

**A Community  
Newsletter**

from the  
**Grossmont –  
Mt. Helix  
Improvement  
Association**



# viewpoints

June 2001

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## **2001 Art & Garden Tour Welcomes Spring**



**T**he annual GMIA Art and Garden Tour took place on May 6, 2001. It was another rousing success. As usual, the weather cooperated and we had a beautiful day. Spring was a little late this year so the timing of the Tour was just perfect. Roses were in the flush of their first bloom and there were still lots of spring flowers and bulbs showing off. Six hundred members visited the gardens this year. This was the most ever for one of our Garden Tours!

GMIA extends a special Thank You to the owners of this year's gardens: Chuck and Judi Duddles, Susan Rice-Luther and Bernard Luther, Lisa Rimlinger and Simon and Elizabeth Southwood. We know how much work it is to put a yard in tip-top show condition and we really appreciate all of the efforts by these gardeners.



As always, fine art work complimented nature and dressed up the gardens. Thank You to: Julie Adams, Robert Bonfils, Laura Buckingham, Phebe Burnham, Eddie McArthur, Norman Pecore and Patricia and Douglas Ryan.

Finally, Thank You to the musicians who provided the perfect audible backdrop in two of the gardens. Playing at the Southwood's home was the East County Recorder Ensemble (Jim Biggerstaff, Elisabeth Nipperus, Mary Warner and Louisa Golden) and playing her Folk Harp at Lisa Rimlinger's home was Chloe Hamann.

If you have a garden, or know of a garden, that we should consider for next year's Garden Tour, please write to the Tour Chairman, Guy Halgren, care of GMIA, at P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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|                            |           |
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## A Letter from the President

The issuance of this edition of our Viewpoints newsletter marks the end of another GMIA fiscal year on June 30, 2001. While the work of GMIA and particularly your Board of Directors continues year round, our corporate organization does have a formal 12 month business year ending annually on June 30. Thus, it might be a good time to reflect on the accomplishments of our GMIA organization during the last 12 months, as measured against the basic mission of our organization: "Homeowners working to preserve the character of the area and foster pride in the community".

The various articles in this issue should give each reader/member a feel for the activity and pursuits of our GMIA organization and specifically the overt support or opposition taken by your Board of Directors on key situations and issues. Some of the activities during the last 12 months have been completed (such as helping defeat the proposed commercial development at Bancroft and Lemon Avenues), while others are either ongoing or just emerging. We hope you take note of all the topics covered in this issue, regardless of status. And all of us should remember that continued preservation of the current character of our wonderful residential community takes the effort of all of our membership and not just the Board of Directors.

I will repeat my paraphrase of a favorite saying I used at the Annual Dinner Meeting, to the effect that the only thing necessary for bad things to happen to our community is for good residents (GMIA members) to do nothing! Your Board works for the membership but we need active and participatory support of our entire membership.

I and your Board of Directors look forward to serving our membership for another fiscal year starting July 1, and extend best wishes for an enjoyable and successful next 12 months to all members and our GMIA community at large.

## Noise From Aircraft Operations

A few residents attended a recent GMIA Board Meeting to express concern regarding their perception that the volume of aircraft operations and the noise related thereto has increased in recent months. Focus of the area of concern was basically around the Mt. Helix area. While concern was expressed by a very limited number of residents, the GMIA Board agreed to pulse our membership to see if the concern was shared by other GMIA community residents. GMIA Board member Brian Arnold is heading the Committee to evaluate this situation. Any member who shares a perception that there has been a noticeable increase in aircraft operations and the noise related thereto over our GMIA community, is invited to register this perception with Brian who may be reached at telephone (619) 469-8027, via email at brjmail@home.com, or by U.S. mail at 9393 Grossmont Blvd, La Mesa, 91941.



## Planning and Land Use: Estrella Park Initiative

Recently an informal group known as the “Estrella Park Development Committee”, was formed to investigate and promote the feasibility of development of Estrella Park that may incorporate a youth sports area.

By way of background, many GMIA community residents probably are unaware that the large parcel of vacant land adjacent to and just north of the Santa Sophia Catholic Church and bordering on Estrella Drive, is actually an undeveloped San Diego County Park. This land, approximately 7 acres, was set aside and designated a County Park many years ago. However, there have never been any County funds allocated for development and maintenance of this land as an



operational County Park.

Your GMIA Board wants to ensure that our GMIA Community is informed on this recent development. As of this stage, the Estrella Park Development Committee has presented to the Valle de Oro Planning Group a proposed plan for development of the Park that incorporates active team sports playing fields. Proposition 12 funds would be requested for development of the Park.

While the GMIA Board is aware of the Committee’s proposal, no meaningful deliberation or action in opposition or support will occur until after action is taken by the Planning Group. GMIA Board Member Tom LeDuc is the GMIA liaison for this proposal and can be contacted at telephone number 697-8583.

### Membership Renewals (and Numbers Do Count!)

With this issue of *Viewpoints* you also received a membership renewal form integrated with a return envelope. This is our attempt to make it more convenient for GMIA members to renew their annual membership. All members are reminded that the GMIA fiscal year ends on June 30 of each calendar year. Therefore, annual membership expires on June 30 and renewals are due on or before July 1. Please check the address label on your copy of this issue of *Viewpoints* newsletter to see if your membership expires on 6/30/01. If that is the case, your renewal should be sent in using the membership renewal form/return envelope included with this newsletter.

You will also note that your Board has approved an increase in annual membership dues to \$15 per family membership. While this is not a significant amount in either the increase or the total, it is necessary to ensure the ability of GMIA to cover all expenses for operation of our organization. Please keep in mind that while GMIA is a very large homeowners association, it is also unique. Incorporated and operated solely to represent the interests of community residents, GMIA does not own, operate, or maintain any real property or equipment (no swimming pools, common grounds, buildings, etc.).

Rather, GMIA exists only for the objective of representing the GMIA community to elected officials and governmental agencies in the form of “homeowners working to preserve the character of the area and foster pride in the community.” GMIA is organized with a Board of Directors and officers to serve the membership. All officers and directors serve as volunteers without pay, and there are no employees. All membership dues are used for operation of the organization, primarily for printing and mailing of literature to keep the membership informed. One final thought: while a large membership for GMIA is not our mission or objective, it is important. GMIA represents a significantly large area of unincorporated San Diego County. We estimate that the population of single family, owner occupied residences in the GMIA area is at least 25,000. This compares to the population of some of the cities in the County: Lemon Grove at 24,918; Coronado at 24,100; and Del Mar at 4,389. The message is: please help expand our membership roles. If each current member recruits one new neighbor or friend, we would double the membership in one stroke. Remember that a membership application form can also be printed from the GMIA website: [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net).

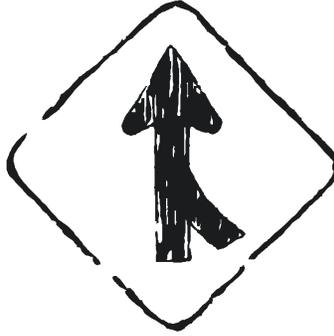
## Highways 94 & 125 Connector Ramps

**A** major successful development has occurred for the forecast operational use of the two missing connector ramps at the interchange of highways 94 and 125!

Confirmation of this latest development was announced at the GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting. For those members not in attendance at the Dinner Meeting, the news was indeed very good compared to what has been facing our community over the past several years. For the benefit of those individuals not familiar with the history of this connector situation, the following brief history should help.

Since completion of the first section of highway 125 between highways 94 and 8, only two connectors were constructed at the 94/125 interchange: 94E to 125N and 125S to 94W. There was never any approved plan or funding for construction of the two missing permanent connectors at the 94/125 interchange: 94W to 125N and 125S to 94E. The obvious and adverse impact of the two missing connectors was that commuter traffic from the east and south was forced to use many of the secondary streets in GMIA community neighborhoods, particularly streets like Fuerte and Avocado.

Up through 1998 the only positive de-



velopment occurred when SANDAG allocated \$3.5m for temporary aid to construct one temporary connector: 94W to 125N. This temporary connector is currently under construction and should open to traffic about June 2002.

However, as of June 2000, there were still no funds for the two missing permanent connectors. At that time the Governor allocated \$60m for the 94/125 missing permanent connectors. These funds were to come from the Congestion Relief Plan funded by forecast State revenue surplus. CALTRANS immediately generated a plan to construct the two missing permanent ramps, but included widening of 125 north of 94 as part of an Ultimate Connector Project with a total estimated project cost of \$90+M (vs. the \$60M authorized in State funds). And, operational use of the two missing connectors was forecast for CY2010 at the earliest.

Recognizing that inclusion of the 125 widening requirement in the same project with the connectors might cause the entire project to experience unplanned delays, the GMIA 94/125 Connector Committee met with CALTRANS representatives to request an alternate project plan. GMIA recommended that the connector part of the project be split into a separate project from the 125 widening requirement. CALTRANS did indeed evaluate GMIA's recommendation and this resulted in the new CALTRANS plan described at the Annual Dinner Meeting. Under the new CALTRANS project definition the missing 125S to 94E permanent connector has been designated as a separate, priority project, now scheduled for operational use in early 2007. The plan is to leave the 94W to 125N temporary connector in operation until a permanent connector for that link is funded and constructed.

This new (and hopefully final) development in the 94/125 Connector situation will not relieve the adverse commuter traffic condition in our GMIA neighborhoods for several more years. However, we now at least have a firm plan for construction of the two missing connectors, and that is a significant improvement from the condition less than a year ago when there was no plan and no funding!

## CALTRANS Excess Right-Of-Way Along State Route 125

**A**s reported in our last newsletter, the overall proposal for commercial development at Bancroft and Lemon was defeated. However, some of the land involved in that proposal was contiguous to or right-of-way land acquired by CALTRANS for the original 125 project, but now considered excess property. Several parcels along 125 are still owned by CALTRANS but must be declared excess and disposed of. Out of

concern that further disposal of CALTRANS excess parcels along 125 might lead to another development proposal, the group ("Save Our Corner") that organized in our community to help defeat the Bancroft/Lemon development proposal has recommended that the City of La Mesa request that CALTRANS defer further disposal of excess 125 right-of-way property until a plan is generated for the ultimate landscape design of 125, similar to the one done for

highway 78. The La Mesa City Council has authorized the City Manager to pursue this idea and apply for a grant to undertake an Urban Design Study for highway 125. This action will hopefully justify a moratorium by CALTRANS on any further excess land disposal pending completion of the study. Those interested in further details may obtain a copy of the proposal from the office of the La Mesa City Manager.



## Annual Dinner Meeting

**R**ock and Roll music greeted the 225 guests at our Annual Meeting and Dinner held at the La Mesa Community Center on May 14, 2001. It was back to the Fabulous Fifties™ with a pink and black theme and beautifully restored '57 Chevy Bel Air (courtesy of Charles Braddy) parked out front.

**Don Bauder**, financial columnist for the Union Tribune, resident of Mt. Helix, and decked out in his 1954 letterman's sweater, was the featured speaker and, as always, regaled us with humor and valuable information about finances and the state of the County. According to Don, the unincorporated County is doing pretty well but the City of San Diego is going to lose in the long run by not investing in the urgent needs of its infrastructure.

**Supervisor Dianne Jacob** was a honored guest and brought us up to date on the energy problem (some companies have made from 300% to 900% profits off the rate payer) as well as positive reports about our fire protection and recent sheriff and police actions.

**Gary Gallegos**, Regional Director of CALTRANS, gave a full report on the highway 94/125 interchange.

The interim ramp, currently under construction, will be ready next year and the permanent interchange could be finished as early as 2007 (see separate article on this topic).

**Capt. Yolanda Collins**, Lemon Grove Sheriff's Station, and Capt Steve Lykins, El Cajon CHP, gave updated reports on the status of East County and encouraged calls to their offices to report problems.

**Rick Applestill** from State Representative Jay LeSuer's office, presented a certificate of appreciation to GMIA for all the work the organization has done over the years.

The "Star Spangled Kids" from the Christian Youth Theater tour group livened up the hall with a half-hour of exuberant singing and dancing. What talent and energy! They were terrific!

A special tribute was given to retiring GMIA Board Member **Pauline Major** for her 20+ years of valuable service to the Mt. Helix community. Her presence on the GMIA Board will be missed.

**Cupid's Catering** furnished the delicious buffet and **Craig MacDonald**, owner of **Hooley's** in Rancho San Diego, provided the bar.

*Right, GMIA President Al Platt presents the Annual Report.*

*Below, enthusiastic diners and avid listeners.*





**viewpoints**

P. O. Box 2751  
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## Annual Dinner Meeting

See page 5 inside for a full report of our Annual Meeting and Dinner Event.



Left, featured speaker **Don Bauder**, financial columnist for the Union Tribune.

Right, The “**Star Spangled Kids**” from the Christian Youth Theater



A special thanks goes to all who donated door prizes for our Annual Dinner:

**ADVENTURE 16**  
**CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY THEATER**  
**HOME DEPOT**  
**KSWB-TV**

**TOM LEDUC**  
**SIMPSON'S GARDEN TOWN NURSERY**  
**LUBRICATION SPECIALISTS/BOB CEDERDAHL**