

**A Community  
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –  
Mt. Helix  
Improvement  
Association**



# viewpoints

Fall 2006

Volume 36 Issue 3



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## Enforcement for Illegal Signs

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*This newsletter reflects the efforts of your entire Board of Directors.*

Editor: Dan Mitrovich  
 Design & Layout: Victoria Vinton,  
 Coyote Press Graphic  
 Communications  
 Photography: Bob Cederdahl  
 Victoria Vinton  
 Printing: Best Printing  
 Casa de Oro

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Like many other volunteer organizations, the unpaid elected members of the VdO work hard on behalf of our local communities. If in the course of your daily activities you encounter the members of the VdO, we encourage you to get to know them and give them well-deserved "thanks" for their hard and sometimes very difficult work protecting the quality of life we enjoy every day. ●

*Dan*

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*Alvin W. Platt*

*March 22, 1931 – July 25, 2006*

GMIA lost a dear friend last July. Al served as president of GMIA from July 2000 to July 2003 working untiringly for our community and its residents. You could characterize Al as the great communicator and the great organizer. If you had a problem you got a call, an e-mail, and probably a visit from Al, and he didn't stop worrying and working on that problem until it was solved. Supervisor Dianne Jacob knew Al well as no stone was left unturned nor phone unring when he was working on a project. He prodded and pushed the County Parks Department until development of Estrella Park was approved. He organized a community forum with representation from our local and state politicians as well as the County of San Diego. He was one of the founding members of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation and served as its secretary. His work for our Mt. Helix community continued even when he moved from the area. Despite everything he was involved in or how he was feeling, Al always had time for a friendly chat or a game of racquetball. We are privileged to have known and worked with him, and our community is a better place because of him. Farewell, friend. ●



## Landmarking

### *Historic & Prehistoric Cultural Resources in the County of San Diego*



Because our Mt. Helix area contains many homes and objects that are considered to be cultural resources, your GMIA board invited members of the County Historic Site Board to give a presentation on how we, as individuals or neighborhoods, could landmark our history.

We found that "cultural resources" can include:

- Something that is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of San Diego County's history and cultural heritage (e.g. gold mining in Julian).
- Something that is associated with the lives of persons important to the history of San Diego County or its communities.
- Something that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, San Diego County region, or method of construction
- Something that represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values. (e.g. from adobes to mid-century modern).

Something that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (e.g. part of pre-historic structure, historic stone dam)

By landmarking a structure, you may be eligible for reduced property taxes or, if it is considered important to state or national history, grants for restoration and maintenance. Also, the building code for restoring historic structures is different from our regular building code. There is a bit more leeway.

We learned that even though a structure has true historical value, if it is not landmarked it can be destroyed. You may be an excellent steward during your ownership, but consider what could happen in the next 50 years. Landmarking will preserve the outward appearance of the structure while still allowing homeowners to remodel the interior to more modern standards. However, with mid-century modern homes or homes designed by famous architects, the interior may be as important as the exterior.

But this is not a simple process. Much research is necessary and documentation is a must. The San Diego Historical Society has a wealth of information on our area. You may do this yourself or retain the services of a professional for that purpose.

Brian Arnold, a member of the GMIA board, and his neighbors are working on landmarking a series of homes and neighborhoods on Grossmont Hill. It is a lengthy process, but well worth the effort to preserve our area's history.

If you are interested in landmarking a house or object, you may contact the Historic Site Board staff with your questions and receive assistance with the proper application forms.

Donna Beddow  
(858)694-3656  
donna.beddow@sdcounty.ca.gov

Gail Wright  
(858)694-3003  
gail.wright@sdcounty.ca.gov ●

## ARJIS

### *Automated Regional Justice Information System*

If you want to know what crimes (from vehicle break-in to residential burglary to violent crimes) have been committed in your neighborhood or any area of the county, log on to:

[www.arjis.org](http://www.arjis.org)

Statistics are available for one year, 92 days at a time. Once you get used to using the site, there is a lot of information at your fingertips.

Overall, our Mt. Helix area seems to attract residential burglaries, vehicle break-ins, and vehicle theft. The daylight hours seem to be the prime time for crime, although the vehicle break-ins and vehicle theft more likely occur at night.

Because our County Sheriffs Department is not effectively deterring these crimes, it is left up to each and everyone of us to "harden the target" around our homes and in our neighborhoods. ●

## R.S.V.P. Retired Senior Volunteer Program

**A**s part of the Corporation for National and Community Service's Senior Corps, RSVP is locally sponsored by the County of San Diego's Aging and Independence Services.

Over 2,000 volunteers 55 and older gave 524,331 hours of service in their local communities during 2005. There are 16 units of the RSVP in the Sheriff's Department and these folks help out with neighborhood patrols, traffic control in emergency situations, handicapped parking patrols in local jurisdictions, etc.

If you would be interested in volunteering for this program, please contact:

Sandra Lawrensen  
Volunteer Coordinator  
(858) 505-6448

If you would like more information about other volunteer opportunities within the County of San Diego, please contact:

Frank Galang  
County Volunteer Coordinator at  
(619)531-5600 ●



## Susan Seeks Gardens!

**D**o you have or know of a wonderful garden? Plans are underway for our annual spring Art & Garden Tour and we need your help to locate great gardens to include in our event. Please consider opening your garden for GMIA members to tour.

Also, if you know of a neighbor's special garden, we would love to hear of it! Please call our Art & Garden Tour Director Susan Nichols at 619-440-1607 to nominate a garden. Let's make the 2007 tour our most exciting yet! ●

Helpful Telephone Numbers	County of San Diego	City of La Mesa	City of El Cajon
<b>ROADS</b> Resurfacing, closures, potholes, etc.	Department of Public Works <b>858-694-2212</b> or <a href="http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us">www.co.san-diego.ca.us</a> Dept. of Public Works section online road service request	<b>619-667-1450</b>	<b>619-441-1658</b>
<b>GRAFFITI REMOVAL</b>	<b>858-467-4042</b>		
<b>JUNK &amp; DEBRIS</b>	<b>858-495-5143</b>		
<b>WEED ABATEMENT</b> Fire Prevention Services	<b>619-562-1058</b>		
<b>LAND USE</b> Zoning violations & other illegal land use	Code Enforcement <b>619-441-4264</b>	Code Enforcement <b>619-667-1177</b>	Code Enforcement <b>619-441-1716</b>
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or Sheriff's Dept. (Lemon Grove) <b>619-337-2000</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or La Mesa Police Dept. <b>619-667-1400</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or El Cajon Police Dept. <b>619-579-3311</b>
<b>ANIMAL SITUATIONS</b> Animal Control	<b>619-236-2341</b>	<b>619-667-1436</b>	<b>619-441-1580</b>
<b>HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL</b>	<b>1-877-713-2784</b> for guidance and information <b>619-598-5100</b> to make an appt. for disposal	<b>619-287-5696</b> to make an appt. for disposal	<b>619-596-5100</b> to make an appt. for disposal
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b> For categories not listed above	<b>858-694-3900</b>	<b>619-436-6611</b>	<b>619-441-1776</b>
<b>SUPERVISOR JACOB'S OFFICE</b>	<b>Caroline Braun, Field Representative ; 619-531-5522; <a href="mailto:carolinebraun@sdcounty.ca.gov">carolinebraun@sdcounty.ca.gov</a></b>		

**To report a crime in progress, call 9-1-1.**

## Septic System Failing? Nature Knows Best...

They say that conventional septic systems have one basic flaw—they try to fool Mother Nature! A new concept waste treatment system has harnessed nature's oldest technology which literally breathes new life into septic tanks and leach fields and increases their efficiency - the natural way!

Over billions of years, nature has evolved aerobic (air breathing) bacteria to be the most effective at breaking down and removing bio-wastes from the environment. Septic tanks, buried deep underground and low in oxygen, force less efficient, slime producing, system clogging, anaerobic (non-air breathing) bacteria to partially break down wastes until their aerobic cousins in the leach field can finish the job.

By providing abundant, life-giving oxygen for specially cultivated aerobic bacteria, the new concept offers an opportunity to restore failed systems - which may eliminate the requirement of having an alternate septic site. In fact, a couple of years ago a Mt. Helix residence may have been condemned - it's septic system did not pass muster with a pre-sale inspection and there was no reserve space for the installation of another. The owners looked into hooking up with La Mesa sewer but the costs, long time frame, and uncertainty of annexation were significant barriers in this approach. They found a company experienced in the new technology, aptly named PIRANA, who installed their system

within a matter of days and the improvement was immediate. They were given the option to monitor and feed the system themselves or have a septic company oversee the process. They chose to tackle it themselves and reported success within one month! The system cost them approximately \$5,000, a fraction compared to their other choices, and operates at pennies a day. The quick installation was managed without site damage and with permits issued by the county. San Diego County has approved this approach to repairing existing septic systems.

Many Mt. Helix residents are concerned about their septic systems - lack of reserve space, topography issues, aging systems and the inability for the system to support added square footage. This new technology appears to have the answer to many of these concerns with restoration of failed systems, immediate improvement, providing protection of environmentally sensitive sites, quick installation and low cost.

More than one company provides this new technology; however our local experience so far has been with the PIRANA company. You can find more information about them on their website: [www.pirana.biz](http://www.pirana.biz).

Oh, by the way their slogan is "Nature Called. We answered."

Wouldn't it be great if everything were that simple... ●

### HELP INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP! Please give this form to a non-member neighbor or friend in the GMIA area.

Join GMIA and help strengthen your influence and keep in touch with current events and issues facing the association and the community. With your membership, you will receive a quarterly newsletter (*Viewpoints*) and notification of special member events.



**Membership  
Application: \$15**

I am making an additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ST/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

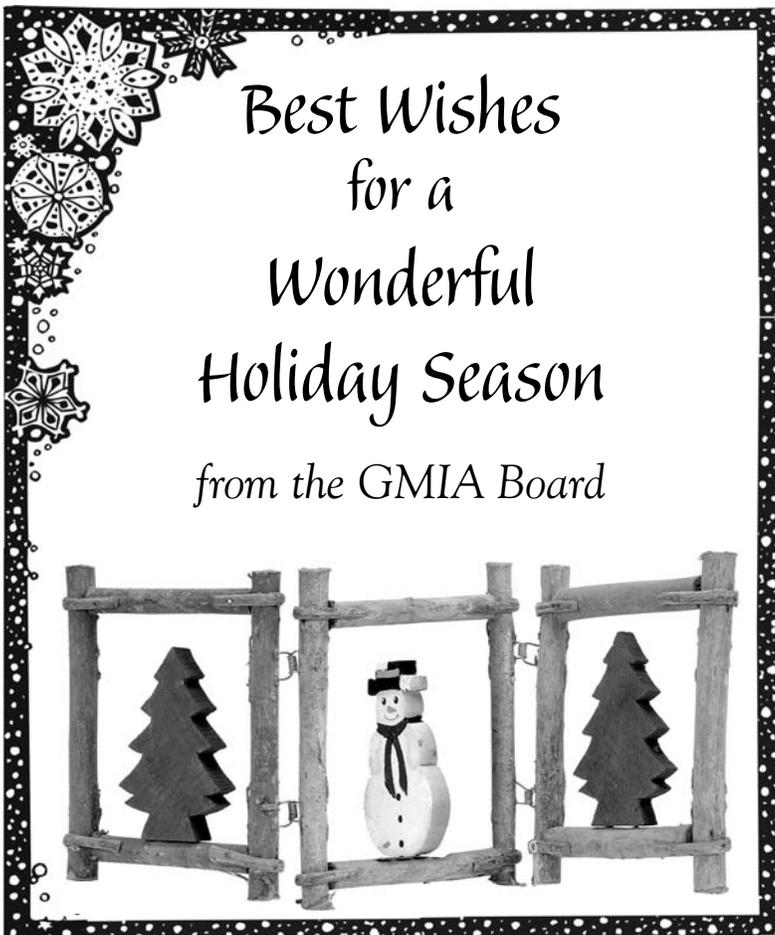
Make check payable & mail to: Grossmont - Mt. Helix Improvement Association, P. O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751



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## 2006 Calendar of Events

### **Caroling on Mt. Helix**

**Dec. 19, 2006; 7pm:** Mt. Helix Amphitheater  
Free shuttles from the parking lot at the corner of Vivera and Mt. Helix Drive. Call 619-588-4901 for more information, or visit [www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org)

### **Valle de Oro Community Planning Group 1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month**

Otay Water District Hq., Lower Terrace  
2554 Sweetwater Springs Blvd. S.V.  
Final agendas are posted 72 hours prior to each meeting at the County Park adjacent to Avocado Elementary School on Fury Lane.

## HELP WANTED

If you have any photos, memorabilia, or anecdotal happenings concerning the Mt. Helix area of the past, or any articles that would be of interest to our members we'd love to have copies to run in future Viewpoints. Please send them to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA, 91943-2751.

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ST/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

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