



viewpoints

Summer 2008

Volume 39 Issue 1



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Animals of Mt. Helix

One of the wonderful treats for Mt. Helix residents is the lovely vistas we are offered daily as we walk and drive around our neighborhood. We see many homeowners working in their front yards, beautifying their landscape, pulling weeds, planting a myriad of flowers, trees and shrubs. We often wonder, "What's in their back yards?" As members of GMIA, we are treated to a glimpse of four or five back yards annually on our tour and can see how hard our neighbors work on their plant hobbies.

Lately, we've been wondering about some of the other fascinating hobbies that take place in our area. In particular, we have a lot of animal lovers in Mt. Helix. We all know about the wildlife that claims residence within our boundaries. And, as you climb the hill into Mt. Helix across

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GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



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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



Allison Henderson

President's Corner

What a wonderful Spring! GMIA's two main events, the annual garden tour and the annual dinner were a resounding success. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and our heartfelt thanks go out to the numerous volunteers who made both events shine.

Also in May, GMIA was the recipient of a "Proclamation" in honor of our 70th year of service to the Grossmont Mt Helix community. Dianne Jacob, our 2nd District Supervisor, along with the entire Board of Supervisors, proclaimed May 6th, 2008 as GMIA Day!

If you think back on where our community was 70 years ago and where we are today, especially compared with other areas of the County, the vision of early community activists to maintain this neighborhood in a semi-rural character is extraordinary. And, over the course of 70 years, it took an extraordinary effort to keep the importance of this semi-rural message alive. Don't ever be fooled into thinking we don't have to keep the pressure up because while Mt. Helix is fairly "built out" (to use land-use phrasing); the development pressure strongly exists to infill, to subdivide large lots, to create more housing on every available piece of dirt. I can't tell you how many times I have heard, "Why do you need ½ acre lots?" Well, there are over 400 members who went on our lovely garden tour who can answer that with enthusiasm and expertise! I hope that whenever your neighborhood is threatened with this "infill" pressure, you will be inspired by GMIA's 70 years of community activism and let your voices be heard. ▲

Happy Summer!
Your Prez, Allison Henderson



GMIA President Allison Henderson and Vice President Mark Schuppert receive a proclamation from County Supervisor Dianne Jacob designating May 6, 2008 as GMIA Day.

Fire Season is Here

Protect Your Home with These Guidelines for Creating Defensible Space

Create a “lean, clean, green” area by using fire-resistant, irrigated landscaping in the first 40 feet around your home. These plants must be maintained year-round. Fire-resistant plants typically have the following characteristics: grow close to the ground; have a low sap or resin content; do not accumulate dead branches, needles or leaves, and are easily maintained and drought-tolerant.



Non fire-resistive trees should be a minimum of 30 feet from any combustible structure measured from the tree’s drip line at maturity (the outer circumference-where the rain falls from the edge of the tree.) Even fire resistive trees should have at least 10 feet from the tree’s drip line to structures.

Remove all plant materials from the roof and rain gutters. Burning debris can fall directly on your roof, in gutters, or enter your home through chimneys or vents.

Remove dead, weak or diseased trees from your property, particularly in heavily wooded areas. This can improve growing conditions for existing trees and help remove fire hazards.

Limit planting of large unbroken masses—especially trees and large shrubs. Groups should be two to three trees maximum, with mature foliage of any group separated horizontally by at least 10 feet, if planted on less than a 20 percent slope, and 20 feet, if planted on greater than a 20 percent slope. The goal is to have sporadic vegetation to slow down a fire, its flame length and intensity. Do not completely remove natural vegetation. If cutting back natural vegetation is needed to achieve desired plant spacing, you should cut back no more than six inches above the ground. Removal of all vegetation may cause soil erosion and habitat destruction.

Trim lower tree branches at least six feet off the ground, even if there is no ground vegetation below. Burning needles and twigs lying on the ground can ignite low growing tree branches.

If shrubs are located underneath a tree’s drip line, the lowest branch should be at least three times as high as the understory shrubs or

10 feet, whichever is greater. Separation between trees and shrubs is necessary to avoid creating a “fire ladder” from which the fire can easily ignite from ground vegetation and spread into the tree’s branches.

Existing trees should be pruned 10 feet away from roof, eave, or exterior siding, depending on the tree’s physical or flammable characteristics and the building construction features.

All tree branches and palm fronds should be removed within 10 feet of a fireplace chimney or outdoor barbecue.

Please do not overlook combustible material such as wood piles, palm-leaf palapas, awnings, wood fences, wooden decks and outbuildings. Outdoor structures such as storage sheds and gazebos and others listed above, can catch fire easily when constructed with combustible materials. If connected directly to your home, fences made with combustible material can also threaten your home. In order to ensure defensible space from combustible structures outside your home follow these guidelines from www.wildfirezone.org

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FIRE AGENCY PREVENTION OFFICER BY TELEPHONE. ▲

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from the Vons at Avocado and Chase, you have seen the llamas and camels and goats. Our parcel sizes are large enough that we have found our immediate neighbors raising a rather wide selection of animal life. On the GMIA board alone, we have members raising chickens and bunnies and one whose pond provides a resting place for many migrating ducks and local herons. There are numerous homes with horse corrals and amazingly, you can still see equestrians on Fuerte Drive.



The pictures here showcase koi, turtles and tortoises from the backyard of the Rose and Jerry Brown Hodge family. Rose, a local veterinarian, and her husband Jerry, designed and built two separate enclosures to house their animals. Jerry brought in ten yards of concrete to line a 10,000 gallon pond six feet deep for their 20+ koi. One yellow koi was rescued from someone's bathtub. It is doing much better now! The adjacent more terrestrial space houses a cherry head red foot tortoise, wood turtles and an African spur thigh tortoise. The African spur thigh needs lots of space because their tunnels can be 40 feet long! It is the third largest tortoise in the world. Jerry noted that he heard of one such pet that burrowed tunnels under a pool resulting in cracking of the pool's concrete. The Brown Hodge's keep both their enclosures covered by netting to protect against wildlife such as raccoons and herons. While they have ½ acre, they would like even more land to be able to raise their animals.

Let us know what you are doing in your back yard! ▲

Helpful Telephone Numbers	County of San Diego	City of La Mesa	City of El Cajon
ROADS Resurfacing, closures, potholes, etc.	Department of Public Works 858-694-2212 or www.co.san-diego.ca.us Dept. of Public Works section online road service request	619-667-1450	619-441-1658
GRAFFITI REMOVAL JUNK & DEBRIS WEED ABATEMENT Fire Prevention Services	858-467-4042 858-495-5143 619-562-1058		
LAND USE Zoning violations & other illegal land use	Code Enforcement 858-694-2705	Code Enforcement 619-667-1177	Code Enforcement 619-441-1716
LAW ENFORCEMENT	911 if Emergency or Sheriff's Dept (Lemon Grove) 619-337-2000	911 if Emergency or La Mesa Police Dept. 619-667-1400	911 if Emergency or El Cajon Police Dept. 619-579-3311
ANIMAL SITUATIONS Animal Control	619-236-2341	619-667-1436	619-441-1580
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL	1-877-713-2784 for guidance and information 619-598-5100 to make an appt. for disposal	619-287-5696 to make an appt. for disposal	619-596-5100 to make an appt. for disposal
GENERAL INFORMATION For categories not listed above	858-694-3900	619-436-6611	619-441-1776

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

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ART & GARDEN TOUR

The 2008 Art & Garden Tour was better than ever, thanks to the generous hospitality of the garden owners: Rick & Joyce Dentt, Judith & Robert Gennette, Karen & Allan Kosup, Vince & Kay McGrath, Dave & Michele Musgrove, the gardens were beautiful as were the works of art. A special thanks to board members Susan Nichols and Jeff Rule for coordinating this event.



GMIA Annual Dinner Highlights

Our annual dinner meeting was held on May 12th with 130 members in attendance. The keynote speaker was Eldonna Lay speaking on the history of our east county. Special guest speaker was Captain Guy Chambers from the Sheriff's Lemon Grove station.

Information from his speech: for a security check on your property, call Joey Tennyson at 619-337-2000 and if you have any questions or comments, call Capt. Chambers at 619-405-9689.



Eldonna Lay
El Cajon Historical Society



Captain Guy Chambers
San Diego Sheriff's
Department



Guy Hलगren receives
the 2008 Annual Al Platt
Memorial Award.



First Place
Flower Arrangement by
Marcia Peterson

Trash Pick-Up Options for Mt. Helix Area

There may be various trash service options available depending on where you live in the GMIA area. There are no options available for those living within the city limits of La Mesa or El Cajon as the cities have long-term franchise agreements with either EDCO or Waste Management. Homes within the unincorporated areas (outside city boundaries) are not bound by franchise agreements and can be serviced by one or more refuse disposal companies. However, it is up to the individual company to offer services on your particular street.

There are at least three major companies that serve our area. These companies include EDCO, Waste Management, and

Allied Waste Services. The rates can vary by company and street location and thus a price comparison depends on the particular address. Phone numbers are listed below for the major providers. Call them to find out if services are available for your address and what rates apply. ▲

	Edco	Waste Management	Allied Waste Services
Phone #	(619) 287-7555	(619) 596-5100	(619) 421-9400
Automated Trucks: (Their Cans Required)	Yes, except for green cans	Optional	Yes
Can Size Options: Trash Recycling Only Green Only	90 / 65 / 35 gal. 65 gal. Not Provided (own cans or clear bags for green)	96 / 64 / 35 gal. 96 / 64 / 35 gal. 96 / 64 / 35 gal. (or own cans)	96 / 64 / 32 gal. 96 / 64 gal. 96 gal. (or own cans)
Max. No. of Green Containers:	12 @ up to 40 lbs each	10 @ up to 40 lbs. ea.	6 @ 32 gallons ea.
Manuel Pick Up Option: (own cans)	No	Yes (40 lbs each)	No
Senior Discounts:	No	Yes	No
Bins Available:	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulk Pick Up:	Up to 4/yr Incl.	Extra	Extra



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About GMIA and 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. ▲

www.gmia.net

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

July is renewal month. Every member needs to send in his or her \$15 dues this month. Please check your mailing label and if your label says 6/30/08 or earlier, then your membership is now expired. To continue receiving a GMIA newsletter, use the envelope provided in this newsletter and send in your \$15. Or, simply go to our website at www.gmia.net and use the very convenient PayPal link to pay automatically, immediately, with no envelope, no stamp, no hassle, very easy to use, etc.

Warning: we used to have a policy of sending newsletters to those who weren't exactly current. Due to high printing and mailing costs, we will be discontinuing this very lenient practice. So, renew now!

Remember: this is an entirely volunteer organization and the larger our database of members, the stronger our voice is at all those community meetings your GMIA board members attend in your behalf.

PLEASE RENEW NOW.