



# viewpoints

Fall – Winter 2009

Volume 40 Issue 2



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## Gardens & Artists Wanted

for the 2010 Art  
& Garden Tour.  
Please contact  
Jeffrey Rule at  
619-466-0362.

## Fire District Gets the Message

In the San Miguel Fire District serving this unincorporated area, 69 percent of the voting property owners voted NO to the District's proposed benefit assessment. After the voters rejected the new tax, the fire district Board of Directors met on September 10, 2009, and voted to cut costs and balance their \$19.5 million budget for fiscal year 2009-2010.

### Summary of FY 2009-2010

#### Budget Cuts:

\$ 994,000	Labor concessions
\$ 558,000	Staff & Facility cuts
<u>\$1,300,000</u>	Elimination of 2nd engine company, Station 15
\$2,852,000	Total Budget Reductions

The Fire District got the message loud and clear – they cut expenses and didn't raise our taxes. ▲

## Water Conservation

After receiving your latest Helix Water District bill, you may have an added interest in replacing some of those thirsty plants with more drought tolerant varieties. The place to see these plants in action is The Water Conservation Garden located at 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, (619)660-0614. The best time to plant these varieties is in the Fall to allow the winter rains to help them along. When the weather finally cools down, let's get to work. ▲



## Excess Crops... Don't Let Them Go to Waste

If you have an excess of tree crops or garden crops, the Volunteer Fruit Picking organization "Harvest CROPS" – Community Residential Outpour of Produce – will come to your house and pick crops and distribute them to those in need. The volunteers are high school and college students, parents, and friends. Harvest CROPS is located at 8086 Broadway, Lemon Grove. For further information, please call (619)461-2681 or check out their website at [harvestcrops.org](http://harvestcrops.org).

Another organization gleaning surplus foods is called the "Senior Gleaners." They will pick your excess fruit, vegetables, or gather excess food from retail stores. These items are then distributed to 58 agencies in San Diego County that feed low income families. For more information, please call (619)582-2299.

These are volunteer organizations that have seen a real need and are working to help you and to help families less fortunate. ▲

## Plant Exchange Postponed

Due to scheduling conflicts, our fall GMIA Plant Exchange is postponed. Look for this event to be held in early spring 2010. Now is the perfect time to root cuttings, divide plants and prepare for our inaugural event. ▲

## GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



## IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

**Officers**

Mark Schuppert, President

Dan Mitrovich, 1st Vice President

Vern Neff, Treasurer/Membership  
579-2517

Ellen Phillips, Secretary  
670-0986

**Directors**

Brian Arnold	Susan Nichols
Diane Bernal	Val O'Connor
Kay Bickley	Jack Phillips
Rosemary Hewicker	Jeff Rule
Dagmar Miller	Oksana Smith
Don Newcom	Mike Valley

**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**

## Message from the President

The Grossmont / Mt. Helix community is fortunate to have such strong involvement by its residents. Your involvement contributes to the preservation of the semi-rural character and appeal that helps make our community such an enjoyable place to live.

The Directors of GMIA have been working diligently on your behalf and we thank you for your continued input and participation. Recently, GMIA has contributed to the defeat of a proposed water rate increase that would have unfairly increased your rates by more than three-fold. We have also contributed to the defeat of a special fire assessment that would have increased your property tax liability during such already tough economic times.

Our efforts continue toward defeating a developer's request to rezone and build a non-conforming subdivision on the site east of Fuerte Elementary School. If developed as proposed, the subdivision would be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood and irreversibly scar our community character. This proposal has

been in the works for several years and will soon be decided by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Please contact GMIA or our web site to ask how you can help.

Our garden committee is working toward the presentation of another successful Spring Garden Tour. More information on this year's Garden Tour will be coming soon. We have enjoyed several sponsored walks and events this past year and will continue to facilitate special events in the future. This summer, we were honored with the "Key to the HeART Award" by the Mt Helix Park Foundation for our community contribution and we are grateful for this accolade.

It is rewarding to be part of this community and GMIA. Thank all of you who make the Grossmont / Mt Helix community such a wonderful place to call home.

Mark Schuppert

## Inventory Your Household Property

Whether the disaster is fire, flood, or earthquake, an inventory of your household property could make a huge difference in finalizing and expediting an insurance claim. If you are a victim of a calamity, the aftermath will be confusing in the very least. Having a written inventory of each room will help tremendously. Remember that appliances, TVs, etc will be replaced on a pro rata basis. If you don't have receipts, please note the approximate date of purchase. If this is too time consuming, walk through each room with a video camera and show the contents. Video open cupboards, drawers, closets, etc. Don't forget the garage and outbuildings that contain tools and



garden equipment. If a video camera isn't available, take photos – lots of them. After you've documented your belongings, keep the information in a safety deposit box, a fireproof safe, or store at a distance from your home with family or friends.

As many folks that were victims of the horrendous fires over the past few years discovered, just seeing a photo of a room brought back a flood of memories as to what exactly they had owned. Without a visual or written reminder many objects will be forgotten. ▲

## Trees of Mt. Helix

This is the second of a series of articles about interesting trees within the GMIA area. Members are encouraged to share their favorite or special tree with others through these articles.



*Ficus microcarpa*  
**Indian Laurel Fig**

The Indian Laurel Tree above is located along the street and in the front yard of GMIA members, Bill and Joan LaClair. The year the tree was planted is unknown, but the house was built in 1962. The LaClairs have lived in the Sunset/El Granito Avenue neighborhood for 28 years. What makes this shade tree special to the owners is the mushroom-shaped canopy. The Ficus tree's unusual shape is created by annual pruning. This specie of ficus can grow 30' in height and 35' wide, but can easily be contained through shearing. The tree's natural and unsheared form is weeping with long dropping branches, thickly clothed with 2"- 4" long green leaves and a woolly green backside. Plant ficus trees away from paved surfaces since their aggressive roots can lift concrete, asphalt, and brick paving.



*Pinus pinea*  
**Italian Stone Pine – Bonsai**

The bonsai-ed Italian Stone Pine above is located in the back yard of GMIA members Harold and Patti Schioldager, who have lived in the Bernita Road neighborhood for 40 years. The tree was planted as a living Christmas tree many years ago. What makes this tree special to the owners is its bonsai shape. The tree was originally trimmed by mistake into a bonsai by oriental gardeners while the homeowners were away for the day. This pine has since received annual pruning and is no taller than 8'. This specie of pine can grow 40'-80' in height and 40'-60' wide, and has a moderate growth rate. The tree's mature natural form is an umbrella canopy with many branches. This specie of pines comes from Italy and can be seen in many Renaissance paintings.

### Have a Tree to Share?

If you have a tree that you would like to share with fellow members, please call Jeffrey Rule (Director) at (619) 466-0362, and he can schedule a site visit. For members who have already contacted me, I will be scheduling visits in the upcoming months. Thank you for your interest. ▲

## Chicken Ranch

On September 16th, Reynolds Communities submitted a replacement map that was to address the concerns of the community regarding their approximately 27-acre project on the south side of Fuerte east of Damon Lane. The new map has 36 units instead of 40; there are 4 lots of approximately 1 acre; 6 lots now face onto Damon Lane; the fill slope in the southwest corner along Damon Lane is now 10 to 13 feet above the road and the park entry. The two main problems that the community and the planning group had with the previous map have not been addressed – the General Plan Amendment and zoning should be for 1 acre minimum lot sizes, not ½-acre; and public sewer should not be brought into the area for the project. Agreeing with the community, the county planning commission denied the previous project for 40 units on the site. ▲

## License Plate Holder

One of our members has suggested that Mt. Helix should have its own license plate holder. We are fortunate to live here and should proudly display that fact. GMIA can purchase these holders in bulk for a reasonable price (about \$5.00) and they would be similar to the KPBS plate holder. But what should the slogan be? If you think this is a good idea and would like to suggest a slogan, please give our secretary, Ellen Phillips, a call at 670-0986 or go to our web site, gmia.net, click on "contact us" and email your comments and/or suggestions. If this is something our membership would like, the plate holders would be made available for sale at the annual dinner, neighborhood walks, and other events. ▲

## Side-Impact Air Bags

Those most important side-impact air bags may be housed in the seat of your car. If you install a seat cover that extends over the side of the seat, that air bag may not deploy. Please check to see where those airbags are installed in your car and do not cover them up! ▲





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La Mesa CA 91943-2751

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## Self-Help Contact List for the Unincorporated County

**Animal Control..... 619-236-4250**

**Hazardous Waste Recycling..... 877-713-2784**

**Abandoned Vehicles..... 619-401-2000**

**California Highway Patrol..... 858-637-3800**

**Code Enforcement Hotline ..... 858-694-2705**

**Code Enforcement ..... 858-694-3741**

**Dead Animal Pick Up..... 888-299-9905**

**Dig Alert ..... 800-227-2600**

Locate gas lines, electrical wiring, water pipes  
and phone lines before you dig. Call at least  
two days before you dig.

**Grading Enforcement..... 858-694-3034**

**Environmental Health Code**

**Enforcement..... 619-338-2222**

**Graffiti Removal on Roadways ..... 858-467-4042**

**Graffiti/County Property ..... 858-874-4040**

Dept. of Public Works

**Junk & Debris ..... 858-495-5143**

Dept. of Public Works

**Lemon Grove Sheriff's Station..... 858-337-2000**

**Noise Enforcement ..... 858-694-3741**

**Road Maintenance - Potholes..... 858-565-5262**

Dept. of Public Works

**San Diego Sheriff's Dept. .... 858-565-5200**

Non-Emergency

**San Miguel Fire District ..... 619-670-0500**

Business & Administration

**Vector Control – Rodents, ..... 858-694-2888**

**Flies, Mosquitoes, etc.**

Health Services Dept.

For those living in the city of La Mesa or city of El Cajon,  
please contact your city's offices.