

**A Community
Newsletter**

from the

**Grossmont –
Mt. Helix
Improvement
Association**



viewpoints

February 2002

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In This Issue:

- **Traffic in Our Community**
- **Land Use: Cell Phone Towers**
- **Perceived Increase in Noise from Aircraft Operations**
- **Helpful Telephone Numbers & Contacts**



Upcoming Spring Events

Art & Garden Tour

The 2002 version of this special event for GMIA members only has been scheduled for **Sunday, May 5**. Watch your mail for a special flyer providing more details on this event, which will feature four beautiful gardens.



Annual Dinner Meeting

The 2002 Annual Membership Dinner Meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 13**. Mark your calendars now.

It promises to be an informative as well as entertaining evening that you won't want to miss! Your Board of Directors will use part of this Annual Dinner Meeting to keep you informed on the objectives, status, and accomplishments of our GMIA organization, with presentations by one or more elected officials important to our GMIA community. Then the balance of the evening will be devoted to entertainment and information regarding our wonderful and historic GMIA community.

Our theme this year for the entire meeting will be local history, and we'll be using historical photographs and fun "table top trivia" to set the mood. There will be a buffet dinner, musical entertainment, door prizes and a special, surprise guest speaker guaranteed to light up our local history. When you stop to think about, this area has some very interesting and unique history. For example, did you know that Grossmont was originally settled as an artist's colony, and that local resident and opera singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink performed for American troops in WWI? Did you know that the poem "A Cottage in God's Garden," by Carrie Jacobs-Bond ("I Love You Truly", "A Perfect Day"), was written about her home here? Did you know that filmmaker Allan Dwan produced over 100 silent movies right in our area? Come join the party, to hear more about this and many other interesting aspects of our local history.

All GMIA members should plan to attend this Annual Membership Dinner Meeting. In fact, every member should invite and sponsor a non-member neighbor as a way of introducing them to your GMIA community improvement association! Watch your mail for a special flyer providing more details on this event along with the reservation form. ■



*Carrie Jacobs-Bond (left)
Ernestine Schumann-Heink (right)*



GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX

**Officers**

Alvin W. Platt 660-0232	President
Robert Ball 589-6616	1st V. P.
Tom LeDuc 697-8884	2nd V.P.
Clinton Smith 698-0839	Treasurer
Jan Bement 670-4279	Secretary
Ellen Phillips 670-0986	Secretary

Directors

Kristine Alessio	Rosemary Heweker
Brian Arnold	Kristin Kjaero
Gordon Austin	Dan Mitrovich
John Fulghum	Jack Phillips
Guy Halgren	

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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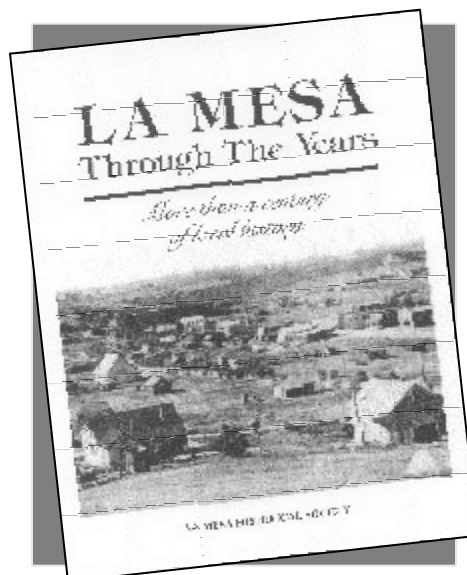
Historical Photos: *Grossmont Isn't Just
A Shopping Center*

A Letter from the President

Greetings on behalf of your GMIA Board of Directors. Calendar year 2001 has now been put in the past, and your Board is already looking forward to another year working for the improvement and preservation of our GMIA Community. Without exception, you have a GMIA Board composed of extremely dedicated Directors who are willing to spend extensive time in fostering the interest of our wonderful GMIA Community. Directors not only devote their time to attend our Monthly Board Meeting but also spend additional hours on committee meetings as well as review and research of GMIA Community issues requiring action by our Board. In addition to that devotion of significant personal time, the entire Board recently spent a whole weekend afternoon in a "Retreat" meeting. That special meeting was devoted to assessment of current and forecast community issues, with the objective to identify and formulate future plans necessary for continued achievement of the Mission of our GMIA community improvement association: "Homeowners working together to preserve the character of the area and foster the pride in the community." With that type of dedication and interest by your Board of Directors, I can assure you that your GMIA community improvement association leadership is working on behalf of our entire community in the most sincere and diligent manner!

In that vein, please note the list of current GMIA Directors displayed in the column adjacent to this letter. If you are acquainted with individual Directors, please find an opportunity to give them a personal word of thanks. For those Directors with whom you are not yet acquainted, please make an attempt to meet them, and then take the time to render a word of thanks to them. ■

New Book on Local History



In case you have not seen an announcement, a new book has been published on local history. The new book is, "La Mesa Through The Years", published by the La Mesa Historical Society. While focusing primarily on the City of La Mesa area, it encompasses history of places and people involving the greater Grossmont-Mt. Helix area also. Copies are available through the La Mesa Historical Society: call (619) 463-1029 for more details.

Traffic in Our Community

94/125 Freeway Ramp

Status

When driving north on SR125, north of SR94, you will notice that the final bridge section of the SR94 West to SR125 North Transition Ramp is being constructed. That is the last element of this new ramp required before it can be opened for traffic, which hopefully will be this Fall.

Watch for an announcement regarding the grand opening of this new important traffic infrastructure improvement.



Traffic Control Proposals Rejected

Several months ago the County's Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) proposed two projects in our GMIA area: (1) a signal at the Fuerte Ave./Grossmont Blvd. intersection, and (2) increasing the speed limit on Avocado Blvd. from 45 mph to 50 mph. The Valle de Oro Community Planning Group thoroughly investigated both proposals and came to the conclusion that a signal at the Fuerte/Grossmont intersection would, under most traffic conditions, be a hazard rather than a solution, and the increase in the Avocado Avenue speed limit an unwarranted if not ludicrous proposal. The Planning Group along with GMIA Board

representatives convinced TAC to remove both proposals from further consideration.

Something to Think About

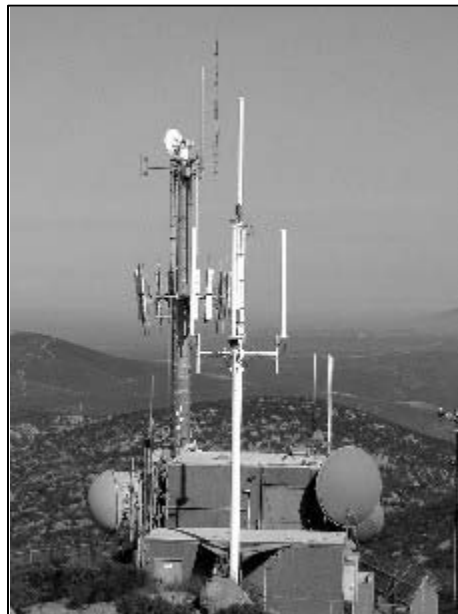
The Highway Patrol studies the speeds on roads that are radar enforced. If the 85th percentile of the actual measured speeds on a given road segment is consistently higher than the

posted speed limit on that road segment, then the Highway Patrol automatically proposes to the County for an increase in the posted speed limit. Ergo, the faster traffic travels on a road segment, the higher the speed limit will be! **LESSON:** Approximately 40% of the traffic on westbound Fuerte Drive is by drivers living outside the Mt. Helix area. Thus, Mt. Helix area residents may be the only drivers concerned enough to drive at or under the speed limit in order to bias the traffic speed observations in favor of maintaining the current and desired lower speed limits! The residents living on Fuerte and Avocado will be most appreciative of this consideration and contribution by fellow neighbors towards helping control traffic speed in this community! **MORAL:** To help control traffic speed in our GMIA community, always drive at or below the posted speed limit. ■

Land Use: Cell Phone Towers

Your GMIA Board recognizes that most of the residents in our GMIA community do not want cell phone towers in residential areas. Most applications for these must pass before our local Valle de Oro Community Planning Group for comment and recommendation regarding ultimate County action. For information of our membership, the Planning Group requested a moratorium on such residential sites two years ago, but the County Board of Supervisors has done nothing so far to protect our residences from this inappropriate use.

By way of background information for better understanding the overall issue of cell phone towers, the useable rationale for denial of these projects is aesthetics,



Cowles Mt. Cellular Tower

lowering of adjacent property values, and insufficient research into alternative sites. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 prohibits denial of a site location based on health concerns, and while we may consider this absurd, it is the law.

The Valle de Oro Community Planning Group makes every effort to restrict these sites to at least 300 feet from residential, daycare, or medical facilities, but has recently lost a case where AT&T chose to locate a site in the middle of a high-density residential area. As currently structured, none of these projects can be appealed to your County Board of Supervisors and it appears that County governing body wants to keep it that way. ■

Perceived Increase in Noise from Aircraft Operations

Your GMIA Board received a few complaints several months ago regarding what was perceived to be an increase in noise from aircraft operating in our community, primarily in the Grossmont-Mt. Helix area. Over the past several months, your GMIA Board has discussed and researched this situation, including committee assignment as well as discussions with community members, pilots, and aviation experts.



- Review of aircraft operations data (take-offs & landings) from the surrounding General Aviation airports reveal that there was actually a decrease in overall aircraft operations in CY2000, as portrayed in the tabulation below (2001 data not yet available).
- Mt. Helix is a well-known and long established visual landmark for aircraft operations and navigation.

The vast majority of air traffic viewed in the vicinity of Mt Helix is in transit to one place or another.

While our research indicated no specific course of action was warranted, the Board did decide on an interim course of action to send letter advisements to the three general aviation airports from which aircraft operating over our community most logically originate. The letters were sent to Gillespie, Montgomery, and Brown Airports. Each airport manager was asked to disseminate a notice to all pilots operating from their airport advising of the perceived noise increase over our community and request strict compliance with all flight regulations. Subsequent discussions were held with each airport manager.

As a result of all action to date, status and conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- General Aviation Operations (small private airplanes and helicopters) are an institutionalized part of most residential areas and cities, and in most cases more dominant than Commercial Aircraft Operations (scheduled passenger and freight airliners).

- Individual airport staffs, including the Control Tower, have direct control over aircraft flying in and out of their specific control area (Class B Airspace) in addition to take-off and landing.
- Our GMIA community area, including Mt. Helix, is not in Class B Airspace under any airport control; rather, it is in Class C Airspace under control of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Flight regulations applicable to the FAA controlled airspace over the GMIA community require a minimum of 1,000 feet vertical distance between the aircraft and the ground, and/or a 2,000 feet horizontal distance from any object. It must be noted that an aircraft flying at a horizontal level at the same height as the Mt. Helix Cross, but a distance of 2,000 or more feet from the Cross, is in compliance with applicable flight regulations. Remember, 1,000 feet altitude or 2,000 feet horizontal distance, is not a great distance and may be perceived to be “very close” when in reality the distance is as required.

Continued next page

Countywide 5-Year History					
SOURCE: http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/cntydepts/landuse/works/airports/airops.htm					
Airport	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Brown Field	103,543	102,532	94,900	98,598	112,800
Gillespie Field	172,980	184,831	209,463	210,185	187,751
Lindbergh Field	244,034	252,800	223,258	248,554	233,836
Montgomery Field	243,558	240,034	266,308	274,877	251,859

- The City of San Diego and the southern and eastern County areas have a combined population exceeding 2,000,000, and that overall area is served by 6 very active airports (NAS North Island, Lindbergh, Montgomery, MCAS Miramar, Gillespie and Brown). It would be difficult to go anywhere in that overall area and not hear the expected noise from aircraft in transit. Aircraft operations, like vehicular ground traffic, are indeed a part of our community life and commerce.
- Many official aircraft, including law enforcement helicopters, are often exempt from standard flight regulations in performance of assigned duties.
- All commercial aircraft operating in and out of Lindbergh Field are under a much more strict and complicated set of flight regulations under control of the FAA. This includes flight paths and altitudes during departure from, and approach to, the airport.

come on the line). If a perceived violation of flight regulations is observed, in addition to the date, time, and location of the violation, a description of the aircraft involved, including its N-number (“tail number”) is considered most valuable in facilitating the FAA’s ability to identify the alleged offender.

We hope the above recitals prove to be informative and interesting to our members. Your Board is open to further action on the issue of perceived increase in noise from aircraft operations over our GMIA community, if and as deemed warranted. As of now, we do not see cause to spend more time on this issue. General aviation and the airports that serve them are an institutional part of our daily activities and commerce. This condition must be recognized as such, under the caveat that all aircraft operations should strictly conform to flight regulations to ensure they do not unduly degrade our quality of life. More information on our local airports can be obtained from several Internet websites, starting with the most common one:

If you are concerned about a perceived violation of aircraft flight regulations, you should report this to the FAA Flight Standards District Office at phone number (619) 557-5281 (wait for the recording to end and then a Safety Inspector will

San Diego County Airports:
<http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cnty/cntydepts/landuse/works/airports/index.html> ■

Helpful Telephone Numbers & Contacts

Your GMIA Board encourages all members and other residents of our community to try to resolve real or perceived unsatisfactory situations or conditions observed in our community as the initial step to rectify the situation. Your GMIA Board will consider appropriate action when requests from individual community members for corrective action go unheeded or unresolved. The following phone numbers and contact information are provided for the convenience of our community residents (those residing within city limits should call the appropriate city numbers listed) . ■

	County of San Diego	City of La Mesa	City of El Cajon
ROADS Resurfacing, closures, potholes, etc.	Department of Public Works 1-877-684-8000 or www.co.san-diego.ca.us Dept. of Public Works section online road service request	619-667-1450	619-441-1658
LAND USE Zoning violations and 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 Dept. (Lemon Grove) 619-337-2000	911 if Emergency or La Mesa Police Department 619-667-1400	911 if Emergency or El Cajon Police 619-579-3311
ANIMAL SITUATIONS Animal Control	619-236-2341	619-667-1436	619-441-1580
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL	877-713-2784 for guidance & information 619-596-5100 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



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Caroling on Mt. Helix

The most recent event at Mt. Helix Park was the Annual Caroling on Mt. Helix event, held on Thursday evening December 20. This was a glorious family-oriented evening of Christmas caroling enjoyed by several hundred attendees from our community. The combined Advanced Choirs from Grossmont and Vahalla High Schools enhanced the group caroling as well as presented several special holiday musical renditions. In keeping with tradition, the Mt. Helix Park Foundation, in conjunction with their Friends of the Park support group, hosted this community event and provided hot beverages and homemade cookies made by members of the SPRITES organization. Don't miss this event next December: mark your calendars now for **Thursday evening, December 19, 2002.**

Easter Sunrise Service on Mt. Helix

The 2002 Easter Sunrise Service on Mt. Helix will be held on Sunday March 31 (Easter is earlier than usual this year!). The College Avenue Baptist Church is the host church scheduled to conduct the Service this year. In keeping with tradition, the Mt. Helix Park Foundation will provide hot beverages and pastries before, during and after this event. Don't miss this event: mark your calendars now for **Sunday morning, March 31, 2002** (and don't forget to set your alarm clocks).



Calendar at a Glance	
March 31	Easter Sunrise Service
May 5	2002 Art & Garden Tour
May 13	2002 GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting