



viewpoints

SPRING 2019

Volume 49 Issue 2

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



THE ORIGINAL GMIA SUCCULENT SWAP

April 27, 2019

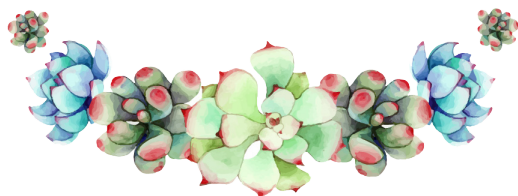
GMIA Members - VIP entry at 10 am
Non-member entry 11 am
10805 Melva Road, La Mesa

by Carey Hultgren and Paul Geldbach

Once again, we are privileged to host our annual event in the 2-acre garden wonderland of GMIA members, Tere Trout and Jonathan Becker. Thanks to the generosity of the Trout-Becker family and a great story in San Diego Home and Garden Magazine, our swap is now the envy and inspiration of succulent swaps cropping up all over the county. As always, the event is free to everyone and is an opportunity to swap cuttings (or give away your extras), discover new varieties, learn more about GMIA and mingle with fellow succulent lovers. If you're lucky, you might even spy the homeowner's African tortoise wandering about the lawn.

Make sure your GMIA membership is current so you can come early for the best selection of succulents! Not a member? Sign up at the event. Complimentary coffee, water and light snacks will be provided. Children are welcome, but please leave your pets at home.

The word "succulent" comes from the Latin word *sucus*, meaning juice, or sap. In botany, succulents are plants having some parts that are more than normally thickened and fleshy, usually to retain water in arid climates or soil conditions. Succulents are hardy, thrive on limited water, and are generally pretty cool.



Celebrate Our Annual Art & Garden Tour A 50 Year Tradition

Sunday, April 7th • 12 – 5:00 pm

by Pat Ryan

For over 50 years GMIA members have enjoyed our premier Art & Garden Tour. Join us on Sunday April 7th for our most popular event showcasing six remarkable gardens, and honoring the vision, hard work, and creativity of the owners.

For our self-guided Tour, you may begin at any garden. New this year, catch our complimentary shuttle running continuously every 15 minutes to access a trio of hideaway gardens. Just park at the Fire Station lot (provided courtesy of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation). This route is also walkable for those who enjoy the short journey to each garden.

More local artists are featured displaying and offering their creations for sale. While strolling enjoy musicians playing guitar, flute and saxophones.

While it is not our intention to open our event to the general public, we will accommodate nonmember guests for a \$15 donation per person.

As always, our Art & Garden Tour is free to members whose dues are paid current (6/30/19). Your mailing label will show your renewal date. This is a family friendly event and well-behaved children are welcome, however, participating gardens cannot accommodate strollers. No pets, please.

Enjoy your day in the gardens!



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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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MISSION

GMIA is an 80-year-old non-profit 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.

President's Message

For over eight decades, GMIA has addressed the most pressing issues confronting our members. Our most recent example: helping stop the California Department of Corrections from placing a Parole Office in our neighborhood. "Preserving and enhancing" our community by effectively working with County, other governmental agencies, and partner organizations to protect our region remains our focus.

But in addition to reactive strategies to local threats, we also shape our community with pro-active endeavors. Our new initiative (see page 7) to partner with the Valle de Oro Planning Group and spearhead a Fire Safe Council is a positive step forward to protect our region.

In the rush to turn off the costly hose spigot, we want to be sure we don't "pave paradise and put up a parking lot." Spring showcases GMIA actively fostering community character by promoting water-wise gardening to retain our region's verdant appeal.

- ✱ Complimentary for members, this Art & Garden Tour takes us to another level of excellence with six gardens and a shuttle linking three gardens for ease of viewing. Check your mailing label for membership expiration; questions - contact us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com.
- ✱ Even if you don't have plants to contribute, join us for our April 27th Succulent Swap. Generous members bring carloads of cuttings to get you jump-started.
- ✱ Nominate your home or a neighbor's for our prestigious Curb Appeal Award. The Award will recognize a front yard that displays outstanding maintenance, distinctive design and water-wise landscaping.

Pushing for policies and encouraging preservation of our community remains a challenge. We rely on you, our members to spread the word about our good work. Please share this newsletter with a neighbor and encourage them to join.

Thank you for your support. 🌱

Susan Nichols

We Love Our Volunteers!

Volunteers are needed to help make our expanded Garden Tour a success! As a special incentive, you will be invited to our VIP Pre-Event Tour and Reception for volunteers, artists, and garden owners hosted by our GMIA Board of Directors on April 6th (the day before our public event.) Volunteers assist with day of event registration, setup, parking logistics and more. A two-hour commitment is required. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Kay Bickley at kbbickley@cox.net. Thank you!

Thank You Donors!

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

Dr. Kuljinder & Mrs. Manjit Grewal
Jim & Linda Michael



What Makes a Community? Our Parole Office Fight

by Wendy Tinsley Becker

In November and December of 2018, our community banded together to oppose an Adult Parole Office proposed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) at the foot of Mt. Helix on the 9400 block of Grossmont Summit Drive. Our community's response was swift. GMIA advocated for the best interests of our community:

- ◆ We printed and distributed copies of the notice to residential and commercial properties along portions of Fuerte Drive, Grossmont Summit Drive, Grossmont Boulevard, Severin Drive, and Murray Drive. GMIA developed a coalition of neighbors to identify information, reach out to area schools, elected officials, the CDCR, and the City of La Mesa.
- ◆ We developed and implemented social media communications using our e-blasts, Facebook, Twitter, and NextDoor.com accounts.
- ◆ We analyzed and observed existing CDCR facilities.
- ◆ We researched legal decisions surrounding the CDCR at local law libraries.
- ◆ We made signs and stood together waving them on our streets to alert neighbors and visitors of the issue.
- ◆ We activated telephone trees and regularly met in person to organize on the issue and tasks at hand.
- ◆ We reached out to print, radio, and television media.
- ◆ We established new relationships with neighbors from all over Mt. Helix.

The semi-rural residential character of our community is one of the qualities that makes it so special to each of us. From a logistical standpoint, however, our semi-rural neighborhood presented challenges for a CDCR facility, as we have no direct access to transit, no sidewalks, no street parking, and a constrained local street network. We

See **PAROLE** on page 4



GMIA Spearheads Fire Safe Council

Our organization successfully presented a request to the Valle de Oro Planning Group to partner together and create a Fire Safe Council for our region. The goal of this effort is to improve comprehensive preparedness through better vegetation management, dead tree removal, and other strategies to reduce fire threats. With the formation of a Fire Safe Council, we will be able to request funding to improve fire-prevention practices that will benefit our neighborhood. Thank you to GMIA Director Kathleen Hedberg for stepping up to make this happen, and to the members of the Valle de Oro Planning Group Josann Feathers, Catherine Gerhart, and Kyle Hermann for their support.

To get involved, contact Kathleen at kchedberg@cox.net or 619-994-6900.

For more information check out:
<http://firesafesdcounty.org/>

LAST CALL! Nominations for GMIA Curb Appeal Award

by Dania Barroso-Conde and Carey Hultgren

We invite you to nominate a Mt. Helix candidate (yourself or a neighbor) for the GMIA Curb Appeal Award. This award recognizes front yards that display outstanding maintenance, distinctive design, and climate appropriate landscaping. The winner will be featured in our newsletter, gifted a year's paid membership to GMIA, and recognized at our Annual Dinner. Mail or go online to www.gmia.net to submit your nomination for our prestigious Curb Appeal Award. The deadline to apply is April 30, 2019! 🌱

GMIA Curb Appeal Award Nomination Form (Deadline April 30, 2019)

Location (Address) _____

Homeowner's Name _____

Person nominating (optional) _____

Comments:

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

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. Family 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.

Note: if the date is June 2019 or later, your dues are paid in full, but you are welcome to renew in advance.

Pick Up Sticks!

by Mike Valley

Beautiful neighborhoods are what we are all about. When driving through a residential area, we can't help but notice how people care for where they live. How about those dog walkers? They (usually) pick up after their pets. What if the other walkers-for-health extended their goals for the day to pick up trash along the way. It's an easy thing to do. Taking a pick-up stick and a trash bag with you on your walk makes it an easy task. It not only gives you a sense of accomplishment but gives more value to where we live.

GMIA will be giving away pick-up sticks (while supplies last) along with that needed bag to hold the trash. How do you get one? Attend the annual garden tour April 7, the Succulent Swap April 27 or the Annual dinner June 9. You can personally ask Mike to reserve one for you and/or answer any other questions you may have. Contact him at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com.

PAROLE from page 3

learned that, due to these infrastructure limitations, the proposed location might actually jeopardize the parolee's successful reintegration into society.

Ultimately, in December 2018, the CDCR issued a notice that the site on Grossmont Summit Boulevard was no longer a candidate for an Adult Parole Office due to logistical concerns. By now, our community is aware of this decision.

What makes a community? Communities can be defined through physical conditions and geographic proximity, common interests and knowledge bases, and through social media. Our greater Mt. Helix community is more than 100 years old. GMIA was founded 81 years ago. As the area evolves and the next generation of residents establishes roots here, our bond is strengthened. Sometimes that underlying bond is not evident. It lays dormant until it is challenged.

GMIA is thankful for the hard work and energy that each member of this community contributed to the effort. Some skeptics have stated that our collective community response had no bearing on the CDCR's decision to withdraw the Grossmont Summit Drive property from consideration. We say, our bond as neighbors, friends, and colleagues was demonstrated in our collective actions. Should we be faced with a similar issue in the future, we will work together to preserve the character and quality of our community. 🌱

Sun., April 7

**Art & Garden
Tour**

Sat., Apr. 27

**Succulent
Swap**

Sat., June 9

**Annual
Dinner**

April 20, May 18,

**June 15
Park & Ride
Cleanup**