



viewpoints

WINTER 2019

Volume 49 Issue 4

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

La Mesa Historical Society Honors GMIA

by James D. Newland, LMHS President

On Sunday June 23, the La Mesa Historical Society honored the GMIA with its “History-Maker of the Year” Award at its annual meeting and awards ceremony. It wasn’t a difficult choice for the Society—not only because of the GMIA’s well-thought out and well implemented defensive planning efforts over the last year to redirect away an ill-advised State of California Adult Parole Operations facility proposal—but for over 80 years of making a difference in the Grossmont-Mt. Helix community.

The history of the GMIA is indeed one that goes back over 80 years. Originally organized in 1938 as the Grossmont Improvement Association, the group expanded to include the rapidly suburbanizing Mt. Helix area in 1947. GMIA provided these growing unincorporated “rural-suburban” neighborhoods a voice in addressing communitywide issues such as roads, water, public safety and land use planning. Over the years, the organization has been the go-to institution for the communities of Grossmont and Mt. Helix.

The La Mesa Historical Society’s mission to preserve and educate about the history of the Greater La Mesa area includes many sources (news-papers, directories, maps, photos, voter registries, etc.) with which to uncover Grossmont, Mt. Helix and the GMIA’s story. Feel free to visit the Society’s archives and the McKinney House Museum (8369 University Ave, La Mesa) on Saturdays from 1 to 4pm. Research the GMIA, your home, and the community’s unique history. Also, feel free to join the Historical Society so that you don’t miss LMHS events such as our Round-table lectures and annual home tour (see page 7).



(L to R) Tracey Stotz, Kathleen Hedberg, James Newland



Award presented to GMIA

Member Numbers Count!

Your membership may have expired! Please check your mailing label on this newsletter. On the label you will find the expiration date of your membership. Due to our limited volunteer resources, we cannot send invoices. 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. Renew today so we can continue to provide this newsletter and other services. We encourage members to renew for multiple years. One year annual dues is just \$18 per household; \$36 for 2 years, or \$54 for 3 years.

Please remit your dues to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943 or renew online at our secure website www.gmia.net. Questions? Contact us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. Thanks for your support. 🌱

Go Green! 🌿

If you would like to “go green” and receive this newsletter by email (instead of postal mail) let us know at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com. We offer our online newsletter in full color! Also, please recycle this newsletter by giving it to a neighbor. Thanks.



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Kathleen Hedberg, President
kchedberg@cox.net, (619) 660-7487
Dave Zimmerman, First Vice President
Pat Ryan, Second Vice President
(619) 248-1619
Pam Coe, Treasurer/Membership
Dania Barroso-Conde, Secretary
Susan Nichols, Past President

Directors

Peter Camana	Jim Marshall
Kay Bickley	Larry Nichols
Leslie Gardner	John Richardson
Paul Geldbach	Mike Valley
Tom Huffman	Marybeth Wilson
Anne Krueger	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.

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

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

It was a beautiful day in June at the Water Conservation Garden for our annual meeting. We had great food, company and a very informative community update from Supervisor Dianne Jacob. We also celebrated our outgoing President, Susan Nichols. Many dignitaries recognized her great leadership for the past 10 years as president of GMIA and the Board thanked her for her service.

I am so honored to have been elected to serve as president of this wonderful historical organization. I have always had a passion for helping my community and this new position promises to be very rewarding. Together with you, our members, we will take on any challenge or obstacle with which we may be faced and continue to preserve and protect our community, as well as sponsor our wonderful events.

We are happy to announce that our advocacy has been rewarded. On the near horizon, Supervisor Jacob has located funding for our long-awaited improvement of the unsafe and ugly intersections at Avocado/Fuerte and Calavo/Fuerte. Look for that project to begin early next year. Our organization has also spearheaded the formation of a new Fire Safe Council that will bring increased protection to our community. On a longer timeline, GMIA continues to actively advocate for the State Routes 94/125 interchange project (see page 5) that will provide relief from traffic on our surface streets.

Please—if you have any concerns, ideas, or would like to volunteer—contact me and we will work together. GMIA has over 1,000 member households and we love new members. Please forward this newsletter to a neighbor and encourage them to join. Let's make sure that every neighbor knows about GMIA and the good things we are doing. With your support, we will keep our community safe and beautiful. 🌱



Thank You Donors!

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

Anonymous	John Grasberger & Eva B. Goode
Dean & Judith Allen	Raymond & Barbara Lee
James & Pamela Berry	Judith & Peter Prichard
Leo & Adrienne Culp	Kathleen & Jay Rains
Jeffrey & Joann Knox	Linda Trent
Henry Jordan & Daniel Lamb	Guy & Signa Wilcox
Jim & Linda Michael	Henry & Orlanda Arnold
Denise Botticelli & Peter Pickslay	Del Lisk
Chris & Betsy Quinn	Jim & Brenda Richmond
William Woolman	Edward Suhay
Jim & Geri Bollman	Paul & Janel Pehau

Prescription Drug Drop Boxes

Unwanted, unused or expired prescription drugs have been determined to present substantial risks to our community by either falling into the wrong hands, or by damaging our environment through improper disposal.

You can safely dispose of those items Monday – Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at our San Diego County Sheriff's Rancho San Diego Station, conveniently located near the Target shopping center at 11486 Campo Road, Spring Valley 91978. Unwanted medications may be turned in anonymously in a secure collection drop off box. 🌱



Trashcan Eyesore

If you are bothered by unsightly trashcans left on the street 24/7, there is help available. County of San Diego regulations state that cans may be out at the curb from 6 p.m. the day before pick up and removed by noon the day following collection.

If you would like help with this issue, County personnel will send a letter without naming the complainant. Contact them at (858) 694-2456 or recycle@sdcounty.ca.gov. If possible, please provide the address, trash hauler and day of collection. This info will speed up the process. 🌱



Curb Appeal 2019 Winners Shary and Bruce Folkmann, Bonnie Lane

by Carey Hultgren and Dania Barroso-Conde

After a two-year hiatus, GMIA has revived the Curb Appeal Award to honor Mt. Helix homeowners Shary and Bruce Folkmann from Bonnie Lane. They bought their 1.2 acre property in 2010 and over the years have embellished their home with decidedly Craftsman details, including gates, lantern lighting, and historical colors. They brought in landscape architect Kirsten Larson to help transform their cookie cutter front lawn into a lush, drought-tolerant oasis that enhanced their Arts and Crafts period style. They told her they wanted the landscape to evoke the edge of the forest and to highlight their mature stand of liquid amber and pine trees. Kirsten also incorporated her best tips for homeowners into the Folkmanns' landscape, among them: grading or contouring the land, introducing a mix of natural hardscape elements like wood and stone, and having at least one or two focal plants. The enormous opal blue "whale's tail" agave (*Agave guiengola*) in their front planter is one such focal point and adds an almost sculptural quality.

A river rock swale flanked by nautilus-shaped stone pilasters and warm brown flagstone give their circular driveway a formal but inviting entry to their home. Hummingbird sage, blue glow agave and purple Arabian lilac shrubs add low water color for admiring passerbys. Delicate blooms on their strawberry trees (*Arbutus marina*) are Shary's favorite part of the garden, attracting birds, bees and butterflies in droves. "When the tree is in bloom, I feel like I'm inside a butterfly snow globe," said Shary. She also loves their lemon-colored sundrop flowers (*Calyophus serrulatus*). Her husband, Bruce, favors the pink and purple azaleas.

Shary and Bruce's home is an inspiring example of how architecture can blend seamlessly into a beautiful, low-maintenance landscape. Now that's curb appeal! 🌱

Casa de Oro Alliance Updates

by Bob Yarris, Casa de Oro Alliance President

The commercial and residential community joined the Alliance and Valle de Oro Planning Group to develop long overdue design guidelines and much needed new zoning regulations within the specific planning process for Casa de Oro. At the September meeting, a new vision and building standards were considered.

In addition, we now have landscape design plans to redevelop the Kenwood\Campo Road corner. These plans include the County completing a sidewalk and curb from Campo road to Kenora Drive.

Our fully volunteer nonprofit organization continues to add new members and work toward accomplishing and developing our goals to make Casa de Oro a safer and more vibrant community. Come out to one of our community meetings or forums listed on our calendar and experience the exciting opportunities to get involved for yourself. www.casadeoroalliance.org. 🌱



Libraries Change Lives

by Chris Quinn, Casa de Oro Friends of the Library, BOD

One of the many great assets we have in living in this area is the Casa de Oro Public Library at 9805 Campo Road (near the US Post Office). Now the library is being enhanced with the creation of the Friends of the Library (FOL) group and you are invited to join. The FOL will advocate and provide additional support to the library beyond county funding. Additional services will be a great benefit to our community and could include: Children's and Adult Summer Reading Programs, after-school programs, additional equipment, and additional materials such as periodical subscriptions and concerts or community art shows. These programs will be developed with community and library input to meet the unique needs and interests of CDO/Mt. Helix.

The FOL volunteer Board of Directors invite all members of the community to become involved. You can support the Friends by becoming a member, donating used books (we will have book sales), volunteering for special events, helping with community outreach and being an advocate for the library. Membership is designed to be affordable for all members of our community. Annual membership is only \$5 for an individual or \$10 for a family. A business membership is just \$10 and lifetime membership for an individual is just \$100.

We hope you will join the Casa de Oro Friends of the Library, volunteer, use the library and join us in making the CDO library even more valuable than it already is to our community. Applications to join the FOL will be available in the library. We look forward to working with you! 🌱

BOARD PROFILE

**DANIA BARROSO-
CONDE**

Board Secretary



I've had the pleasure of serving as a board member of GMIA since May 2018. My husband and I are Los Angeles transplants who settled in La Mesa 13 years ago. When it came time to find a new home for our growing family (Paloma, Santiago, and dog Beni) we were drawn to the appeal of living in Mt. Helix with its wonderful secluded feel, lush landscape, and sense of community that GMIA helps to foster.

As a public health professional, I've worked in partnership with communities in San Diego to support efforts on policy, system, and environmental change, specifically on projects that could improve the quality of life for its residents. Similarly, my involvement in GMIA affords me the opportunity to be engaged in and serve my local community.

Currently, I am the co-chair for the Curb Appeal Award, newly elected Board Secretary, and lend a hand wherever I can in support of GMIA's mission. It's truly gratifying supporting the various events GMIA hosts, especially when afterwards my children exclaim, "I love living in Mt. Helix, it's so fun!" 🌱



Helix Water District Rebates

Helix Water District customers are eligible for a \$100 rebate when they install a smart leak detector. These devices show your water use on your smartphone in real time and alert you to high use and leaks 24/7. Funding is limited. Rebates are available on a first come, first served basis. For eligible devices and the rebate application, go to www.hwd.fyi/SLD.



Photos by Ed Batchelder



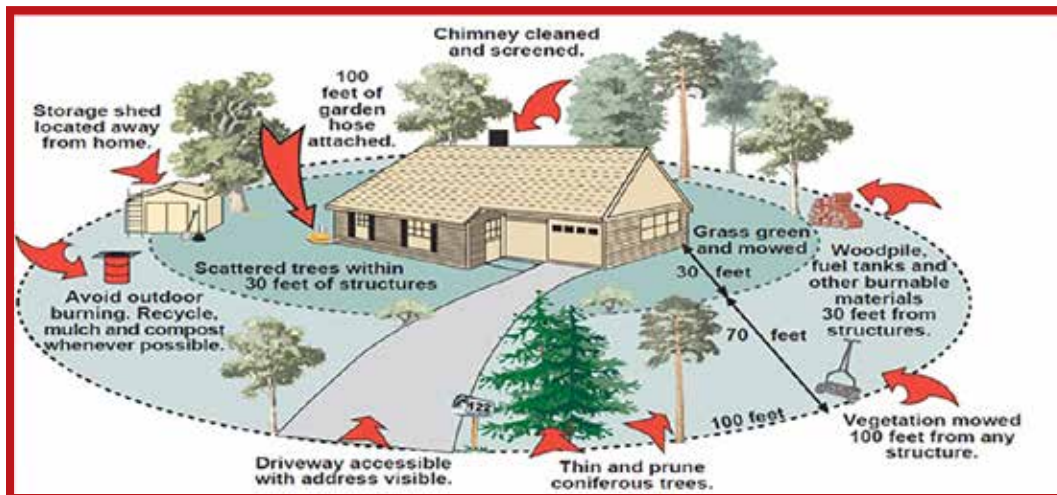
Bottleneck on the 94/125

The daily traffic jam on State Routes 94 and 125 has negative consequences for our quality of life in our community. Commuters avoid the sluggish mess by detouring onto our narrow, winding residential roads which were not designed for that purpose. Our air quality is also impacted by additional emissions from cars stuck at a near standstill in the rush hour traffic. To help resolve these issues, we need Caltrans to finish the 125/94 "missing link" connector and lane expansion promised more than 20 years ago.

GMIA has been actively engaged this summer with SANDAG requesting support for the direct freeway-to-freeway connector from southbound SR-125 to eastbound SR-94. The new connector joins eastbound SR-94 west of the Bancroft Drive undercrossing with auxiliary lanes added to the SR-125 to reduce the almost constant daily bottleneck. Approval has been granted for the design phase of this project, but more is needed.

GMIA, along with other stakeholders, created the 94/125 Coalition and gave a presentation to SANDAG on June 7 asking for funding to cover the costs for right-of-way acquisition during the design phase. This will enable the project to be shovel-ready as soon as possible. The next SANDAG meeting to vote on the adjusted budget is on September 27, 2019.

We need your help to ensure our voice is heard. Please continue to contact SANDAG to express your concerns at sdforward@sandag.org and note that you are making a public comment. 🌱



Fire Safe: HELP ... HELP ... HELP!

by Mike Valley

Imagine a knock at the door at 2:00 a.m. advising you have five minutes to evacuate. No time to think about what to take with you, no time to take photos of your furnishings and belongings; there is only time to get in the car and go. We hope that never happens here – but it has happened in recent history elsewhere in San Diego

Almost none of us are fully prepared, but being aware helps.

Be prepared for yourselves, your family and your community. Wildfires travel with the speed of wind! The website readyforwildfire.org has numerous tips and information to get Ready, Set, GO!

Remember, no water, electrical or telephones are available in most evacuated areas. You cannot return, sometimes for

a week or more. This also applies to earthquakes and plane crashes.

Another very good website by the County of San Diego is readysandiego.org. This site will also get you the Alert San Diego signup site for your cell phones. Hopefully, you are alerted before the cell sites are lost in an emergency.

You'll need a "go-bag" in each vehicle plus a larger emergency bag, very portable and easy to load, which should be stored in an easy-to-get-to corner of your garage.

For more information, contact your Fire Department, Fire Prevention Section. For residents in our area, the San Miguel Consolidated Fire District provides our service. They can be reached at 619-670-0500 or www.sanmiguelfire.net. ▲



Rancho Helix de Oro Update

Your newly formed (2019) Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council (FSC) met with leadership of the San Miguel Consolidated Fire District. Chief Criss Brainard advised that the most important thing you can do to save your home from fire is to have at least 100 feet of defensible space and brush management around your house.

If there is a brush concern in your area, go to <https://www.sanmiguelfire.net/weed-abatement/> to file a weed abatement complaint. The FSC is working on setting up a community education workshop soon. If you would like to help with the FSC, contact Kathleen at kchedberg@cox.net. ▲



We are grateful for our hardworking volunteers, Board of Directors, and co-chairs Kay Bickley and Holly Yarris who made the evening a success. Thank you so much!

Annual Dinner Highlights

by Holly Yarris

The 81st GMIA Annual Dinner was held Sunday, June 9th at the beautiful Water Conservation Garden. Members and friends enjoyed Phil's BBQ, Ballast Point Beer secured by member Steven Rotsart and wine donated by board member Jim Marshall and member Eric Ayaso. Jake Becker entertained the members with lovely keyboard melodies.

Susan Nichols was recognized for her 10 years of service as President by incoming President Kathleen Hedberg. Other notable awards include the GMIA Al Platt Memorial award, presented to Jeff and Claire Rule for their years of service to our community and the GMIA Curb Appeal Award (see page 3 for details). Dianne Jacob, Chairperson,

County Board of Supervisors was our keynote speaker with a summary of the State of the County Address followed by a helpful Q&A with our members. We look forward to seeing you all next year! 🌱

THANK YOU ANNUAL DINNER VOLUNTEERS

Shirley Valley
Christine Leefeldt
Mike and Barbara Sciulli
Jocelyn Zimmerman
Stephen Bickley
Bob Yarris
Eric Ayaso
Steve Carter

Howie Pattie
Vince and Kay McGrath
Jon Hedberg
Anna Hedberg
Carey Hultgren
Terry Coe
Bob Cederdal

La Mesa Historical Society Home Tour November 2nd

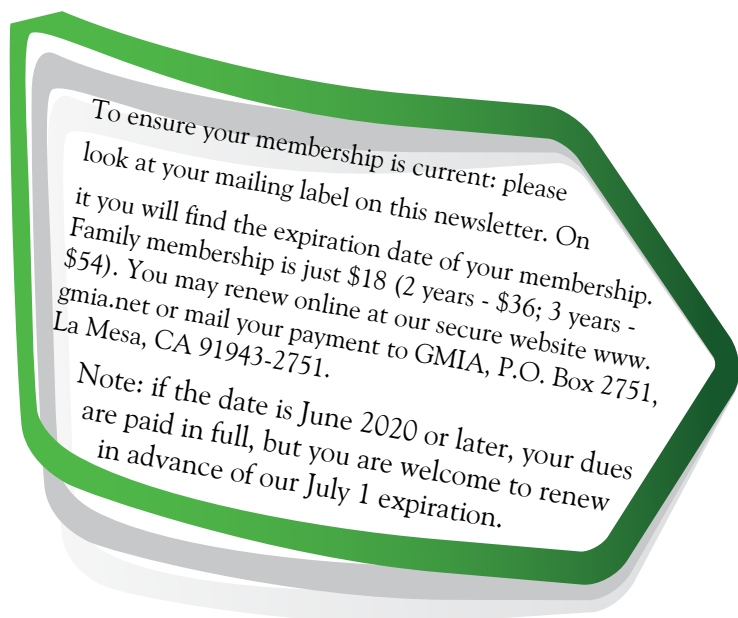


The La Mesa Historical Society Historic Home Tour returns to the charming rural suburban landscape of Grossmont/Mt. Helix featuring an eclectic mixture of Rustic, Classic and Modern designs emblematic of this exclusive community. The Society's last tour here in 2016 sold out and this year's tour is similarly outstanding. Tickets are available only through the La Mesa Historical Society. For more information or to order tickets, check online at lamesahistory.com or mail checks by October 28th to La Mesa Historical Society P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944. Docent and volunteer opportunities are also available. Contact volunteers@lamesahistory.com if you are interested in helping out.



P. O. Box 2751
La Mesa CA 91943-2751


PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit No. 17



Who We Are & What We Do

The Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) is one of the oldest and largest associations of its type in San Diego County. Formed in 1938 as a result of community concern for the lack of adequate land use planning and zoning type requirements, we are a non-profit public benefit corporation. We represent over 7,000 single-family residences with a population approximating 20,000 people. Our region includes parcels east of Bancroft Drive, south of El Cajon, generally north of SR94 and Rancho San Diego, and west of SR54/Jamacha Rd.

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 "homeowner's 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. GMIA works with County and regional governmental entities to help resolve issues that impact our community such as transportation systems, traffic 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 support our efforts to ensure we will continue to enjoy our wonderful lifestyle. For more information on GMIA, please visit our website at www.GMIA.net 

CALENDAR

