



viewpoints

Summer 2007

Volume 37 Issue 1



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The Al Platt Memorial Award



Ellen and Jack Phillips

Last year, we lost a cherished member of our GMIA community, Al Platt.

Al, who served as president of GMIA for four years, was truly one of our neighborhood's brightest "thousand points of light." Al firmly believed in participating in the community and world around you to make it a better place. "Always give 110%," was Al's motto. You may have heard him quote "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." He encouraged those around him to get out in the community and participate, to support your political leaders, and to reach out to the world to build bridges in hopes of peace.

The GMIA board has created the "Al Platt Memorial Award" to honor his hard work and devotion to our nation and to our community.

The first recipients of Al Platt Memorial Award, **Jack and Ellen Phillips**, are native Californians who have lived in Mt. Helix since the early 1970s.

They have been involved with GMIA since 1980 and as is true of most volunteers, there was an "issue" which grabbed their attention and they decided to do something about it. In their case, it was a general plan amendment issue. It seems that in 1979, vacant land near their house was to be rezoned.

Well, that didn't sit too well with them and they determined to figure out the "who what when where why's" of this land use issue. They talked to neighbors, circulated a petition, worked with the Supervisor's office with an organization they hadn't heard of, called Grossmont Mt. Helix Improvement Association, and basically got the rezone quashed.

As the story goes, they were at a GMIA annual dinner meeting and there was the Supervisor chatting with a Valle De Oro Planning Member who said that there was an opening at the VDO. The Supervisor looked over and said "time to put your money where your mouth is."

And so, a long history of community service was begun.

Ellen joined GMIA first, in 1980, so technically has been volunteering longer. Jack joined a year later in 1981. Ellen has served as 1st Vice President and Secretary. Jack has been the land use chair for longer than anyone can remember! If you need anything done, if you need the County and its inner workings to be explained, you can count on them.

Together, with their history of community activism and their more than 53 years of combined community service, they have shown us what it really means when someone says "it takes a village."

GMIA is thrilled to honor them with the first ever Al Platt Memorial Award. ■

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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President's Corner

Greetings to our friends and neighbors in the best neighborhood in San Diego! Since the last newsletter, your GMIA board has been busy organizing the annual garden tour and dinner. This year, we had five lovely gardens to tour and through new board member Jeff Rule's extraordinary effort, we had a record 19 artists showcasing their talents.

A special "thanks!" to board member Susan Nichols for not only volunteering tremendous amounts of time and energy to make the tour successful but for simultaneously getting her own gorgeous garden ready to be on our tour!

The dinner, as always, was a wonderful opportunity for meeting and greeting our membership. Our keynote speaker, Monica Zech, inspired us to be prepared for disasters both large and small. As she so graphically reminded us with gruesome but challenging statistics and pictures, an 'ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure'. It's the uncomplicated safety precautions like driving and not being distracted by cell phones, or eating, or changing clothes that can help keep us in one piece. She also noted how much easier it is to deal with any emergency by having a plan. So, don't procrastinate, get your home and family prepared now!

I would like to take a moment to thank those GMIA members who volunteer their time to either our organization or other community groups. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, last year more than 61 million people volunteered their time either through or for an organization. This means that over 26% of the US population does some sort of volunteering. While it often seems like our nation's communities are at loose ends, these statistics mean that there are a significant number of people who are doing what they can to make their neighborhood a better, safer, cleaner and more livable place.

At our annual dinner, the GMIA board acknowledged two of GMIA's most hardworking volunteers, Jack and Ellen Phillips, with the first annual Al Platt Memorial Award. If you missed the dinner, read up on their award in this newsletter.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact any board member.

Thank you for supporting GMIA!

Your president,
Allison Henderson

Always Welcome

- Suggestions for articles in *Viewpoints*
- Intriguing stories of local interest
- Photos of our area, then & now
- Gardens for the Art & Garden Tour
- Volunteers for GMIA committees (Garden Tour, Annual Dinner, *Viewpoints*, etc.).

If you would like to participate in any of the above ways, please contact GMIA by mail or telephone (address and telephone numbers at left).

Neighborhood Crime: Steps to Harden the Target

ALARM SYSTEM 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.

EXTERIOR LIGHTS Thermal or motion-sensing exterior floodlights, strategically placed around a home, can surprise and deter intruders before they find an entry point.

LOCKS Your home becomes a much more likely target if it is not protected

by good, high quality dead bolt door and window locks that are consistently secured—even when you are home.

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.

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.

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.

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. ■

Casa de Oro's Estrella Park *One Step Closer*

Working with the County Parks Department, our elected Valle de Oro Planning Group recently held a public meeting to obtain neighborhood input for the final design phase of the Estrella Park development project. Public testimony indicated neighborhood support for the passive recreation design concept presented at the meeting. Neighborhood participation has been essential in formulating the design due to the close proximity of residences along Bonita Street, Estrella Drive, and Sierra Madre Road.

The Planning Group's special committee for the project has announced completion of the detailed design phase and their intention to seek park-land development funding and grants to complete the project. Committee members Richard Rachel, Don Fitchett, and Jack Phillips have found that the long-term lack of public recreation space in Casa de Oro should place this project high on the county's priority list for funding. ■



GMIA Window Decals

Our new static cling decal of green on a white background (3"x3") was given to everyone at our annual meeting. If you weren't able to attend the annual meeting or want additional decals, just send a self-addressed stamped envelope (with number of decals you want) to Mark Schuppert, GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa 91943-2751. ■

West Nile Virus Still a Threat

It's that time again: time to prepapre for West Nile Virus. The unpleasant illness is spread by infected mosquitoes and causes flu-like symptoms. In severe cases, it can be deadly.

The County Department of Environmental Health recently confirmed the first dead bird infected with West Nile Virus this year, and is urging residents to start controlling mosquito breeding grounds now.

If you have standing water around your home, get rid of it. Horse troughs, fountains and ponds can be stocked with special fish to help out. Learn more at: www.SDFightTheBite.com (from "The Jacob Journal," March 2007) ■

ART & GARDEN TOUR

We had the usual big turnout at the art and garden tour and, as you can see from the pictures, the gardens were beautiful as were the works of art.

A special thanks goes to board members Susan Nichols and Jeff Rule for coordinating this event, and to all our members and friends for attending. ■



Artist Cindy Berg's bio was inadvertently left out of the garden tour brochure. Her impressive figurative paintings of cultural people and their landscape were at the garden of Steve and Joyce Welch on Resmar Road. Cindy can be reached at (858) 454-3327, and her website is www.cindybergstudio.com.





Garden owners, l to r: Dottie & Leon Herrick, Jackie Sciulli (Michael not pictured), Laura & Robert Walker, Susan & Larry Nichols, Joyce & Steve Welch.

GMIA Annual Dinner

Our annual dinner/business meeting was attended by nearly 150 of our members and we all enjoyed a delicious dinner prepared by "The Abbey". Supervisor Dianne Jacob gave us an up-to-date report on all the county projects and especially those affecting us here in east county. Monica Zech, from the El Cajon Fire Department, was our featured speaker. Aidan Miles furnished the musical background for the event. Centerpieces contributed by a number of members were judged on best design, color and flowers. Our winners received generous gift certificates donated by Simpson's Nursery, Evergreen Nursery and Hunter's Nursery. A big thank you to all who participated. We also want to thank board member Kay Bickley and her committee for all the effort that went into organizing this successful event.

These meetings are a great way to meet your neighbors—both new and old, so keep the second Monday in May of 2008 available. See you next year! ■

Electronic Speed Signs on Fuerte



As you have noticed, our electronic speed monitoring signs are operating on Fuerte. The computers are keeping track of all Fuerte traffic west of Avocado Blvd. So far, the average speed has dropped about 3 MPH. But that is not enough. Keep those speeds down—way down. If we don't keep to the speed limit, how can we expect our out-of-community drivers to slow down?

F.Y.I. — These signs have been installed by the county on an experimental basis. If they are found to be effective in lowering speeds, more signs may be installed elsewhere in our area or in other communities. Only roads in the unincorporated county will be considered. Roads in nearby cities would be under that city's jurisdiction. ■

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 619-441-4264	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.

April 20, 2007

Dear GMIA,

Since October, my husband and I have known that we'd be moving away from Mt. Helix after living in our house on Edgelake Drive for almost 30 years. During these past months, I have tried to savor the moments and special things about this beautiful, peaceful place to live. Maybe you will be interested in my thoughts, as expressed in this poem, and will find a way to use them to promote this wonderful piece of San Diego County. Sometimes I think that the Mt. Helix area is under-appreciated by our public. This poem should give people an insider's view of the qualities that make it so special.

Sincerely,
Valerie Davidson

When I Leave Mt. Helix

by Valerie Davidson

I shall miss the morning mountains.
Shades of gray create the scene,
Like rows of cardboard cut-outs,
Misty layers laid between.

I shall miss the lights that twinkle,
Against a darkening sky,
Inside the scattered hillside homes
As daytime starts to die.

I shall miss the sounds of Springtime,
In the stillness of the morn.
Chirping birds outside my window
From the nest where they were born.

And the gleaming full 360
On a Santa Ana day.
From the mountains to the coastline,
And the border to L.A.

I shall miss the blustery breezes
On an Autumn afternoon,
Bringing forth a kind reminder
Winter weather will be soon

And the screeching parrot circus
Warning man to leave them free,
Flying flock of neon feathers,
Touching down from tree to tree.

I shall miss the glow of moonlight
On a chilly Winter night.
Silhouettes of nearby hillsides
Standing out beneath the bright.

And Mt. Helix' guise at Christmas
Laced in lights like sparkling jewels.
Carolers who gather
Sing to welcome in the Yule.

I shall miss the winter rainstorm
That pounds upon my roof,
And the sudden icy cold snap,
Leaving mountain snow for proof.

I shall miss the distant vistas
And the early evening views.
Sunlight settling on the mountains
Making pink and purple hues.

And the friends that we have made here
Through all our many years.
It's all about the people,
The laughter, tears and cheers.

HELP INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP!

Please use the convenient Membership Renewal envelope provided in this newsletter to renew your membership in GMIA today. Give the form below to area friends or neighbors who are not GMIA members. You can print additional forms from the GMIA website: www.gmia.net. THANK YOU!

Join GMIA and help strengthen your influence and keep in touch with current events and issues facing the association and the community. With your membership, you will receive a quarterly newsletter (*Viewpoints*) and notification of special member events.



**Membership
Application: \$15**

I am making an additional donation of \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

☐ I (We) would like to receive *Viewpoints* via email.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/ST/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Make check payable & mail to: Grossmont - Mt. Helix Improvement Association, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751



viewpoints

P.O. Box 2751
La Mesa CA 91943-2751

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It's Membership Renewal Time!

Over the past 69 years, GMIA has been doing the many necessary things that have kept our community the rare jewel that it is. Without your help and membership, this organization would wither and its influence would become non-existent. If you have new neighbors, please welcome them to the neighborhood and tell

them about GMIA and what it has done and will do for our community. (A GMIA membership would make a nice housewarming gift.)

Check the address label for your "PAID TO" date. If you're in arrears, now is the time to pay up! (For tax time, just

remember that GMIA is a 501.c.4 organization and your dues are not deductible.)

Our remittance envelope has a new box to check. If you wish your "VIEWPOINTS" to be sent via e-mail in the future, please check this box. ■

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 ■