

**A Community
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –
Mt. Helix
Improvement
Association**



viewpoints

Fall 2007

Volume 37 Issue 2



In This Issue:

**Sheriff's Substation
in Casa de Oro?...**
See page 2

**Controlling Roof
Rats...**
See page 3

Helpful Numbers...
See page 4

**Barking Dog
Disturbances...**
See page 5



Russell Road Rocks!

If you have ever been on Russell Road, then you have undoubtedly seen two shining examples of volunteerism in our Mt. Helix neighborhood. One is Mosher Field where the Cajon de Oro Little Leaguers play ball and the other is the horse arena where the Horsemanship for the Handicapped program works its magic.

We all know how many hours the parents of the Little Leaguers put into their organization. They volunteer to maintain the field, bleachers and fencing in top condition; they volunteer to coach and teach and the kids about the intricacies of the game itself; they volunteer to do the hardest of all possible jobs—fundraise—so our kids can play in one of the few available fields in the Mt. Helix area.

What the Horsemanship for the Handicapped program does is less well-known. This rehabilitation and therapy program, first established in England in 1954 when Princess Anne was an active sponsor, was brought to the Russell Road arena in 1968. According to Corrine Baird, Director and Wrangler for Horsemanship, volunteers working under the auspices of 4H help over 60 handicapped kids ride the horses. Every Saturday morning kids with autism, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and other physical or mental disabilities take turns riding around the ring. Ms. Baird says that the participants not only benefit physically from the riding but also socially



Physically and mentally challenged kids enjoy meeting and riding the horses each Saturday morning on Russell Road.

See RUSSELL ROAD on page 4

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Allison Henderson, President
593-0443

Mark Schuppert, 1st Vice President
401-8003

Dan Mitrovich, 2nd Vice President

Vern Neff, Treasurer/Membership
579-2517

Ellen Phillips, Secretary
670-0986

Directors

Brian Arnold Susan Nichols

Diane Bernal Val O'Connor

Kay Bickley Jack Phillips

Tim Carpenter Jeff Rule

Rosemary Hewicker Mike Valley

Viewpoints is a community newsletter published by the Grossmont – Mt. Helix Improvement Association. Letters to the Editor should be sent to P. O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

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

Editor: Allison Henderson

Design & Layout: Victoria Vinton,
Coyote Press Graphic Communications

Photography: Bob Cederdahl

Printing: Gabi's Printing
Scott Rivers

**President's Corner**

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

The year end is fast approaching and I would like to give a heartfelt Thank You to all of GMIA's steadfast volunteers. I am probably a broken record on the topic of the importance of volunteerism, but without the many neighbors who offer their homes and gardens for our annual tour, without GMIA's hardworking volunteers who organize the tour, the annual dinner and your quarterly newsletter, well, our neighborhood just wouldn't be the same. We are so fortunate to have warm-hearted and civic-minded neighbors!

After reading this newsletter, you may be inspired to volunteer with the neighborhood organizations we highlighted, namely, the Horsemanship for the Handicapped and the Cajon de Oro Little League. They could both use your support. Speaking of support, if your membership is up for renewal (and just about every member's renewal date was June!), feel free to renew by mail, or online with our recently activated Paypal link. It's easy! And, it's important!

As always, feel free to contact me with any suggestions, comments or ideas for future newsletters.

Your president,
Allison Henderson

Sheriff's Department Seeks Storefront

Can You Help Captain Chambers? The Sheriff's Department needs storefront space in the Casa de Oro neighborhood to set up a sub-station. The square footage needed is small, anywhere from 500 to 1000 sq. ft., which is enough room for a few desks and a small community meeting area.

Captain Chambers wants his deputies closer to our neighborhood and says the deputies would use the space to fill out reports, file complaints from the citizens, and hear community concerns. The CHP would also be able to use the storefront space. Their combined presence would be a good thing for our entire GMIA neighborhood.

If you or anyone you know can help, please call the Sheriff's Department at 337-2000 and ask to leave a message for Captain Chambers. ■

Controlling Roof Rats

Our lush Grossmont-Mt. Helix landscape is the perfect habitat for local wildlife. While many of us enjoy (or at least tolerate) most neighborhood critters, the universal exception is rats. For some people, rats can make good pets. If they are unwanted however, rats can be pests. They pollute food, spread disease, and cause damage by gnawing. Rats are most active at night. If they are seen during the day, there is a good chance there are more around your home. Rats eat all types of food, including human and pet food. Roof rats are the most common type of rat in San

Diego County. They like to climb, rather than burrow, and they live above ground. They are gray or brown in color.

San Diego County's Vector Control Program offers a free rat inspection at your property and is currently distributing Rat Control Starter Kits. The Vector Control program is NOT a pest control company, but will help you to control rats yourself. To schedule an inspection, or for more information, contact Vector Control at (858) 694-2888 or vector@sdcounty.ca.gov. ■

Helpful Tips from Vector Control

SIGNS OF RAT ACTIVITY

The most common signs of a rat infestation in your home are:

- ◆ Stripped bark from plants and trees
- ◆ Piles of cut snail shells hidden under plants or piles of wood
- ◆ Sounds in the attic, floor, and walls
- ◆ Rat droppings in garages, storage buildings or other sheltered areas
- ◆ Rub marks caused by greasy rat fur
- ◆ Damaged food containers
- ◆ Damaged food
- ◆ Signs of gnawing

We all want to keep rats out of our homes. You can get rid of rat problems by following these simple steps:

STEP ONE

Rodent proof your home and storage buildings!

1. Check the outside of your house for holes or gaps the size of a quarter or larger
2. Repair all openings using rodent proof materials: ¼ inch 18-22 gauge wire hardware cloth
3. Install metal weather stripping under doors to remove gaps

STEP TWO

Remove food sources from your property!

1. Keep garbage cans covered at all times
2. Pick fruit, nuts and vegetables as they ripen, and throw away or compost fallen fruit

3. Feed pets during the day and remove uneaten food right away
4. Avoid storing food in garages or sheds unless in ratproof metal containers

STEP THREE

INSIDE your home use traps, not poison bait!

1. Poisoned rats may die inside wall or attics, creating odors and attracting flies
2. Use snap traps when rats are inside your home
3. Place traps at entry points or where you have seen rat droppings

See RATS on page 5



From a Concerned Neighbor

Those of us who are lucky enough to live in our neighborhood usually enjoy the ride along Fuerte Drive as we go back and forth to work and errands.

We do, however, have a number of people using Fuerte who show little regard for the appearance of our neighborhood. There appears to be an increasing amount of refuse—drink cups, plastic bags, and just plain trash—that is being thrown from cars. With the refuse trucks in the neighborhood occasionally leaving some trash behind to blow around, and the additional traffic, Fuerte Drive is beginning to look “trashy” in spots.

Let’s all pitch in to keep it clean. If your property has a Fuerte Drive frontage, check it once in a while for trash. For those of us who are walkers, how about walking with a plastic bag and doing a little litter removal along the way.

Let’s keep Fuerte looking good!! ■

RUSSELL ROAD continued from page 1

and emotionally. The program gives them a sense of accomplishment.

A fascinating historical fact about these Russell Road facilities is that the approximately two acres of land was donated by Hansel and Fannie Howell in December of 1948 to the “Fuerte Recreation Club,” a non-profit, tax-exempt organization whose intent was “to provide recreational and educational facilities for the youth of the community.” Claude Mosher, for whom the Cajon de Oro field is named, was a founding director and was instrumental in arranging the legal agreements required for the Little League and the Horsemanship Club to be able to use the land.

How awesome it is that sixty years ago, members of the Grossmont-Mt. Helix community saw a lack of parkland and donated their own personal property so that future generations would be able to enjoy the neighborhood that much more. Our hats are off to such visionaries, and our thanks extend to the current members of both Horsemanship and Little League organizations who work countless hours so that the youth of our community continue to benefit from the Fuerte Recreation Club’s largesse! ■



GMIA Window Decals

Our new static cling decal of green on a white background (3"x3") was given to everyone at our annual meeting.

If you weren't able to attend the annual meeting or want additional decals, just send a self-addressed stamped envelope (with number of decals you want) to:

Mark Schuppert
GMIA, P.O. Box 2751
La Mesa CA 91943-2751

Membership Renewal Just Got Easier!

If you look at your mailing label and see that you are due to renew, have we got news for you!

You can now go to our website, www.GMIA.net, and renew online using PayPal.



A New GMIA Committee Forms

Watch for upcoming events organized by the recently formed “I” is for Improvement committee.

Check out the calendar on www.GMIA.net for more details. ■

Thank You from a Grateful Parent

My daughter Vanessa began riding horses with Horsemanship for the Handicapped mid-June 2007. She was born with Cerebral Palsy and wears braces on both her legs. She works very hard each day just to learn how to walk.

By the end of July, her physical therapist was commenting on the amazing turn-around Vanessa had made. In just one month's time, her trunk strength became significantly stronger, and her feet "miraculously" straightened out. I asked the therapist why she thought this happened. Without hesitation, she said it was the horseback riding.

I'm pleased to say that Vanessa no longer needs braces on her legs. For the first time since she was a baby, we were able to buy her regular shoes from the department store. And to think we became involved with Horsemanship just to do something fun. Something that wasn't "therapy." Who knew that riding horses would have such a profound impact on Vanessa's life.

I cannot thank you enough for taking time out of your day to do this. What you are doing impacts peoples lives in ways we will never understand. Thanks to everyone for all you do!

Sincerely yours,
Vanessa's Mommy

RATS continued from page 3

4. Use CAUTION when placing traps around children or pets
5. Bait the traps with peanut butter or the food the rats have been eating
6. Tie down traps to prevent injured rats from dragging the traps away and dying inside your walls. (Tie a string to a nail and hammer it in the attic floor)
7. Check traps at least twice a week

STEP FOUR

OUTSIDE your home use poison bait!

1. Keep bait away from children and pets
2. Rodent-proof your home BEFORE using poison bait
3. Always read the label and follow directions when using poisons!
4. Multi-dose, anti-coagulant poisons are the most effective, and the rat may need to feed on the bait for several days for it to work
5. Place poison bait in an enclosed bait station – for detailed instructions, see Vector Control on the San Diego County website sdcounty.ca.gov

6. Make sure bait is in a protected area, such as under woodpiles or thick vegetation where rats may be hiding
7. Check bait stations twice a week and add bait when necessary
8. Place dead rats in sealed plastic bags and put them in the trash
9. Move to step five when rats stop eating bait

STEP FIVE

Get rid of rat habitat!

1. Remove all trash and debris
2. Stack woodpiles, lumber and household items at least 18" above the ground, 12 inches away from fences and walls
3. Trim trees, bushes and vines to at least 4 feet away from the roof
4. Remove heavy vegetation such as ivy, bougainvillea and pyracantha away from buildings and fences
5. Thin vegetation to allow daylight in and remove rat hiding places. ■

What to Do With Used Electronic Items

We have a new Goodwill store and donation center nearby in the Rancho San Diego Town & Country Shopping Center (Ralphs/Petco/Kohl's), at 2650 Jamacha Rd., #153. The great importance of this to our members is that Goodwill Industries accepts computers, televisions and other electronic items, working or not! What is required is that you must drop off the articles at the read of the store during business hours (M-Sat, 9a-7p, Sun 10a - 5p) and get your tax receipt. To prevent vandalism and theft, please don't leave donations after hours. ■



Helpful Telephone Numbers	County of San Diego	City of La Mesa	City of El Cajon
ROADS Resurfacing, closures, potholes, etc.	Department of Public Works 858-694-2212 or www.co.san-diego.ca.us Dept. of Public Works section online road service request	619-667-1450	619-441-1658
GRAFFITI REMOVAL	858-467-4042		
JUNK & DEBRIS	858-495-5143		
WEED ABATEMENT Fire Prevention Services	619-562-1058		
LAND USE Zoning violations & other illegal land use	Code Enforcement 619-441-4264	Code Enforcement 619-667-1177	Code Enforcement 619-441-1716
LAW ENFORCEMENT	911 if Emergency or Sheriff's Dept (Lemon Grove) 619-337-2000	911 if Emergency or La Mesa Police Dept. 619-667-1400	911 if Emergency or El Cajon Police Dept. 619-579-3311
ANIMAL SITUATIONS Animal Control	619-236-2341	619-667-1436	619-441-1580
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL	1-877-713-2784 for guidance and information 619-598-5100 to make an appt. for disposal	619-287-5696 to make an appt. for disposal	619-596-5100 to make an appt. for disposal
GENERAL INFORMATION For categories not listed above	858-694-3900	619-436-6611	619-441-1776
Useful Websites	San Diego County Government		
www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/index.html	This site will give you information for planning and land use in the unincorporated county. Just click on the subject you want: Code/Zoning (for enforcement), Zoning Ordinance, etc.		
www.sdcl.org	This site will give you information about our county libraries.		

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

Barking Dogs in Your Neighborhood?

Does your neighbor's dog bark? What can you do? According to the public affairs office at the Sheriff's Department, there are plenty of options.

First, of course, try talking with your neighbor. Then, if that doesn't work, contact the Sheriff's Department. In the case of a barking dog, be prepared to fill out and sign a form that brings, essentially, a Disturbing the Peace violation. Disturbing the Peace is defined as "frequent or long continued noise that disturbs a person of normal sensitivity." Those refusing to control their dogs/pets can be charged with a misdemeanor according to San Diego County Code 62.672. Call the main dispatch number (858-565-5200) and lodge a complaint. A deputy will be assigned and you will be contacted.

The County's Noise Abatement Ordinance also comes into play with the barking dog scenario. These are regulations that discuss the standards of neighborhood noise issues. Generally, two neighbors living in two separate households in the vicinity of the barking dog are needed to start the process and again, signatures on a form are required.

The Sheriff's Department says that it's important to call the dispatch number because it's important to

RECORD the violation, especially if the violations occur numerous times. This helps the deputies if they need to go to the next stage in enforcement.

The Sheriff's Department works on a priority system so patience is needed if there are emergencies ahead of you. Complaints can be lodged with the Noise Abatement Office of DPLU (Dept of Planning and Land Use) either by a phone call (858-694-3741) or by email.

Here is the link to the noise control webpage: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/ce5/Noise.htm>. There is a button on that page to file your noise complaint via email.

The information at the right is taken from the City of San Diego's Code Compliance website. Share it with neighbors who have barking dogs. ■



Why do Dogs Bark so Much?

Dogs bark excessively for numerous reasons such as loneliness, frustration, frequent neighborhood activity, hyperactivity, etc. The following suggestions may be helpful in controlling excessive barking:

- ◆ Give the dog attention and exercise daily.
- ◆ If the dog barks because of frequent neighborhood activity, try to remove the dog from the activity. Consider keeping the dog in the house or garage whenever possible or keeping a dog in a location isolated from the source of disturbances.
- ◆ Dogs frequently bark while left outside alone on the property. If you must leave the dog unattended, keep the dog inside the garage or house whenever possible.
- ◆ Consult your veterinarian on the possible causes for the barking.
- ◆ Explore training services listed in the Yellow Pages under "Dog Training."

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: \$ _____

I (We) would like to receive *Viewpoints* via email.

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



viewpoints

P.O. Box 2751
La Mesa CA 91943-2751

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 17

About GMIA . . . and What We Do

The Grossmont- Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is one of the oldest and largest association of its type in San Diego County. It was formed in 1938 as a result of community concern for the lack of adequate land use planning and zoning type requirements. It is a non-profit public benefit corporation that represents thousands of families residing in the large unincorporated area of the County that is east of Bancroft Drive, south of El Cajon, generally north of SR94 and Rancho San Diego, and west of SR54/Jamacha Rd. The GMIA area contains over 7,000 single-family residences with a population approximating 20,000 people.

The primary mission of GMIA is to work on behalf of all GMIA community members to ensure that the quality and character of our community is preserved and enhanced. Unlike a typical "homeowners association," GMIA does not own any property or facilities, nor is it responsible for any property maintenance. GMIA is served by an elected, unpaid Board of Directors and has no paid officers or employees. The GMIA Board works with County and regional governmental entities to help resolve issues that impact our community such as transportation systems, traffic control, planning and land use, zoning, code enforcement, as well as crime prevention and law enforcement.

GMIA invites and encourages all residents in our membership area to become active members and to support the efforts of the GMIA Board to preserve and enhance the character and lifestyle that are currently enjoyed in our wonderful community. For more information on GMIA, please visit our website at www.GMIA.net.



Let's Walk up Mt. Helix Won't it be Great...

Say Goodbye to '07, Hello to '08!

On Saturday, December 29th at 10:00 a.m., join GMIA for a Neighborhood Walk. We'll meet at the Fire Station on Viviera and stroll together to the Mt. Helix summit. Enjoy entertainment and light refreshments at the top. Meet your neighbors, relish the beauty of our community, and welcome the New Year! Please RSVP for this free event at www.GMIA.net (to enable GMIA to plan for attendance). Limited parking at the Fire Station lot; please carpool or walk to the start if possible. Event volunteers NEEDED. To help, call Susan Nichols at (619) 440-1607.