

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

We Can Influence the High Cost of Water

by Larry Nichols

For our members in the Helix Water District, you will recall that for several years GMIA has actively lobbied for change at the Board level. At last October's Public Hearing, the Board (3 to 2) passed an unprecedented five-year rate increase plan likely to result in nearly 70% higher water bills by 2020. This, despite a standing room only crowd protesting the action, along with hundreds of letters in opposition. It was, in our opinion, the last straw.

This November three seats on the Board of Directors are up for election:

- ◆ Division 5 (East El Cajon) Joel Scalzitti is unopposed. GMIA supports his retention on the Board as he is one of two Directors who consistently represent the rate payers.
- ◆ Division 3 (Spring Valley, Lemon Grove, southern La Mesa) Chuck Muse (incumbent) is opposed by Mark Gracyk and Erik Collins. GMIA strongly supports **Mark Gracyk** as the candidate with professional experience in managing water, who regularly attends Helix Board meetings, and has expressed willingness to be a rate payer advocate. His website is www.Mark4HWD.org.
- ◆ Division 1 (El Cajon) John Linden (incumbent) is opposed by Dan McMillan, Luis Tejada, and Aaron Zajac. GMIA strongly supports **Dan McMillan** who has served on the Padre Dam Water District Board, the San Miguel Fire District Board, has a sound background



in finance and also pledges to represent the rate payer. His website is www.dan4lowerrates.com.

It is important to note that voters may only vote for the candidate representing their geographic Division. While we recognize that our members may be unable to vote for our preferred candidates, we encourage you to support them in other ways because their presence on the Helix Water Board *will change the direction of the agency*.

Here are some ways you can affect the outcome of this important election:

- ① Urge your friends and acquaintances living in Division 1 and 3 to **VOTE** in this election and to vote for Mark Gracyk or Dan McMillan.
- ② Make a financial contribution to their campaigns to help purchase signs and flyers (see websites).
- ③ Offer assistance: the candidates need help in placing signage, distributing flyers, networking with voter groups, and media coverage.

With your help, we can finally end up with a majority on the Helix Water Board – a majority that is open and willing to consider alternatives to raising rates in order to manage their budget.

For questions or more information, contact Larry Nichols (619) 440-1607 or Lsnnichols@cox.net. 🏔️



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Susan Nichols, President
(619) 440-1607

Pat Ryan, First Vice President
(619) 248-1619

Sue Creveling, Second Vice President
(619) 971-2712

Larry Nichols, Treasurer/Membership
(619) 440-1607

Kay Bickley, Secretary
(619) 318-5260

Directors

Wendy Tinsley Becker	Jeff Rule
Paul Geldbach	Michael Sciulli
Kathleen Hedberg	Elizabeth Smith-Chavez
Allison Henderson	Mike Valley
Tom Huffman	Holly Yarris
Don Newcom	Dave Zimmerman
Tom Osteen	

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.

Editor: Susan Nichols
Design & Layout: Victoria Vinton,
Coyote Press Graphic
Communications

www.gmia.net

Email us at:
yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

MISSION

GMIA is a 78 year old nonprofit 501(c)4 public benefit membership organization. Our mission is to preserve and enhance the character and quality of the community and foster pride in the area. We do not employ a paid staff and are served by an all-volunteer board.

Message from the President

I'm a huge believer in local news. It connects us to the place we live, serves as public record, and covers the news happening in our own backyard. And while newspapers or television stations can report on big issues, it's never about the same issues as neighborhood coverage.



GMIA knows that collecting the news about regional concerns that have bearing on our daily life is important to our members. Local news helps to both build awareness and to motivate us to become involved. With our focus on providing useful information about our immediate area, we provide articles with local "color" that highlight important positive work in our community while acknowledging concerns that need to be addressed.

One of the reasons this newsletter is a trusted source for credible information is our long standing policy to not accept paid advertising. Although businesses and vendors periodically ask to buy space, GMIA will continue to decline to sell ad space because we want to ensure that our content remains of high value to you, our members.

Publication of our newsletter is made possible by your \$18 annual membership fee. Design, printing, and mailing (email & postal) is one of our largest budget considerations. So, please check the mailing label of this edition to see the expiration date of your membership or note the email message accompanying your e-version. We hope you find our efforts worthy and continue to support them with payment of your dues.

Our common interest — to ensure the character and quality of our community — frames the content of this newsletter. Thank you for your membership. ▲

Susan Nichols

Thank You Donors!

Special thanks to these members who donated a gift of \$25 or greater in excess of their dues.

William & Maxine Oden
Tim Young
Rudy & Marilyn Santich
Dean & Judith Allen
Lou & Peggy Botte
Leo & Adrienne Culp
Florrie Taylor
Richard & Nancy Fassett
Mary Gilligan
Joanne Ling

Dave & Cathy Long
Peter Pickslay & Denise Botticelli
Ron & Marilyn Svalstad
Jeffrey & Joanne Knox
Carl & Joan Ecklund
Harry & Rita Mixon
Gary & Janice Paul
Guy & Signa Wilcox
Myra Zimmerman
Ron & Mary Alice Brady

Ken Bullock
Charles & Beverly Little
Sandra & David Polster
Jim & Geri Bollman
Judy & Brian Pike
Yvonne & Mike Gagen
Mable Wigfall
Paul & Janel Pehau



by Kathleen Hedberg, a Neighborhood Watch Coordinator

One of our Explorer Road neighbors was out walking and observed a male in a vehicle driving on Explorer Road looking around. He stopped his vehicle, walked away leaving it running, and went up to the home he targeted because it had an open garage door.

The observant neighbor did not have a cell phone, and so memorized the car license plate and came home to call it in.

In that amount of time, the suspect was able to steal a \$600 mitre saw and take off heading to Avocado near Nabal.

So, what did we learn...

- That WE HAVE AN AWESOME NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH - neighbors looking out for each other. The victim might not have known of the burglary until he realized what was missing, and the thief's vehicle information would not have been noted.
- Don't leave your garage door open for long periods of time or when you are not out there.
- Now you know a firsthand example of what the difference between "suspicious" and "crime in action."
 - Suspicious: an unusual person in the neighborhood cruising looking for a victim – call dispatch at 858-565-5200!
 - Crime in Action: person getting out of car and going into a garage – call 911!
- Take your phone when you are out walking so you can snap a picture in action, and be able to call 911 right away.
- That the BAD GUYS ARE ROAMING THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND LOOKING FOR EASY OPPORTUNITIES!

Thank you Neighborhood Watch Friends! If you see something say something.

- Anything that looks suspicious, call Dispatch 858 – 565 -5200!
- Crime in Action, call 911!
- Be sure to get a description of the person, vehicle, and the license plate number
- Please—secure your doors, windows, and garages. 🏠

Neighborhood Watch is a powerful crime suppression tool. For more information or to organize a Neighborhood Watch contact Crime Prevention/ Rancho San Diego Station, 619-660-7000. Additional information available online at: www.sdsheiff.net/documents/nw.pdf

2016 Community Forum, Come One Come All!

Our GMIA 2016 Community Forum is scheduled for Wednesday October 5, 2016 6:30-8:30 p.m. Titled *Then and Now: The Past, Present, and Future of the Greater Grossmont-Mt. Helix Community*, this year's forum will focus on the history of the area, goals for the future, and who to contact with community needs moving forward. We are assembling a panel of representatives from area organizations including the County of San Diego (various departments), the Sheriff's Department, the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group, and the Casa de Oro Alliance. The forum will be a great opportunity to:

- Meet old and new neighbors,
- Learn about the history and future of your community, and
- Make contact with local decision-makers and individuals working towards the area's maintenance and improvement.

The forum will be held at the Fuerte Elementary School auditorium. Limited refreshments will be served. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the event will begin at 6:30. Bring a neighbor - we look forward to seeing you there!

Questions? Please email Wendy Tinsley Becker:

wendy@urbanapreservation.com
or call / text (619) 302-0425. 🏠

Succulent Swap Success

Bushels of plants found new homes at our popular Succulent Swap in May. GMIA members and guests brought cuttings and potted specimens to give away and exchange in a community effort to promote water wise landscaping and neighborhood beautification.

The gorgeous garden of Tere Trout and Jonathan Becker (pictured here), featuring a handsome, mature drought tolerant setting, provided a spectacular backdrop for our event. Thank you to our hosts for their third year of generously letting our 200 attendees stroll the paths of their property. A perfect venue!



A big thank you to Albertson's in Casa de Oro for providing yummy baked goods, and to Starbuck's in Rancho San Diego for coffee for our morning event. Thank you to our former GMIA Director Dagmar Miller who created this signature event and coordinated this year's Succulent Swap while packing for her move to Manhattan. A special thank you to all our Directors who volunteered to ensure a successful day.

GMIA has heard from many members who've told us the Succulent Swap helped jump-start a transformation for their yards. We love to hear that and hope you will join us next year. The Succulent Swap is a two-fer: a free, fun way to improve your landscape plus a chance to meet and mingle with your neighbors. A great day in the neighborhood! 🌱



Photo by Pat Ryan & Susan Nichols





Members of the Casa de Oro Community Alliance and other stakeholders meet with Supervisor Dianne Jacob.

Casa de Oro Moving Forward

The Casa de Oro Community Alliance continues to spearhead a dynamic revitalization effort to invigorate this neighborhood on our GMIA southern boundary.

Formed in 2015, the Alliance is a group of residents, parents, schools, business owners and managers, local churches, non-profit organizations, Planning Group members, the Sheriff's Department and other stakeholders committed to renewing the business district that runs along Campo Road in Casa de Oro. The organization is supported by the Institute for Public Strategies who provide guidance under a contract from the County of San Diego. GMIA member Bob Yarris provides leadership as Chairperson. Thanks Bob! More than 150 people have attended meetings. In June, the Alliance organized a successful Community Clean Up with nearly 100 volunteers who spent their morning sprucing up the area.

GMIA actively supports the Alliance and invites you to get involved! All are welcome. Follow them at www.facebook.com/CasadeOroCommunityAlliance to keep up to date on what is happening in Casa de Oro. ▲

Team Meeting Schedule

The **Casa de Oro Community Alliance** meets the third Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at Faith Chapel, 9400 Campo Rd. Spring Valley CA, 91977. For more information, please contact Bob Yarris at 619.813.2164.

The **Business Development Action Team** meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at Butler's Coffee on the corner of Kenwood and Campo Road. For more information, please contact Manolo Guillen at 619.476.9100 ext. 108.

The **Beautification and Community Event Planning Action Team** usually meets multiple times per month in the evening. They are currently planning a Fall Festival. For dates, times and locations please contact Joyce Moore at 619.476.9100 ext. 109.

The **Policy Action Team** meets monthly in the evening. For dates, times and locations please contact Brenda Simmons at 619.476.9100 ext. 132.

GMIA Questions Fire District Board Decision

GMIA has concerns about a recent vote by our San Miguel Consolidated Fire District Board majority to cancel an existing contract with CAL FIRE and again provide service as a "stand alone" agency. It is our understanding that no comprehensive independent study was conducted prior to this decision, that the decision was based on analysis supplied by staff, and that the staff's analysis had significant flaws that were discovered but not corrected until after this important vote was taken.

GMIA is deeply troubled with questions of transparency and governance by the San Miguel Fire District Board majority. We will be looking closely at the upcoming November elections and encourage our members to do so as well. ▲

Curb Appeal Award Winners

Drum roll please! GMIA is pleased to present our 2016 Curb Appeal Award winners. GMIA initiated this award because we believe that when neighbors take pride in our community and its overall appearance, a better quality of life results.

This year's winners are **John & Mary Ray on Cliffwood**, **Gaylord & Jill Norcross on Monahan**, **Shannon Varley & Javier Aguilar on Mollywoods**, and **Lee Knight on Via Escuda**. Look for photos in our next edition.

Criterion for our award includes:

- Visual presentation: site utilization, design, color, proportion, balance form and texture (40%)
- Maintenance – neatness and grooming (20%)
- Plant materials with a focus on water wise landscaping (20%)
- Originality and distinction (20%)

Thank you to our Curb Appeal Award Committee including 2015 Curb Appeal Winners Giana & Jeff Crispell, Vince & Kay McGrath, Jim Brega, and Pete & Joan Camana along with GMIA Directors Pat Ryan, Kay Bickley and Sue Creveling who spent countless hours reviewing our entries to determine the best of the best. We appreciate their dedication.

GMIA is starting early to gather nominations for 2017. We encourage you to nominate yourself or a neighbor's front yard using the form below, or go online to our website www.gmia.net and complete the simple form found there. The deadline is March 30th. 🏡



Herrick Health Care Library

Located at 9001 Wakarusa in La Mesa, the Dr. William C. Herrick Community Health Care Library is a consumer health library that is free, open to the public, and accessible via the Internet. It is supported by the Grossmont Healthcare District.

The Library provides access to the latest medical information from authoritative and reliable sources, in both print and electronic formats. Staff is trained to help users find materials to satisfy their health information needs.

Offering many other free services, the Library also hosts a Wellness Wednesday Group, presenting speakers on health topics, as well as health fairs and art exhibits. For more information, go to www.herricklibrary.org. 🏡

NOMINATE A BEAUTIFUL FRONT YARD

GMIA Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form (Deadline March 30, 2017)

Location (Address) _____

Homeowner's Name _____

Person nominating (optional) _____

Comments:

Please return to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751. You may also go online to nominate at www.gmia.net.

Annual Dinner Meeting

by Holly Yarris

GMIA's 78th Annual Dinner was held at the beautiful Water Conservation Gardens at Cuyamaca Community College on June 26th. Nearly 250 members and friends enjoyed Phil's BBQ along with local brewery Ballast Point beer, select wines and other beverages. A talented jazz guitar duo serenaded our members while we dined. Supervisor Dianne Jacob provided informative responses to our member's questions and concerns. It was a delightful evening, filled with good food, good friendship and community interaction. Looking forward to seeing all of you again next year!

We are grateful for the many volunteers who helped us – we couldn't have done it without you! Thanks to: Nancy Bailey, Bev Little, Jan Pisor, Mike Pisor, Craig Anderson, Kristi Anderson, Barbara Sculli, Stephen Bickley, Jon Hedberg, Mark Schuppert, David Johnston, Giana Crispell, Jeff Crispell, Doug Ryan. 🌱

A big shout out to Chairperson Holly Yarris for outstanding leadership, ably assisted by former chair Kay Bickley, Lead Volunteer Joan O'Steen, and our entire Board of Directors.



Al Platt Memorial Award Winner

Congratulations to member Bob Cederdahl, recipient of our Al Platt Memorial Award for Service to Our Community. This well-deserved recognition was presented to honor Bob's myriad of volunteer activities and thousands of hours devoted to the betterment of our community.

Your Valle de Oro Community Alliance Planning Group

Elected by voters in our region, the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group provides the County with community input regarding land use decisions in the Rancho San Diego and Grossmont-Mt. Helix areas. We rely on our Valle de Oro Community Planning Group to advise the County on long range community goals as related to land use and to make recommendations on proposed developments that are going through the entitlement or permitting stages. Members of the Valle de Oro Group are volunteers and GMIA says a big thank you to the group for selflessly serving our community. We are grateful for their work.

In 2012, the Red Tape Reduction Plan

was proposed to supposedly speed up the development process by eliminating input from citizens. Fortunately, this plan was not enacted; had it been approved it would have gutted our Planning Group's ability to speak for us and our semi-rural way of life. Instead, it was decided that members may serve 4 year terms with no term limits. Current members include: Sharon Nold, Alyssa Burley, David Zimmerman, Lori Myers, Eileen Tierney, Karibia Baillargeon, Mark Schuppert (Chair), Dan Hyatt, Christopher Rand, David Johnston, Charles Kossman, M.D., Stephen Bickley, Josan Feather, and two Candidates in process.

The Planning Group operates under the California Open Meeting Law, the

Brown Act, to ensure that their actions occur openly with public access and input. Meetings are open to all and are held once monthly on the first Tuesday at 7:00 PM at the Otay Water District Office located at 2454 Sweetwater Springs Boulevard. A typical meeting agenda might include a design review for signage on a commercial development such as the recent Smart & Final building or more controversial projects such as new Charter Schools (two presently in the permitting stage). Other typical items may include zoning variances and street safety issues. The public is encouraged to attend the meetings and to bring land use issues to the Board's attention: Mark Schuppert, Chair (619) 749-2464 🌱

To ensure your membership is current: please look at your mailing label on this newsletter. On it you will find the expiration date of your membership. Annual membership is just \$18 (2 years - \$36; 3 years - \$54). You may renew online at our secure website www.gmia.net or mail your payment to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

Have You Seen The Flock of Pet Pigeons?

A trained flock of pigeons or doves flies every morning around our Mt. Helix neighborhood.

They are routinely spotted soaring on the south side of the mountain, around 8:00 a.m. daily. We've been told the flock is owned by a resident on Heavenly Way but have been unable to locate the owner.

We'd love to know more about this unique hobby and share it with our members. If you can help us connect with the owner, we'd appreciate it. Contact us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. Thanks! 🏔️



CALENDAR

Wed., Oct. 5th

Community
Forum

Sat., Jan. 7th

Walk Up Mt. Helix
for the New Year