



viewpoints

Summer 2006

Volume 36 Issue 2



In This Issue:

Art & Garden Tour
Photos...
See page 4

Planning & Land
Use...
See page 3

Safety on Fuerte...
See page 6

Helpful Numbers...
See page 6



West Nile Virus — It's Back!

It looks like the West Nile Virus is going to be with us summer after summer so

keep those waterways flowing and empty 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!

Any folks 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. ■

Thanks to Our Donors!

GMIA wishes to thank those individuals who have contributed above and beyond the usual membership dues; we greatly appreciate your support. This is only a partial list; more to come.

Ruel & Carol Bench	Miles & Carol Todd	William & Judith Friedel	Michael & Lynn Smith	John & Marilyn Adams
Richard & Kandy Bartlett	Tom & Donna Bloomer	John & Linda Quinn	Diane Bernal	Gene & Jane Compere
Scott & Jill Brady	Bill & Ruth Devin	Leo & Adrienne Culp	Danny & Lauri Riley	Steve Camblin
Karolyn Malmin	Woodrow & Ruth Graham	John & Doris Eastman	Ed & Lisa Kleist	Mary Jean Holmes
David Jessop	Rupert & Dorothy Crosthwaite	Mel & Mildred Etter	Samuel Ciccati	Tajmahal Dirbas
Paul & Gloria Benitez	Harrison & Jackie Hollywood	Guy & Signa Wilcos	John & Nancy Capistran	Mary Gilligan
Mary Ehmeke	Ralph & Kathie Allen	Bob & Dot Hamann	Mark & Lynne DeBoskey	
Henry & Olinda Arnold	Joffre Baker	Roy & Grace Seifert	Fletcher & Marcy Thornton	
Jeff & Gayle Marsh	Thomas & Linda Trent	Stan & Joanne Rogers	David & Jocelyn Zimmerman	
Mark Gundert	Jacob & Marion Oswald	Stephen & Sara Gillespie	Harold & Patti Schioldager	
Dr. Brigitte Heimers	Marchel & Alice Tevelson	George Darrieulat	Alexander & Debra Olander	
Roy & Shirley Logan	Garrett & Phyllis Bradt	Jerome & Lucille Heard	Norm & Suzanne Applebaum	

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Dan Mitrovich, President

Ellen Phillips, Secretary
670-0986

Allison Henderson, Treasurer
619-593-0443

Directors

Brian Arnold Vern Neff
Dr. Rick Bartlett Susan Nichols
Diane Bernal Jack Phillips
Kay Bickley Mark Schuppert
Tim Carpenter Mike Valley
Rosemary Hewicker

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

A Message from Dan Mitrovich, our New President

The GMIA 2006 Fiscal Year ended on June 30. As announced at the May Annual Dinner Meeting, GMIA remains in sound financial condition, and your Board of Directors is fully motivated to serve our association for another year. Since the GMIA Fiscal Year has ended, you will also be receiving your annual notice for membership renewal. We hope that all members will take the time to respond to the renewal invitation and get this administrative chore out of the way.

Planning and land use is probably one of the most critical parameters in the preservation of our quality of life as residents in the GMIA community. Many people wrongly believe the GMIA area is built-out or protected from future in-fill projects that are not consistent with either the General Plan or our community's character. Let me assure you there are constant land use pressures on our community. Planning and land use is one of those things like water quality that many of us take for granted. However, someone has to worry about it, and if you don't, someone else will and you may not like the results! Trust that your GMIA Board

remains ever diligent in this area, and we will keep you abreast of any significant land use issues potentially impacting our community. On the next page, we have included an article to provide some background on our local land use and planning process.

In the face of every-increasing trends toward such things as higher density residential development, vehicular traffic congestion, and the encroachment of commercial developments into residential areas, GMIA is under increasing pressure to work more and more with elected officials and government entities to help preserve the rural, uncongested nature of our community. To continue to respond effectively to such issues, bluntly, elected officials and government entities respond to numbers — obviously the larger our active membership, the more influence we can bring to bear. Your GMIA Board now needs your help in expanding our membership. As you talk to neighbors and friends who live in our area, please ask them if they are members of GMIA, share with them the importance of belonging and encourage them to join. Membership applications are available on our website at www.gmia.net.

Best wishes to all GMIA members for an enjoyable summer!

Dan

Did You Know?

Over 10,000 fires occurred in 2005 from unattended appliances. Make sure you don't become one of the statistics in 2006. Remember to turn off the... **coffee pot, iron, curling iron, space heater, clothes dryer, etc.**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates 260 children under the age of five drown each year in residential swimming pools. **Never leave children unattended; fence the pool completely; post all pool rules; learn CPR. ■**

Summer Fun for Kids



The San Diego County Library in Casa de Oro (9805 Campo Rd., #14) offers fun programs for preschool-age kids this summer. All programs at 11 am.

I Got Rhythm Day: Thurs., Aug. 3
Rhyme Time: Thurs., Aug. 10
Music, Music, Music: Thurs., Aug. 17
Old Favorites Day: Thurs., Aug. 24
Beach Story & Crafts: Thurs., Aug. 31 ■

The Planning & Land Use Process

Many GMIA members and community residents are aware of the continuous planning and land use process going on for the entire San Diego County, including the large unincorporated GMIA membership area. However, the details of this process, the decisions made, and the impacts on our GMIA and surrounding communities are perhaps not always clearly understood by many of our members and community residents.

The interests of our GMIA community in the planning and land use process are vested in the elected members of the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group (VDO). That local planning group represents more than 40,000 people in the eastern unincorporated part of the County, including those of us who reside in the GMIA membership area. Obviously, one of the most important aspects of the current planning and land use process is how the remaining vacant land in the VDO planning area is going to be used.

General Plan 2020

Future land use is now being considered County-wide in what is known as General Plan 2020 (GP2020). This draft document now prescribes a plan for land use through the year 2020 in terms of commercial, residential with density factors, and green space/preserve areas.

VDO Reviews the Plan

Each local planning group has reviewed the section of GP2020 for its planning area, and made advisory recommendations regarding the plan for its local area. VDO has completed this task and provided input to the San Diego County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. VDO has taken the position that the existing General Plan reflects the desired and appropriate planning and land use for the VDO planning area, and should not

be changed except to correct previous errors. Since GMIA has a highly vested interest in the planning structure of the VDO section of GP2020, your GMIA Board of Directors stays in tune with the content of GP2020 for VDO and surrounding planning areas. To that end, a GMIA position statement has been made to County Government endorsing the VDO recommendation that the VDO section of GP2020 should not be changed. The GMIA endorsement was stated as follows:

- 1 The Grossmont-Mt. Helix area is a combination of highly urban development adjacent to semi-rural and estate residential areas.
- 2 We estimate that it is 98% built-out and our members are pleased with the quality of life it provides.
- 3 There are exceptions:
 - a. Traffic on our thoroughfares such as Avocado Boulevard and Fuerte Drive is congested to the point of being dangerous for our residents.
 - b. The urban area of Casa de Oro has no developed parks to serve the many apartment complexes there.
 - c. Crime appears to be on the increase.
- 4 All indications are that build-out of our area and surrounding communities has pushed our County infrastructure and services to their extreme limits.
- 5 Because our roads and County services are highly stressed, no increases in development intensity should be added to our Mt. Helix/Casa de Oro area in this GP2020 process.
- 6 We understand that the Valle de Oro Community Plan map meets that standard and we recommend that it be approved without allow-

ing increases in development intensity.

Your GMIA Board encourages all GMIA members to take a more focused interest in the planning and land use process that is so vital to the preservation of the quality of life we enjoy and desire to continue for our community.

We urge you to be proactive and keep up with the various issues involved in the final development of our community area, and be supportive of the VDO and urge them to continue the fine accomplishments they have made to date on behalf of our community. ■



“Chicken Ranch” Parcel

In our GMIA membership area, there is an important large parcel of land that has been in agricultural use. That parcel, located at the intersection of Fuerte Drive and Damon Lane, is commonly referred to as the “chicken ranch” since a large chicken ranch has been operated on the land. It is planned for agriculture and one dwelling unit per 2 acres for estate type residences on current County land use maps. It is now surrounded by prime developed residential properties, and this parcel, approximating 25+ acres, is in the process of being purchased by a developer, Reynolds Communities. An unacceptable development plan has been submitted by the developer.

It is opposed by the GMIA Board and the VDO planning group because it requests a 300% increase in the site's allowable General Plan density. ■

ART & GARDEN TOUR

What a wonderful day, Sunday, April 30th. Our annual Art and Garden Tour was enjoyed by over 600 members and guests and from the comments that were heard, the tour was a huge success. We wish to thank the owners of the gardens for all their hard work and the willingness to open their gardens to an admiring group.

For those of you who missed the occasion, the photos by Bob Cederdahl reveal the beautiful properties owned by Jim and Debbie Gianulis, Jim Wermers and Anne Riedman, Rob and Melanie Ault, Don Newcom, and Bob and Carole Caparas. Complementing the gardens were art works by Rhonda Black, Sally Snipes, Judy and Ray Kirk, Jeffrey Rule, Karen Johl, Maureen Ceccarelli, Suja Pritchard, Bob Rhodes, Alo Munizza, Theresa Vandenberg Donche, and Nancy Poisson and students.

A special thanks goes to Susan Nichols for organizing this year's tour and to all who helped make it a success. ■





Garden owners, l to r: Melanie Ault, Jim Wermers & Anne Reidman, Bob & Carole Caparas, Don Newcom. Not pictured: Jim & Debbie Gianulis.

Safety & Enforcement Improvements for Fuerte Drive

After consultation with our County Supervisor, Dianne Jacob, GMIA board members, and area residents via MHANDS, the Department of Public Works (DPW) undertook a focused study of methods to improve traffic safety on Fuerte Drive. The study was very ably led by Mr. Larry Watt of DPW. Several recommendations of the study group have been implemented:

Improve Visible CHP Enforcement Presence

The shoulders along Fuerte have been improved in 9 locations to provide safe roadside access for CHP radar enforcement of the 35 MPH speed limit.

Improve Intersection Warnings for Mayapan Drive

New warning signs have been installed along Fuerte's approach to the obscure intersections.

Identify Limited Road Shoulder Areas

Four "NO SHOULDER" warning signs have been installed in areas where no pull-off shoulder is available.

Electronic Traffic Control Signs

Acquisition of these signs is going through the County's purchasing process. The signs are capable of monitoring and recording vehicle speeds and flashing messages to drivers. We believe this speed feedback technology will significantly reduce the excessive speeds that we are observing on our 2-lane thoroughfares such as Fuerte Drive.

"Go 35 on Fuerte Drive"

Residents who live along Fuerte Drive are asking that all who drive on Fuerte go no faster than the posted 35 miles per hour and take a brake to 25 miles per hour on the curves.

Why? To give their neighborhood walkers, bicyclists and car drivers "a brake" from the threat and stress of near-misses, noise, accidents, and mailbox/service pole/property damage. Their driveways and access streets are often hidden from view and Fuerte drivers have little time to brake to avoid an accident. ■

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

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

A Word on GMIA Finances

As you may be aware, GMIA is a non-profit corporation. Association revenue consists primarily of dues and donations from members. Expenses of the Association are predominately for our special events such as the garden tour, printing and mailing newsletters, surveys, and occasional candidate endorsements and other communication with our members and the community. There are no paid directors, officers or employees of GMIA. All revenue received by GMIA is used for operation of the Association.

The Board of Directors is careful to use all revenue efficiently. Thus, contributions from members are always welcome, as are dues from first time members recruited through your efforts to expand our membership.

To answer a question we hear frequently, the IRS does not deem our association a charitable organization, thus your dues and donations are not deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes. ■

About GMIA . . . What We Do

The Grossmont- Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is one of the oldest and largest associations 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 requirements. It is a non-profit public benefit corporation that represents thousands of families residing in the large unincorporated area of the County 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 ■

Please use the convenient Membership Renewal envelope provided in this newsletter to renew your membership in GMIA today. Give the form below to area friends or neighbors who are not GMIA members. You can print additional forms from the GMIA website: www.gmia.net. THANK YOU!

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



PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 1889

viewpoints

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

Membership Renewal Time!	2006 Calendar of Events
<p>Back in 1795, Edmund Burke said "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."</p> <p>For over 68 years, GMIA has been busy doing the many necessary things that have kept our community the safe haven that it is. Without your help and membership, this organization would wither and its influence would become non-existent.</p> <p>Our objective this year is to get new residents to the area to join GMIA. This issue of <i>Viewpoints</i> will be mailed to them along with a welcoming letter from our president, Dan Mitrovich. If you have new neighbors, please welcome them to the neighborhood and tell them about GMIA and what it has done and will do for our community. (A GMIA membership would be a nice housewarming gift.)</p> <p>At present, we have 1350 member families in GMIA. Our goal is to reach 2000 member families. This means that all our members must renew as well as invite neighbors to join.</p> <p>Check the address label for your "paid to" date. If you're in arrears, now's the time to pay up! (For tax time, just remember that GMIA is a 501.c.4 organization and your dues are not deductible.)</p> <p>If you need additional membership application forms to distribute to your neighbors, you can download them at www.gmia.net.</p>	<p>Christian Community Theater August, 2006: Mt. Helix Amphitheater Performance times and dates are on the Calendar of Events at: www.mthelixpark.org.</p> <p>Jon Schmidt In Concert Saturday, September 16, 2006 7:00 p.m. Mt. Helix Amphitheater If you missed this concert last year, don't miss it again! Everyone raved about Jon's performance, the amazing venue and the overall experience. Pianist, composer, and entertainer, Jon has a refreshingly unique style. 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</p> <p>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.</p>