



viewpoints

FALL 2020

Volume 50 Issue 4

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

Annual Meeting Goes Virtual

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 8

GMIA's annual meeting will be held virtually this year because of public health concerns. Cook up some barbecue and pull up a chair to your computer to participate in the meeting, which will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 8. Feel free to log on at 5:15 p.m. to say hello to your neighbors!

The meeting will include highlights for GMIA and the community in the last year, and an introduction of the GMIA board members.

The keynote speaker will be Supervisor Dianne Jacob, who is leaving office after 28 years because of term limits. This is your chance to thank Supervisor Jacob for all she has done for our community.

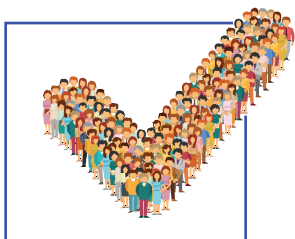
The meeting will be held by Zoom, and requires a quorum of at least 50 members. To attend, please go to the GMIA website at gmia.net and register by Monday, October 5. If you aren't familiar with using Zoom, you can also register for a practice session to be held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7. See you on October 8!

Register
for the
Annual Meeting
at gmia.net!

GMIA Endorsements in November 2020 Local Elections

GMIA urges all of our member households to vote in this important election. We are pleased to endorse the incumbents for the board seats in the Helix Water District and the Otay Water District Division 5. Their noteworthy accomplishments over the last few years prompt our unqualified endorsement.

GMIA endorses these incumbents:



Helix Water District
Dan McMillan in Division 1
Mark Gracyk in Division 3
Joel Scalzitti in Division 5
Otay Water District
Mark Robak in Division 5

Grayck will not be on the ballot, as he is running unopposed. While many of you will not be able to vote for these individuals directly, as your residence must be in the geographic boundaries of their division, you could pass the word to friends and family living in those divisions.

For general information about the upcoming election, go to www.sdvote.com. ▲

Tracking Your Mail Ballot

Are you concerned about making sure the ballot you mailed gets to the Registrar of Voters Office? Sign up to have your mail ballot tracked at

sandiego.ballotrax.net

to get email alerts on when your ballot was received and counted.





GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Officers

Kathleen Hedberg, President
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Dave Zimmerman,
First Vice President

Pat Ryan, Second Vice President
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Pam Coe, Treasurer/Membership
Dania Barroso-Conde, Secretary

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Kathleen Moen	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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MISSION

GMIA is an 82-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

Thank goodness for our beautiful, safe neighborhood and friendly neighbors! As life continues to throw us curve balls, GMIA board members are hard at work for our community. Like the rest of the country, we must move forward, engage and we will be stronger when we get through these challenges. I love seeing all the positive chatter on the free neighborhood application Nextdoor (www.Nextdoor.com) of neighbors discussing issues, sharing fruit, identifying types of snakes and watching out for each other's pets! What I love about our neighborhood is that we all love our property and privacy, but we are also willing to help each other.



Even in this virtual world, GMIA continues to advocate and keep our membership informed about issues that affect our community. When we heard about a proposal before the county Board of Supervisors to expand cannabis facilities in the unincorporated areas, we made sure you were informed. We also notified you about the County Planning Commission meeting regarding the location of the Liberty Charter High School and how you can comment. It is our mission to preserve and enhance the character and quality of the community and foster pride in the area. We cannot do it alone. We need your voice, as we are stronger in numbers.

GMIA is thankful to Jim Marshall, who recently resigned from the board because of an increased workload. Before Jim left, he had led the efforts for the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Gateway Monument. He worked with San Diego County Public Works and Supervisor Dianne Jacob's office to come up with a design. GMIA recently presented the project to the Valle De Oro Planning Group, which approved the project in concept and gave their approval to move forward with plans. The plans are for the monument to be installed at the intersection of Avocado Boulevard and Fuerte Drive. It will look great next to the median improvements at the intersection, another project that GMIA spearheaded.

This year we will be having our Annual Meeting virtually on October 8. We recently updated our bylaws to address this new life dilemma and you can find a copy of them on our website, gmia.net, in the About Section. Our Annual Meeting will showcase our year in review and will include a presentation by outgoing County Supervisor Dianne Jacob, who will talk about her 28 years as county supervisor and answer your questions. We sincerely thank Supervisor Jacob for her years of service and dedication to our community and the County of San Diego. She has been a great partner and we look forward to having a great relationship with our next County Supervisor.

With the upcoming election on November 3, GMIA is endorsing candidates for the two water districts that serve the area. Please read the Viewpoints article and consider these endorsements, as their positions influence our area. We are grateful to have good representation and encourage our members to get involved and spread the word.

Thank you so much for your engagement and membership and please share this newsletter with a neighbor and encourage them to join. We are stronger in numbers! Thank you for your ongoing support!

Kathleen Hedberg, PE, MPH



Candlesticks Are Finally Gone!

The intersection of Fuerte Drive and Avocado Boulevard has a more appealing look now thanks to the efforts of GMIA. The intersection median had previously used unattractive delineators (“candlesticks”) to separate traffic between northbound and southbound Avocado Boulevard.

The San Diego County Department of Public Works took five years to fund the project, but it was finally completed this summer. 🌱

Save the Date

April 25, 2020 | GMIA Garden Tour

Mark your calendars for one of GMIA's signature events, the Annual Garden Tour, scheduled for Sunday, April 25, 2021. We are thankful that two of the gardens on last spring's cancelled tour have agreed to participate next year!

GMIA appreciates all of the garden owners who volunteered to share their amazing gardens again. Assuming public health conditions allow, we expect our members will have an opportunity to enjoy these outstanding gardens. We count on you our members to help us scout out possible gardens, large or small for the garden tour. If you have one, or know of one that our members would appreciate visiting, please contact our Garden Tour Director, Pat Ryan, at 619-248-1619 or patrice46@gmail.com. 🌱



Thank You Donors!

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

Anonymous
George and Betsy Baker
Chris & Deborah Beason
James and Pamela Berry
Lori & Rob Borkert
Ron & Mary Alice Brady
Leo & Adrienne Culp
Richard & Nancy Fassett
Jurgen Dieter & Susan & Dayle Fischer
Yvonne & Mike Gagen
Zita Gardner
Mary Gilligan
Andrea & Frank Goicoechea
John Grasberger & Eva B. Goode
Julia Holladay & Kirk Hulett

Charles & June Jenke
Julia de Jessop
Michael & Jackie Kirby
Vadja & Joyce Kolombatovic
Henry Jordan & Daniel Lamb
Paul Liederman
Dave & Cathy Long
Frank & Cathy Lubak
Cheryl & Calvin Mason
Harry & Rita Mixon
Molly & Rey Nocon
Paul & Janel Pehau
Denise Botticelli & Peter Picksley
Sandra & David Polster
Mike & Mary Qualls

Chris & Betsy Quinn
Kathleen & Jay Rains
Michael & Susan Rhea
John & Valerie Richardson
Danny & Lauri Riley
Ron Stahl
Paul & Linda Wargo, Jr.
Emily Weld
Paul B. & Carol Wells
Alan & Jennifer Westermeyer
Cathrine & Wesley Whitaker
Robert & Holly Yarris
Tim Young

Board Member Profiles

My husband and I have lived in the Mt. Helix community for the past 42 years, raising our two daughters, Liz and Aly. I retired after a 30-year career with Westfield Shopping Centers in Leasing and Operations Management.

Eight years ago, I joined the GMIA Board of Directors. For the past 6 years, I have been the Co-Chair of our Annual Dinner. Being a Grandmother to Jordan, golfing, swimming and Pilates have also kept me very active.

Being shut in these last several months has made me especially grateful for our views of the Coronado Islands, Pt. Loma, Mt. Miguel and the rural and mature landscape of our community. Over the years, we have re-landscaped our property to make it water-wise with succulents and native vegetation. Our garden has been featured on both the GMIA Garden Tour and The Water Conservation Garden Tour. I also love walking our winding roads and taking in the beautiful scenery of our safe and peaceful neighborhood.

In 2015, the Casa de Oro Alliance was formed and I have volunteered as Co-Chair of the Economic Development Committee with my husband, Bob, who has served as President since its inception. Great strides have been made in revitalizing and cleaning up Casa de Oro.

GMIA has provided me the opportunity to give back to our community through their many outstanding events that support and define the integrity and character of our region. 🌱



Holly Yarris



Kathleen Moen

I have been a resident of Mt Helix since December 2016 when my husband and I ran across the home of our dreams with room for our kids to play and a country feel. We were both looking for something with a wonderful small community feel since we are from small towns in Idaho and Oregon and felt it was a great way to grow up.

This community is incredibly beautiful and unique. I have been looking for ways to get involved and continue the area's legacy while helping improve on the beauty it already has. Being part of the GMIA is exciting for me because I can find ways to give back directly to my community. I am excited to be part of local improvement projects and would love to organize a few events along the way to strengthen our community bonds.

My background professionally started in hospitality and eventually moved into a blend of Human Resources/sales and staffing. Once my children were born, twin girls now age 4 and a little boy who is 3, I took a break from going into an office and worked part-time remotely. I made the decision a few years back to transition into real estate selling and buying residential real estate in San Diego. This has allowed me more flexibility to be around for my family when they need me and it's been a great transition thus far.

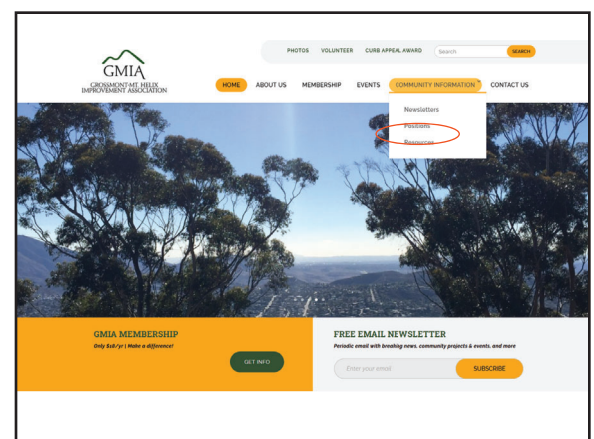
I look forward to working with you all and seeing what great things we can accomplish together for our community! 🌱

New "Positions" Page on the GMIA website

Advocacy for our neighborhood is one of the main missions of GMIA. The GMIA board reviews development projects and other concerns that affect our area and lets county officials know where GMIA stands. A new page on the GMIA website archives the letters that GMIA has written, and more letters will be added as other projects arise.

The letters include comments on these topics: Fire Station 21 lease agreement, Special Events Ordinance updates, Proposed Liberty Charter High School, Support for the State Route 94 and State Route 125 interchange project, Cottonwood Sand Mining project.

You can find the letters at gmia.net. Go to Community Information and then Positions. 🌱





Estrella County Park Project Underway

The San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation is constructing improvements on a 6.67-acre vacant parcel off Estrella Drive. The project will include trails and a nature-based play area, avoiding and protecting the parcel's environmentally and culturally sensitive areas. Construction is underway on the project, and is expected to be completed in Winter 2020. The project cost is \$893,900. 🌱

Free Landscape Makeover Workshops

The San Diego County Water Authority is offering free three-hour online workshops, taught by local landscape design professionals, to give you the skills and knowledge to create a yard that loves San Diego as much as you do. Each workshop focuses on specific landscape topics.

Registration is required by going to watersmartsd.org. All weekday workshops are held from 5:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday workshops are held from 9 a.m.-noon. 🌱

Upcoming Workshop Topics

October 10	Plan Ahead: Understanding Soil and Site Assessments
October 16	Installation and Maintenance: Protecting Your Investment
October 24	Design: Shape Your Space
November 7	Plants: Inspiring Choices for our Region
November 21	Water and Irrigation: Utilizing a Precious Resource
December 5	Installation and Maintenance: Protecting Your Investment

Park N Ride Cleanup Volunteers Needed

Here is an opportunity for you to assist in keeping our community clean and attractive.

Volunteers are needed to assist in the clean-up of the Park and Ride lot on the south side of Interstate 8 and the Severin and Fuerte Drives intersection. GMIA has contracted with Caltrans to care for this lot monthly.

You may ask why clean this lot?

It's important to keep this lot clean because it is located at a prominent entrance to our community. By caring for this parking lot, it not only looks better but also is less inviting to crime in our area.

GMIA volunteers meet every third Saturday each month at 9:00 am. We meet at the lot and it takes about 30-45 mins. All are welcome. A brief training will be provided for first-time volunteers. For more information and/or RSVP, please contact either John Richardson: jbrichardson51@gmail.com or Pete Camana: pete.camana@viasat.com. 🌱





Traffic Roadway Insights

by John Richardson

The Mt. Helix area has a unique mix of roads that are either maintained by San Diego County, the City of La Mesa or El Cajon, or are privately maintained roads or easements. So who do you call for a traffic-related issue, such as speeding, reckless driving, illegal parking or an accident?

Regardless of where you live, call 911 for an emergency traffic issue. For anything else, call one of the non-emergency numbers listed below. It's a good idea to know whether you live in a city or the unincorporated area of the county. Remember, just because your mailing address is La Mesa or El Cajon doesn't necessarily mean you live in that city.

The California Highway Patrol handles traffic issues in the unincorporated county areas. However, the Sheriff's Department will respond and then turn it over to the CHP when they arrive.

For a situation on a private road or easement, the CHP should be called. If the situation is on a private driveway, the Sheriff Department should be called. Neither the Sheriff's Department nor the CHP can have an improperly parked car towed unless the legally required tow away signage is posted on the private roadway. ▲

(Information was provided by San Diego County Sheriff's Department and California Highway Patrol)

La Mesa Police Department non-emergency line	(619) 667-1400
El Cajon Police Department non-emergency line	(619) 579-3311
San Diego County Sheriff non-emergency line	(858) 565-5200
California Highway Patrol non-emergency dispatch line	(858) 637-3800

Don't Fall for the Scam!

San Diego Gas & Electric reports that a new wave of scammers is threatening utility customers by telling them their electricity will be cut off unless they pay their bills directly with prepaid cards.

The scammers impersonate SDG&E's billing department and ask for payment via Green Dot MoneyPak, a way of sending cash via prepaid or bank debit cards.

The scam can be confusing for customers because the scammers may play a recorded message and menu options that mimic SDG&E's official customer service line, which is 800-411-7343.

Remember, SDG&E would never call a customer to ask for payment information during the call, or request a customer to use pre-paid debit cards or cryptocurrencies. If you have questions, call the SDG&E customer service line to verify a call. Don't fall for the scam! ▲



Nominations Now Open for the GMIA Curb Appeal Award

An attractive front yard shows our pride in our community, and Realtors say that a beautiful yard adds value to a neighborhood. We invite you to nominate a candidate (yourself or a neighbor) for the GMIA Curb Appeal Award. This award recognizes front yards that display outstanding maintenance, distinctive design, and landscaping appropriate for our climate. The winner will be featured in our newsletter, receive a free year's paid membership to GMIA, and will be recognized at the 2021 Annual Dinner.

Help us recognize the homeowners who are making our community a beautiful place to live! Nominations can be submitted by going to the GMIA website at gmia.net/curb-appeal-award.

From the U.S. Postal Service

Informed Delivery

Did you know you can get an email each day showing you what to expect in the mail? The U.S. Postal Service offers a free service called Informed Delivery that will send you an email each morning (except Sundays) showing greyscale images of the address side of letter-sized mail.

To sign up for the service, go to [USPS.com](https://usps.com), then go to 'Track & Manage' to locate 'Informed Delivery.'

Create an account and verify your identity to begin receiving the daily notifications.

Keep your packages safe!

The Rancho San Diego Sheriff's Office has some tips to help avoid being a victim of package theft. Don't let the "porch pirates" get to your packages.

How to protect your packages:

- ◆ Set up notifications to track your package
- ◆ Require a signature on delivery
- ◆ Ask your neighbors to grab your box deliveries



The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College is offering Nature Therapy workshops on several dates. Based on the Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing), but adapted to The Garden, you will learn how to adapt Nature Therapy to other outdoor get-aways. Learn the science behind the practice, with demonstrations, then immerse yourself in nature with all your senses on a self-paced journey of discovery. This is a slow-paced, fully accessible experience.

Attendance is limited to 15 participants. The meetings are held outside, so safe distancing can be practiced, and fresh air enjoyed by all!

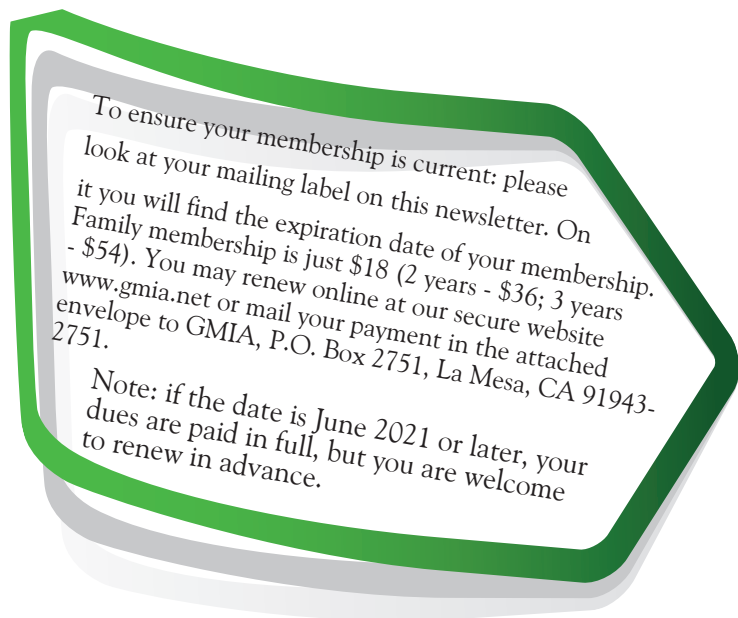
The workshops are free for Garden members, and \$10 for non-members.

Go to thegarden.org to register for an upcoming workshop. 🌱



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About GMIA...And What We Do

The Grossmont-Mt. Helix Association (GMIA) is the oldest and largest association of its type in San Diego County. GMIA was formed in 1938 because of community concern about land use planning and zoning requirements. It is a nonprofit public benefit corporation (501c4) that represents about 7,000 families in the county unincorporated area east of the city of La Mesa, south of El Cajon and generally north of State Route 94.

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, and to foster pride in the area.

Unlike a homeowners association, GMIA does not own any property or facilities, and it is not responsible for any property maintenance. GMIA is served by an elected volunteer Board of Directors and has no paid employees. The GMIA Board 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 also sponsors annual events to build and unify the community by bringing neighbors together, although events such as the Spring Garden Festival had to be cancelled this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to resume holding events in 2021!

GMIA invites and encourages all residents in our membership area to become members to support GMIA's efforts to preserve and enhance the character of our wonderful community. For more information, visit the GMIA website at www.GMIA.net. 

CALENDAR

