

**A Community
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –
Mt. Helix
Improvement
Association**



viewpoints

August 2005

Volume 35 Issue 2



In This Issue:

GMIA Boundaries, a
Statistical Analysis...
See page 3

RSD Parks Tax
Defeated for Mt. Helix
Residents...
See page 5

2005 Art & Garden
Tour Photos ...
See page 7

Thank You, Donors!
See page 7



West Nile Virus is Back

by Jack Phillips

You may recall last year during spring and summer that we were very concerned about the first evidence that West Nile virus had reached this area. Well, it's back this summer and infected birds have been found in our county. West Nile virus is an illness that is spread by mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes become infected with the virus after biting an infected bird. When infected mosquitoes bite people, they can give the virus to them. People infected with West Nile virus are not contagious, and cannot transmit the virus to other people.

If you are bitten by an infected mosquito, your risk of getting sick is very low. People who are infected with West Nile virus usually have no symptoms. Those who do get sick may have a mild fever, rash, body aches and headaches. People over 50 years of age, and those with compromised immune systems, are at the highest risk of developing serious illnesses such as encephalitis or meningitis. Your immune system can be compromised if you are using chemotherapy drugs or some common arthritis medications such as methotrexate.

To help protect your family and your neighbors the county recommends that when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, wear long pants and long sleeved, light colored shirts. This allows you to see mosquitoes before they bite you. Insect repellents containing DEET effectively repel mosquitoes. Follow product label instructions carefully. If you have ques-



tions about repellents ask your doctor. When indoors be sure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair.

Stop mosquitoes from breeding by removing sources of standing water from your property such as:

- neglected pools
- spare tires
- neglected fish ponds
- birdbaths
- play equipment
- boats
- plant saucers
- clogged rain gutters

Stock creeks and ornamental ponds with mosquito fish. These handy fish are provided free of charge through the Department of Environmental Health.

See WEST NILE on page 7

It's Membership Renewal Time

Look at the date printed on your mailing label. This will show your membership renewal date. Please fill out the enclosed envelope and return with your check. If you're already paid up, please give the envelope to a neighbor or friend in the GMIA area who is not a member. A printed form on page 7 is also available for new members. Pass it on!

Thanks for supporting GMIA. The larger our membership, the more influence we have.

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



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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.

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A Message from the President



Kristine Alessio

Entering into Fall, GMIA is undergoing some changes. Most notable is the fact that our long time Board member and Treasurer, Clint Smith, has resigned from the Board. Clint did an outstanding job for many years as Treasurer and we will miss him enormously. Our new Treasurer is Allison Henderson; we are confident that she will do an excellent job following in Clint's footsteps and expect a smooth transition.

The second change is that we are in the process of updating and revamping our website. Be on the watch for a whole new look to the website.

Finally, we have another new Board member to welcome, Diane Bernal. Many of you may know Diane through her work with the community group, MHands. We are very pleased to have Diane with GMIA and look forward to her involvement on the Board and her expertise in traffic issues. ■

Annual Dinner and Garden Tour

by Kristine Alessio

The Annual GMIA Art Garden Tour on April 17th was again a huge success. A big THANK YOU to Board member Guy Halgren and his son Matthew for organizing this wonderful event.

Five magnificent gardens were on display. A special thanks to the members who allowed their gardens to be displayed to their fellow GMIA members and friends: the Herricks, the Ross', the Shaws, the Beckers and the Westermeyers. See pages 7-8 for photos of this best-ever tour.

The GMIA Annual Dinner was also a huge success. We had an excellent speaker in Roger Showley of the San Diego Union Tribune who took us through 100 years of San Diego

History. Supervisor Dianne Jacob also addressed the meeting and updated the membership on County happenings that affect our area. Boy Scout Honor Troop 362 provided the color guard and led the pledge of allegiance. Thank you to the following individuals and businesses who donated door prizes: Simpson's Gardentown Nursery, Kay Bickley, Mike Valley, Home Depot, Allison Henderson and Jay Miles. We urge you to mark your calendars now for next year's dinner!

Also related to the Annual Dinner, we have a missing winner of the Flowering Plum Tree door prize! If you are the winner, please contact Brian Arnold at 619-469-8027 or brjmail@cox.net and he will deliver your tree! ■

GMIA Boundaries, a Statistical Analysis

by Mark Schuppert

The GMIA constituent area is generally bounded by Bancroft Drive on the west, the City of El Cajon on the north, Jamacha Boulevard on the east, and Rancho San Diego and Highway 94 on the south. This area is mostly residential in character with most home sites being a half acre or larger. The statistical area also includes some higher density residential and commercial uses in the Casa de Oro and Avocado Village areas.

A compilation of statistical data was gathered with help from Debbie White of Prudential Realty and Tara Kelly of

California Title Company. The data suggests that there are over 9,000 parcels in GMIA boundary area with approximately 7,500 being single-family residential. Additionally, there are nearly 500 condominium units within our area. The balance includes a relatively low number of parcels being vacant: Residential (5%), Apartment and Duplexes (2%), and Other (6%). The Other category includes places of worship, motels and special use properties not identified as residential or commercial.

The statistical information is summarized in the following table.

Statistical Summary of GMIA Boundaries by Assessor Parcel Numbers

Total	SFR	Condos	*MFR	Vacant Residential	Vacant Commercial	Other
616	455	0	20	79	4	58
79	66	0	1	4	0	8
605	515	0	23	45	0	22
871	786	0	15	49	0	21
895	794	0	6	45	0	50
861	777	0	7	44	0	33
994	919	0	6	33	0	36
77	60	0	2	2	1	12
766	581	57	5	26	3	94
1,792	1,482	78	46	31	10	145
909	628	205	1	39	2	34
681	468	151	12	16	0	34
9,146	7,531	491	144	413	20	547
	82%	5%	2%	5%	0%	6%

SFR is Single-Family Residential (houses)

MFR is Multi-Family Residential (apartments and duplexes)

* Multi-Family use represents parcels that may include a single duplex to an entire apartment project. The number of dwelling units is not reflected in the statistical data.

2005 - 2006 Calendar of Events

Christian Community Theater July - August, 2005 Mt. Helix Amphitheater	See the Calendar of Events at: www.mthelixpark.org for performance times and dates.
Jon Schmidt In Concert Saturday, September 17, 2005 7:00 p.m. Mt. Helix Amphitheater	Pianist, composer, and entertainer, Jon has a refreshingly unique style combining Classical and New-Age with comedy, charm and high energy. Jon has performed throughout the west, including Hawaii, and has recorded a series of popular CDs. Free shuttles from the parking lot at the corner of Vivera and Mt. Helix Drive. Concert benefits the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. Tickets are \$12 - \$24 and are available at www.ticketleap.com . Call 619-588-4901 for more information.
GMIA Annual Dinner & Meeting Monday, May 8, 2006 La Mesa Community Center 4975 Memorial Drive, La Mesa	Details to be announced.
GMIA Art & Garden Tour April or May, 2006 Private gardens of GMIA members	Date and details to be announced.
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.

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
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

Attempt to Tax Mt. Helix Residents for Rancho San Diego Parks Defeated

by Jack Phillips

The County Parks department and Rancho San Diego CSA advisory board attempted to include a portion of our Mt. Helix community in their creation of a new assessment district to pay for maintenance of Rancho San Diego's open spaces and park sites.

Rancho San Diego was created as a "new town" development in the mid 1970s. The community was designed around the concept of tightly clustered villages separated by open-space corridors. Each village was to be somewhat self-contained with its own commercial and recreational facilities and open space areas to provide visual relief for the clusters of high-density residential development.

This development was approved before a general plan was established for the much larger Mt. Helix, Vista Grande, and Spring Valley areas. Its high-density apartments and miniature-lot single family clusters were a controversial plan because they fell completely out of the rural context of the area.

The parks and open spaces intended to benefit from the assessment were designed to serve the intense Rancho San Diego urban development with its thousands of apartments and condominiums and thousands of miniature-lot single family homes. The need for these facilities arises solely from this intense urban development within the actual development boundaries of Rancho San Diego.

Communities surrounding Rancho San Diego are markedly different. Surrounding densities are semi-rural with typically 1/2 to 1-acre and larger parcels and no apartment or condominium development. These communities have very little, if any, need to frequent the neighborhood parks in Rancho San Diego.

Without any earlier notice, residents in our Mt. Helix community received ballots for the Rancho San Diego Parks Maintenance Assessment District. This apparently occurred because the contractor, SCI from Fairfield, CA, through ignorance, thought that people living in the historic semi-rural areas of the Mt. Helix community were part of Rancho San Diego.

Ignoring the obvious differences, County Parks and this contractor proposed that Mt. Helix residents living on large semi-rural lots are part of the Rancho San Diego

community of apartments, condominiums, and miniature single-family lots for which these parks were designed and located.

While the Rancho San Diego community needs neighborhood parks to provide outdoor recreation space for its residents living in apartments, condominiums, and miniature-lot developments, the semi-rural Mt. Helix community does not need such parks and derives minimal benefit from their presence in Rancho San Diego.

Thus, the GMIA board argued that Mt. Helix community residents should not be compelled to pay for services that are only necessary for and primarily serve the Rancho San Diego intense urban neighborhoods.

Due to these serious fairness problems, Dianne Jacob and her fellow county supervisors agreed with GMIA and affected residents and instructed the County Parks department to eliminate from the proposed assessment district all properties that are not within the Rancho San Diego Specific Plan. ■



Helicopter Noise?

Again it has come to our attention that helicopters are flying very low in our area. There is something you can do if you notice this! There is now an online form to report aircraft noise, it can be accessed at

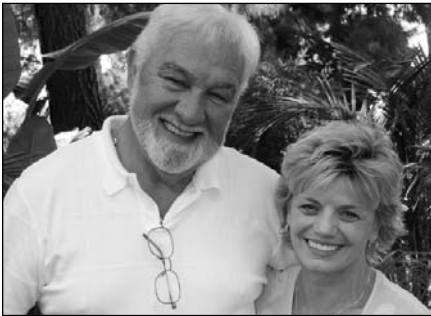
<http://www.sdcdpw.org/noise/>

or you can call Gillespie Field at (619) 956-4800. ■

2005 Art & Garden Tour



Thank You For Welcoming Us Into Your Gardens!



The 2005 Gardens are the beautiful accomplishment of, clockwise from left:
 Tere & Jonathan (not pictured) Becker
 Jennifer & Al Westermeyer
 Leon & Dottie Herrick
 Gloria & Ramon Ross
 Julie & Mike Shaw

Thanks Donors!

GMIA wishes to thank those who have contributed above and beyond the usual membership dues. We greatly appreciate your support. ■

- Kathy and Scott Aishton
- Randy and Liz Dibbs
- Pei Hua and Chun Chao Chou
- Jim and Vie Lidell
- Taj Majal / George Dirbas

WEST NILE, Continued from page 1

Alternatively, use larvicide pellets or "dunks" in these locations or in backwater locations in the many small creeks in our Mt. Helix area. Follow the package directions carefully. These mosquito dunks are available on line and at home centers and some garden shops.

The county tests dead birds to monitor the spread of West Nile virus. Without disturbing the carcass, report dead birds for collection and testing by calling (888) 551 4636.

By following these basic guidelines you can help protect yourself and your neighbors from West Nile virus. For more information call the County's Vector Surveillance and Control Program at (858)694 2888 or log onto www.SDFightTheBite.com. ■

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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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 preven-

tion 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 ■