

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

2ND ANNUAL

Halloween Harvest Family Festival

@ Mt Helix Park

GAMES &
CRAFTS

LIVE
MUSIC

FOOD
TRUCKS



PRIZES 4
COSTUMES

FACE
PAINT

AND
MORE!

Presented by:

**GMIA (Grossmont-Mt Helix Improvement Association)
&
MHP (Mt Helix Park Foundation)**



Take the shuttle from Fire Station 21
10105 Vivera Dr



Live Music by: [facebook.com/TheRespondersSD](https://www.facebook.com/TheRespondersSD)

GMIA Endorses:

7 Valle de Oro Planning Group Candidates

GMIA works hand in hand with the Valle de Oro Planning Group to ensure the preservation of community character. Voters will select seven candidates for this important group. GMIA strongly endorses election of the following candidates:

Alyssa Burley (incumbent)
Charles R. Kossman (incumbent)
Lori M. Myers (Incumbent)
Mark Schuppert (Incumbent)
David R. Steele (Incumbent)
Wendy Tinsley Becker (Incumbent)
Catherine Gerhart

Helix Water District Board Incumbent

GMIA endorses Dan McMillan (incumbent) for Division 1. Dan has been a steady proponent of reducing costs and minimizing rate increases. Although members in our area do not vote for Division 1 candidates, we encourage you to spread the word to friends/family who live in west El Cajon including Fletcher Hills.

You can make a difference! We really need to be sure that Dan continues to advocate for Helix Water District rate payers. 🏔️



More Info:
GMIA.net or MtHelixPark.org





GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Susan Nichols, President
(619) 440-1607

Pat Ryan, First Vice President
(619) 248-1619

Dave Zimmerman,
Second Vice President

Pam Coe, Treasurer/Membership

Kay Bickley, Secretary
(619) 318-5260

Directors

Wendy Tinsley Becker	Jim Marshall
Peter Camana	Larry Nichols
Dania Barroso-Conde	Krista Bishop Powers
Paul Geldbach	John Richardson
Kathleen Hedberg	Mike Valley
Tom Huffman	Holly Yarris

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.

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www.gmia.net

Email us at:
yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

MISSION

GMIA is an 80-year-old non-profit 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.

President's Message

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

Your GMIA Board of Directors held a Strategic Planning Retreat on September 15th. The purpose of the Retreat was to provide direction for our efforts for the next few years. Our last Strategic Plan was three years ago, so we were due for an update.

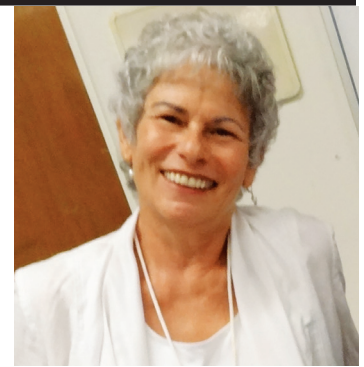
GMIA member Joan Camana stepped up to facilitate our five hour meeting. Her breadth of professional experience and management skills truly elevated our process. A heartfelt thanks to Joan for her hours and hours of preparation, wisdom in helping us recognize both what we are doing well and what we would like to do better, and skillful guidance keeping us on track.

A huge thank you to our Board members who took their time on a Saturday to spend five hours working to better GMIA. In attendance were Pat Ryan, Dave Zimmerman, Larry Nichols, Susan Nichols, Pete Camana, Wendy Tinsley Becker, Pam Coe, Kay Bickley, Mike Valley, Kathleen Hedberg, Jim Marshall and Dania Barroso-Conde.

We generated many exciting new ideas that generally fell into the three categories noted below. These broad categories support the myriad of activities by which we fulfill our mission to preserve and enhance the character and quality of our community. Our Board agreed that we need to:

1. Increase GMIA's visibility/public face (both physical, i.e. signage as well as digital/social media/website).
2. Develop guidelines to make our committees more effective.
3. Develop a plan to increase membership and involvement, to include a succession plan as well as "on-ramps" for participation.

Now begins the ongoing work as we dig in to, and as Joan said, "put flesh on the bones" of our plan. At our monthly board meetings and in our committees, we will focus on how to move forward with each initiative. As always, we welcome your suggestions and invite you to share your thoughts with us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. Thank you for your membership and ongoing support. ▲



Thank You Donors!

Special thanks to the following members who donated a gift of \$25 or greater in excess of their dues.

Henry & Orlinda Arnold	James Marshall & Eric Ayoso
Jim & Jeri Bollman	Harry & Rita Mixon
Ken Bullock	Leo & Bev Papas
Leo & Adrienne Culp	Paul & Janel Pehau
Charles & Gloria Eller	Peter Picksley & Denise Botticelli
Mike & Yvonne Gagen	Chris & Betsy Quinn
Frank & Andrea Goicoechea	Edward Suhay
John Grasberger & Eva Goode	Robert & Holly Yarris
Joanne Ling	Myra Zimmerman

THIS ARTICLE BEGINS A SERIES TO INFORM OUR MEMBERS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY OUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCE, THE RANCHO SAN DIEGO SHERIFF'S STATION.

You Are Not Alone

GMIA member and volunteer Carlos Arias provided information about an important service provided by the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) from our Rancho San Diego Sheriff's station. Thank you Carlos!

Completely free, You Are Not Alone (YANA) volunteers make weekly visits to those that would appreciate or need to have someone check on their welfare on a regular basis. In addition, they may be able to suggest resources to meet individual needs. They also bring a caring attitude and a friendly smile! There is no minimum age for YANA participants; younger persons may request YANA visits for a few days during post-surgical recuperation time.

If you know someone who is elderly or disabled and also lives alone, RSVP volunteers can stop by and check on them regularly. For more information about RSVP or to request this service, please contact the Rancho San Diego Sheriff's station RSVP volunteers at 619-660-7022.

Are you over 50 years old and interested in lending a hand? Join RSVP and help with duties that range from traffic control, patrolling neighborhoods, home vacation checks, clerical work and checking on the welfare of elderly or disabled people. GMIA strongly supports this service because we know that RSVP volunteers provide more eyes and ears to watch over our community. ▲

USPS' Informed Delivery

If you've ever wondered if mail is missing from your mailbox, the U.S. Postal Service has a new free service to help. Informed Delivery provides residential customers with a digital preview of their household's incoming mail scheduled to arrive soon. The post office scans an image of the address side of incoming letter-sized mailpieces (not the inside contents) and send the image to you via email or an online dashboard. You can easily monitor your incoming mail.

Signing up is easy – go online to www.usps.com. Click on Quick Tools, and then Informed Delivery. There you will be guided to create your account, and to verify your identity to protect your personal information and privacy. Once you sign up, you will be able to preview your incoming mail, track packages, leave delivery instructions if you won't be home to accept a package, and schedule redelivery.

GMIA recommends our members take advantage of this service and we applaud the USPS for this innovation. ▲

Safeguard Your Mail

Mail theft continues to be a problem throughout our community. Our rural style mailboxes are easy targets for thieves who have been sighted driving our streets and removing mail contents from both locked and unlocked boxes.

Members, if you experience mail theft be sure to also call the Sheriff's nonemergency line to report the crime 1-858-565-5200. Remember, complaints drive service – so if you have a problem be sure to report it. It is also a good idea to file a mail theft complaint with the U.S. Postal Service. To report online, go to www.usps.com. Click on "Where is My Package", enter the tracking number or select No and then click on Continue and enter all applicable information. You can also call their offices during regular business hours at 1-800-275-8777 to log your complaint.

Secure Mailbox Options

To combat these drive-by thieves, some residents have installed the Armadillo Mailbox.

Made in America and distributed locally in Escondido, this uniquely designed locking mail box protects mail from thieves, vandals, and the weather. The 14 gauge steel housing appears to be impenetrable yet does not require the mail carrier to have a key. It accepts magazines and packages plus stores mail while you are away. The downside? Cost of the Armadillo Mailbox is \$650 and the stand an additional option. Another model is the Letter Locker with smaller capacity at \$350.

Please note, the purpose of this article is to provide information and not to promote a product. We welcome members to let us know of other solutions they have found to combat mail theft.



SANDAG Steps up to Support Casa de Oro

by Jay Steiger

In July the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) voted to award Casa de Oro a \$500,000 grant to support revitalization of the business corridor along Campo Rd. The Casa de Oro Alliance (CDOA) and Valle de Oro Planning Group (VDOPG) will work with the County of San Diego to use the grant money to benefit this community. Building on over two years of planning and community dialogue within the CDOA, the initial goal is to use the services of an Urban Design Expert to help create design guidelines that are specific to Casa de Oro. This process will result in a road map to help revise zoning and regulations to make it easier for business and property owners to upgrade and renovate neglected properties. Civic improvements and a pedestrian friendly streetscape are also part of the longer-term goals.

Roy Davies, a Mt. Helix resident and member of the CDOA steering committee, noted that Casa de Oro is surrounded by affluent neighborhoods with over 7,000 households. Residents are interested in shopping in Casa de Oro but want better options and a more inviting environment. A major obstruction to improvements is that zoning regulations are outdated and the community lacks a Specific Plan. Davies noted that Spring Valley, south of highway 94, has had a plan since 1992. In addition to the design guidelines and zoning revisions, the grant will help support civic improvements to community signage, county fencing, streetscape, and a larger library and possible community center. Bob Yarris, CDOA Chairman, stated that the issues affecting Casa de Oro have been many years in the making. There are still too many businesses which are not beneficial to the area, and both design guidelines and a revision to zoning will help incentivize better business investment. Yarris stated, "Our community loves living here. They want a better Casa de Oro and this grant will help create that." To facilitate discussion, Davies has created an entry about the grant and community planning on Nextdoor.com. Information will also be available at the Casa de Oro Fall Festival. 🌱

<http://casadeoroalliance.org/>

— PROJECT WILDLIFE —

What to Do If You Find an Injured Wild Animal or Bird

In our unique region, we have an abundance of wild critters who share our neighborhood. Here's what to do if you find a wild animal in need of help.

Project Wildlife cares for injured, orphaned, and sick native wildlife and releases rehabilitated animals back into their natural habitat. The nonprofit San Diego organization operates two Wildlife Triage Centers that serve as central hubs for animal patient intake where medical staff provide services. Additionally, Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitators provide treatment and therapy in their private homes under special state and federal permits.

Project Wildlife cautions that you do not attempt to care for the animal yourself. Do not give it food or water. Help is available:

- If you've found an injured animal, contact their hotline at 619-225-WILD (9453) for information and instructions.
- If you are able, bring the animal to the Wildlife Care Center at 887 Sherman Street (please note the entrance is on Custer Street) Keep the animal in a dark, quiet box or crate and bring it to our Care Center. The Care Center is staffed from 9am - 5pm, 7 days a week. A drop-off area is open 24/7.
- A volunteer transport team may be available to move the animal to care if needed.
- To speak to a representative during business hours 10am - 6pm, call 619-299-7012. Staff/volunteers are there 7 days a week except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For after-hours emergencies, call your local police department or San Diego Humane Society's Humane Law Dispatch 619-243-3466.



Project Wildlife services also include free educational outreach. For more information, check out www.projectwildlife.org. 🌱



Casa de Oro Alliance

Congratulations to the 2018 WaterSmart Landscape Contest Winner

Paul Geldbach (GMIA Board member) and Carey Hultgren

by Mike Uhrhammer, Senior Public Affairs Representative -
Helix Water District

Helix Water District has named Carey Hultgren and Paul Geldbach of La Mesa as the winner of its 2018 WaterSmart Landscape Contest, an annual competition that recognizes outstanding water-wise residential landscapes based on design and overall attractiveness, appropriate plant selection and maintenance, and irrigation methods.

This 1930s Spanish-style home on Dutton Lane sits on a 0.67-acre lot and now uses 40 percent less water than it consumed a few short years ago. Over the two-month billing period ending this April, this home used just 14 units of water. One unit is 748 gallons.

Hultgren and Geldbach purchased the property in 2012 and, at the time, the only landscaping was dead sod, dying trees and a swimming pool. Rather than trying to rehabilitate the thirsty lawn, Hultgren and Geldbach slowly transitioned their property into a colorful, complimentary, and climate-appropriate landscape.

Incredibly, the two completed the design, installation and maintenance of their Spanish oasis on their own. "Yes, it has taken us a long time! But I believe the extra time spent has been worth the money we've saved and the pride of ownership we gained in the process." 🌱



↑ BEFORE | AFTER ↓



↑ BEFORE | AFTER ↓



Next Year's Contest

The 2019 WaterSmart Landscape Contest will begin around January next year and the deadline for submissions will be in late April. Look for information about the 2019 contest at hwd.com, [Facebook.com/HelixWater](https://www.facebook.com/HelixWater) and [Twitter@HelixWater](https://twitter.com/HelixWater).



Meet Your Board of Directors

Your GMIA Board of Directors is made up of 18 dedicated, hardworking residents of our community who contribute their professional expertise, experience and active participation to advocate for our semi-rural way of life.



Tom Huffman: "I was asked to join the GMIA Board seven years ago after I appeared at a Board meeting to ask that the word be spread about the redistricting of high school assignments by the Grossmont High School District. Little did I know then how much I would come to enjoy being part of a grass roots organization that does so much behind the scenes to protect and enhance the area where we all live. I have thoroughly enjoyed being on the

Board, and it has encouraged me to get involved in GMIA, the same way that any member can. I have used the Garden Tour to get ideas for my own yard, gotten succulents at the Succulent Swap that are shaping my landscape, and met lots of great people at events like the Annual Walk up Mt. Helix. I have been actively using my environmental planning background to help with special projects including Estrella Park, the revitalization of Casa de Oro, and the Fire Station Demonstration Garden. Among the things I enjoy most about living on Mt. Helix are the large lots and funky roads that respect the natural landform, like you see in other older areas like La Jolla. Today's development standards don't allow for building communities like ours, for the most part, so we truly are part of something unique."



Pat Ryan: "Preserving the character of our community has been a priority for me since my husband and I bought our home here in 1971. I can recall a time before Avocado was widened and a single traffic light hung on wires over the two-lane intersection of Avocado and Fuerte. I taught at Emerald and Montgomery Middle School for 33 years before retiring. After joining the board eight years ago, my interest in landscaping and gardening led to my involvement as Director of our Annual Garden Tour.

The Membership committee, the Walk Up Mt. Helix, Viewpoints editing, the Succulent Swap and the Annual Dinner are also areas where I serve. Using my teaching experience in publishing, I redesigned our logo and created our stationary, postcards and business cards. Soon that GMIA logo will be updated and enhanced for our upcoming redesigned webpage. Our motto "preserving the character of our community" defines our important work, and remains my main focus, either by increasing membership, organizing and producing the Garden Tour, photographing all our activities for the newsletter and the website, or by supporting all the events we sponsor. Our area is a treasure that must be preserved by creating community spirit, informing our members, welcoming new residents, and working with our county officials to actively advocate for the lifestyle that makes Mt. Helix an incredible place to call home. I am honored to serve the community and this organization." 🌱

Thank You GMIA Volunteers

Our organization exists thanks to volunteers who work selflessly to provide quality experiences for all our members. Their contribution of time and talent is priceless. We can't say enough to thank them for their commitment to bring people together to celebrate our unique region and to ensure the character of our community.

GMIA applauds Board members Holly Yarris and Kay Bickley, Co-Chairs, Joan and Tom O'Steen, Volunteer Coordinators, and Paul Geldbach, Logistics for our Annual Dinner in June. We appreciate the efforts of all of our volunteers including Joan O'Steen, Kristi Anderson, Craig Anderson, Valerie Richardson, Trish Huffman, Joan Camana, Rick Dehaven, Jocelyn Zimmerman, Stephen Bickley, and Jeff Rule.

A big shout out to GMIA Board member Krista Bishop Powers who has made it her personal goal to reach out to the many younger families who now live in our neighborhood. Krista created and organized our Family Fest in August and our upcoming Halloween Harvest Festival. Thank you to Family Fest volunteers Allyson Kinnard, Carole Caparas, Leslie Gardner, Zita Gardner, and Regina Eldred, who lent a hand.

Behind the scenes, volunteer Kay McGrath brings her bookkeeping expertise to support Treasurer Pam Coe managing our finances and database. We are grateful to have her help and additional support at our events. GMIA recognized Kay and husband Vince with our Al Platt Memorial Award for Service to Our Community in 2017.

If you would like to volunteer to help at an event, or with other aspects of our GMIA work, please let us know at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. We'd love to have your help! 🌱



Triangle Monument

You may have noticed, GMIA replanted the triangle entrance monument at Fuerte and Grossmont. This is our sixth year volunteering under an agreement with the Department of Public Works to maintain this community gateway. Our original planting in 2012 included a modest blue agave whose size, when fully grown, was supposed to be a perfect fit for our planter. However, Mother Nature had a different idea and it grew to block our signage. We have installed a new planting which seems to be doing well. Thanks to Board member Tom O'Steen for leading this renovation and to board members Pete Camana and Larry Nichols for their participation.

Look for our (now) enormous blue agave as a Silent Auction item at an upcoming GMIA event. Proceeds from its sale will help fund our ongoing community improvement projects. 🌱

Our Front Porch

Our ongoing monthly clean up at the I-8/Fuerte Park and Ride continues. At a recent clean up, volunteers found a considerable amount of fast food refuse, along with lots of beer cans and bottles. After five years of maintaining this site, we agreed this was a tick up in that kind of litter. We also noted the bluff across the street from our Park & Ride appeared to have been scaled which resulted in a dirt slide down the bluff and onto the road, with additional beer bottles on that slope. Because we know our residents use this location at night, we are concerned. GMIA contacted Lieutenant Shawn Wray at the Rancho San Diego Sheriff's station. Lt. Wray quickly responded and offered to contact the CHP to provide additional patrols along with his officers. Thank you to our Sheriffs for addressing this issue.

We rely on volunteers to help with our efforts to keep our "front porch" clean and tidy. A shout out to Gretchen Morrison for emailing monthly reminders to volunteers, and to the La Mesa Lions, Michael Sciulli, Pete Camana, Tom O'Steen, Kay Bickley, Brad Boswell, Susan and Larry Nichols for their help. We welcome all members to join us – even one time would be great! We meet on the third Saturday of the month at 9:00 am. To lend a hand, please contact yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. 🌱



Nominations Now Open for GMIA Curb Appeal Award

by Dania Barroso-Conde and Carey Hultgren

Attractive front yards say a lot about the pride we take in our community. Realtors tell us that curb appeal adds beauty and value. Equally important, a well-groomed and thoughtfully designed landscaping sends a clear message to everyone that homeowners care about their neighborhood. We invite you to nominate a Mt. Helix candidate (yourself or a neighbor) for the GMIA Curb Appeal Award. This award recognizes front yards that display outstanding maintenance, distinctive design, and climate appropriate landscaping. The winner will be featured in our newsletter, gifted a year's paid membership to GMIA, and recognized at our Annual Dinner.

Nominations can be mailed in using the form below, or go online to complete and submit the form directly at our website www.gmia.net. Deadline to apply is April 30, 2019! 🌱

GMIA Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form (Deadline April 30, 2019)

Location (Address) _____

Homeowner's Name _____

Person nominating (optional) _____

Comments:

Please submit to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751. You may also go online to nominate at www.gmia.net



P. O. Box 2751
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 expiration date of your membership. 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.

Note: if the date is June 2019 or later, your dues are paid in full, but you are welcome to renew in advance.

Halloween Harvest Festival

Come join us for another year of neighborhood fun! Live music by The Responders, games, crafts, face painting, Costume Parade and more!

The Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) and the Mt. Helix Park Foundation present the 2nd Annual Halloween Harvest Family Festival. Local businesses will be hosting booths with crafts and activities at our beautiful Mt Helix Park. The event is FREE. Park at the Fire Station (10105 Vivera Dr) and hop on the shuttle to the top.

Please let your neighbors know about the event.

If your business would like to host a booth, contact Caroline Harrod at 619.733.9193 - carolineharrod1@gmail.com.

If you would like to volunteer, contact Krista Bishop Powers at 619.985.1445 - krista@businessofinfluence.com. 



CALENDAR

