



# viewpoints

SPRING 2021

Volume 51 Issue 2

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



## Highlights of the 2020 Garden Tour

by Patricia Ryan

In this issue, we are delighted to present highlights of the amazing gardens we missed seeing last spring with the pandemic-related cancellation of the 2020 Art & Garden Tour. This year, we wish to honor those members who worked to prepare their gardens for that tour by sharing them in a photo collection featured on pages 4 and 5. These dedicated garden owners were prepared to open their gardens again, but current conditions prevented

scheduling an in-person Garden Tour in 2021. That's why we decided to share their great ideas here – drought-tolerant landscaping, colorful rose gardens, vegetable gardens, artful use of borders, pathways, fountains, arbors and architecture. We appreciate the recent additional photos contributed by these owners. Don't miss visiting our website at [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net) to view more photos of their beautiful gardens. 🌱

## GMIA Gardens ROCK!

Most of us have some areas in our gardens that are real showstoppers, but we may not be ready to volunteer our entire gardens for the traditional GMIA Art & Garden Tour. Current restrictions on social gatherings allow YOU to become a part of garden tour history by sharing that one distinctive spot in your landscape for our virtual 2021 event: "GMIA Gardens ROCK!"

We invite all members to support this year's event and become part of the tour by contributing photos of their unique garden area for a special iMovie video feature, scheduled for release on June 10 on our GMIA website. Be a part of our feature! Submit up to 3 photos (plus one 5-10 second video if you like) of some noteworthy feature in your garden. Email your entries to [gmiaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:gmiaphotos@gmail.com) by

May 10, and be sure to send them in "actual size" for best resolution. Include your name and your email address.



For inspiration, the Garden Tour Committee has selected five categories for organizing the photos: "Blooming Gardens;" "Drought-Tolerant Gardens;" "Garden Architecture: Art, Design, and Hardscape;" "Farmer's Market;" and "President's Special Award: Rock Star Garden." One winner from each category will receive a gift certificate from GMIA for Hunter's Nursery for their outstanding photo, but every garden becomes a part of our show.

Wander out to your amazing garden and snap a photo, or look through your files and help make this year's garden tour a reflection of the extraordinary gardens right here in our own GMIA backyards. 🌱

## Virtual Annual Meeting June 24

To ensure the health and safety of our members, the annual GMIA meeting will be held on Zoom at 6 p.m., Thursday, June 24. A Zoom registration link will be posted on the GMIA website. Please join the meeting for a report on GMIA activities this year and a look ahead to plans for the future. We look forward to coming together as a community soon!



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX  
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 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

APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

GMIA's board is made up of 18 members, who are ALL volunteers. You can see their names listed on the left panel and also on our website.

It is very much a working board. Each board member participates on committees that take on issues, projects and events. See the list on page 8 of our members and the activities they have taken on recently.

If you see them out in our community, thank them! If you have some time, offer your services or ask how you can be of help. The right opportunity will fall into your lap. On such opportunity happened when Past President Susan Nichols ran into Lidia Chang, who is now our newest board member. Lidia has lived in the Mt. Helix area for over 30 years, and loves the Succulent Swap. She says it has done wonders for her garden. We welcome Lidia to the board.

You will find many articles in this newsletter showcasing GMIA activities. We are making a creative effort in our Go Slower campaign to bring speeds down on Fuerte Drive. Board members recently met with Supervisor Joel Anderson's office to work with county staff for traffic-calming measures on Grandview Drive. Recently, Circulate San Diego spoke at a Valle De Oro Planning Group meeting about plans for a walking and biking path on Avocado Boulevard. We will keep you informed as the project develops.

As we approach summer, we are all looking forward to a more open San Diego County. However, in the meantime it is important that we continue to take measures to protect the public health. Thus, the GMIA Annual Meeting will be held virtually through Zoom on Thursday, June 24 at 6 p.m. You can sign up on our website to get the registration link. I am excited to kick off a new Garden Tour Contest that showcases our own gardens. Check out the article in this newsletter and then come to our Annual Meeting to see your picture and your neighbors in an iMovie! This should be fun, and I know that the GMIA Gardens Rock!

Kathleen Hedberg, PE, MPH



## Thank You Donors!

Special thanks to these members who donated \$25 or greater in excess of their dues.  
Charles & Andrea Airy | Dean & Judith Allen  
Lucy Burni | Teresa Gersch | Mary Jo Stalder

## Your Opinion Matters

We are eager to hear from you, our members, about your interests and concerns for our community. You can help keep GMIA on the right track and ensure our organization remains a meaningful advocate for crucial happenings in our region. Your Board of Directors needs your input. Help guide our efforts as we work to preserve and enhance the character and quality of our community.

Please take time today to fill out the 3- question survey printed on our return envelope. This survey is also available online at our secure website, [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net). Thank you for your support. 🌱



## Estrella Park Opens

Estrella Park is getting extensive use by children and families in the Mt. Helix area following its opening on December 19. GMIA has been involved as a major proponent of this park and as a representative of our community to help ensure that our members know about the park and help it to be adopted as a shared community amenity. A recent graffiti vandalism episode was met with a rapid response by local residents and the county to quickly remove the graffiti. It's gratifying and encouraging to see the community immediately adopt and care for this park.

Funding has already been secured for future phases of the project that will include an accessible walkway, parking, and water quality features. GMIA will work with our elected officials and county staff in future phases of the project. We invite our members to visit and utilize this gem in our own backyard. 🌱



## The Threat to Our Community Character

by Susan Nichols

If you have walked or driven up Mt. Helix Drive lately, you may have noticed a proliferation of trash, vandalism and illegal parking along this acclaimed scenic roadway. These problems have multiplied during the pandemic. Because our community character is threatened and safety issues are involved, GMIA has partnered with the Mt. Helix Park Foundation and nearby residents to address the myriad issues that plague this important corridor. Ongoing concerns include:

- ♦ As many as 30 cars park on the road in defiance of the numerous "No Stopping" signs clearly posted. The highest number of illegally-parked vehicles occurs in the late afternoon and continues long past sunset. While some may be there merely to enjoy the view, we have also seen vandalism and other illegal activities. Illegal parking also forces pedestrians to dodge cars and walk into the roadway.
- ♦ Our iconic rock walls (designated an historic monument by the County of San Diego) are routinely damaged by vandals who illegally park beside the walls. While the Department of Public Works is responsive to our requests for repair, this vandalism is costly for taxpayers and in some cases threatens the stability of the wall due to numerous stones that have been gouged out.
- ♦ Many instances of graffiti on the rock wall, adjacent boulders, and the pavement have occurred. Graffiti is a method to mark territory "claimed" by gang members.
- ♦ Piles of fast-food wrappers, liquor bottles, vaping devices, and the like are strewn along the right-of-way and onto private property.

GMIA is working on a multi-faceted approach with our community partners to deal with this dangerous situation. Several GMIA board members are coordinating these strategies with the Mt. Helix Park Foundation and an active group of neighbors:

- ♦ We have asked the CHP for increased patrols and increased ticketing of illegally parked cars. Many offenders who are only warned to move along simply circle the summit and park illegally again.

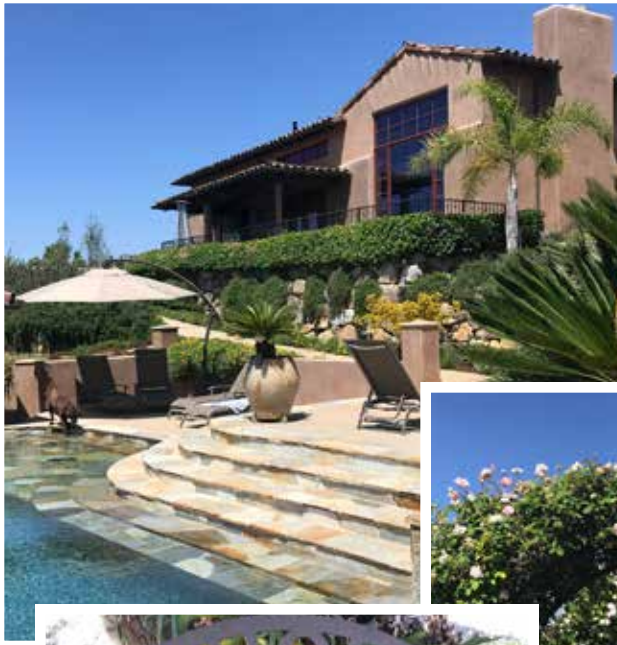
- ♦ We have also requested increased patrols by the Sheriff's Department.
- ♦ We continue to reach out to the Department of Public Works to report graffiti, request its removal, and request repairs.
- ♦ We have asked the County Department of Public Works to add physical parking barriers along the down-slope of Mt. Helix Drive. Some delineators ("candle-sticks") were installed, but we are advocating for more deterrents.
- ♦ We are working on finding a solution for the trash buildup, particularly adjacent to the Helix Water District pumping facility and water storage tank. This area is a dumping ground for masses of trash. The strip of land between the Helix facility and the rock wall is county right-of-way and under their jurisdiction.

### We need your help. Here are three important ways you can aid our efforts.

- 1 If you see illegal parking, call the CHP non-emergency line at 1-800-835-5247 to report it. A license plate number and brief description of the car is also helpful to the CHP. Take a photo of the license plate of the illegally parked car and send it via email to the CHP Community Officer at [tgarrow@chp.ca.gov](mailto:tgarrow@chp.ca.gov). Please include the date and time of the photo. This communication will be confidential. The CHP will send a letter to the registered owner of the car regarding the illegal parking.
- 2 If you observe any suspicious non-traffic related activity, contact the San Diego County Sheriff's Department at 858-565-5200. To report a crime happening now, call 911.
- 3 You can quickly report graffiti, litter and other maintenance issues to the county by downloading the "Tell Us Now" app on your phone. This app is simple to use – fill out a short form and you can also snap a photo to attach.

Remember, if you see something wrong: do something about it. If you would like more information or want to be a part of our committee effort, please contact GMIA through our website at [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net). 🌱





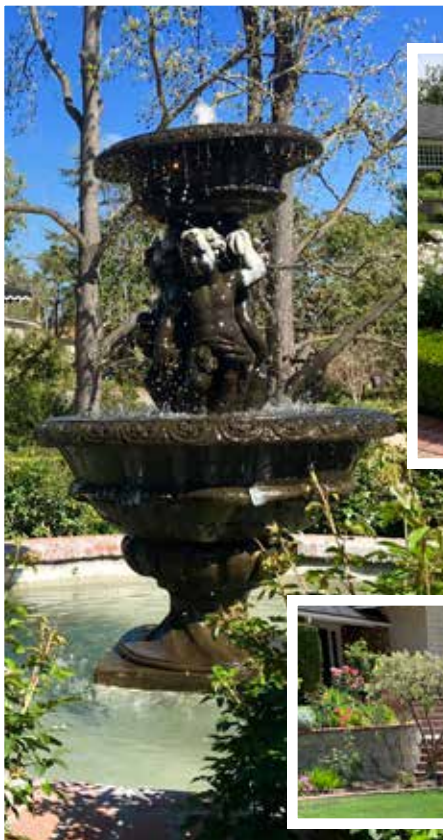
### The Garden of Joris Hitt 4516 Resmar Rd.

Spectacular views, ingenious use of Mt. Helix stone, inviting terraces and landings, extensive use of drought-tolerant plantings, and dramatic pergolas and arbors provide myriad areas for entertaining in this Tuscan inspired "Tree House." Bricks from the original 1948 farmhouse form a charming path under the white floribunda rose-covered arbor, with massive boulders forming terraces down the steep slope to the inviting pool and landscaping below.



### The Garden of Jay & Kathleen Rains 4830 Vita Way

Mature trees, expansive areas of lawn, neatly trimmed boxwood hedge borders, masses of white roses encircling a central fountain amid the driveway laid with thousands of pavers are featured on this magnificently landscaped two-acre property, designed and planted by the owners.







### The Garden of Lee & Sarah Rogers 5346 Grandridge Rd

With views from Mt. Helix to Cowles Mountain as a backdrop for this 1.25-acre hillside property, unusual cactus and succulent specimens are showcased by accessible pathways and landings built of stones and railroad ties, filled with colorful mulches. A pool-side pergola, dolphin fountain, and remarkable Talavera pottery collection are featured in this unique owner-created garden.



### The Garden of Joe & Linda Morse 4645 Hillview Drive

A permeable sandstone patio, surrounded with water wise plantings in a warm color palette, provides a unique seating area on the former front lawn. Seeds are collected and plants are studied inside the unique red barn "office" and grown for the bountiful organic vegetable garden, protected by an ingenious system of netting and hoops.





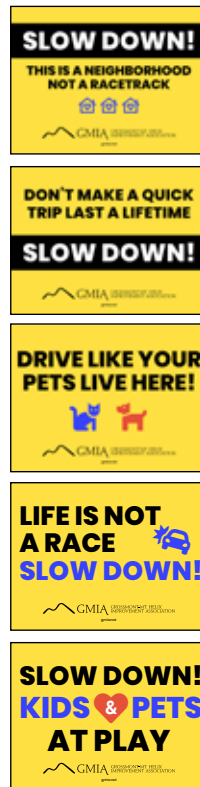
## Parking on Damon Lane

The various walking entrances into Damon Lane Park are shown on the map. Highlighted on the map are areas on the street for parking near the entrances. Please be respectful to our neighbors. Do not park illegally in front of fire hydrants, mailboxes or move trash containers. 🌱



## Go Slower Signs Going Up

The Go Slower Campaign signs are being printed, and we hope to have the program kicked off soon! We are grateful to GMIA member Alice Qualls for joining our committee and designing the signs, which will go up for one week on Fuerte Drive between Severin Drive and Avocado Boulevard. In early March, we met with San Diego County Supervisor Joel Anderson's staff to relay information about the campaign and voice our concerns about speeding vehicles on Grandview Drive. Thanks to the other committee volunteers: GMIA members Donna and Tom Bloomer, Matt Wesenberg and Michael Newman; Valle De Oro Planning Group member Michelle Kister; and GMIA board members Marybeth Wilson and Pete Camana. If you have any questions or want to bring the Go Slower Campaign to your neighborhood, contact Kathleen Hedberg at [kchedberg@cox.net](mailto:kchedberg@cox.net).



## Fire Safe Council Fosters Fire Prevention and Safety

The Rancho Helix De Oro Fire Safe Council was created to educate and prepare the community to avoid devastating fires. The Council recently sent out a flyer to area residents with information on how to protect yourself from fires.

The topics include:

- ♦ Developing a fire emergency strategy
- ♦ Maintaining a defensible space around your house
- ♦ Fire information resources
- ♦ Personalized evacuation routes for your specific neighborhood.

To learn more about the Fire Safe Council and to get a copy of the brochure, go to [helixfiresafety.com](http://helixfiresafety.com). 🌱

## April 30 Deadline for Curb Appeal Nominations

Many homeowners in the GMIA area have beautiful yards that reflect pride in our area and add value to the neighborhood. Please nominate a candidate (you or a neighbor) for the GMIA Curb Appeal Award to recognize these outstanding landscapes' distinctive designs.

The winner will be featured in Viewpoints; receive a free year's membership to GMIA; and will be recognized at the 2021 Annual Dinner.

The deadline to submit a nomination is April 30. Nominations can be submitted through the GMIA website at [gmia.net/curb-appeal-award](http://gmia.net/curb-appeal-award). 🌱

## Lots of Fun on the Virtual Walk to the Top

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Walk to the Top scavenger hunt. The winners of a free year of GMIA membership are Josh and Jane Doros, who sent a family photo along with their baby, Eliza.

The winners of four tickets to the Midway museum for top dog were Paul Geldbach and Carey Hultgren, who submitted a photo with their daughter, Greta, and their dog, Remy.

We hope you had fun hunting down the clues and learning a bit more about Mt. Helix.

We want to extend a special note of appreciation to the GMIA board members who created the scavenger hunt and took numerous hikes up Mt. Helix to confirm the questions. 🌱





## Scavenger Hunt WINNERS

### Walk to the Top Winners

Josh and Jane Doros,  
with their baby Eliza.

### Top Dog Remy

Remy is owned by Carey  
Hultgren and Paul Geld-  
bach and daughter Greta.



### Walk to the Top Honorable Mention

For largest group of walkers goes to Reid Walker, 9; Christian Renfro, 14; Cameron Renfro, 8; Layne Walker, 5; Weston Walker, 7; grandmother Laura Walker, with the photo taken by Jamie Renfro.



### Top Dog

### Honorable Mention

Torrey, owned by John and Eva Grasberger.



### Walk to the Top Honorable Mention

For Most Senior Walkers with Pocket Pets  
Jack and Beverly Dostal.



### Top Dog Honorable Mention

Butch and Sundance, with Cole Billand.  
Dogs owned by Chris and Michele Billand.



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](http://www.gmia.net) or mail your payment in the attached envelope to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

Note: if the date is June 2021 or later, your dues are paid in full, but you are welcome to renew in advance.

## THANK YOU ...

...**SUSAN NICHOLS** for being the best Past President and helping with all the Committees and Viewpoints.

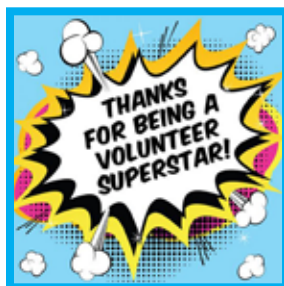
...**DAVE ZIMMERMAN** for being an awesome 1st Vice President and keeping our agendas and meetings in order.

...**PAT RYAN** for being the best 2nd Vice President for leading and Chairing the Scavenger Hunt and the upcoming Garden Event and being so helpful to all our programs.

...**DANIA BARROSO-CONDE** for being a Great Board Secretary and keeping great notes and your husband **ADAM CONDE** for all the help with the website!

...Traffic Committee: **PETE CAMANA, SUSAN NICHOLS, MARYBETH WILSON** in helping keep the GMIA community safe.

...**CHAIR PAT RYAN, LESLIE GARDNER, COLEEN GERAGHTY, KATHLEEN KRAPFL-MOEN, ANNE KRUEGER, DANIA BARROSO-CONDE, PAM COE, HOLLY YARRIS, SUSAN NICHOLS, MARYBETH WILSON** for creating a new way for us to walk and enjoy Mt. Helix through our Scavenger Hunt.



...**TOM HUFFMAN** for all your experience and insight in keeping our Monument Project moving forward and your great ideas in committees.

...**ANNE KRUEGER, SUSAN NICHOLS AND COLEEN GERAGHTY** and **VICTORIA VINTON** for putting out a top-notch, beautiful and informative Viewpoints Newsletter!

...**TREASURER PAM COE** and **PAST TREASURER LARRY NICHOLS** for keeping track of our funds, membership and overall operation of the Association.

...**JOHN RICHARDSON** and **MIKE VALLEY** for your great help in keeping Mt. Helix Streets and our Park and Ride safe and clean.

...**MARYBETH WILSON** for coming up with a creative way to get new members and welcoming new homeowners to the community.

...**HOLLY YARRIS** for all your updates on Casa De Oro Alliance and all of your help and ideas on committees and always pulling off a great annual membership event.

## CALENDAR

**Fri., April 30**

**Curb Appeal Award  
nom. deadline**

**Mon., May 10**

**Garden Tour photo  
submission deadline**

**Thu., June 10**

**Garden Tour video  
released**

**Thu., June 24 6 p.m.**

**GMIA Annual  
Meeting**