



# viewpoints

SUMMER 2015

Volume 45 Issue 4

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

## Come to Dinner!

Enjoy a summer night with mouth-watering Phil's BBQ, Ballast Point beer, wine and soft drinks at GMIA's Annual Dinner on June 14th 5:30 - 8:30.

Our casual BBQ buffet will once again take place at the gorgeous 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. Supervisor Dianne Jacob will be on hand to talk with us.

The dinner 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 envelope is in this newsletter. Your membership renewal date is located above your address on the back page of this newsletter.

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. 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. We want to hear about your issues and concerns.

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.

*Note: reservations are required. Our Annual Meeting is designed for GMIA members but nonmembers may attend for \$20 per person.*

Reserve online at [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net) or return the enclosed form. Don't delay. 🏔️

## Award Winner Announced

GMIA is pleased to announce the **Al Platt Memorial Award for Service to the Community** will be presented to the **Board of Directors of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation** at our Annual Dinner program. The Mt. Helix Park Foundation, founded in 1999, is responsible for the Park, parking lot adjacent to the fire station, amphitheater and cross memorial on top of Mt. Helix. GMIA is pleased to recognize the Board for their stewardship of the summit for all to enjoy.

Sometimes our residents are confused about the two nonprofit organizations that serve our Grossmont-Mt. Helix community. The mission of your Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is to preserve and enhance the character and quality of our neighborhood, and to foster pride in the community. We are a nonprofit public benefit membership organization founded in 1938, are led by an all-volunteer Board of Directors and have no paid staff or officers. 🏔️



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX  
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

#### Officers

Susan Nichols, President  
440-1607

Pat Ryan, First Vice President

Sue Creveling, Second Vice President

Larry Nichols, Treasurer/Membership  
440-1607

Kay Bickley, Secretary  
318-5260

#### Directors

Kathleen Hedberg	Jeff Rule
Allison Henderson	Mark Schuppert
Tom Huffman	Michael Sciulli
Dagmar Miller	Mike Valley
Don Newcom	Holly Yarris
Tom Osteen	Dave Zimmerman

**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

Nature furnished picture perfect weather for our annual spring Art & Garden Tour. The mild sunny day, tucked between a scorching hot spell and a rainstorm, was a superb backdrop for our Tour. Thanks to our garden owners Eric Fenex, Guy & Laura Halgren, Robert & Judith Gennette, and Jeff & Claire Rule who invited members to enjoy their beautiful landscapes (see photos on page 5).



Throughout this newsletter, you will find many examples of community members stepping up to help our region – and making a difference. Their generosity is the heart and soul of our organization.

- ◆ GMIA board members, garden owners and volunteers pitched in to produce our Art & Garden Tour for more than 400 guests. Thank you!
- ◆ GMIA members attended the Helix Water District Board meeting and emailed concerns to the District Board regarding water rates. Thank you!
- ◆ GMIA members like Lori Borkert installed and maintain Little Free Libraries to benefit their neighborhoods. Thank you!
- ◆ At our Annual Dinner, the volunteer efforts of the Board of Directors of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation will be recognized with our Al Platt Award for Service to the Community. Thank you!
- ◆ GMIA member Aaron Duggan took the time to provide an informative article with helpful methods to deal with a troublesome garden pest. Thank you!
- ◆ GMIA board members and volunteers are busy planning our popular Annual Dinner to make sure everyone enjoys a great evening. Thank you!

The American philosopher William James wrote, “Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.” With your help, GMIA has made a difference for 78 years. If you would like to deepen your commitment to our community, please check out the list of Volunteer Opportunities in the newsletter. We welcome you to lend a hand. Thank you for your membership! ▲

*Susan Nichols*

## Thank You Donors

Thanks to the following GMIA members whose donations of \$25 or more in excess of their annual dues help fund our projects and events.

Michael & Barbara Bradshaw

Paul Wells

Roger & Ann Graham

Jerry & Betty Hill

Ralph & Kathie Allen

Bob & Holly Yarris

## Are Your Dues Current?

Above your address is the renewal date for your membership. If the date is June 2016 or later, your dues are paid in full. Thank you! For those whose dues are in arrears: please renew using the enclosed remittance envelope (also good for dinner reservations) or online at our secure website [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net). Annual membership per household is just \$18 for one year, \$36 for two years, and \$54 for three years.

GMIA is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization and we don't have the resources to send individual renewal notices. We'd rather use our limited funds to benefit the community! Please take the time today to make sure your dues are current. We appreciate your membership.



## Helix Water to Penalize Large Lot Owners

**G**MIA and other community stakeholders spoke out at the May 13th Helix Water District Board workshop and its May 20th Board Meeting. Thanks to you who participated; without your voice an even higher penalty would have been imposed. The Board nonetheless voted to implement a 10% penalty on the portion of water billed at Tier 3 levels regardless of whether customers reduce their water usage, while not penalizing other water customers (Tiers 1 & 2) even if they increase usage. The 800 irrigation budget customers, commercial and multi-family properties are not scheduled for penalties or reduced budgets.

Water bills received on or after July 25th will include the penalty, and the penalty will expire at the end of February, 2016. The rationale for this “penalty” (which is in fact a rate increase for Tier 3) is the assumption that customers in Tier 3 must have unnecessary outdoor watering of lawns or ornamentals. The Board overlooks the fact that some Tier 3 water feeds slope planting to prevent erosion and water runoff, and that some goes to maintain trees, which are important to us all in the conversion of carbon dioxide to oxygen. In our heavily wooded area, sustaining mature trees and foliage is critical to reduce fire hazard.

Additional action taken at the May 20th Board Meeting to encourage water use reduction includes restricting outdoor watering to 2 days per week, shortening the time for custom-

ers to respond to violation notices, the imposition of administrative penalties for failure to take corrective action following water district notices, and a broad program of education and outreach to its 56,000 customers.

GMIA encourages our members and all citizens to do their part and reduce water consumption. We tirelessly promote water-wise landscaping and conservation.

We recognize that Helix Water District will face reduced income from rate payers due to reduced usage. Raising rates and reducing costs are the typical business methods to respond to a reduction in income. By calling this 10% increase a “penalty,” the Water District carefully avoided the legal requirements necessary for an actual rate increase. GMIA is dumbfounded at the inequity of this penalty that places the burden only on large lot owners, but targeting large lot owners is nothing new for Helix Water District. They seem to ignore the fact that here in the Grossmont-Mt. Helix region, our zoning ordinances require us to maintain large lots in keeping with the character of the community.

Your voice matters! Please make your opinion heard by writing letters via email or postal mail to [sandy.jantzen@helixwater.org](mailto:sandy.jantzen@helixwater.org) – mail is to Sandy Jantzen, Board Secretary, Helix Water District, 7811 University Avenue, La Mesa, CA 91942. GMIA will continue to closely monitor Helix Water District and keep you informed. ▲

## Neighborhood Social Network

**G**MIA members might want to check out online Nextdoor, a free private

social network for neighbors

and the community. It's touted as a way to talk online to build stronger and safer neighborhoods. Our Grossmont-Mt. Helix region is among the thousands of neighborhoods using Nextdoor to connect residents with one another. The website is a platform to share online the kind of things you'd be okay sharing with your neighbors in person. Recent examples of postings include location and time of a car break-in, details about a dog spotted running loose, a request for a referral for a swimming pool remodeling company, and a notice for



**Nextdoor**

free moving boxes. When GMIA checked it out, no commercial advertisers were on the site.

According to Nextdoor's website, the San Diego Police Department partnered with Nextdoor to improve neighbor-to-neighbor communications as well as increase participation in Neighborhood Watch across the city. The SDPD uses the site to share critical updates in times of crisis such as wildfires as well as crime alerts. GMIA encourages the San Diego County Sheriff to consider this communication tool to serve our region. ▲



## GMIA “Art Alive” Prize Winner

Congratulations to talented GMIA Board member Dagmar Miller, who, on behalf of GMIA, entered the acclaimed “Art Alive” exhibition at the San Diego Museum of Art. Dagmar’s stunning floral interpretation of a 15th Century painting won the Members’ Choice 3rd Place Award. ▲

## GMIA Volunteer Opportunities

Want to feel more connected to our community? Be a good role model for family and friends? Get to know like-minded neighbors who care about our region? Email us at [yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com](mailto:yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com) or call Susan Nichols at 619-440-1067 to lend GMIA a hand. Volunteer one time or frequently - we have a variety of opportunities including:

### GMIA Ambassador

Help promote GMIA among neighbors and new move-ins. We will provide you with brochures and other materials to spread the word.

### Park & Ride Cleanup (3rd Saturday every month 9:00 am)

GMIA sends a monthly email reminder. Join the volunteer list to help remove litter and weeds. Help just one time or become a regular! You can choose to help when convenient, no obligation.



### GMIA Event Support

- ◆ **Annual Dinner Meeting (June)** Help with set-up, clean-up or serving. As a Committee member, help plan our 2016 event.
- ◆ **Annual Garden Tour (Spring)** Be a Garden Scout to help locate gardens to participate or to help with day of the event registration, parking logistics, and planning.
- ◆ **Community Forum (Fall)** This year’s topic will be Preserving and Enhancing Our Community with representatives from County and other agencies addressing all aspects of that theme. Help us plan the event, secure speakers for our panel, and provide light refreshments.
- ◆ **New Year’s Walk Up Mt. Helix (January)** Help with supplies, set-up, clean-up, parking logistics. ▲



## Little Free Library

GMIA member Lori Borkert advised that a Little Free Library miniature replica of their Mid Century Modern home is installed at 334 Horizon Hills Drive. The Library debuted on Valentine’s Day with 21 neighbors attending the dedication. Writes Lori, “It has been a hit and we look

forward to sharing it with others.”

The very first Little Free Library was built in 2009 in the shape of a one room schoolhouse by a Wisconsin resident as a tribute to his mother, a former school teacher who loved reading. His neighbors loved it, and so he built several more and gave them away. Each had a sign that said FREE BOOKS. The concept is simple: give a book, take a book. The library encourages readers, plus it’s giving neighbors opportunities to get to know each other. Over 15,000 Little Free Libraries in 62 countries have been built. Right here in our own community, neighbors are joining in. To date, GMIA has highlighted 8 LFL in our neighborhood.

If you know of other Little Free Libraries in our community, please let us know at [yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com](mailto:yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com). We’ll get the word out. ▲

## Community Concerns

**FUERTE DRIVE DELAYS:** Many of our GMIA members have expressed concern about ongoing traffic delays on Fuerte Drive as SDG&E replaces the underground gas lines. It is important to note that the pipes being replaced are 75 years old; GMIA understands the wisdom of timely replacement of aging infrastructure before a major break or problem occurs. To accomplish necessary work, utility companies have a long standing agreement with the County that allows them access in the right of way as needed.

**Final repairs for the current phase** should commence the first week of June: on Fuerte between Sierra Vista and El Granito, Lemon Avenue, and the intersections at Summit/Fuerte and Sunset/Fuerte. Repaving is a two-step process: first a base pavement, then a brief waiting period for the pavement to settle, followed by grinding and a final cap. The Department of Public Works will inspect and oversee the full lane repair process to ensure the result is suitable. GMIA has asked DPW to make sure the contractor restores the Grossmont-Mt. Helix triangle monument which has been damaged by use as a staging area for supplies. GMIA adopted and maintains this neighborhood landmark.



**Here's what's next:** phase 2 gas line replacement will take place on Fuerte Drive between Ward Lane and Calavo Drive. The anticipated start date was April 1st, and the project is expected to take 6 months. GMIA has asked to be advised of the traffic control plan and will pass along pertinent details as they become available. As previously noted, we hope these delays will encourage drivers to find alternate routes and thereby reduce the traffic congestion on heavily traveled Fuerte. Please plan accordingly and always use caution when driving through the construction areas.

**ROCK WALL REPAIRS:** GMIA thanks Supervisor Dianne Jacob for her help with the restoration of our historic rock wall on Mt. Helix Drive. GMIA sought help from the Supervisor to address repair issues: significant voids where original stones were missing from the wall, and a 30' section of the stone structure just west of Halo Circle that was leaning precariously.

**Here's what's been done:** We are happy to advise that a repair crew from Department of Public Works has completed filling the voids, reset the leaning wall, and repaired the cement cap. GMIA appreciates DPW's responsive attention to preserve this historic community asset.

**Here's what's next:** Roberto De La Torre, Assistant Superintendent at the Department of Public Works, Division 1 Roads, has advised additional rock wall repairs are needed due to damage from a vehicle vs. wall accident. We'll keep you posted.



## A Day of Beauty: Photos from the Tour



## Extra EDCO Green Waste Carts

Many GMIA residents served by EDCO Waste received new 95-gallon green waste carts. Although the cart will hold as much waste as three standard trash cans, some large lot homeowners need more capacity for garden trimmings. EDCO customers may call 619-287-7555 to request 2 additional green waste carts at no charge.

GMIA encourages our members to consider composting as an alternative to sending green waste to Miramar. Besides reducing trash hauling, home-made compost is free, easy to make and good for the environment. Your garden will thank you! 🌱



## Citrus Leafminer

Thanks to GMIA member Aaron Duggan who provided this information.

Citrus leafminer is a tiny (1/4" wingspan) moth that arrived in southern California from Mexico in 2000 and now infests citrus in Southern and Central California. Most active from dusk to early morning, they spend the day resting on the undersides of leaves, but are rarely observed.

Citrus leafminer larvae feed by creating shallow tunnels, referred to as mines, in young leaves. The larvae mine the lower or upper surface of the leaves causing them to curl and look distorted. Mature citrus trees generally tolerate leaf damage without any effect on tree growth or fruit yield. Citrus leafminer is likely to cause damage in new plantings because the growth of young trees is retarded by leafminer infestations. However, trees are unlikely to die.

To treat the problem, there are options available. Armstrong Nursery sells an organic product, Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew, which when applied liberally kills both adult moths and larvae. Depending on the number of citrus trees treated, 32oz of concentrate, applied using a Gilmour All-Purpose Sprayer with Metering Dial, ought to last for several seasons.

In addition to insecticide, the Master Gardeners' of San Diego website has recommendations regarding trimming new flush growth and water sprouts and fertilizer application: "Citrus leafminer moths are attracted to new flush of citrus trees.

Avoid pruning live branches more than once a year, so that the cycles of flushing are uniform



See MINER on page 7

## WATER-WISE GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX HOMEOWNER Showers to Flowers!

by Kathleen Hedberg

Using graywater can be an important way to reduce drinking water use and flows to our sewer system. Graywater is simply reusing the water from your bathroom sink, shower, tub or your clothes washer to help grow the plants in your landscape. You can use graywater to irrigate fruit trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, groundcover, and lawns (if you still have one). Do not use graywater to water vegetables that grow in or on the soil (i.e. carrots and zucchini).

Keep your Graywater System simple!

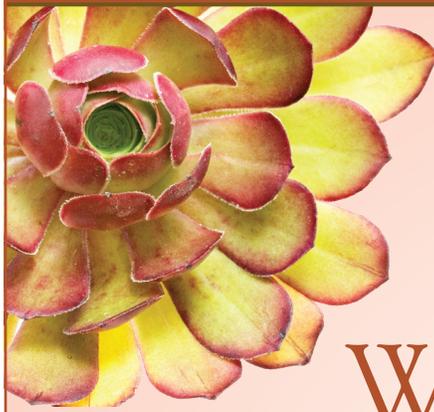
- ◆ Use gravity to deliver Graywater to trees and plants downhill from the house.
- ◆ Avoid pumps and expensive pumped systems because Graywater may clog them with hair and debris.
- ◆ Place a bucket in your shower and collect the water while showering and when the water is warming up and use that water for your plants or cleaning. Or a bowl in your kitchen.

The State of California and Helix Water District do NOT require a permit for a Laundry to Landscape System. However, complex drain piping systems may require a permit because they involve altering plumbing. When changing plumbing you should call your city, or the county, to determine if you need a permit.

- ◆ City of La Mesa - Building Department 619-667-1176
- ◆ City of El Cajon - Building Department 619-441-1726
- ◆ San Diego County - Environmental Health Dept. at 858-565-5173 and [http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu\\_graywater\\_systems.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_graywater_systems.html)

Need some assistance? Local classes, resources and great teachers are available.

- ◆ Take a course from the San Diego Sustainable Living Institute. Go to <http://sdsustainable.org/event/laundry-to-landscape-greywater/>
- ◆ Contact the Water Conservation Garden for upcoming classes, [www.TheGarden.org](http://www.TheGarden.org)
- ◆ Contact [www.wh20-me.com](http://www.wh20-me.com) for upcoming Graywater events.
- ◆ FREE ONLINE Graywater Design Manual from the San Francisco PUC: <http://www.sfwater.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=55>
- ◆ Check out the Helix Water District website, [www.hwd.com](http://www.hwd.com) for updated information on the Drought News and Conservation Water Rebates. ▲



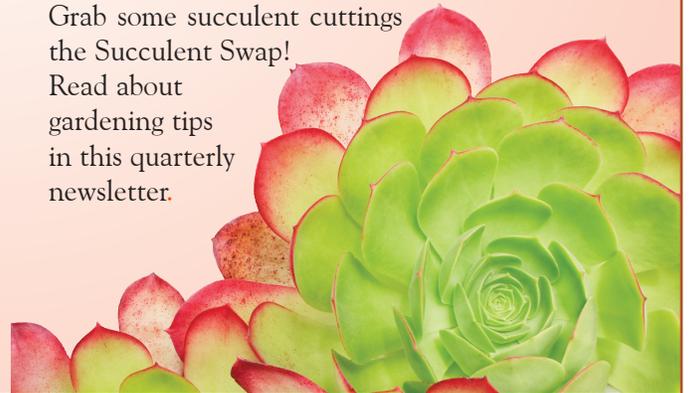
## Gardening Tips For GMIA Residents

by Tom Huffman

**W**e live in a great community and many of us have challenging and rewarding yards that we both love and hate at times. We thought it would be great to share some gardening tips and ideas that you might find useful.

1. Stay calm and keep plugging away. Large lot yards require a fair amount of work (either your own hours or someone you hire). Taking care of your yard is also a way of taking care of yourself. The benefits from performing physical labor and the mental escape that come from long term care of plants and the landscape are not to be taken lightly.
2. Share ideas with your neighbors. What works for them will likely work for you. They also might share tools, cuttings, encouragement, and a cold beer just when you need it.
3. Mulching much of your lot will save you money on irrigation, make your plants grow better, keep weeds down, and make your yard look better. You can sometimes find tree companies that will provide wood chips and/or mulch for FREE. Miramar Landfill sells clean mulch and woodchips. Pricing for County residents is just \$5 to \$25 per truckload depending on product. Info at [www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/miramar/greenery/cmw/shtml](http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/miramar/greenery/cmw/shtml) or (858) 694-7000.

4. Use drip irrigation as much as possible. Drip irrigation requires ongoing maintenance, but the money savings and contribution to water conservation are worth it.
5. Find plants that work! Some plants are drought tolerant, some are easy to propagate, and some are both.
6. Succulents are FABULOUS! They require little water, are easy to grow and even easier to propagate, and they look great.
7. Try controlling gophers without poison by using black box traps or other traps. Your dog and local wildlife will appreciate it.
8. Do you want your yard to provide fresh items to eat but you are too busy to plant and maintain a vegetable garden? Then plant a small herb garden that is both manageable and always there for adding fresh herbs to your home cooked meals.
9. Take time to enjoy your yard. Give tours when your friends and family come over. Have a picnic outside once in awhile. Add lighting to accent features in the yard.
10. Take advantage of GMIA events. Get ideas from the fabulous yards featured on the Garden Tour! Grab some succulent cuttings the Succulent Swap! Read about gardening tips in this quarterly newsletter.



MINER from page 6

and short. Once the leaves harden, the pest will not be able to mine the leaves. Do not prune off leaves damaged by citrus leafminer because undamaged areas of the leaves continue to produce food for the tree. Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer at times of the year when leafminer populations are high as flush growth will be severely damaged. Vigorous shoots known as water sprouts often develop on branches and above the graft union on the trunk of mature trees. These shoots grow rapidly and produce new leaves for a prolonged period of time. Where citrus leafminer is a problem, remove water sprouts that might act as a site for the moths to lay eggs.” ▲

## 2015 Calendar





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

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

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 2016 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](http://www.gmia.net) or mail your payment to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

## Is Your Front Yard a Winner?

Nominations are now open for the GMIA Curb Appeal Award. We invite you to nominate a front yard (your own or a neighbor) that shows pride of ownership. Any well maintained landscape is welcome, and drought tolerant designs are especially encouraged. We want to recognize neighbors who maintain their properties, adding beauty and value to our community. As more and more residents remove thirsty front lawns, we want to encourage the installation of attractive low water alternatives. 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](http://www.gmia.net) (click the Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form), or use the enclosed GMIA envelope to mail your nomination to us.



### GMIA Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form

Location (Address) \_\_\_\_\_

Homeowner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Person nominating (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: