

Seashore News



October 2020

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Issue 562

FROM THE HELM

Whose Job Is It?

Niguel Shores is comprised of 960 homes plus common areas. Sometimes, residents may wonder about “who does what” in our community, so here is some information:

Board of Directors—The Niguel Shores Community Association Board of Directors is the Association’s decision-making body made up of five elected Directors. The Board directs Management and other HOA vendors. Among other things, the Board sets the rules and hires vendors. The Board will then allow management to carry out the decisions of the Board. A single Director has no power, as each Director has only one vote. The Board makes decisions as a whole and Management enforces those decisions, including instructing vendors.

Management—The Management consists of the Maintenance and Office Management staff. These staff members manage the association and give advice to the Board to help them comply with the Business Judgment Rule. Management does not make decisions, except when the Board specifically delegates something to them to handle. Niguel Shores is lucky to be a self-managed community with employees onsite to help with the daily requests from residents.

Committees—Except for the Architectural Committee and Nominating Committee, which are specifically called out by the governing documents, all other committees are optional and considered advisory committees to the Board of Directors. All committees have a specific role and work within a specific Charter which is approved by the Board of Directors.

Individual Homeowners—Sometimes homeowners feel that they should be allowed to participate in Board



“Fall Flyover”—photo by Nadine Allen
Pelicans in formation over Strands Beach.

meeting deliberations. Or that during a Board meeting the Open Forum portion means that this is a Q&A session. That is not the case. A Board meeting is much like a City Council meeting where an owner is provided an allotted amount of time to speak and the Board listens. No deliberations take place. Owners also sometimes believe that they should give direction to hired vendors or service providers on how to do their job. However, this is the role of the Board and Management, so if a homeowner has a concern the best way to have it addressed is to submit a request through Management. Again, this

is another benefit of having staff onsite.

The NSCA Board, Management, and Committees do their jobs keeping the best interests of the Niguel Shores Community Association and all our homeowners in mind.

—Bob Russell

WHAT'S INSIDE

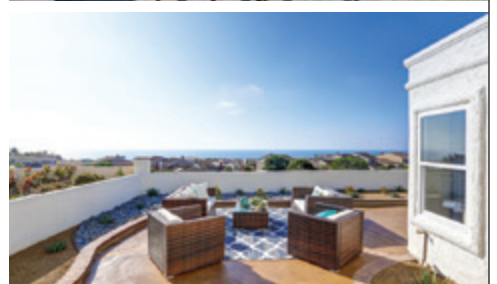
- 3..... **General Manager's Report**
- 4-6..... **Committee Reports**
- 7-9..... **Club News**
- 9..... **Activities**
- 10-11 **Spotlight**—Shores Wildlife Up Close
- 12..... **Family Focus**—School In Session
- 13..... **Meet Your Neighbor**—The Scheers
- 14 **Dana Point This Month**—Construction Update
- 15 **Wellness**—Just Breathe
- 15-16.... **Sports**



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GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Tree Trimming

The annual tree trimming throughout the community began just last month and should be completed before mid-December. Although requests for trimming in common areas are received throughout the year, the fall months are the best time of year to trim the community trees because of the cooler temperatures. Once the tree trimming is completed, the trees should not grow significantly during the winter months and then you can expect them to come back during the spring. The Association will start over again with the same process next fall. Hopefully, the trimmers will get to your area very soon and get the trees trimmed up quickly, but keep in mind that Niguel Shores has thousands of trees throughout the community. Thank you for your patience during this process.

Turf Over-Seeding

Fall is here and now is the time to scalp the warm season turf and over-seed with a cool season turf blend. October is a key transitional month in the turf lifecycle. It is the month when the warm season grasses begin to go dormant, which causes lawns to look dead and brown. Of course, the lawns are not dead, but in order to keep the lawns looking lush and green, the warm season turf needs to be scalped and new cool season turf seed blend needs to be applied.

Although the final results of this process look great, the process itself is somewhat lengthy (approximately 3 to 4 weeks) and not aesthetically pleasing. The process we adhere to is as follows:

- The irrigation will be shut off in all turf areas to allow them to dry out.

- All turf will be cut at the lowest motor setting possible (This will leave exposed dirt and is unattractive).
- The lawns will then be over-seeded with a perennial rye blend and topped with steer manure.
- In approximately one month the seed will begin to germinate and there will be beautiful new grass.
- During this one-month germination period the water will be on several times a day in small increments each time.

As always, the lawn will look bad for a little while but, once seeded and watered heavily, it will come back quickly looking better than ever.

Happy Halloween from all the Niguel Shores Staff. We will

Always remain cheerful when helping you, even in difficult times, and never lose

Patience and understanding. Know that you are all respected for your kindness,

Positive comments, and the ability to treat others as you wish to be treated.

Your staff is always here to help you with any questions you may have at anytime.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Association staff. We will be glad to help you or direct your questions to the proper staff member so that your questions are answered in a timely manner.



—Marla Miller



Issues of the **Seashore News** from 1973 to now are available online at www.niguelshores.org.

We would like to hear from you! Send your comments and suggestions to seashorenews@hotmail.com

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Meet Neighbor)

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Patti Staudenbaur

JoAnne Webb

Meg Wilson

Board of Directors Action Summary for September, 2020 is posted on the Niguel Shores website at www.niguelshores.org.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE

Members of the busy **Architectural Committee** are **Jeanne Sticher** (Chair), **Wendy Cubbon**, **Dave Dowling**, **John Yocca**. The Staff Liaison is **Karen Decker** (Community Association Manager). They meet on the first and third Monday of each month.

The Architectural Committee (AC) is tasked with maintaining the aesthetic look of the homes within the community. It manages this responsibility by reviewing and approving exterior modification applications. The AC operates under the requirements listed in the NSCA Bylaws, CC&Rs, and Rules and Regulations.

—Karen Decker

COMMUNICATIONS

The year 2020 will most certainly be remembered as a very different time not just here in Niguel Shores, but throughout the country. Even so, your NSCA Communications Committee is doing our best to keep all residents informed about the happenings in and outside the gates of Niguel Shores. We encourage all residents to follow us at niguelshores.org for the most up-to-date news including pool, bluff park and office information, as well as when and how meetings are taking place.

In addition to following our community updates on the Niguel Shores website, you can continue to read the *Seashore News* either by the hard copy that is delivered directly to your door each month, or by looking for current and past issues online at niguelshores.org.

First Place Award

This year, as in several previous years, the *Seashore News* received honors from Neighborhoods USA, an organization devoted to recognizing the best efforts of communities across the nation. We were awarded **1st Place** for our online newsletter and **Finalist** for our print version.



Communication Committee Staff Liaison Matt Northrop, and Committee Members Patti Staudenbaur, Sandy Homicz, and Michelle Ralph display the First Place award given to *Seashore News*. Committee members not pictured: Mike Harrod, Kathy Newport, Meg Wilson. Others not pictured: Mike Link, Board Liaison, Marla Miller, General Manager.



Seashore News 2020 First Place and Finalist awards.

Graphics and Layout Designer

Speaking of the *Seashore News*, this is a good opportunity for us to thank our longtime graphics and layout designer, **Mary Francis McGavic**, who gives the newsletter its professional “look” each month. As many of you know, the *Seashore News* has been a tradition in Niguel Shores for nearly fifty years. Our award-winning newsletter grew from a few xeroxed sheets in 1973 to a publication that has grown bigger and better over the years with all the input from our resident contributors. And, quite frankly, Mary McGavic is the one responsible for laying out all our articles, page by page, and making us look so good! Since March of 2007 (more than 13 years!), she has worked behind the scenes every month to make sure we are ready to “go to print” and get to you on time. Thank you, Mary. We very much appreciate all you do for the *Seashore News*!



Mary McGavic, and her pal Bubbles in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

—Patti Staudenbaur

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Can you ever remember dealing with the many challenges we are facing today? More than ever, it’s so important we face reality and cope with these challenges.

Coping strategies take many forms, but we can start by using our own emotional and mental resources to address issues confronting us. Draw upon the strengths that work best for you: Faith, trust, patience, resolve, positive attitude, discipline. Don't give in, don't get discouraged, and make sure you shore up your coping skills head on.

And, yes, as of this mid-September writing, COVID-19 is still a tremendous threat to our physical and mental well being. It won't go away without us practicing all the preventative measures outlined by our healthcare professionals.

Most of these are easy to carry out: Be mindful of personal hygiene (frequent hand washing, using anti-bacterial gel, sanitizing wipes and sprays, wearing masks); distance from others and don't gather in large groups; minimize unnecessary visits to non-essential businesses. (The internet has proven to be a great option to bring the outside world to our doorstep.)

BUT, here's another threat on the horizon: THE SEASONAL FLU!

If COVID-19 cases increase and hospitals are stressed, more people getting the flu shot means fewer people who need to be hospitalized for flu.

COMMITTEE REPORTS



Protect yourself, your family, friends, neighbors, community and health care system by getting a flu shot. The Food and Drug Administration's website at fda.gov shows their recommendations for quadrivalent and trivalent vaccine formulations that include specific A and B strains, depending on the vaccine production method used (egg-based or cell-or-recombinant-based). Your health care professional can provide you with information regarding this year's flu vaccine and the different A and B strains of flu addressed. This year, finally, there are approved quadrivalent high-dose adjuvant vaccines available for people over 65.

The BEST TIME to get a flu shot is NOW.

Stay vigilant, practice preventive health and safety measures, resolve to see the challenges of this time in our lives pass, and be better PREPARED.

—Kent Wellbrock

LANDSCAPE

As a reminder to homeowners, common area landscape concerns must be reported to the NSCA Office by submitting a hard copy of the Homeowner's Request Form (HRF) or using

Service Request Forms:

- [Online Service Request Form](#) (Online Homeowner Request Form)
- [Homeowner Request Form](#) (Printable Hard-Copy Version)

Sample of HRF links on website

the Online Service Request Form at niguelshores.org/148-2/

Once you submit the form, it will then be routed to the appropriate parties to investigate the request. The request can then be tracked and monitored so that you receive a response on the resolution.

—Landscape Committee

MAINTENANCE

The work of the maintenance team never stops.

Clubhouse Refurbishment—By the time you are reading this, the refresh on the interior of the Community Center Clubhouse should be almost complete. Taking advantage of the required closure per COVID-19 requirements, some much needed new carpet, wall coverings and tile have been installed all designed to coordinate with the update done on the lobby/entry last year.

In addition to design changes, the faulty audio-visual system was replaced and the outdated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system is also being addressed for possible replacement due to the ban on R22 refrigerant that dates to 2010.

The haphazard display of plaques and awards was also

redone to give everything a new fresh look. All repairs are being funded out of Reserve Budget.

Curbs, Sidewalks, and Walls—The ongoing maintenance of our curbs and sidewalks is back in swing. Maintenance Committee members have been out observing their assigned areas investigating potential trip hazards and bids are under way.

The Committee approved the repair of the Garibaldi Entrance east wall to repair faulty drainage and peeling stucco as well as some new plantings once complete.

A constant source of needed repair are the sidewalks, rolled curbs and drain outlets being assessed on an as-needed basis and repaired by our maintenance team.

Also under much-needed renovation is the Beach Bluff Stairway. Maintenance staff has replaced the hand rails, posts and the railroad tie retaining wall. Look for this improvement on your next walk down to our beautiful bluff.

Vandalism—We have had an uptick in vandalism in our neighborhood including street signs and residents' flags, so please be on the lookout and report any suspicious behavior to Securitas personnel.

Wildlife—Has anyone noticed the proliferation of bunny rabbits in our open spaces? Well, it appears the neighboring coyote population has, and is visiting with more frequency. Please be careful with your pets, especially with the days getting shorter, which makes letting pets out in your yard or walking them more dangerous in the mornings and evenings.

Thanks!—Thanks as always to George Cooley and our maintenance staff for keeping Niguel Shores an Extremely Well Maintained Community!

—Geoff Dunlevie

PLANNING FOR DISASTER — RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OC FIRE AUTHORITY

Wildfires raging across the western states have touched all of us either personally or through our families or friends. The Orange County Fire Authority website at ocfa.org recommends certain things that may help us in case of disasters such as these devastating fires.

Make an Emergency Plan

- Meet with family, neighbors, friends, coworkers to create an emergency plan.
- In case of evacuation or if family gets separated, designate meeting places outside your home and outside your neighborhood. Plan multiple evacuation routes in case of road closures.



COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Register for AlertOC, Orange County's emergency notification system.
- Establish an out of state contact to receive and relay messages. Provide contact phone numbers for all family members.

Create Emergency Supply Kits

- Prepare kits with enough necessities to last you and your family for at least three days.
- Make sure your kit is portable and easily accessible.
- Consider having smaller kits in your car and at your workplace.
 - Water (1 gallon per person per day)
 - Non-perishable food and manual can opener
 - Battery powered radio and extra batteries
 - Flashlights (one per person) and extra batteries
 - First aid kit, including manual
 - Prescription medications
 - Spare eyeglasses
 - Whistle to signal for help
 - Dust mask to filter contaminated air
 - Personal sanitation items (soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, etc.)
 - Portable shelter (tent, sheet, or blankets with duct tape)
 - Toilet paper and garbage bags for waste
 - Tool kit, including wrench to turn off utilities
 - Heavy gloves for clearing debris
 - ABC fire extinguisher
 - Cooking/eating necessities, including cups, plates, utensils and paper towels
 - Local maps
 - Cash (small bills and change)
 - Copies of important family documents
 - Food, water and supplies for pets

—Orange County Fire Authority Website

RECREATION

Greetings from the **Recreation Committee!** Summer is gone but we are still here and "still open." Thank you all for your patience as we have travelled through our favorite time of the year without a lot of our normal events. We are slowly coming back as safely as we can. Please join us in the following outdoor activities.

October Events:

Halloween Scavenger Hunt – Sun., Oct. 25, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
New event! Have a ghouling good time in your best costume



while walking throughout the neighborhood looking for various Halloween themed items. Meet on the grass in the Community Center Park. Prizes and candy to follow after the hunt is over. Questions? Contact

Rhonda Dunlevie at rhonda@interiorconsultants.net.

Upcoming Events:

Christmas Market – Sat. Nov. 14, 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Come and enjoy all the crafts and ideas from the community for sale at the market. Get your vendor application in the office now if you would like to participate. Only 12 open spots available @ \$15 each. Event will be located outdoors on the grass in the Community Center Park. Interested crafters please contact Nancy Tinnes for more information at (949) 235-2555.

Please continue to be safe and enjoy our community. Practice social distancing and wear your face mask.

—Maria Elena Banks

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

Guest Lists—The summer season has passed, fall is here, and many folks (and stores) are already starting to prepare for the upcoming winter Holidays. While we still have the time, this is a good opportunity for each of us to examine and, if necessary, update our ever-changing guest lists. This simple action may well preclude a lot of frustration during busy times at the gate.



Political Signs—Our rules and regulation allow for political signs on our private property during the campaign period. However, there is a proviso that they be removed as soon as the election is over. A single flag is permitted, but it must be attached to either the house or fence (Rules and Regulations, Modification Restrictions).

With the current COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest, along with a contentious presidential race, some emotions are likely to run higher than they have been. In fact, members of our community have already experienced several acts of vandalism and theft of political signage. Hopefully, there was no malicious intention to these crimes. I am confident that as a group we will continue to respect each other and appreciate everyone's right to express their support for their favorite candidate.

As a last reminder, stealing a sign or maliciously damaging someone's sign or flag are normally misdemeanor crimes and can result in a police record.

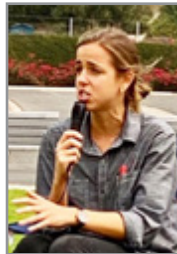
—God Bless . . . Tim Murphy

CLUBS

The **Niguel Shores Women's Club Board** met in early September at **Suzanne Enis'** lovely patio to organize plans for the 2020-2021 NSWC events. The following week, Women's Club greeted 50 of our 115 members who attended our **Welcome Back September Meeting** on the Bluff. It was an incredible day for a picnic lunch enjoying each other's company. Officers and Committee Chairs were introduced along with a quick synopsis of the club's upcoming events.

If you haven't joined a committee yet, please contact one of the Chairpersons listed in your **Membership Directory** to become an active participant in our Women's Club. Many thanks to **Marian Kennedy** and her helpers for putting together this year's new Directory, and to member **Linda Curie** for the beautiful cover illustration.

Mariette MacDonald, supervisor of the new **Moulin** restaurant, spoke at the meeting and she was delightful, answering our many questions with her Parisian accent. Moulin owner Laurent created the cafe as a gathering place with a touch of Paris in Dana Point. Just look for the red umbrellas on the corner of PCH and Ritz Carlton Drive. In fact, our club's Outside Activity for September began at Moulin for coffee and a taste of delicious artisan pastries, and then continued for a walk toward the beach.



Our **October 8 Meeting** will be held on the poolside patio at noon. Since no furniture has been released from storage yet, we ask everyone to bring your own chairs and picnic lunch as we did in September at the Bluff. We'll provide water and iced tea. No charge. Name tags will be available so we can get to know newer members and assist our occasional memory loss for names! Our noted speaker will be a Niguel Shores' neighbor, **Eileen McDargh**, an author, professional speaker and motivator. We look forward to hearing about her public relations experiences



throughout the world. Look for her latest book, *Burnout to Breakthrough*, offering "tips to rediscover your passion, unlock your potential, and recharge your future possibilities." Eileen's lively, humorous, positive presentation skills are a delight. Don't miss hearing her!



On **October 15**, our **Outside Activity** will be to the **Ecology Center** at the historic Congdon farmhouse in San Juan Capistrano. Explore the **Farm Stand** grounds and purchase



locally grown produce, followed by lunch at **Agustin Mexican Restaurant**.

If you have interested Shores friends who may like to visit our club as your guest, please let **Judi Palladio** or **Jennifer Paige** know and we'll have a name tag ready for them. We would love to hear from any female resident wanting to learn about our fun and friendly group! Hope to see you at the October meeting—and we encourage you to wear your autumn colors or your favorite Halloween attire to celebrate this festive fall month.

—Terry Link

Women's Club Outside Activity for September

EVENT: A Visit to the Ecology Center Farm Stand Followed by Lunch at Agustin Mexican Restaurant
DATE: Thursday, October 15 TIME: 10:30 a.m.



SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: Join us to explore the Farm Stand grounds and purchase its fresh locally grown produce. Then have lunch on picnic tables at Agustin Mexican Restaurant.

- The Ecology Center Farm Stand: 32701 Alipaz Street (corner of Camino del Avion), San Juan Capistrano.
 - Agustin Mexican Restaurant: 32382 Del Obispo B6, San Juan Capistrano.
- Mask required at both locations. Credit card only at Farm Stand, no cash.

RSVP to Carla Perin at (949) 689-8831.

CLUBS

MEN'S CLUB

The Men's Club is a great place to make quality friends and learn what is happening in our community and surrounding area. While we can't meet in our clubhouse at present, we are bringing speakers and presenting candidates for the November 3 election to you via **Zoom**.

On September 15, we heard from **Mike Frost**, **Gary Newkirk** and **Benjamin Bebee**, candidates for City Council seats in Districts 4 and 5. It was good to hear fresh thoughts and ideas for our terrific city. Candidates differed with views and plans for development, short term renting, and the homeless situation, but all was done with civility and mutual respect. Districts 1, 2 and 3 are not up for election at this time.

This month, on **October 6**, candidates for **South Coast Water Commissioner** will share information about clean water and efficient waste water projects that are imperative for Southern California residents. Participating candidates are **Rick Erkeneff**, **Doug Erdman**, **Wayne Rayfield** and **Markus Lenger**. Numerous projects in the works for clean water include the Doheny Ocean Desalination plant, the Golden Lantern Bottleneck Project, and the Reservoir Rehabilitation Project. Wastewater projects address the Lift Station 2 Force Main, Lift Station 6 Force Main, and Tunnel Stabilization and Sewer Pipeline Replacement. All are important.

October 20 will give us the big picture from **Congressional District 49** candidate **Bryan Maryott**, who addressed us previously when he and **Mike Levin** were invited to speak. Mike was unable to attend at that time so Bryan addressed us alone. Both candidates have again been invited, with a full hour for each to speak on different days. As of this date, Maryott has agreed to join us, and possibly we can still hear from Levin before the election. Watch your email for further announcements.

The presentations on **October 6** and **20** will again be conducted through Zoom. Our President **John Yocca** will host. To join the Zoom presentation, you can phone (669) 900-6833 or go to [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87147279881?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87147279881?MeetingID:87147279881) Meeting ID: 871 4727 9881. Passcode: 730269.

Please bring your questions for our speakers. Your participation makes for informative and enjoyable meetings.

Meet Club Treasurer Eric Eckes

The first person you probably notice at a Men's Club gathering is Eric Eckes with his big, welcoming smile. He sets the tone for positive meetings and is efficient beyond belief as our Treasurer with his 21 years of experience as CFO of Pacific Rim Capital. Eric successfully organized our highly

successful 2019 Oktoberfest German Dinner and led everyone in a fun-filled night of food, music and dancing. He will head the event again when our facilities are open.

Eric is happily married to Margi, proud of their five kids, and loves dogs. All are often crammed into their golf cart as they warmly interact with the community. The Eckes' home is impressive, with the original owner tied to the racehorse Seabiscuit. Eric met Margi diving in Laguna Beach where he

taught SCUBA part-time. Their passion for diving has taken them to places over most of the world, including Egypt and the Red Sea twice, four times in Indonesia, cave diving in Mexico, great white shark cage diving in Guadalupe, Mexico, and in Tonga to interact with hump-



Eric and Margi Eckes with two of their best friends.

back whales. A very special time was diving Truk Lagoon, in the mid Pacific, where 60 Japanese ships were sunk and 400 aircraft were destroyed during World War II. Eric has explored the ships in the deep lagoon, diving to a depth of 173 feet. Not bad for *any* SCUBA diver!

Our club always welcomes new members, as all clubs do, so please invite friends to join in. As your VP and Program Chair, I want to say thanks for the privilege of being part of such an outstanding club.

—C. W. Gruenig

GARDEN CLUB

We're finally getting off to a new start after such a long pause. I think we've never had so much time on our hands to work in our gardens! During this quarantine, my neighbor and I have spent many hours in my garden. We started calling it the Sanity Garden because it provided such peace. I hope that we all can tend our lovely little Sanity Gardens!

With masks on and bringing our own chairs, our first club event was held on September 21 at the Community Center Park in the grassy area under the shade trees. We enjoyed a boxed lunch from Panera Bread and were happy to visit with our Garden Club friends again. New members and the new Board were introduced. Our 2020-2021 Membership Books were distributed, and we reviewed the goals

CLUBS

and history of our club, which will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary in the spring.

Our agenda for the year will be flexible and developed in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions. Each month members will be emailed with information a week in advance of each meeting (usually the third Monday of each month). If you are interested in joining the Garden Club, please email our Membership Chairperson, **Diane Dale**, at dianedale@cox.net.

Our **October 19** meeting will be a field trip to visit the "Shangri-la" of our neighborhood—**Seaside Growers and Nursery** in San Juan Capistrano, near Costco and the Railroad Tracks. We will meet there at noon for a brief introduction by the owner, **Jim Cassidy**, and then we will be free to look at all the amazing plants! Tropical, Coastal, Natives, and Desert plants will wow you. Your CA Garden Club



Seaside Growers and Nursery

Cards will give you a nice discount, too! You will receive an email the week prior to the meeting giving details, including driving directions. It's a surprising little road to find!

See you then!

—Nadine Allen

ACTIVITIES

PAGE TURNERS

By the time this is published all three groups of Page Turners will have had their first meeting of the new "book club year" in various locations that are different than usual because of these times of social distancing.

October finds us reading a brand new novel by Irish author Anne Griffin—*When All Is Said*—"The tale of a single night. The story of a lifetime." This is Griffin's debut novel and it won the John McGahern Award. (For those who follow Irish literature, that is a very familiar name.) The main character, Maurice Hannigan, is finally ready to tell his story, and I think the following best describes the book: "Over the course of . . . [an] evening, he will raise five toasts to the five people who have meant the most to him. Through these stories—of unspoken joy and regret, a secret tragedy kept hidden, a fierce love that never found its voice—the life of one man will be powerfully and poignantly laid bare." One of the questions we will most likely discuss is, "If you had five people to sum up your life, who would they be, and what would you say about them?"



Page Turners meets on the fourth Monday and fourth Thursday of the month. For information on the Thursday groups please contact **Steve** and **Ann Morris** at samwrsi@cox.net and for the Monday group contact me, **Frances** at fozimec@cox.net.

—Frances Ozimec

REALLY SERIOUS BOOK CLUB

Nothing new but much that is old. No meeting this month. After the Presidential election next month we will sing, "Hail To The Chief—We Promise Not To Give You Any Grief!"

—Norton Schwartz



BRIDGE



Neither August heat, nor September haze, nor a closed October clubhouse can stop a good game of Bridge.

Niguel Shores “Wildlife” Up Close

Bees, bunnies, butterflies, bluebirds, cats, crows, creepers, dogs, doves, ducks, lizards, turtles—what’s in your garden? Thanks to our residents Nadine Allen, Jessina Peterson, and Meg Wilson for catching these shots of Niguel Shores smallest residents, seasonal visitors, and beautiful flowers.



Niguel Shores Bluebird Nestboxes

Not many communities can boast of having bluebirds among their resident families, but Niguel Shores can! Thanks to several of our nature-loving neighbors, past and present, we have an established Bluebird Trail of nine nestboxes placed throughout our common areas. During nesting seasons in spring and summer, the boxes host bluebird couples and their hatchlings (and often provide shelter to other bird species during winter).

The story of how Niguel Shores began hosting bluebirds goes back to 2009, when **Jessina Peterson** was

inspired to hang a Bluebird nestbox in front of her Windjammer home. It took the birds two years to find the box and choose to use it, but eventually they did. Jessina's neighbor **Bob Gutknecht** liked the nestbox idea and they talked about putting up more. So Bob introduced Jessina to **Jerry Koppang**, also a nature enthusiast, and they took a proposal to the NSCA Board in 2013 for permission to install the Western Bluebird nestboxes in common area trees.

Jessina reported previously in the *Seashore News* that one of the boxes installed early that summer was chosen as a nesting site by a pair of bluebirds: "The female bluebird built a nest in the box and laid five eggs. As sometimes happens in nature, only three of the eggs were viable. The parents (along with one of their fledglings from their first clutch that spring) dutifully cared for the hatchlings. By the end of July the baby birds fledged from the nest and joined their parents and older sibling in happily roaming Niguel Shores."

The boxes were left in place in hopes that the birds would find them again the following spring. Jessina cleaned and prepared the nestboxes and, sure enough, by late March of 2014,



Male bluebird, clutch of five bluebird eggs, female bluebird nesting, nestbox in common area tree.



Color the Western Bluebird

nest-building had begun in several of the boxes. She said all nine of the Niguel Shores boxes were monitored throughout the breeding season (March through August). Six were used as nests that produced a total of fifteen bluebird fledglings that year.

Since then, returning bluebird couples, who mate for life and defend their territory, have been nesting in the Shores and producing clutches of tiny blue eggs annually. Many of the fledglings return as adults to a box nearby (but outside their parents' territory) to nest the following

year. Jessina has been cleaning out the boxes yearly and repainting the outside as needed with a pale blue color that keeps the inside cool. She prepares the hanging hooks by twisting pipe cleaner around them and adding Tanglefoot, a natural substance to repel ants. She also lines the interior ceiling with a batting material to prevent wasps from attaching nests there.

The nestboxes, which she obtained from the **Southern California Bluebird Club**, are a specific size, with an entry hole just right for a Western Bluebird (but too small for the cavity-nesting non-native birds like Starlings).

Last month, the **NSCA Recreation Committee** sent us on a **Scavenger Hunt** to find these nestboxes, with five booklets about bluebirds donated as prizes by Jessina. Perhaps on the hunt some lucky people came close enough to hear the birds calling to each other in sweet peaceful trills or even to see them atop a post or tree branch.

Now that we know their nestbox locations, let's ensure that the bluebirds remain our neighbors for many years to come—so don't touch the boxes or scare the birds away. Just enjoy!

—Sandy Homicz



“**W**hat did you learn at school today?” That question probably sounds familiar to most of us, whether we heard it as kids from our parents or asked it of our own children or grandchildren. The question definitely takes a new twist in the current COVID-19 environment. After attending school online for months, by now many students have returned to school, either by continuing virtual learning from their homes or returning to the classroom with modifications in place.

Locally, public health officials announced that Orange County may be allowed to resume in-person instruction starting September 22. However, according to the *Orange County Register*, most O.C. districts are offering a phased return with a hybrid online and in-person format to allow for physical distancing. The **Capistrano Unified School District**, with a K-12 enrollment of 47,000 students, offers a staggered shift to in-person instruction that began with select special education programs on September 28, then kindergarten and first grades on September 29, and second- and third-graders on October 1. Fourth- and fifth-graders would begin in-person instruction on October 5, middle schoolers on October 6, and high schools on October 13. These dates are subject to change if circumstances prevent reopening for some reason.

Seashore News reached out to families whose children had been out of the classroom since March and are now returning. No surprise, the past six months have been challenging: Teachers had to implement virtual learning practices. Parents found themselves both teacher and parent and, in many cases, still had to maintain their careers. Students faced adjustment to new learning methods and loss of social time with classmates.

Susan and Jeff Stabe, parents of Natalie, a first grader

at St. Anne’s School, said, “While the school did an amazing job shifting gears from in-person to virtual learning, the virtual learning model

shifted a lot of responsibility from teachers to parents. Students had a lot less interaction with their teachers and very little interaction with their friends.” Along with other schools, St. Anne’s has now reopened their campus for students with many safety protocols and a modified schedule in place. Jeff, Susan and Natalie are very happy to be back in the classroom. “We are thrilled that St. Anne’s was prepared to open campus . . . The faculty, staff and administration worked so hard to prepare for both virtual and in-person instruction. St. Anne’s teachers are rock stars!”

Katherine and Scott Scheer, featured on the next page, are parents of high school students who began the fall semester at Dana Hills 100% on line. Katherine noted, “It has been a pretty smooth process and the teachers seem to be well prepared and doing their best to engage the kids.”

She added that some students may enjoy the aspect of virtual learning that allows them to roll out of bed, open their laptops and not be late for “Zero” period class, but it also means they must learn to self-manage, especially if parents work and cannot monitor their progress all day. Another challenge of virtual school she mentioned was that online learning meets the academic parts of the school experience but lacks some of the fun parts like lunch with friends, social activities, pep rallies, sports, and so on. She echoes everyone’s hopes that our kids return to in-person class with a safe, healthy school year ahead for all.

—Patti Staudenbaur

ICE CREAM DAY!

The kids loved it—and so did the adults! September found us listening for the ice cream truck and running to meet it for a cool soft serve or other treat. It was just like the old days so many of us remember when the chimes of the Good Humor Truck brought us out with nickels in hand for a chocolate-coated vanilla ice cream bar on a stick, or perhaps an ice cream sandwich. Thanks to our **Recreation Committee** for the fun! In the future, the Recreation Committee will get more trucks and allow more time so the trucks can get through the entire community.



MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

The Scheer Family

Meet your neighbors **Scott, Katherine, Nathan and Paige Scheer** along with their miniature poodle, **Gracie**, who definitely considers herself part of the family AND the neighborhood! The Scheers have lived in Niguel Shores on Atlantic Avenue since 2010.

Scott was raised in Orange and attended Orange High School. Katherine grew up right here in the Shores until she was fourteen and her family moved to San Juan Capistrano where she attended St. Margaret's. They met during college at UC Irvine.

Katherine is currently the Senior Director of Product at Mavenlink, a Software as a Service (SaaS) startup headquartered in Irvine. Scott is consulting and doing business development in the Avionics and Inflight Connectivity industry. Paige and Nathan attended St. Anne's, and are currently at Dana Hills High School. Paige is a freshman with plans to play soccer and run track when school resumes. Nathan is a junior who runs track and cross country.

In their early marriage, Katherine and Scott lived for a time in Newport Beach and focused on their careers. When they decided to purchase their first home, they began searching in the Newport Beach, Costa Mesa areas. However, at one point, Katherine's Mom posed an important question. "Are you interested in having children? If so, don't you want to be close to grandparents?" Katherine and Scott took that suggestion seriously and switched gears, focusing in south Orange County and, luckily, Dana Point.

They purchased that first home in Dana Knolls, a very small house which required a very large remodel. The couple acted as the general contractors doing a lot of the work themselves. "Sweat and hard labor" is how they describe the project, living in the home during the remodel.

After their children arrived, they needed a bit more space and once again purchased a home that needed lots of remodeling. This was a much larger place in the Sea Canyon

community of Dana Point. Katherine and Scott dove into another remodeling project, again acting as the general contractors and doing a lot of the work themselves.

Keeping an eye on the real estate market, they felt it might be time to purchase an investment property so they began researching condos in and around Dana Point. Katherine remembered how much she loved growing up in the Shores. She said, "Just for fun, we decided to take a look at a home that had come on the market in Niguel Shores." They both knew that Niguel Shores was probably a long shot, but they took a look anyway and, well, here they are. Instead of an investment property, they purchased the home on Atlantic Avenue as their primary residence and—as you can probably guess—began their third remodeling project.

Katherine knew first hand that raising their children here would be wonderful with the parks, the bike trails, and of course access to the beach and pool. Although their present home is smaller than the one they left behind, they feel the tradeoff is well worth it.

As a family, Katherine shares, "We love trips that revolve around snow and water skiing, mountain biking and hiking." They also enjoy other travels, including a

recent trip to Germany where they visited the Berlin Wall, still intact with the Death Strip and Watch Tower, and walked the grounds of Dachau outside Munich. They plan more travels in the future, but for now they prioritize their time cheering on their kids in sports.

The Scheers love living in Niguel Shores and raising their children with the countless other families who enjoy all that the community has to offer. Nathan and Paige have participated in Camp Hobbledohoy, Junior Lifeguards, decorated their bikes for the 4th of July Parade, and spent all day building a Haunted Maze for the Halloween Carnival with Scott. They truly feel they are here in Niguel Shores for the "long haul" and may finally be done with their remodeling projects, at least for a while.

—Michelle Ralph and Patti Staudenbaur



Above: The Scheer family mountain biking in Big Bear.
Below: Nathan, Scott, Paige, and Katherine



DANA POINT THIS MONTH

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

With so many new developments being built in Dana Point, one often wonders what is happening at places where there are vacant lots or buildings in partial construction.

For example, at the point closest to Niguel Shores where Del Prado and PCH separate as one approaches from the North, it looks like the fate of the small stucco building that has been around almost forever is still waiting to be determined.

However, more definite plans are underway for the lot that used to house the Marina Inn at 34111 Pacific Coast Highway, just north of the new Taco Bell. This location has an application being reviewed for a three-story mixed-use project with two levels of subterranean parking. The ground floor would consist of 11,800 square feet of commercial space with two levels of residential space above, as pictured in the PCH and Del Prado elevation plans shown here.

34111 PCH now under consideration



The Greer

Just south of that, in the Town Center area near the Post Office, no one can miss seeing the large mixed-use three-story structures currently under construction. These will eventually be apartments, retail, and underground parking.

At PCH and Amber Lantern, the longtime owner of the Coastal Kitchen property is developing The Greer as a mix of retail, restaurants, and apartments, some reserved for residents over 55.

All along PCH and also down at the Harbor, applications are under review for hotels, a hostel, private residences, retail, dining, and parking. For those who are especially interested in the progress regarding these proposed and current constructions in Dana Point, please go to the **City of Dana Point Development Pipeline** at <http://aboutdana-point.com/portfolio/development-pipeline/>

The Development Pipeline website has a map of all the projects, the status of their applications, and what they propose to be upon completion. It is a very helpful resource for all of us who have been wondering what's going on. Check it out to see all the construction locations and details.

—Mike Harrod

Wellness... Breathe Deep. Lung Health. Lovely Lungs. Longevity.

The view out my upstairs office window this past week has been utterly oppressive. The sky appears hazy and the air, at times subtly smelling of burning wood, is dense and heavy with smoke from the fires raging up and down the west coast. I have to say that this is the worst fire season I've ever seen. California is my home state, born and raised, and I've seen far too many fires destroy lives and homes, leaving thousands of acres of the most beautiful examples of nature blackened to nothing but ash.

We also know that fires are a fact of life and usually with proper practices we can manage to prevent the dangers that they bring. However, the frequency, the causes, and the very extreme nature of these fires in recent years certainly brings a concern about the future. Will this continue happening?

Of course, I don't have the answer to that question, but the poor air quality combined with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic prompts other questions, such as, what is happening to our health—specifically our lungs—under these conditions?

We don't often think of the role our lungs play in our overall wellness until something threatens their ability to function properly. The main job of our lungs is to exchange gases by inhaling fresh air and exhaling carbon dioxide, providing a mechanism to get oxygen to each one of our cells and removing waste gases. They also regulate the



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

temperature of the air we inhale, moisturize that air, and protect our bodies from harmful substances through filtering, coughing, and sneezing.

People who suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, COVID-19, lung cancer, and pulmonary fibrosis, to mention a few, are very susceptible to potentially life-threatening symptoms when our air quality plummets due to smoke from fires, smog from burning fossil fuels, and other toxic emissions into the atmosphere. Even the omnipresent gas leaf blower emits smog-producing gases along with sending debris and dust into the air that are exceptionally dangerous for those suffering from compromised lungs. Also, indoor air quality can't be overlooked when assessing your living environment. Valuable information is available on the American Lung Association website lung.org.

What we can do to keep our lungs as healthy as possible is probably going to sound familiar. Don't smoke, exercise, stay hydrated, eat healthy food, maintain a healthy weight, avoid outdoor activity on days when the air quality is poor, avoid second-hand smoke and indoor pollutants, including radon.

If this leaves you with more questions than when you started reading, that's good! Take those questions to lung.org to find some of the answers and learn how you can keep your lungs smiling! Meanwhile, the sky remains heavy and polluted in appearance, but I know those blue skies will be back calling us to breathe deep with confidence!

just breathe

SPORTS

SPORT COURT HOURS

Pickleball Hours (Daylight Savings Time)

- M W F 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- T Th Sat 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Closed Sundays

Drop In Play / Rotate Play

- M T W Th F Sat 9 to 11 a.m.
- M W F 4 to 7 p.m. (courts 1 & 2)

Play With Your Own Group

- M T W Th F Sat 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- M W F 2 to 7 p.m.



Tennis Hours

- Court signups are for 1 hour each. 1 hour permitted for singles, 2 hours for doubles.
- You may sign up 7 days in advance online at niguelshores.org.
- Tennis courts are open 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- To cancel or reschedule a booking please refer to your confirmation e-mail.

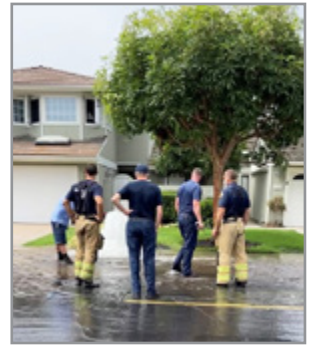
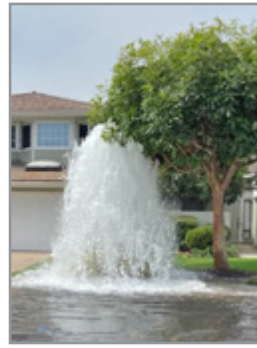
Reminder

- Pickleball and Tennis Courts are closed for cleaning on the second and fourth Thursday of every month.
- Play is for Niguel Shores residents only. No outside guests at this time.

SPORTS

OUT AND ABOUT

Niguel Shores doesn't sit still. Our residents are out and about enjoying the common areas, pool, sport courts, and our beautiful bluff park. In addition to pickleball, water aerobics, tennis, bike riding, jogging, and dog walking, another "event" brought out the neighbors last month when something like "Old Faithful" geyser erupted on Halyard. Fortunately, the fellows from the water company showed up right away to save the day.



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