies being born before arriving at the safety of the warmer Mexican birthing lagoons, and they are subject to attacks by Orcas both on the way south as newborns and when returning north two to three months later. In recent years Orca whales have even been reported attacking babies in the lagoons because the adult Gray Whale population has declined to the point they can't protect their young as they have in the past. Mothers need to provide about 50 gallons of fatty milk per day to their offspring, who in turn gain 50 pounds of weight or more each day. However, the toll on the mothers, who are often malnourished from the start, means that many don't survive the trip themselves, so they and their babies make up a growing number of fatalities.

A Population in Danger—The current Gray Whale population decline is lasting much longer than previous events (like the 1999–2000 die-off), suggesting the Arctic ecosystem may be changing too rapidly for whales to adapt, especially since they were removed in 1994 from protection under the Endangered Species Act. There is growing concern that if their numbers drop too low there may not be enough mating-age Gray Whales to rebound as they have in the past.

What Can We Do? We can be proactive about climate issues and legislation to protect all aspects of our large scale ecosystems. To learn more and/or support adding our Gray Whales to the Endangered list, go to biologicaldiversity.org.

—Jenny Rose

Past issues of the *Seashore News* from 1973 to present are available online at niguelshores.org.

We would like to hear from you!



Send your comments and suggestions to seashorenews@hotmail.com

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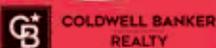
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2015	34	\$1,499,162	\$737
2020	46	\$2,191,182	\$1,015
2025	27	\$3,352,426	\$1,710

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