



viewpoints

SUMMER 2019

Volume 49 Issue 3

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



Let's Gather for the Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 9th 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Water Conservation Garden Outdoor Amphitheater

Join us and come together for:

- ◆ Good food
- ◆ Great company
- ◆ An informative community update from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

Enjoy a Phil's BBQ buffet, craft beer, wine and soft drinks at our Annual Dinner Meeting. Meet Supervisor Dianne Jacob and hear the latest about our community. The summer heat seems to



arrive earlier each year and so we've moved our meeting up to early June for cooler weather (fingers crossed).

To encourage everyone to attend, our event remains an affordable \$12 for members, \$20 for nonmembers. Reserve online today at www.gmia.net or mail in the form found in this newsletter with your payment. Dinner payments may be added to your renewal dues in the same envelope.

July is Renewal Time Check Your Mailing Label

Numbers count! In order for GMIA to advocate for our community, we need a robust membership. That's why your membership support for GMIA makes a difference. Please check your mailing label on this newsletter. On the mailing label you will find the expiration date of your membership. Annual memberships expire at the end of June, so please renew today if your membership expires in 2019 (or previously).

Time to renew? We encourage our members to renew for multiple years. Annual dues are just \$18 per household. Your payment of \$36 for 2 years or \$54 for 3 years will help us by reducing paperwork and ensure your membership is current. Please remit your dues to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943. You may also renew online at our secure website www.gmia.net.

Please renew today and encourage your neighbors to join.

Questions? Contact Pam Coe, Treasurer, at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. 



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Susan Nichols, President
(619) 440-1607

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

Dave Zimmerman,
Second Vice President

Pam Coe, Treasurer/Membership

Kay Bickley, Secretary
(619) 318-5260

Directors

Peter Camana	Jim Marshall
Dania Barroso-Conde	Larry Nichols
Leslie Gardner	John Richardson
Paul Geldbach	Mike Valley
Kathleen Hedberg	Marybeth Wilson
Tom Huffman	Holly Yarris

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

Email us at:
yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

MISSION

GMIA is an 81-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

Leading our organization and working with our fabulous Board of Directors has been my pleasure for a decade. Helping to shape our community – how we care both for our unique environment and each other – has been the most fulfilling volunteer commitment I could have ever imagined. As a special bonus, along the way, I've met so many amazing members who have become friends.

I have chosen to step down this year, and I am thrilled to let you know that our Board of Directors has nominated Kathleen Hedberg to serve as President. We are lucky to have Kathleen's dedication to our community and willingness to serve along with the efforts of all our Board members. In our new format, nominated First Vice President Dave Zimmerman will share many of the administrative functions that go along with GMIA leadership. Thank you to them both for stepping up to take on these responsibilities. I'll remain on the board as Past President to help guide the transition.

I hope to see you at our Annual Dinner meeting on June 9th. I look forward to thanking you personally when I preside over my last public function as your GMIA President. At the meeting you will meet President Elect Kathleen Hedberg, hear an informative update about the state of our community from Supervisor Dianne Jacob, plus meet and mingle with friends over a tasty dinner at the magnificent Water Conservation Garden.

Your support means so much to GMIA. We are stronger because of members like you who care deeply about our unique region. Our community, just 15 minutes from the 8th largest city in the nation, remains a marvelous oasis of semi-rural tranquility at a time when other places have been overrun with cookie-cutter development. Your support, and the efforts of all of our GMIA members for 81 years, have enabled us to safeguard this special place we call home.

Please join me in wishing Kathleen well as she takes the helm. Thank you for your membership. ▲

Are You Receiving Our EBlasts? If Not, Do You Want To?

We send our GMIA's monthly community e-update (including an informative community calendar) to our members who've given us their email addresses. If you are not receiving our eblasts and would like to, contact us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. Please check the "social" messages in your gmail account for our latest news. The gmail system routes our messages to that location. ▲

Thank You Donors!

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

Radu and Amber Alexandru





In Our Lifetime? Update on 125/94 Project

For more than a decade, GMIA has advocated for a freeway-to-freeway connector to eliminate the need for southbound State Route 125 (SR-125) traffic to use Spring Street to connect to eastbound State Route 94 (SR-94). Building the “missing link” and adding needed lanes will decrease traffic on our surface streets and improve air quality by reducing daily traffic jam on SR-125. The proposed project is expected to reduce the volume of traffic exiting from southbound SR-125 at Spring Street by more than 15,000 vehicles a day.

Due to new leadership at SANDAG (the San Diego Association of Governments), we may never see this project built. SANDAG has proposed to shift funding away from promised highway improvement and expansion projects. Our understanding is that they intend to divert TransNet funds (a half cent sales tax originally approved by voters for road projects) to add hundreds of miles of high-speed transit lines throughout the county. The ultimate decision about transportation priorities will be made by SANDAG.

We met with Supervisor Jacob who has encouraged GMIA and other stakeholders including the Valle de Oro Planning Group, Spring Valley Planning Group and Casa de Oro Alliance to fight for our long-promised “missing link” connector. **We ask that you help us by contacting SANDAG to express your concerns at sdforward@sandag.org and note that you are making a public comment.**

Please note: we are not opposed to SANDAG’s vision of transportation projects, but believe they should seek funding elsewhere and move forward on long anticipated road projects that benefit East and North County residents.

The estimated total cost of the project is \$105 million to construct a direct freeway-to-freeway connector from southbound SR-125 to eastbound SR-94. The new connector would pass under Panorama Drive, Echo Drive, existing SR-125, Campo Road overcrossing, the existing SR-94 connectors to and from SR-125, and the eastbound off ramp to Bancroft Drive. The new connector joins eastbound SR-94 west of the Bancroft Drive undercrossing with two auxiliary lanes that will be added to the project. 🟢



Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council

Our semi-rural community will soon have a new tool to combat the threat of wildfires in our region. GMIA President Elect Kathleen Hedberg is spearheading an important new resource for our community: a Fire Safe Council (FSC) to assist with fire prevention services, education and outreach. The new organization has submitted documentation to the County for approval and will serve those households within our GMIA boundaries.

Thank you to those who have stepped up to serve including representatives from GMIA, the Valle de Oro Group and Casa de Oro Alliance. Board Members include Kathleen Hedberg President, Josan Feathers (VDO) Vice President and Kyle Herrmann (VDO) Secretary, and Members at Large including GMIA board members Pete Camana, Dania Barroso-Conde and Leslie Gardner, Catherine Gerhart (VDO) and Michael Herron (CDO). 🟢

Check Out Our New GMIA Website!

Our streamlined and beautiful new website at www.gmia.net is up and running. Check it out to find all the latest GMIA news, community photos, plus a searchable archive of our informative past newsletter articles. A big shout out to our amazing volunteer, internet guru Mike Atkinson, who facilitated the process to modernize our virtual outreach. We think it looks terrific and hope you do too! 🟢





6TH ANNUAL SUCCULENT SWAP SUCCESS

A happy day for our (200+) attendees who shared a bounty of plants to promote water wise gardening and community character. This great event was organized and directed by GMIA Board member Paul Geldbach, with the help of your GMIA board and assisted by volunteers Pam Hoy, Anice Plikaytis, Frances Hill and Trish Huffman. A huge thank you to Tere Trout and Jonathan Becker who generously provided their beautiful garden for the occasion. See more photos on Instagram: @gmia_neighbor

Photos by Dania Barroso-Conde.



Casa de Oro Accomplishments

by Bob Yarris, Casa de Oro Alliance President

The Casa de Oro Alliance is now a California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation with an elected President, Secretary, Treasurer and 12 volunteer Board members. Committees include Economic Development and Funding, Legislative, Beautification and Community Events, Media and Public Relations and Ambassadorship. Other news includes:

- ◆ The County will award a \$500,000 SANDAG Grant this month to a community planning consultant to develop a Specific Plan, Design Guidelines and Rezoning for Casa de Oro with input from GMIA, Valley de Oro Planning Group and the Alliance.
- ◆ Discussions continue with property owners and the County to find the ideal location for a new library and tech center. A final location is being reviewed by the County, the Spring Valley/La Mesa Board of Education and the Alliance.
- ◆ The County has committed funding to complete the curb and sidewalks from Campo Rd. to Kenora Dr. to provide a safer student walkway.
- ◆ An upgrade is planned for the Campo Rd./Kenwood Dr. intersection including new welcome signage, landscaping and lighting.
- ◆ Request for Proposals for construction of Estrella Park have been issued by the County.
- ◆ The Alliance hosted Supervisor Dianne Jacob and Lt. Jerry Hartmann from the RSD Sheriff's Dept. for a well-attended Community Coffee.
- ◆ Work continues with County Code Compliance officers to close the few remaining illegal pot shops and address all existing code violations along Campo Road.

We extend an invitation to GMIA members to participate in our General Assembly Meeting on Thursday, May 16 or July 18 at 6 pm at Faith Chapel on Campo Rd. For more information: www.CasadeOroAlliance.org



JEFF AND CLAIRE RULE



Each year GMIA recognizes those whose outstanding service to our region has made a difference. For 2019, we are pleased to announce that Jeff and Claire Rule are recipients of our **Al Platt Memorial Award for Service to Community**. The award is named in memory of a dedicated GMIA leader who set a remarkable example of stewardship, going above and beyond to serve our organization. We will present the award in his name at our Annual Dinner on June 9th.

Nearly twenty years ago, Jeff and Claire moved to the Horizon Hills area, citing their desire for a large property and good public schools for their two boys. Jeff relocated his Landscape Architectural business to the La Mesa Village neighborhood. Jeff first participated with GMIA when he was featured as an artist at our 2006 GMIA Art & Garden Tour. He joined our Board in 2007 as our Tour Art Curator, then stepped up to serve as Tour Director thereafter. Jeff retired from the Board in 2017 after a decade of service.

GMIA was fortunate to also have volunteer Claire Rule, who provided volunteer support at countless GMIA activities. A highly experienced photographer, Claire documented many events for us over the years. Claire continues her volunteer work through service with her church, and also creates children's books and greeting cards. They are the proud parents of two USC graduates. ▲

Meet Board Member Kathleen Coates Hedberg



Moving to Mt. Helix was a “no brainer” for me when I was looking for a place to raise a family. Mt. Helix has the rural charm very much like where I was raised in Fallbrook, but with a big difference—the benefit of the proximity to downtown, plus all the local amenities! We have lived here for over 19 years and have two kids, two goats, two cats and a dog.

Having kids brought us closer to my community. As a mom, I became very engaged in our local schools, PTA, board meetings, sports, and running for our local Helix Water District Board in 2006. As a Civil Engineer, my expertise is in Drinking Water Agencies, so it was a perfect fit to run for the water district board, ensuring delivery of safe, reliable and affordable drinking water. I enjoy being a voice for the people in the community where I live.

I officially became a GMIA Board member over 5 years ago and I serve on the Water and Politics Committees. Whether it is water, fire, school board, or land and building issues, it is very important that we are all aware and engaged. I feel it is important that we are active in our community and we collaborate with other local agencies to ensure that our neighborhood is beautiful and safe for many years to come. ▲

Potholes And Roads

by Mike Valley

Due to above normal rainfall and heavy vehicle traffic, our roads are deteriorating. Potholes are opening up and with warmer weather, roads will only become worse. The San Diego County Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for repairing these problems when notified. Call or email DPW with the nearest address (with a cross street location) so they can list and fix the problems with a SERVICE REQUEST. Get a confirmation of your SERVICE REQUEST in writing. They will probably ask for your name and email. Contact information for DPW:

- ◆ Phone: 858-694-3850
- ◆ Email: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/roads/Roads_Service_Request.html

Remember: dry weeds, grass and trash alongside our County roads are also the responsibility of Department of Public Works and you can make a SERVICE REQUEST for this maintenance. With your help - by contacting DPW with SERVICE REQUESTS, we can improve our roads. For questions or more information, please contact Mike Valley at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. ▲

Inspiring Art & Garden Tour

Over 400 guests enjoyed our 2019 Art & Garden Tour featuring six gorgeous gardens. Beautiful weather, the inclusion of live music, a handy shuttle, and an abundance of cheerful volunteers made it a great day to celebrate our neighborhood. Special thanks to hardworking GMIA Co-Chairs Pat Ryan and Kay Bickley and Logistics Coordinator Paul Geldbach for superlative planning and execution of this treasured event. We also recognize GMIA member and brilliant photographer Bob Cederdahl - go to www.gmia.net to see his magnificent photos of this and other events.

We couldn't have a garden tour without the wonderful generosity of our garden owners. Thank you to Bob and Carole Caparas, Allan and Karen Kosup, Tom and Annette Moore, David and Barbara Mays, Dan and Mary Zamudio, and Ken and Gail Sparhawk.

Volunteers are at the heart of every GMIA event. We are grateful for their support. Thank you to Bill Albreksen, Kristine Anderson, Donna Andrisani, Karibia Baillargeon, Liz Barber, Sue Ellen Benson, Susi Besenbruch, Stephen Bickley, Joan Camana, Bob Cederdahl, Sheila Dowe, Fotine Fahouris, Dan Gallardo, Jack Gambrell, Janet Gambrell, Zita Gardner, Valerie Hapke, Jon Hedberg, Gitta Herbert, Herb Herbert, Frances Hill, Beth Jacobson, Janet Johnstone, Christine Leefeldt, Beverly Little, Kay McGrath, Herb Milley, Kelly Porter, Carol Prior, Gary Prior, Rae Riner, Carlie Robitaille, Sallie Saltzman, Barbara Sciulli, Michael Sciulli, Jeanne Spann, Mary Ann Stepnowski, Arlene Steinberg, Christine Stockham, Tracey Stotz, Mary Jane Tanquary, Laura Tosatto, Darlene Trochanowski, Shirley Valley, Cathrine Whitaker, Bob Yarris, and Jocelyn Zimmerman.





The Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association Board of Directors cordially invites you to our

81ST ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Sunday, June 9th, 2019

5:30 – 8:00 pm

Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College.

Complimentary guided tour of the garden at 4:30 (reservation required).

Admission: members \$12 each | Non members \$20

Dinner includes BBQ buffet, beer, wine, soft drinks.

PROGRAM

- 4:30 Complimentary garden tour (by reservation)
- 5:30 Social/Dinner/Program
 - Election of Board of Directors
 - Presentation of the Al Platt Memorial Award for Community Service
 - Supervisor Dianne Jacob, Keynote Speaker
- 7:30 Social, enjoy the garden

PLEASE RSVP BY JUNE 6, 2019

Questions? Contact Holly Yarris, Annual Meeting Chairperson 619-813-2165.

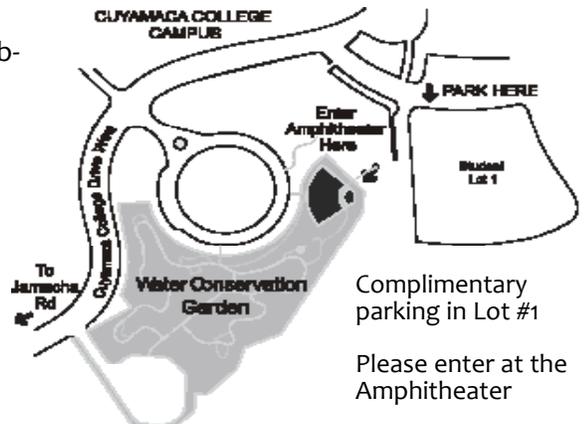
You may reserve by returning the form below with your check (GMIA, PO Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751), or reserve online at our secure web-site, www.gmia.net. Your reservation will be held at the door.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____



Complimentary parking in Lot #1

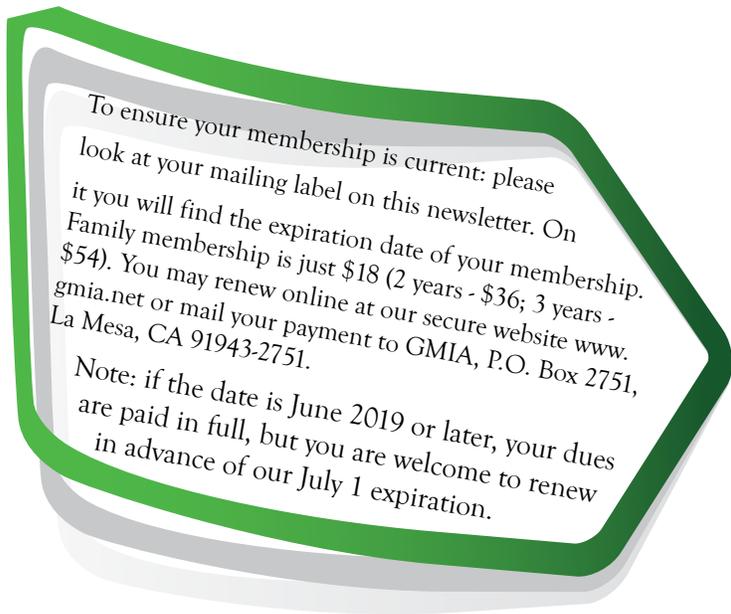
Please enter at the Amphitheater

Members at \$12 each

Non-members at \$20 each

Vegetarian Menu Options

Attending Complimentary 4:30 pm Garden Tour



Free Vacation Checks

Thanks to GMIA member Carlos Arias and SVP member Craig Carlson for providing this information.

Our San Diego County Sheriff's Department offers free vacation checks year-round. Let them know when you are leaving and a Senior Volunteer Patrol (SVP) member will keep a watchful eye on your home while you are away.

Here's what they will do:

- ◆ Security inspections around your home Monday through Friday
- ◆ Check your home for broken windows, open doors, garages or other suspicious clues
- ◆ Hide newspapers and packages in your side fence or back patio
- ◆ Call for a deputy's assistant if there is a problem
- ◆ Upon your return, you will receive a welcome home letter listing the dates your home was checked and observations made during the visit.

To take advantage of this free service, complete and return a vacation check form online at www.sdsheiff.net for the Rancho San Diego sub-station, or call 619-660-7021.

If you would like to join the San Diego County Sheriff's Department Senior Volunteer Patrol, contact them at www.sdsheiff.net/volunteers or (619) 660-7021 for more information. 

