

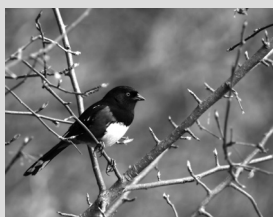
A Community  
Newsletter  
from the  
Grossmont –  
Mt. Helix  
Improvement  
Association



# viewpoints

Winter-Spring 2009

Volume 39 Issue 3



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## GMIA Needs...

- someone with computer skills to help us maintain our website and database
- beautiful gardens to showcase on our annual garden tour.

Contact any board member or log on to [gmia.net](http://gmia.net) and fill out a contact form and we will get back to you.



## Neighborhood Walk

**W**hat a start to the New Year! Over 200 people joined our 2nd annual neighborhood walk up to the park on Mt Helix. The weather was fantastic. The goodies and beverages scrumptious. Even the participating pets had a doggie bowl awaiting their arrival up at the top! The board of GMIA would like to say a heartfelt "Thanks!" not only to the many walkers but also to our partners in the event: Kathleen Coates Hedberg and De Ana Verbeke of the Helix Water District, Tracy Stotz and Amanda Bond of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation, Souplantation (donated the muffins), Vons (donated the gift card), Starbucks (donated the coffee). A special shout out goes to Susan Nichols, Jeff Rule, Mike Valley and Dagmar Miller for all the effort in organizing this lovely neighborhood event, and to Jenney Howe for the excellent photos of our walk.

Save the date for our next neighborhood walk: March 28 at Damon Lane Park, led by Fuerte Elementary School's science teacher extraordinaire, Bruce Wollitz. ▲



## GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



## IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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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

**Dear Neighbors,**

The New Year has just begun and already GMIA has been busy organizing events so that there is something for everyone to enjoy. In early January, we joined 200 neighbors for a walk up to the park at the top of Mt Helix. It was a very festive "Hello to 2009." In a few short months, GMIA will be hosting a Spring Walk to Damon Lane Park, as well as our annual Garden Tour and the annual dinner meeting. See our events calendar below for details. By the way, we are always in need of volunteers to help out on

our events so if you'd like to join a committee, contact any of the board members or log on to gmia.net and send us a contact form and we will gladly put your helping hands to work!

Speaking of volunteers, I would like to report that our board is losing one of our most technologically advanced members. Tim Carpentar, who has been in charge of our database, is moving out of the area and has resigned from the board. We will sorely miss his computer expertise! Thank you to Tim for so many years of help and advice. We wish him well in all endeavors.

One quick note about membership dues. As many of you realize, annual dues are a mere \$15. Every membership expires in June and is to be renewed in July. As our database is fairly basic and we are an entirely volunteer board, we are unable to prorate dues. This inevitably causes confusion for those who join or renew in winter and spring. Please accept our apologies for any misunderstanding or dismay that may arise from our process. Our sincere hope is that you, our neighbors, see the value in being a member of the oldest (70 plus years!) community organization in the Mt Helix area.

Most humbly yours,  
Allison Henderson

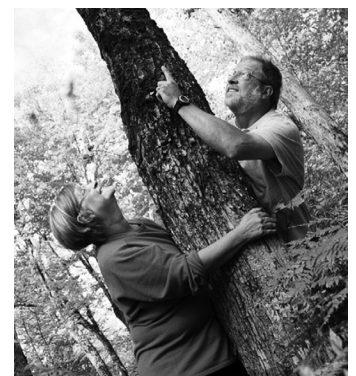
**GMIA Calendar of Events****Spring Walk: Saturday March 28th at 10 am, Damon Lane County Park:**

There is plenty of parking available near the Park (which is south of Fuerte Drive), along Damon Lane or at Fuerte Elementary. Accomplished naturalist and Fuerte Elementary School science teacher, Bruce Wollitz, will lead neighbors on a walk to discover the beauty of nature in our own backyard—focusing on birds, native plants, and invasive and naturalized plants.

He will have binoculars for 35 people, and recommends that we discourage people from bringing dogs. The walk should last around one hour with questions and answer session included.

**Annual Garden Tour: May 3, 2009:** Details coming in the next Viewpoints.

**Annual Dinner: May 11th, 6 pm:** Speakers will include Supervisor Dianne Jacob, CHP Public Affairs Officer Brian Pennings, Department of Public Works (tbd), Sheriff's Department Captain Guy Chambers. ▲





## What's in YOUR Back Yard?

In the ever fascinating quest to discover interesting backyards in Mt Helix, your Viewpoints staff (all one of us!) didn't have to look further than the GMIA board. Susan Nichols, GMIA's garden tour coordinator, and Diane Bernal, our intrepid traffic and roads committee chair, both have quite the menagerie in their backyards. On a whim 4 years ago, Susan and her family decided to design and build a chicken coop. I believe it's the only coop I have seen with a lovely stain glass window. Once their coop was built, they purchased day old chicks at a local feed store. It takes about 6 months for the chicks to mature and lay eggs and only then will you know whether they will crow or not. Apparently, some breeds can be purchased "sexed" but the Exotic breeds, like the Polish, you just have to wait and see. Susan's hens include: Sultans, Gold Lace Wyandotte, and a variety of Polish hens. They used to have a rooster but the rooster was quite noisy and in deference to their neighbors, Susan sent him to live with some friends who live deeper in the country.

The Bernals are also raising chickens. They have Araucanas, Rhode Island Reds, Bardocks, Buff Orpingtons, Black Australorps and Leghorns. Their middle-schooler, Charlotte, is primarily responsible for maintaining the coop but the upside to that is her business, "Charlotte's Egg Shoppe," which is adding to her college education fund. From personal experience, I can attest to those eggs being the best ever! This may be due to the leftover bean soup that the hens eat.

Charlotte also raises bunnies that she sells to local pet stores. Currently, she has a Mini Rex and Jersey Woolly. The bunnies can have 3-4 litters a year and each litter can have from 5-11 bunnies. They eat any and all leftover fruits and vegetables in addition to pellet mix.

We are fortunate to live in a semi-rural neighborhood where the zoning allows for some very interesting backyard avocations. If you are interested in starting your own chicken coop, a good online resource is [www.backyardchickens.com](http://www.backyardchickens.com).



## What Have You "Gleaned" Lately?

The Senior Gleaners of San Diego County are volunteers, 55 years of age and over who volunteer their time and labor in gleaning surplus food from gardens, fields, groves and regional supermarkets to supplement the hungry and poor.

The Senior Gleaners, a 501 (c) 3 non profit, was founded in 1992. Started by six retired senior volunteers picking up surplus food at only two sites, the organization now has over 100 volunteers who pick up the surplus food from over 50 sites in the county.

Last year, 65 volunteers worked over 10,000 hours to collect and distribute 390,000 pounds of food to approximately 39 charitable organizations. The gleaned food is sorted, packaged, and shared with social service agencies authorized by their board of directors. Gleaned food cannot be sold by the gleaners or by any of the agencies they assist. Food is provided at no charge for the elderly, the disabled, homeless families or families on low and fixed incomes.

Every van that is driven, every box of food that is sorted, packaged and delivered, each administrative task is performed by a volunteer.

Volunteers are needed to help pick up day old food from grocery stores and deliver it to the warehouse.

Volunteers are also needed to help pick fruits and vegetables from orchards around San Diego County.

If you can help the Senior Gleaners in any aspect of their mission, please call Ann Evans at 619-582-2299

Log on to [www.seniorgleaners.com](http://www.seniorgleaners.com) for more information. ▲

Visit us at [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net)

**T**he 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,”

## GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX



## IMPROVEMENT 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, traf-

fic 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](http://www.GMIA.net) ■