



viewpoints

SPRING 2015

Volume 45 Issue 3

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

GMIA's

Art & Garden Tour *Always an Inspiration*

*"Spring is the time of
plans and projects."*

LEO TOLSTOY
Anna Karenina

Sunday
May 3rd, 2015
12:00 – 4:00 pm

Spend a delightful afternoon at our GMIA Annual Art & Garden Tour on May 3rd. Four generous homeowners in our neighborhood will open their garden gates to welcome you for a look at their unique outdoor sanctuaries. This is a great opportunity to learn what plants flourish in our Grossmont-Mt. Helix region. Be sure to bring the enclosed Garden Tour brochure/map with you.

As always, admission to our Garden Tour is complimentary for GMIA members whose dues are current. Please check the mailing label on this newsletter – if the date is not 6/30/15 or later, your dues are not current.

When you visit your first garden, you will receive a wrist band that will provide entry at each additional garden. While it is not our intention to open our tour to the general public, we will accommodate guests who wish to experience our event. Nonmembers may participate on the tour for a nominal donation (\$5). There is no entry charge for children under 18 years old.

You're Invited! Delish' Dinner & Dialogue with Supervisor Jacob

GMIA's Annual Dinner | June 14th | 5:30 -8:30

Our mouth-watering BBQ buffet Annual Dinner will once again take place at the magnificent Cuyamaca Water Conservation Garden. This event is a great opportunity to connect with old friends, meet new friends, and hear what's going on in our area.

The BBQ dinner, including soft drinks, beer and wine, is just \$10 per GMIA member with dues current. Please be sure to invite your neighbors and encourage them to become GMIA members. Our membership application/renewal form is located on page 7 of this newsletter. Note: reservations are required. Our Annual Meeting is designed for GMIA members but nonmembers may attend for \$20 per person.



For our program, Supervisor Dianne Jacob will forgo prepared remarks and instead respond to questions from our audience. Please include your questions on your reservation form. Note cards for questions/comments will also be available at the dinner. We want to hear about your issues and concerns. Thanks in part to last year's questions and issues raised by our members, GMIA was able to accomplish a lot of good in our community.

As a special bonus, complimentary tours of the Garden will precede the Annual Meeting. If you would like a complimentary tour, please be sure to note that on your reservation. Tour time is 4:30 p.m. Reserve online at www.gmia.net or return the enclosed form. Don't delay.



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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440-1607

Larry Nichols, Treasurer/Membership
440-1607

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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.

Editor: Susan Nichols

Design & Layout: Victoria Vinton,
Coyote Press Graphic
Communications

www.gmia.net

MISSION

GMIA is a 75+ year old nonprofit 501(c)4 public benefit membership organization. Our mission is to preserve and enhance the character and quality of the community and foster pride in the area. We do not employ a paid staff and are served by an all-volunteer board.

Message from the President

This newsletter, like so many before it, is chock-full of articles that tell of GMIA's progress at improving our community. I want you to know that much of the success of GMIA's efforts has been the result of the approachable, supportive, and responsive help Supervisor Dianne Jacob has extended to our organization. That is one of the many reasons why our Board of Directors has come out early and voted to endorse her bid for re-election in 2016.



What I know is this: when GMIA has concerns and contacts Dianne, her office will always set up a timely meeting. At that meeting, she will bring together representatives of all County, State, or other agencies to resolve the issue. Her hard working staff always follow up to be sure that measures taken were satisfactory.

Like any elected official, her abilities are not unlimited – she can't fix every situation. There are four other County Supervisors whose votes hold equal weight; some agencies do not fall under her jurisdiction; budget is often an issue. However, my personal experience as President of GMIA for the last five years is that she has gone the extra mile to help us many, many times.

I hope you value the dedication and hard work Supervisor Jacob has devoted to our Grossmont-Mt. Helix region, and that you will unite with our Board of Directors in supporting her reelection.

Susan Nichols

An Invitation

On a personal note, my husband Larry and I invite you to show your support for Dianne's reelection. We welcome you to join us at our home on Monday, April 27th from 5:30 -7:30 p.m. The occasion will be a fundraiser for Dianne's campaign.

We believe it is important to help raise contributions for her reelection because she has tirelessly served our community with great commitment. Her potential challenger received a \$200,000 contribution from the Republican Party. (The role of County Supervisor is a non-partisan position).

We hope you will say "Yes!" and accept our invitation to attend. Meet the Supervisor, enjoy light hors d'oeuvres, and hear beautiful live music by the Jan Connor Trio in our garden. For more information, to RSVP, or for contribution details, please contact me at 619-440-1607, or email me at Lsnnichols@cox.net.

Thank You Donors

Special thanks you to Delevan Lisk, Jr. and Judith & Brian Pike for their gifts in excess of \$25 to GMIA.

GMIA & Supervisor Jacob Light Up the Night

After 18 months of effort, and with the pivotal help of Supervisor Jacob, GMIA is elated to announce that Caltrans has agreed to our request and will install a street light at the I-8 Park and Ride at the eastbound exit of Fuerte and Severin.

GMIA undertook this initiative because community safety is an important focus of our organization. When members expressed concern that this busy Park and Ride is so dark at night, our Improvement Committee requested Caltrans mount a street light to illuminate the area. We were informed by agency officials there was

no budget to fund the project. But our Improvement Committee stepped up their efforts, first researching lower cost alternative lighting solutions and then asking Supervisor Jacob for assistance.

Our determination along with the work by Supervisor Jacob and her staff has been successful. Caltrans District Division Chief Marcelo Peinado advised that their agency has confirmed and funded a project to install one light pole in the Park and Ride facility. The Division of Procurement and Contracts advertised and awarded the work on March 2, 2015. We anticipate installation by summer. GMIA gets results!



Exciting Work in Progress

The intersection at Avocado/Fuerte is a significant community gateway for our area and is it ever ugly! At our 2014 Annual Dinner, GMIA members asked Supervisor Jacob to help us improve this entry point.

Coming Soon: Safety will be improved for cars turning right onto Avocado Boulevard from west-bound Fuerte Drive. Look for installation of a right-turn lane signal on an added “arm” of the traffic light. GMIA met with County traffic engineers. Their analysis of the intersection found inadequate visibility for vehicles making that turn. GMIA noted the new light might cause traffic to back up at pick-up and drop-times for nearby Fuerte Elementary School. Due to our concerns, the project will include an electric loop in the

ground to sense when traffic is heavy and ensure the turn light stays green.

Here is What Has Taken Place to Date: The Department of Public Works has repainted the crosswalks. As for the weeds, GMIA has learned that, due to safety concerns, it is not possible for our organization to clean the median, but DPW will maintain a quarterly maintenance schedule.



On the Horizon: GMIA has met with DPW and Supervisor Jacob to outline a plan to eliminate the unsightly “candlestick” delineators in the center median at the intersection. Our Improvement Committee is working on a design featuring an attractive raised medium finished with natural stone or stamped concrete to enhance the intersection. 🌱



Preserving Our Historic Rock Wall

Built in the 1930's with manpower from the State Emergency Relief Administration, the rock wall that lines the road to the Mt. Helix summit winds 7,000 feet up to the summit. It consists of more than 10,000 tons of carefully stacked rock whose only reinforcement is a cement cap.

GMIA has been concerned about damage to the wall where significant voids from missing rocks are evident. We asked Supervisor Jacob for her help. As a result of that request, the Department of Public Works spent a morning with GMIA's President inspecting the wall. A work crew was then sent to begin restoring the wall to its original historic condition. ▲

New Casa de Oro Library Top Priority

Last year, GMIA initiated a request for the County to consider a new, free-standing library in Casa de Oro. We noted that an appealing library would be the nexus to bring together residents from the surrounding area including Mt. Helix and serve the many schools within walking distance: Murdock Elementary, Spring Valley Middle, Monte Vista High and Santa Sofia. Casa de Oro (Campo Road) is on the southern boundary of our GMIA region. Our research has shown shown that the footprint of our current library (located in a strip mall) is very small – especially when compared to others in the immediate area. Here we are, at the bottom of the chart:

Libraries in the East County	
Location	Square Ft.
El Cajon	30,166
Rancho San Diego	20,000
Lemon Grove	14,000
Alpine (opening fall 2015)	13,500
Spring Valley	12,630
La Mesa	10,000
Casa de Oro	6,308

On GMIA's behalf, Supervisor Jacob contacted Deputy Director Susan Moore who has responded to our request. She has advised that Casa de Oro is "at the top of our priority list for a brand new library." She notes that the current leased space is not easy to identify, not large enough to accommodate a real Teen Space, and that the Community Room is undersized and heavily utilized. Her conclusion: Casa de Oro deserves and can support a stand-alone, County-owned facility of 15,000 sq. ft. – more than double the current library. We look forward to moving ahead with this important initiative.





Strategic Plan Overview

Over the course of the last few months, your GMIA Board of Directors met to update our Strategic Plan. Our purpose was to create a five year operating plan and to set realistic, actionable and measureable goals.

As a result of our fruitful discussions, we’ve drafted a series of new initiatives. Thanks to our members who completed our survey which provided a foundation for our discussion.

As a recognized leader in the community, GMIA’s advocacy role remains a primary emphasis: land use, zoning, safety, water rates, and traffic are among the many issues we address. Additionally, your Board identified these four areas of focus:

- ✓ Promote positive community character
- ✓ Actively pursue improvement projects as they may benefit our neighborhood
- ✓ Boost GMIA membership/increase organizational visibility
- ✓ Clarify Board processes

Below is an example of what we are up to as we implement our new initiative to promote community character.

Nominations Now Open for GMIA Curb Appeal Award

Members told us they wanted GMIA’s help to encourage neighbors to maintain their properties. We know that one of the most valuable assets of our community is the strong first impression that our well maintained properties provide. Attractive front landscapes say a lot about the pride homeowners take in our neighborhood. Realtors tell us that curb appeal adds beauty and value. But equally important, well-groomed residences send a clear message to passers-by that residents care about their neighborhood.

We invite you to nominate a candidate (yourself or a neighbor) for our GMIA Curb Appeal Recognition Award. This distinction will be conferred to encourage good front yard maintenance, the hallmark of our community. The winner will be featured in our newsletter, and recognized at our Annual Dinner.

You can nominate a front yard in our area at www.gmia.net and click the Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form, or send your nomination to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943.



GMIA Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form

Location (Address) _____

Homeowner's Name _____

Person nominating (optional) _____

Comments:



Neighborhood Little Free Libraries

Our Winter edition of Viewpoints highlighted the many Little Free Libraries in our community. Member Claudia Erickson emailed to let us know that they installed a Little Free Library made from a repurposed outhouse in their front yard. Claudia coordinates the San Diego Reach Out and Read Program, so inviting neighbors to “bring a book, take a book” is a natural fit. Stop by 9243 Lovell Lane, La Mesa to visit their unique Outhouse Library.

If you would like to let neighbors know about a Little Free Library, please email us at: yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

Fuerte Lane Closures

Commuting on Fuerte Drive continues to be a mess as new gas lines are installed in the traffic lanes. Too bad the various agencies who provide utilities don’t talk to each other to coordinate installations. It wasn’t very long ago that Helix Water District tore up this same road to install their new pipes. Each time the road is excavated and then subsequently repaved, guess who is footing the bill? We, the rate payers.

GMIA is working with Supervisor Jacob to make sure SDG&E returns Fuerte Drive to good condition and not the bumpy thoroughfare it is at the moment. In the meantime, please remember to give yourself adequate time to navigate the traffic delays. Here’s the good news; maybe this inconvenience will persuade drivers to find alternate routes and avoid this heavily travelled road. 🌱

Car vs. Bicycle: Safety on Mt. Helix

A GMIA member has asked us to investigate how the new ordinance requiring three feet of clearance between cars and bicycles will impact our Mt. Helix neighborhood. Narrow, winding roads with no shoulder or sidewalk are typical in our region. It’s hard to figure out how cars and bicycles can share Fuerte Drive with three feet of space between.

Looking for answers, GMIA contacted Kevin Pearlstein, Public Affairs Officer for the California Highway Patrol. Officer Pearlstein advised that the law mandates “three feet of clearance when feasible”. Drivers should “use their best judgment”; go slowly until the road widens and it is safe to pass; never cross the double yellow line.

If you would like more information about this or other traffic issues that affect our community, Officer Pearlstein invites you to contact him at kpearlstein@chp.ca.gov.



Contact Information for the Unincorporated Area

Compiled by Pat Ryan. Please clip and save this list.

Animal Control.....	619-236-4250
Abandoned Vehicles.....	619-401-2000
California Highway Patrol	858-637-3800
Code Enforcement.....	858-694-3741
Grading Violations Hotline	858-694-2705
Dead Animal Pickup.....	888-299-9905
Dig Alert.....	800-227-2600
(Call 2 days before you dig near any underground utility or pipe)	
Environmental Health	
Code Enforcement/Information	619-338-2222
Graffiti Hotline/Caltrans	858-467-4042
Graffiti/County Property	858-694-2705
Hazardous Materials Disposal:	
• Information Hotline.....	877-713-2784
• To schedule a drop off	619-596-5100
Mail Theft Complaints (USPS).....	877-876-2455
Noise Enforcement.....	858-694-3741
Potholes/Road Maintenance.....	858-694-3850
RSVP (Retired Sheriff Volunteer Patrol)	619-660-7021
San Miguel Fire District	619-670-0500
(Business & Administration)	
Sheriff's Station Rancho San Diego.....	619-660-7090
SD Sheriff (Non-Emergency).....	858-565-5200
Vector Control	858-694-2888
(Rodents, Mosquitoes, Flies, etc.)	



Families & Pets Enjoy GMIA's 7th Annual Mt. Helix Walk

by Pat Ryan

A bright and sunny January 3rd greeted members for the 7th annual "Welcome the New Year Walk Up Mt. Helix." An enthusiastic crowd of families and their pets gathered at the fire station on Vivera to trek to the top, behind the yellow GMIA banner. At the summit, everyone enjoyed delicious bakery items, fruit, and beverages. Thanks to the La Mesa Blvd. Starbucks who generously donated coffee, and to Cal Fire who parked their engine at the top and gave firefighter hats to the kids.

Many members have participated in the walk since its beginning. Among this year's walkers were several dogs rescued from Hurricane Katrina. GMIA member Janet has walked every year, and proclaimed, "It's a great way to start the New Year!" Another GMIA member, Jeff, arrived very early to help board members set up the venue. He commented, "It's nice to get together with neighbors and meet ones you don't know."

Fostering a spirit of community is one of our missions. This popular activity gives members an opportunity to greet the New Year, see old friends and meet new neighbors. We invite you to contact us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com if you have comments or would like to be involved with next year's celebration. Thanks for your participation! ▲



GMIA Membership Application or Renewal Or Join/Renew Online at www.gmia.net!



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY / ST / ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

Our household would like to Join / Renew our membership (Year July - June):

☐ One year: \$18 ☐ 2 years: \$36 ☐ 3 years: \$54

☐ Address label on Viewpoints is correct.

☐ Change information as indicated.

☐ I am making an additional contribution of: \$ _____

☐ I would like to receive *Viewpoints* via email instead of postal mail.

Total Enclosed

\$

Make checks payable to
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La Mesa, CA 91943-2751

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To ensure your membership is current: please look at your mailing label on this newsletter. On it you will find the renewal date of your membership. Note: if the date is June 2015 or later, your dues are paid in full. Thank you! Annual membership is just \$18 (2 years - \$36; 3 years - \$54). You may renew online at our secure website www.gmia.net or mail your payment to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

Succulent Swap

Saturday, May 23rd | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
10805 Melva Road

Everyone in the community is welcome at this FREE event to help promote water-wise landscaping!

- * Trade, swap or give away your succulents and other plants
- * Leave with lots of new plants
- * Bring your neighbors

Don't have cuttings? Come anyway. You will leave with new plants for your garden.

Special thanks to GMIA members Tere Trout and Jonathan Becker who are graciously hosting our plant exchange in their beautiful garden located at 10805 Melva Road.

Bring your cuttings (any size is fine) and extra plants. This is a no-cost and no-fuss way to add to your landscape plus meet your neighbors. As a special treat, GMIA member Mike Atkinson will answer any questions and offer advice about plumerias. He will bring examples from his collection of this beautiful, flowering, drought tolerant plant.

Questions? Contact GMIA Board member Dagmar Miller at 619-579-1844 or dagmaremiller@yahoo.com.

Calendar

Sun., May 3rd
Art & Garden
Tour

Sat., May 23rd
Succulent
Swap

Sun., June 14
Annual
Dinner