

**A Community
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –
Mt. Helix
Improvement
Association**



viewpoints

January 2001

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History of the Place We Call Home

Our community begins to blossom

In the April issue of Viewpoints you read how in 1900 Ed Fletcher had a vision for how this part of the county would one day be dotted with neighborhoods surrounded by lush landscaping. In order for his vision to take root it needed a seed. Enter William Gross.



William Gross (right) and a friend, parked alongside the huge boulder symbolizing Grossmont Summit.

William Gross at Yosemite Valley in 1902 opened new horizons for both men. For young Fletcher, it signaled the end of a routine existence as a produce salesman and the beginning of a new and exciting career in land development. For

In Hubert Guy's book, *Grossmont Isn't just a Shopping Center*, he writes, "The chance meeting of Ed Fletcher and

elderly Gross, it was the end of an illustrious career in the theater and the

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75th Anniversary of Mt. Helix Park

A very memorable and enjoyable party was presented on Mt. Helix by the Mt. Helix Park Foundation on October 14. This event was a celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the construction of this magnificent Park, consisting of the Cross, amphitheater, and associated trails and landscaping. For those of you who were unable to attend this gala affair, perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the celebration was the assembling of some of the current descendents of the



Yawkey family (Mary Yawkey to whom the Park was dedicated as a memorial) and the Fletcher family (Ed Fletcher who donated the land for the Park and then managed construction of the entire Park). This marked the first occasion in 75 years when members of both families appeared at the same time on the Mt. Helix Park amphitheater stage! Watch your mail for notices and information from the Mt. Helix Park Foundation regarding further events and developments for Mt. Helix Park. ▲

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



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A Letter from the President

By the time you receive this issue of our Viewpoints newsletter, calendar year 2000 will be closed and we will have started yet another calendar year. We would like to say something like “time flies when you are having fun”, but believe me, most of us could use a slow down in the clock speed to allow enough time to complete all the tasking we have, and then perhaps have time for some fun!

It seems like the year 2000 was a fast and full year for your GMIA Board of Directors. We produced what turned out to be a wonderful Garden Tour for members in April, staged an outstanding Annual Dinner Meeting in May, worked to achieve definitive funding authorization for the critical 94/125 interchange missing ramps, and then assisted in defeating the zoning application for development at Bancroft and Lemon during the last part of the year, all the while keeping the routine functions of GMIA on pace. We think overall, it was a good year for our GMIA community.

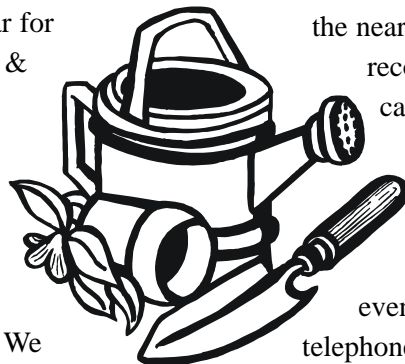
However, 2001 brings its own set of challenges, including ensuring the 94/125 Interchange Project stays on track, and expediting the construction completion schedule. And, to preserve the quality of life in our community we must be ever vigilant and proactive against unwarranted zoning changes and development in our area. Your Board genuinely solicits the help and support of all members in achievement of the necessary goals for GMIA. In that vein, please note the article regarding our Annual Dinner Meeting scheduled for May 14. We strongly encourage all members to attend, along with friends and neighbors who also need to be informed of what GMIA has done and is doing for our community.

Also, please read the article below on the planned 2001 GMIA Art & Garden Tour, and then make a note to attend that event when you receive the announcement. In the meantime, your Board wishes you a happy and prosperous 2001! ▲

Al Platt

2001 GMIA Art & Garden Tour

That time of year for our annual Art & Garden Tour is just around the corner! Usually held in April, watch your mail for the announcement on this event for 2001. We will be selecting the gardens and artists to be included in the tour in



the near future. If you have any recommendations on candidate gardens or artists, or would like to propose your own garden, please contact our Director in charge of this event, Guy Halgren, at telephone 619-338-6605. We look forward to seeing many members and their friends at this event. ▲

Detailed Plans Emerging for the 94/125 Ramps

As of the issuance of this volume of Viewpoints, firm plans for construction of the two missing ramps at the 94/125 interchange have been identified and analyzed. The two missing ramps—one to tie 94 west traffic to 125 north, and one to tie 125 south traffic to 94 east—are now recognized as an official CALTRANS Project with an assigned Project Manager! This development was made possible by the special designation of \$60 million in funding at the State level by Governor Davis for this project. However, the total cost of the project is currently estimated at \$90 million, with the shortfall expected to be provided through SANDAG and/or additional funds from the State level. Using the authorized \$60 million funding, the project has officially started and is in the Project Report/Environmental Impact Phase I.

The Design and Right of Way Acquisition Phase II will follow the current Phase I, with some of the tasking for Phase II accomplished concurrent with Phase I. Final Construction Phase III is currently scheduled for completion in the year



2010. Although this schedule is better than the condition prior to the \$60 million fund authorization when all we had was a promise from SANDAG that they would get to it some day, GMIA feels that the overall project schedule is still excessive. Therefore, we will continue to work with our representatives and CALTRANS to develop ways to shorten the overall project schedule to achieve a completion date sooner than the current forecast 2010 date.

Some interim relief from commuter traffic on our local streets will be experienced from a previously approved “94/125 Interchange Improvements Interim Project”. Prior to the unexpected authorization of the \$60 million State funding, SANDAG had authorized \$3.5 million for

installation of a “temporary” ramp as a stopgap measure to allow 94 west bound traffic to merge into 125 north. This temporary ramp installation is a current CALTRANS Project and construction is scheduled to start early in 2001 with completion and operational use sometime in 2002. This temporary ramp will stay in use until the ultimate 94/125 interchanges are completed, and then it will be removed. We should realize some decreased traffic on our community streets when this temporary ramp goes into operation.

Your GMIA Board will continuously track this entire 94/125 interchange situation very closely, and keep our membership informed. We specifically plan to have the CALTRANS 94/125 Interchange Project Manager provide a status report and answer questions at our next Annual Dinner Meeting on May 14. If for no other reason members should plan to attend the dinner to hear the latest official information on this project that is so critical to relief of traffic congestion on our local streets! ▲

Annual Dinner Meeting Set for May 14th, 2001

Our GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting is just around the corner. Formal announcement and reservation forms for the event will be in our next (April) newsletter. But, mark your calendar now for: **Monday May 14!**

Your Board of Directors considers this a very important meeting that is designed to be of interest for all members. As usual, we will present and/or have speakers on a variety of topics, including the 125/94 ramp project, traffic issues, zoning and other important community and County issues. This year’s dinner meeting will again be held at the La Mesa

Community Center. Since this is our most important member-wide event we strongly urge you to attend.

And, to help us expand community knowledge of GMIA and increase community involvement, we encourage each of you to invite one friend or neighbor to attend who has never been to one of our Dinner Meetings. Building a strong and informed community membership is a prime objective of your Board. So, please be sure to mark your calendar for May 14, 2001! ▲

Membership is Not Just a Number!



A large and solid membership allows GMIA to speak with more strength when addressing issues and working to preserve the quality of life in our community. Each member of GMIA is recognized by our representatives and governmental agencies as a resident of our GMIA community area who is interested enough in the community to be a part of a formal organization of similar minded community residents. MEMBERS DO COUNT!

In terms of membership strength, we are still experiencing some growth of new members, as well as renewals by some members who have been delinquent in their dues but are now paid up to date! As a special undertaking for 2001, we ask each member to ensure that your dues are current, **and then** recruit at least two non-member friends or neighbors into GMIA membership this year, preferably before we hold our Annual Dinner Meeting in May if at all possible! Remember, we are particularly interested in increasing membership in the eastern part of our GMIA area (basically between Avocado and Jamacha).

For those with Internet capability, we remind you that you can obtain membership information and application forms on the GMIA web site:

www.gmia.net

Or, you can write to us at the return mail address printed on this newsletter.

Grossmont, continued from page 1

beginning of a less-taxing period of semi-retirement.

Their partnership brought together a coalition of two men with outwardly different temperaments, yet as a team they worked smoothly together. Gross had invaluable contacts which formed the nucleus of a future colony of famous literary and musical entertainers while Fletcher capably handled en situ problems such as building roads, planting trees and having power and water made available.

Gross' active participation in the Grossmont development was terminated at his request in 1911 and he was content to quietly oversee the continuing progress being made by Fletcher. By 1916, Gross had realized between \$30,000 and \$40,000 profit on his original investment (\$5,750) with Ed Fletcher in Hervey Parke's ranches.

*That year, Fletcher embarked on a new development program that would add the adjoining Mount Helix to his ever-expanding portfolio. Gross was invited to join as a partner in the new venture but declined with thanks, noting that his once-conspicuous red beard had turned white indicating it was time to sit back and rest on his laurels. He continued to participate in social and civic affairs and wrote a well-received romantic novel entitled *The Conquest of California*, published in 1930.*

In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt took time away from his duties to write Bill Gross a fan letter concerning his book but it was never received. Bill Gross had passed away two months earlier."

William Gross not only financed the start of the community but as was mentioned, he helped populate it with friends of the arts. But that's a whole story in itself for another time. Stay tuned.

Get your own copy of *Grossmont Isn't Just a Shopping Center* by calling Jean Guy at 466-7385. ▲

Submitted by John D. Mead

Planning and Land Use

People Power—It Really Works!

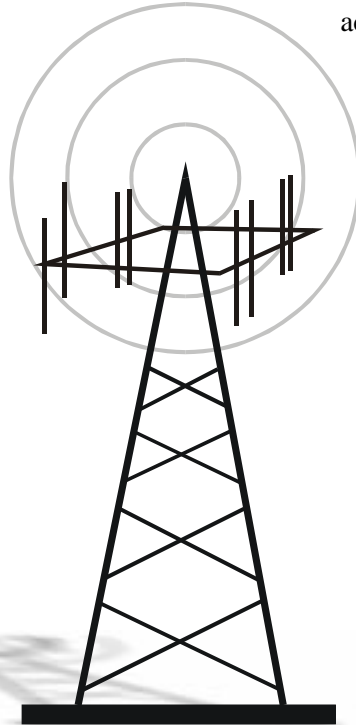
Thanks to Kristin Kjaero, Kristine Alessio, the other volunteers and hundreds of neighbors, a proposed gas station/minimart and apartments on vacant land at the Bancroft/Lemon Avenue intersection was defeated at the La Mesa City Council on November 28, 2000.

Kristin and her army of petition carriers got over a thousand signatures against the proposed change and then rallied the troops to attend the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group meeting, the La Mesa Planning Commission hearing, finally the La Mesa City Council hearing.

The hearing rooms were full to overflowing at each meeting. Al Platt, representing GMIA, and Jack Phillips, representing the planning group, spoke against the proposal and in support of the neighbors.

Another people power issue was a proposed cellular phone antenna site on Fuerte Drive near Grandview. The planning group made sure that all the nearby residents were notified of the proposal and neighbor Beverly Papas organized the opposition. Again, the planning groups' meeting was packed with concerned neighbors who didn't want a commercial enterprise in their back yards. After much discussion and show of resolution by the neighbors, the applicant decided to withdraw the proposal.

The amount of time and energy necessary to communicate with hundreds of people on a neighborhood issue is tremendous. However, through all the research, discussions, and petition gathering, you meet new neighbors, renew acquaintances with old neighbors, and achieve a cohesive neighborhood that did not exist before. In the final



accounting, even though you're exhausted from all the effort, fighting for your neighborhood is worth it! Congratulations to all involved!

Cellular Phone Sites

In regard to commercial cellular sites, the Valle de Oro and other planning groups have asked the Board of Supervisors to initiate a moratorium on all sites in or near residential neighborhoods. So far, no action has been taken by the Board. Until a moratorium is in effect, each neighborhood will have to vigorously oppose any such project that may threaten their health, safety or general welfare.

The jury is still out on the possible harmful effects of long-term exposure to radiation from these sites. However, the planning group opines that until these effects are absolutely known, the new source of radiation should not be located in close proximity to residential dwellings where people may be exposed to it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

General Plan 2020 Update

All homeowners in our area received a postcard notifying residents of the unincorporated county that workshops and county hearings are occurring on this subject.

The planning group has unanimously determined that the Valle de Oro General Plan (includes Mt. Helix area) continues to function well as the planning document for this community, and an update or any major revision at this time would be unwarranted and probably unwise.

This finding has been supported by government leaders so we probably do not need to worry about changes threatening our exceptional quality of life in the Mt. Helix area. If there are any changes in this status, we will try to keep you up to date. ▲

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX

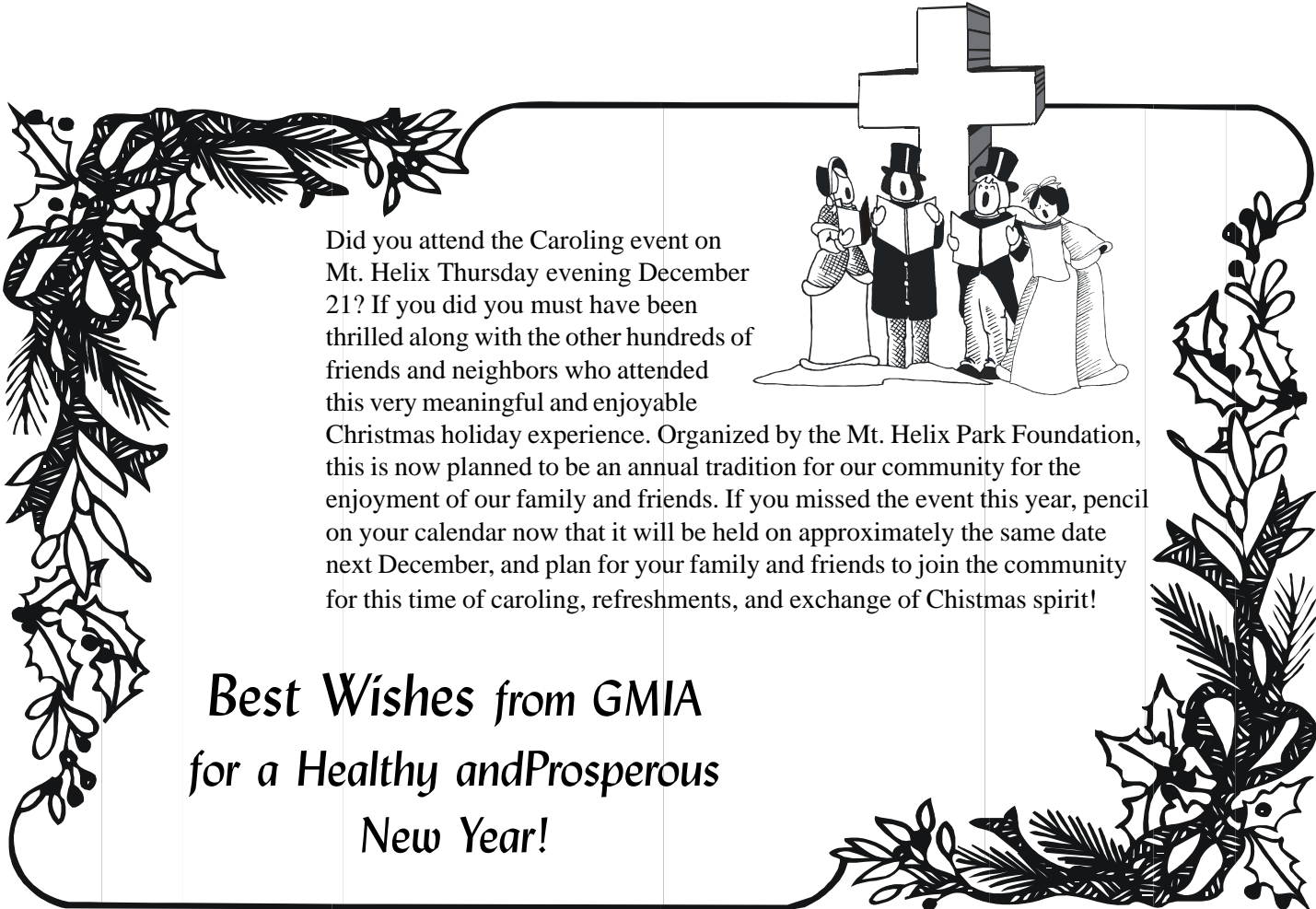


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Did you attend the Caroling event on Mt. Helix Thursday evening December 21? If you did you must have been thrilled along with the other hundreds of friends and neighbors who attended this very meaningful and enjoyable Christmas holiday experience. Organized by the Mt. Helix Park Foundation, this is now planned to be an annual tradition for our community for the enjoyment of our family and friends. If you missed the event this year, pencil on your calendar now that it will be held on approximately the same date next December, and plan for your family and friends to join the community for this time of caroling, refreshments, and exchange of Christmas spirit!

*Best Wishes from GMIA
for a Healthy and Prosperous
New Year!*