

**A Community
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –
Mt. Helix
Improvement
Association**



viewpoints

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ART & GARDEN TOUR

Sunday, April 30 – Noon - 4 p.m.

It's GMIA Art and Garden Tour time again! As a GMIA member you are entitled to participate in this welcome to Spring, and you may want to bring guests who enjoy 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 art will be on display for your enjoyment as well as your purchase.

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. Board member Susan Nichols has organized this year's tour. You will find the descriptions of gardens and map as an insert in this newsletter.

– ANNUAL –

Meeting & Dinner

Monday, May 8 – 5 - 9 p.m.

Our annual meeting and dinner will be held on Monday, May 8th at the La Mesa Recreation Center. The keynote speaker will be Gregory J. Smith, County Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk. Greg has been the County Assessor since 1983. Greg received his Masters in Public Administration from San Diego State University where he is currently a part-time evening faculty member. We were fortunate to have Greg as a speaker several years ago, so we can guarantee that the evening will be very entertaining as well as fact-filled.

The dinner will be catered by "Simply Unforgettable," a San Diego three-generation family-owned specialist in providing a personal touch to every event. This meal will be a treat so join us May 8th. *Please use the enclosed reservation form and return it by May 1st.*

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. This is only a partial list; more to come.

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This newsletter reflects the efforts of your entire Board of Directors.

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A Message from Dan Mitrovich, our New President

As the recently elected President of the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association, I welcome the opportunity to serve our association and the entire GMIA community. As you will note on this page, we have a full slate of officers to help accomplish our GMIA objectives. You will also note that there have been several additions to your Board since our previous newsletter: Diane Bernal, Vern Neff and Susan Nichols. We are grateful to have a talented and dedicated group of community members. I look forward to continued work on our Board for the benefit of our entire community.

A recurring theme you will hear from me is the utmost importance of growing GMIA's membership. Despite the image of our community being protected because it appears built-out, the potential for poor land-use decisions remains a constant threat. GMIA supports the existing General Plan, in addition to Valle de Oro Community Planning Group's efforts to influence the county to make sound decisions on issues affecting our community. The size of our membership is most often a gauge of how much attention your Board receives from elected officials and government entities. Accordingly, I urge you to please renew your membership and help us recruit new members.

A special "thank you" to the very large group of our community members who attended a recent Valle de Oro Planning Group meeting to present their views regarding an application for a significant change in zoning towards our eastern boundary, adjacent to Paseo Fuerte and Monte Vista Road. Your voices were loud and clear - THANKS!

GMIA continues to work on issues and activities to ensure the quality of life of our community. Traffic issues continue to plague us. Along with the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group and mHANDS, GMIA is encouraging the County to consider installation of electronic "traffic calming" devices along several of our critically impacted roads (see article on page 4).

Additionally, a big MAHALO (Hawaiian "thanks") to the tiki person on Fuerte. Your personal efforts to address our traffic issues are appreciated.

Spring is upon us and your GMIA Board is looking forward to our annual two big events, the Art & Garden Tour and the Annual Dinner. I hope that you all will be joining us for these events. They are excellent ways to meet your neighbors, your GMIA Directors and to find out more about GMIA! Please invite your non-member neighbors; I am sure they will enjoy both of these events.

Finally (and my last one), a BIG THANK YOU goes out to our former president Kristine Alessio, who committed a tremendous amount of time and energy to GMIA during her tenure as president. Kristine continues to carry a full-plate of volunteerism, dedicating herself to our community's betterment. She is truly an extraordinary individual. When you see her out-and-about in our community, please extend your appreciation for her service.

Is Neighborhood Crime Increasing?

We are hearing an increasing number of reports of burglaries and vandalism occurring in our GMIA neighborhoods. We are also noticing that the presence of County Sheriff's patrols on our streets appears to be declining. While there are probably many reasons these anecdotal trends appear to be occurring, for the immediate future we encourage members to assume that the County Sheriff is unable to provide sufficient patrol presence in our neighborhoods to deter property crimes.

Given these circumstances, we must assume a greater role in prevention of crime in our own neighborhoods.

- Initiating a neighborhood watch program in your area is a good start that brings neighbors together to work for their common good. Contact the Sheriffs Department at **(619)337-2037**.
- The County's Citizen Patrol program (RSVP) must be revitalized in

our area (functions under Lemon Grove Sheriff's substation) with renewed recruiting, stable dedicated substation management, and good serviceable patrol vehicles. To get involved in this program, contact the Sheriff's Department at **(619)337-2072**.

- We also must harden the target that our home offers to thieves or vandals.

Here are some important security measures you can take.



Alarm System Crime statistics have shown that homes protected with an obvious up-to-date alarm system will be bypassed by burglars who generally prefer easy targets. A good system with three levels of burglary protection (perimeter, interior motion, and glass break) plus smoke/fire protection may cost several thousand dollars and monthly monitoring costs (approximately \$40), but the peace of mind is well worth the cost. If you already have an alarm system but don't use it regularly, bring it up to date with one of the San Diego county monitoring companies and use it, use it, use it until it becomes second nature.

Visibility from Street Keeping your front landscaping well trimmed can help by eliminating concealment areas where intruders can work. Also, neighbors will be more readily able to see and report unusual activity.



Exterior Lights Another product that can help by deterring nighttime intruders is thermal or motion-sensing exterior floodlights. Strategically placed around a home, these lights can surprise and deter intruders before they find an entry point.

Occupied Residence Since most burglaries occur in unoccupied homes, another good deterrent is the appearance and sound of an occupied residence. A few radios strategically located and tuned to a talk radio station should be turned on every time you leave. For long absences, the radios should be set on timers and augmented with lights in the same rooms. Set the volume level so the radios can just be heard outside of their locations in the house.

Garage Door Keep it closed when no one is in the garage, especially if there is a direct entry into the house from the garage.



Locks Almost anywhere you live today, good high-quality dead bolt door and window locks are a necessity. In many instances, intruders enter through unlocked doors or windows. Your home becomes a much more likely target if it is not protected by good locks that are consistently secured-even when you are home.

Home Security Check If you are in doubt about how to best improve the security of your home, the County Sheriff's Department offers free residential security consultations. This can be arranged by calling **(619) 337-2037**.

Report Suspicious Activity If you see suspicious activity in your neighborhood, jot down any related license numbers or other pertinent information and call the Sheriff's non-emergency phone number **(858)565-5200** as soon as possible.

To report a crime in progress, call 9-1-1.



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New Electronic Traffic Control Signs May Be Coming Soon

Your GMIA Board is evaluating new methods for "calming" the traffic on our problem roads. Recent technology developments have produced an electronic traffic sign that monitors and records vehicle speeds and flashes messages to drivers. We believe this speed feedback technology will significantly reduce the excessive speeds that we are observing on our 2-lane thoroughfares such as Fuerte, Conrad, Grandview, Chase, and Lemon. Our current effort is to encourage County Government to install some of these devices at key locations on these roads and study their effect on controlling excessive speed. Other jurisdictions have observed significant overall reductions in traffic speed after installation of similar electronic traffic control signs that provide direct feedback to the drivers.



About GMIA . . . What We Do

The Grossmont- Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is one of the oldest and largest association of its type in San Diego County. 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 the large unincorporated area of the County that is east of Bancroft Drive, south of El Cajon, generally north of SR94 and Rancho San Diego, and west of SR54/Jamacha Rd. The GMIA area contains over 7,000 single-family 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 prevention 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 ■