

## A Community Newsletter

from the

**Grossmont –  
Mt. Helix  
Improvement  
Association**



# viewpoints

March 2005

Volume 35 Issue 1



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## Predatory Annexations

by Jack Phillips

EDITORS NOTE: Your GMIA Board first brought the issue of the chipping away of the GMIA area through annexations by our bordering cities to your attention in Viewpoints in November of 1999. Fortunately, between then and now, there had not been any significant activity by our neighboring cities to encroach into our area. However, as this article notes, the City of El Cajon is now openly encouraging annexation.

Your GMIA Board is disturbed by this action and intends to continue to protest as the project progresses to the next regulatory level.

The City of El Cajon is now processing a pre-zone/annexation request that would increase the density of a parcel in our Mt. Helix community by 200%. The parcel is 1.0 acre fronting on the west side of

Avocado Blvd at Dewitt Court (address is 4876 Avocado Blvd). This area is an important portion of the green-belt separation of our community from the City of El Cajon. This appears to be jurisdiction shopping in an attempt to circumvent the County General Plan that requires one-acre minimum lot sizes on this property.

Prior to 1977 when the County General Plan was adopted for this area, the cities of La

Mesa and El Cajon ran sewer lines up Lemon Avenue and Avocado Boulevard at the request of land speculators and annexed large islands of our Mt. Helix community into their jurisdictions. (Check your Thomas Bros. for these incursions.) These predatory annexations reached the point of threatening the very existence of our Mt. Helix community by splitting it between the two cities. Since 1977,

annexations have been primarily for health and safety reasons only (unrepairable septic system failure requiring connection to a sewer) and have conformed to our General Plan for density and type of land use.

The General Plan for this area was developed by and for our Mt. Helix residents and legally establishes the rules that

must be followed for any development. This is not a "transition plan" that exists only until a neighboring jurisdiction decides to annex and increase the density and, thus, destroy the ambiance and desirable character of our area.

Our Mt. Helix community exists quite comfortably outside of El Cajon's jurisdiction. We are part of that entity called the unincorporated



See ANNEXATION on page 5

## GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



## IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Guy Halgren Mike Valley

Allison Henderson

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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Spring Valley

## A Message from the President



*Kristine Alessio*

**H**aving basically survived the rainstorms, we are moving into Spring and the coming of two of GMIA's most interesting and enjoyable events, the Annual Garden Tour and the Annual Dinner. You will find information on both contained within this issue.

Spring also brings a change to your GMIA Board. Al Platt, our former President and long time community activist, is no longer a Board member. His presence on the Board will be deeply missed. Al contributed to our community above and beyond the call of duty for a volunteer. I personally would like to wish him and his lovely wife, Judy, all the best in their new home in Crest. I am sure Al is enjoying being a gentleman farmer of sorts on his new spread.

I would like to welcome our newest Board member, Mark Schuppert. Mark is a long time East County resident and is very involved in many community activities. He looks forward to serving our members and striving toward keeping the Grossmont-Mt. Helix area a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment. Thank you and welcome Mark.

On a final note, two of our long time community members who have both been extremely helpful to GMIA through their efforts suffered losses to their families. I wish to express my condolences on behalf of the entire GMIA Board to Bob Cederdahl and Caroline Braun on the loss of their loved ones. ■

## Fuerte Drive - Continued Speeding & Hazards

by Kristine Alessio

**U**nfortunately, there is still a problem on Fuerte Drive with traffic congestion and speeding. Your GMIA Board is very aware of the problems along Fuerte Drive and urges all residents to observe the speed limits. Increasing your speed from the posted limit of 35 to 55 is not going to get you there faster by any significant difference in time.

There is an ongoing problem with people passing those who are observing the speed limit on the right hand side. This is extremely hazardous. One of the current issues facing drivers

along Fuerte Drive is the use of El Granito as a "short cut" to avoid traffic congestion at the Grossmont Blvd./ Fuerte intersection. This is apparently a short cut favored by high school students on their way to Grossmont. This creates unnecessary traffic, noise and increases the risk of accidents along El Granito. Saving maybe two minutes in transit time is not worth the adverse impact to the residents along El Granito. We urge you to not take the short cut and to encourage your kids who are driving age to respect their neighbors and avoid the shortcut as well. ■

GMIA  
2005

# ART & GARDEN TOUR

Sunday, April 17 Noon - 4 p.m.

**I**t's GMIA Art and Garden Tour time again! As a GMIA member you are entitled to participate in this special welcome to Spring, and you may want to bring a guest who enjoys fine gardens and art. The Tour is not open to the public.

Opening one's garden is wonderfully generous and we give all of the homeowners a special THANKS! We also thank this year's fine East County artists, whose wares will be on

display for your purchase as well as your enjoyment. As usual, thanks also to Marie Waters for coordinating the artists.

Please park only where indicated, as we need to comply with the terms of our County parking permits. Wear practical walking shoes, and while we hope for a beautiful spring day, the Tour goes forward in any weather.

The Art and Garden Tour has been a GMIA hallmark for at least 50 years; Board member Guy Halgren and his son, Matthew, have been arranging it for the last 15. This will be their last year coordinating the Tour, as Matthew leaves for college in the fall. GMIA extends a heartfelt "Thank You!" to Guy and Matthew for their dedicated service and excellent organizational skills which have made the annual Tour an event greatly anticipated each year. Their efforts leave a legacy for new leadership to take the Art & Garden Tour forward next year.



## Here are the 2005 Gardens

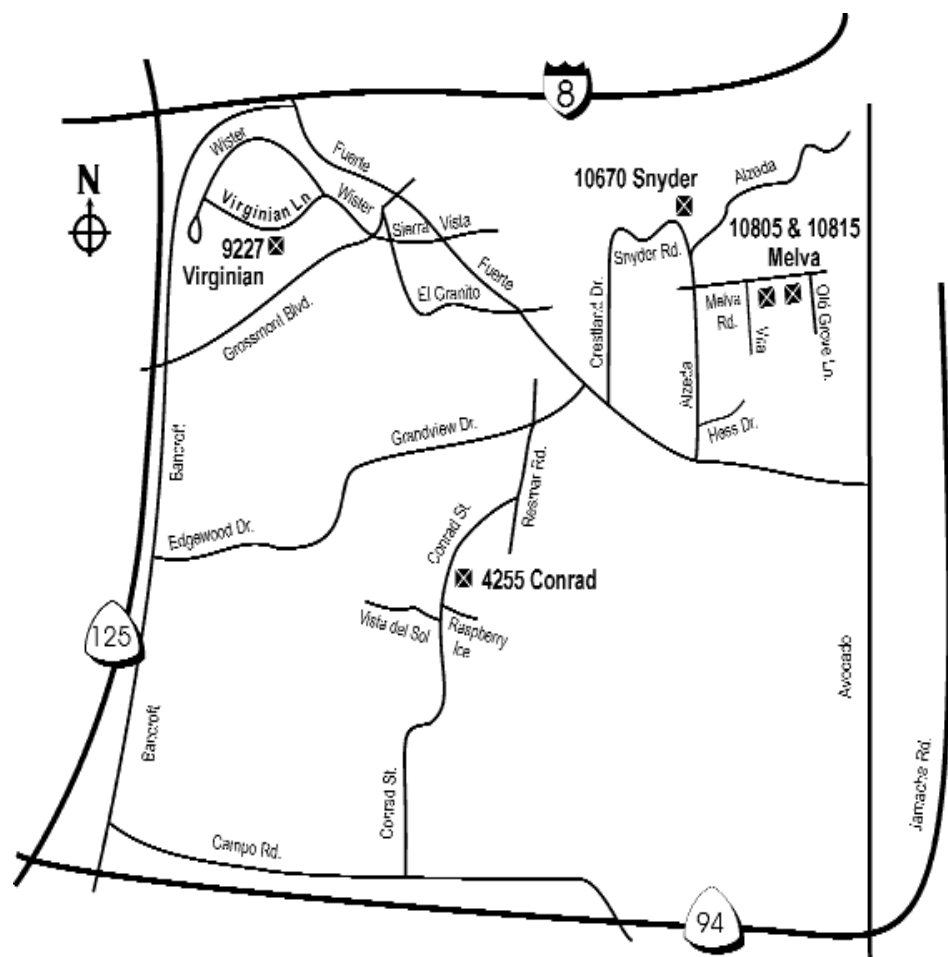
Leon and Dottie Herrick  
4255 Conrad Drive

Ramon and Gloria Ross  
9227 Virginian Lane

Jonathan and Tere Becker  
10805 Melva Road

Mike and Julie Shaw  
10815 Melva Road

Al and Jennifer Westermeyer  
10670 Snyder Road



## 2005 Calendar of Events

<b>Sunday, March 27 - 6:00 am</b> <b>Easter Sunrise Service</b> Mt. Helix Park	Shuttles begin at 4:30 am from the San Miguel Fire Station (on Vivera), Kaiser Permanente (on Avocado) and The Brigantine Restaurant Sponsor: Mt. Helix Park Foundation — Service: Skyline Church
<b>Sunday, April 17 - Noon - 4 pm</b> <b>GMIA Art &amp; Garden Tour</b>	See page 3 for details about this year's Tour, which as usual goes forward rain or shine! This is a private tour for GMIA members and their guests. Please observe the parking signs at each garden you visit.
<b>Saturday, April 23 - 1:00 - 3:00 pm</b> <b>Kids &amp; Kites Fest</b> Mt. Helix Park	Make a kite to fly, or bring your own. See Raptors (hawks & owls) and learn about their habits. See the Calendar of Events at: <a href="http://www.mthelixpark.org">www.mthelixpark.org</a> for details. Sponsor: Mt. Helix Park Foundation
<b>Monday, May 9 - 5:30 - 9:00 pm</b> <b>GMIA Annual Dinner &amp; Meeting</b> La Mesa Community Center 4975 Memorial Drive, La Mesa	See the special insert in this newsletter for details.
<b>July - August, 2005</b> <b>Christian Community Theater</b>	See the Calendar of Events at: <a href="http://www.mthelixpark.org">www.mthelixpark.org</a> for performance times and dates.
<b>Monday, July 4 - 6:00 pm</b> <b>4th of July Celebration on Mt. Helix</b> Mt. Helix Park	An Old-Fashioned Fourth, with hot dog- and watermelon-eating contests, a salute to our troops, and viewing of local area fireworks from atop Mt. Helix. See the Calendar of Events at: <a href="http://www.mthelixpark.org">www.mthelixpark.org</a> for details. Sponsor: Mt. Helix Park Foundation

Helpful Telephone Numbers	County of San Diego	City of La Mesa	City of El Cajon
<b>ROADS</b> Resurfacing, closures, potholes, etc.	Department of Public Works <b>1-877-684-5000</b> or <a href="http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us">www.co.san-diego.ca.us</a> Dept. of Public Works section online road service request	<b>619-667-1450</b>	<b>619-441-1658</b>
<b>LAND USE</b> Zoning violations & other illegal land use	Code Enforcement <b>619-441-4264</b>	Code Enforcement <b>619-667-1177</b>	Code Enforcement <b>619-441-1716</b>
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or Sheriff's Dept (Lemon Grove) <b>619-337-2000</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or La Mesa Police Dept. <b>619-667-1400</b>	<b>911 if Emergency</b> or El Cajon Police Dept. <b>619-579-3311</b>
<b>ANIMAL SITUATIONS</b> Animal Control	<b>619-236-2341</b>	<b>619-667-1436</b>	<b>619-441-1580</b>
<b>HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL</b>	<b>1-877-713-2784</b> for guidance and information <b>619-598-5100</b> to make an appt. for disposal	<b>619-287-5696</b> to make an appt. for disposal	<b>619-596-5100</b> to make an appt. for disposal
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b> For categories not listed above	<b>858-694-3900</b>	<b>619-436-6611</b>	<b>619-441-1776</b>



## Thanks to Our Donors!

GMIA wishes to thank those individuals who have contributed above and beyond the usual membership dues; we greatly appreciate your support.

F. Giarratano  
 Frank & Cathy Lubak  
 Jolene Roth  
 Ed & Lisa Kleist  
 Richard Rachel and Annette Lau  
 Ralph Peterson  
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 Rupert and Dorothy Crosthwaite  
 Irv Retner and Family  
 Steven and Kristine Alessio  
 Frank Verbeke  
 Brian Arnold and Ronilee Clark  
 Norm and Valerie Hapke

### ANNEXATION, Continued from page 1

rated county. We have elected leaders, planning and public works departments, fire and sheriff's protection. We are not lands with low-density improvements just waiting to become part of a high-density city.



Unfortunately, even though we believe this project would violate six General Plan requirements, most notably land use policy, the County's Planning Director, Gary Pryor, refuses to defend our Mt. Helix area General Plan in these cases. Only large-scale projects and commercial developments are the concern of the County Planning Director at this point in time. This means that he is willing to see our Mt. Helix area eroded away bit by bit until the rural ambiance of our community is destroyed.

Our low density development provides thousands of acres of "green" that are a haven for wildlife and for the tranquility of rural living. We have chosen to live in a rural, large-lot atmosphere and we cannot condone annexations by neighboring cities for the purpose of increasing profits for a developer at the expense of our chosen way of life.

GMIA has written letters to County Supervisor Dianne Jacob (1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101-2470) and Mayor Mark Lewis (200 East Main Street, El Cajon, CA 92020) regarding this Pre-zone #2255. Concerned residents are encouraged to also write letters to Supervisor Dianne Jacob and Mayor Lewis and contact any El Cajon City Council members or planning commissioners you may know to support the GMIA position against this or any similar annexations. For further information, please contact Jack Phillips at (619) 670-0986. ■

## Rain, Rain and More Rain

### *What Now?*

by Kristine Alessio

This year has been the third wettest in San Diego history. Fortunately, the Grossmont-Mt. Helix area appears to have escaped many of the hillside erosion problems that have plagued several areas of San Diego County and Southern California causing loss of property and of life. However, we have not been completely untouched. Streams have overflowed causing water to cover yards and enter homes; groundwater continues to come up through sidewalks, roads and in some cases home foundations. The majority of damages related to rainfalls are not covered by traditional homeowner's insurance. Therefore it is prudent to take precaution in the event of heavy rain forecasts. The County of San Diego has various excellent resources available to guide you in protecting your property from flood, debris and erosion control as well as general preparedness for winter storms. This information can be accessed online at [www.sdcdpw.org](http://www.sdcdpw.org) or by calling the County Department of Public Works at 888-846-0800.

Additionally, the increased rainfall will be leading to an increase of pests in our area. West Nile Virus continues to be a threat and standing water should be removed from your yard whenever possible. Furthermore, area residents can expect an increase of snails, ants and flying insects. For information on how to rid your home and/or yard of pests without using toxic chemicals, Project Clean Water has a wealth of information. This information can be found online at [www.projectcleanwater.org](http://www.projectcleanwater.org) or by calling 858-694-2860. ■



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## About GMIA . . . and What We Do

**T**he Grossmont- Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is the oldest and largest association of its type in San Diego County, if not the entire State of California. It was formed in 1938 as a result of community concern for the lack of adequate land use planning and zoning type requirements. It is a non-profit public benefit corporation that represents thousands of families residing in single family residences in the large unincorporated area of the County that is east of the city of La Mesa, south of the city of El Cajon and generally north of SR94. The GMIA membership area consists of over 5,000 single-family owner occupied residences with a population approximating 20,000 people.

The primary mission of GMIA is to work on behalf of all GMIA community members to ensure that the quality and character of our community is preserved and enhanced. Unlike a typical "homeowners association,"



GMIA does not own any property or facilities, nor is it responsible for any property maintenance. GMIA is served by an elected, unpaid Board of Directors and has no paid officers or employees. The GMIA Board works with County and regional governmental entities to help resolve issues that impact our community such as transportation systems, traffic control, planning and land use, zoning, code enforcement, as well as crime preven-

tion and law enforcement.

GMIA invites and encourages all residents in our membership area to become active members and to support the efforts of the GMIA Board to preserve and enhance the character and lifestyle that are currently enjoyed in our wonderful community.

For more information on GMIA, please visit our website at [www.GMIA.net](http://www.GMIA.net) ■