

**A Community
Newsletter**
from the
**Grossmont –
Mt. Helix
Improvement
Association**



viewpoints

Spring 2008

Volume 38 Issue 4



In This Issue:

A Brief History...
See page 3

West Nile is Early...
See page 3

**Annual Dinner
Meeting Invitation...**
See Insert

**2008 Art & Garden
Tour Brochure...**
See Insert



⇒ 70th ANNUAL ⇐ DINNER MEETING

Join us in celebrating GMIA's 70th anniversary at our annual dinner on May 12, 2008 at the La Mesa Recreation Center.

This year our keynote speaker is Eldonna Lay, Vice President of the El Cajon Historical Society, curator of the Knox House Museum, former member of the San Diego County Historic Sites board, and a local history columnist for the San Diego Union. She will regale us with many stories about what it was like to live in our area in the 1900s.

We are pleased to have The Abbey Catering Company again provide our dinner and special dessert. Please join us to share this anniversary event with your neighbors and meet other GMIA members. Please use the enclosed reservation form and return it by May 1st. ▲

2008 ART & GARDEN TOUR

As a GMIA member you are entitled to participate in this annual tour of some of our area's creative and inspiring gardens, on Sunday, May 4th. The Tour is not open to the public, but you may bring guests who enjoy fine gardens and art. THANKS to this year's homeowners for generously sharing their gardens. We also thank our wonderful artists whose art will be on display at each of the gardens.

Please park only where indicated. We need to comply with the terms of our County parking permits. Wear practical walking shoes, and remember—the Tour goes forward in any weather. Once again, Susan Nichols has our tour. You will find the descriptions of gardens and map as an insert in this newsletter. ▲

Create a Floral Centerpiece from Your Garden



This will be the second year for the floral centerpiece contest at our annual dinner on May 12. We invite you to bring and display your own table centerpiece creation using the flowers and plants from your garden and yard. Three prizes will be awarded – Best Design, Best Color and Best Flowers. This is a great opportunity to display the "fruits of your labors" in your own unique style. These centerpieces will be returned to you at the close of the event. If you have any questions, please call Kay Bickley at 619-318-5260.

Rules and Guidelines

1. Finished size is 20" x 20" maximum.
2. Attach your name to the arrangement.
3. Use only those flowers and plants from your garden or yard.
4. Deliver the arrangements between 2 and 4 p.m. to the La Mesa Community Center.

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

Pg. 1 Photography: Jeffrey Rule

Printing: Gabi's Printing
Scott Rivers



Allison Henderson

President's Corner

Dear Neighbors and Friends:

As I type this paragraph, I gaze outside and see the leaves budding out on our 60-year-old pecan tree. The first roses are blooming, the lawn is green and the weeds are still small and easy to pull. Springtime in our neighborhood has definitely sprung and it's a lovely sight to behold. We are so fortunate to live where there are still large enough parcels that we can have mature fruit trees and compost piles and chicken coops that don't annoy the neighbors!

Spring in GMIA's neighborhood also means that our annual garden tour is fast approaching. Our fearless Garden Tour Coordinator, Susan Nichols, has organized five awesome gardens for us to visit. Save the enclosed tour map and join us on May 4th for a day of art and garden magic.

Come help us celebrate GMIA's 70th anniversary on May 12th. It may be hard to imagine what our neighborhood was like 70 years ago but at this year's annual dinner, our guest speaker, Eldonna Lay of the El Cajon Historical Society, will entertain us with stories from our past. We will also have Captain Chambers of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department give us an update on law enforcement in our area. And, if your garden is filling up with flowers, you might enter a centerpiece in this year's Floral Arranging contest. You can send in your dinner registration form by mail, or online using Paypal at www.gmia.net.

While our tour and annual dinner are for GMIA members only, we encourage you to invite a neighbor to join in the fun. A strong and growing membership translates into a very strong and clear voice as we meet with our local officials on the issues of the day.

Your GMIA board would like to welcome its newest member, Dagmar Miller. Dagmar has lived in the area for about 15 years and has recently volunteered her time on GMIA's membership and beautification committees. She was very helpful during our first ever neighborhood walk up the Mt. Helix Park. We are very honored to have her on the board.

As always, feel free to contact me with comments, questions and suggestions. Hope to see you this Spring! ▲

Please Check Your Mailing Label!

As most of you know, GMIA does not normally send out renewal notices when your membership expires. It has been a longstanding, cost-saving tradition that your mailing label shows not only your name and address but also the date that your membership is paid through. You may have noticed that EVERY MEMBERSHIP comes due in June. It is only the year that changes. Some of you are paid through 2008, some 2009 and there are even some that are paid through 2011! There was some confusion on the mailing labels from the last issue of Viewpoints wherein renewal dates were incorrect. We sincerely apologize for that and if you look right now at your mailing label, you should see the correct date. Now, you may see that your membership expired last year. We can't change that date unless you renew. Because the costs of printing this newsletter are so high, we will regrettably not keep you on our mailing list. However, you can easily renew online at our www.gmia.net website and using PayPal, be renewed immediately. Renew today! Please feel free to contact us through the contact form on the website. ▲

A Brief History of the Mt. Helix Area and GMIA

Any reference to the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association is linked with the early events and individuals involved in the development of this prime residential section of San Diego county. Those first earth shakers transformed the brush-covered and rock-strewn land into an area that has grown into the beautiful community as we know it today.



Heink, world-famous contralto; Carrie Jacobs Bond, popular composer; Owen Wister author; and John Chaney, poet. The Grossmont Inn, built in 1914, also drew many visitors from San Diego. During this period, Mt. Helix attracted the attention of the Yawkey family of Minneapolis. The Mt. Helix amphitheater was completed in 1923 as a memorial by Cyrus and Mary Yawkey.

In 1904, Col. Ed Fletcher began acquiring local property. At the conclusion of these purchases in 1913, it is said that he owned approximately 33,000 acres of the Mt. Helix area. In 1906, a wooden flume line along the northern slope of Mt. Helix was used to bring water from the San Diego River. A pumping station near the junction of Fuerte and Grossmont Drives tapped this conduit to fill a reservoir on the lower level of Mt. Helix. Roadways for horse and buggy travel were delineated by Col. Fletcher and development began. One man who promoted land sale during this period was William Gross. The Grossmont title was further established by the opening of the Grossmont Post Office in 1908.

Development continued to flourish, helped in part by another reservoir just below the Helix peak and the purchase, in 1926, of the water system by the Helix Water District. Grossmont became a cultural center with residents including Madame Ernestine Schumann-

As the years passed and the area became more and more popular, "growing pains" were in evidence. In 1938, there was no zoning of any kind in San Diego County. In fact the total planning department consisted of only three employees! The need for control of local residential development was recognized by residents of the Mt. Helix area and, in 1938, the Grossmont – Mt. Helix Improvement Association was formed. The prime movers behind this event were Virgil Cash, builder and architect; Ed Fletcher, Jr. of the Fletcher Co.; E. Heilbron, plumbing contractor; John Steen, D.D.S. and Andrew Smith, M.D.

One of the strongest controls exercised by GMIA has been its surveillance of requests for zoning variances. For years, Charles E. Burch, Jr., a prominent San Diego attorney, took time from his busy law practice to appear before the Planning Commission to protest what

See **HISTORY** on page 4

West Nile Virus Arrives Earlier than Ever

The West Nile Virus is arriving earlier each year. So far, six dead birds have tested positive for the virus since January. We can do our part by keeping those waterways flowing and emptying all standing water. Mosquitoes, the carriers of this virus, can fly up to three miles, so each and every neighborhood must be on alert.

When you hear that mosquito buzzing your ear, you know there must be some standing water either on your property or in your neighborhood. Check for mosquito larvae in your stored flower pots, buckets, cans, drainage ditches or pipes, or anything that will hold even a little bit of water. Unused

ponds or pools that can collect water from the sprinklers or an occasional rain shower should be kept empty. If a standing body of water cannot be emptied, a commercial larvicide is available (check online) or stock it with some mosquito fish from the Koi store on Jamacha Road (this is a free service through the County). Remember—a mosquito can go from larva to adult in only one week!

People with compromised immune systems (caused by chemotherapy, M.S., certain prescription drugs, etc.) must be extremely careful. If outside at dusk, protect yourself from mosquito bites by wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants

and/or spray a mosquito repellent containing deet on exposed skin areas.

Dead birds, especially scrub jays or crows, are a sure sign that the virus has invaded your neighborhood. Don't touch the dead birds, but immediately notify the County Department of Environmental Health Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636). They will tell you the proper procedure to follow.

For more information on West Nile Virus or other vectors, you may contact the Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or go to www.sdfightthebite.com. ▲

Code Enforcement News... Do you see abandoned vehicles piling up on a neighbor's private property? Does your block have a problem with excessive noise or graffiti? Do you have concerns about a possible zoning or grading violation? The Department of Planning and Land Use is opening a new storefront in Spring Valley that will be staffed by someone who can answer these and other code enforcement questions and concerns. The new storefront will operate only on Fridays from 10 am until 6 pm and will be located at the Spring Valley Community Center (8735 Jamacha Blvd, Spring Valley). The Codes Enforcement complaint line is 858-694-2705. For more on what the code enforcement people do, check their website is www.sdcce.org. ▲

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. ▲

HISTORY continued from page 4

the GMIA Board of Directors considered to be negative zoning requests. Mr. Burch was effective in curbing literally hundreds of alterations that would have changed the unique quality of our hillside community.

Because of increasing density, the decision was made, in 1957, to organize a local fire protection district. Under the leadership of Charles E. Burch, Jr., Ed Fletcher, Jr., and D.R. Grable of the GMIA Board of Directors, the community voted in favor of the project. 1958 saw the completion of Fire Station #1 at Vivera and Mt. Helix Drives. The service has since expanded to include two more stations. In 1973, GMIA sponsored elections to bring sewer services to the area—Otay Municipal Water District and Spring Valley Sanitation District. Minimum half-acre zoning was introduced in 1979 when the community plan for the Valle de Ore area was adopted. This achievement was wholly a product of GMIA members, spearheaded by Mrs. Kenneth G. Rogers.

GMIA continues to work for its members and the area. Problems in zoning changes, traffic, road maintenance, etc. are dealt with on a continuing basis. Our "rural" way of life in the midst of urban development must be protected. Only through constant vigilance and community spirit can this be achieved. ▲