

Let's Gather for the Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 30 | 5:30 - 8 p.m. | Water Conservation Garden Amphitheatre

Keynote Speaker: District Attorney Summer Stephan

Join us for GMIA's Annual Dinner Meeting, returning this year to the Water Conservation Garden on Saturday, July 30.

Reservations are required. Be sure to reserve at our secure website (gmia.net) or mail the reservation form on page 7, along with your check, by July 26. Your reservations will be held at the check-in table.

Dinner guests will have the opportunity to hear San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan, our featured guest speaker, who assumed the post in 2017. She pioneered the county's Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division and established a Workplace Justice Initiative to address wage theft from low-wage workers.

Stephan will update us on what's happening in our community regarding crime prevention and take questions from GMIA members. Please include your questions with the reservation form or email them to yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

Our annual dinner meeting is a great opportunity to socialize with friends and neighbors in the Mt. Helix



community! Phil's BBQ will cater a delicious buffet, and GMIA will provide dessert, soft drinks, craft beer and wine for just \$20 for members. Non-members are \$25 per person. The guitar duo Dream Gypsy will entertain throughout the evening.

If you wish, arrive early (at 4:30 p.m.), and join a docent for a private tour of the Water Conservation Garden.

Reserve now and plan to join us on July 30 for an enjoyable and informational evening.

GMIA Membership – A True Bargain

When it comes to value for money, GMIA membership is a rare bargain. We keep members informed about relevant news, events and programs that matter to the Mt. Helix community.

As of this month, family membership in GMIA will cost \$20 per year, a slight increase from the \$18 annual fee that has stood for more than a decade.

Here's what you get for your annual dues:

- FREE entry to the Art and Garden Tour
- FREE early-bird entry to the Succulent Swap

- A reduced price for dinner, drinks and dessert at our annual meeting (see page 7 to register for 2022)
- Our informative quarterly newsletter, Viewpoints.

We think membership is still a bargain.

If you haven't renewed recently, check the mailing label on the back page of this issue to determine your dues expiration date. If you're unsure, contact us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

Payment can be made at our secure gmia.net website or you can mail a check to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751. 🌱



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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www.gmia.net

Email us at:
yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com

MISSION

GMIA is an 84-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

As we slowly and cautiously enter a new phase of the pandemic, it was great to see all the people who came out for the 2022 Art and Garden Tour. GMIA had to cancel the tour in 2020, and in 2021 we offered a virtual tour. This year, we were back in the gardens of four Mt. Helix homes, where we saw some spectacular and innovative landscaping displays. It was clear that those who visited the gardens enjoyed the opportunity to participate in GMIA's most popular event.

We've already begun planning for the 2023 garden tour. If you would like to have your garden considered for inclusion in next year's tour, please email us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com.

Our next event, the Annual Meeting dinner on July 30, is also the beginning of a return to pre-pandemic days. In 2020, we held our annual dinner over Zoom, and in 2021, we met at Harry Griffen Park in La Mesa while munching on snow cones.

This year, we are returning to the Water Conservation Garden amphitheater, and we will once again be offering a dinner catered by Phil's Barbecue along with beer, wine, soft drinks and dessert. The dinner is still reasonably priced at just \$20 a person for GMIA members, or \$25 for nonmembers.

A few things will be different this year. Instead of meeting on a Sunday, we'll be meeting on a Saturday evening. We're excited to have San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan as our keynote speaker. DA Stephan will be discussing concerns about crime and punishment, such as the attempted placement of sexual violent predators in our neighborhood. If you have a specific question you'd like her to answer, please email us before the event with your question.

GMIA is an all-volunteer organization, and we can always use some help. If you would like to be involved in planning any of our events, please email us and we'll be in touch.

Thank you for being a part of this great organization and we hope to see you on July 30! 🌱



Thank You Donors!

Special thanks to these members who donated \$25 or greater in excess of their dues.

Andrea and Frank Goicoechea

Paul and Mary Russo

Sarah and Lee Rogers

Edward Suhay

Del Lisk

Stan and Elaine Davies

Laura Berend and William Ziegler

Jeffrey and Joann Knox

Board Member Profile: Teri Buehler

Teri Buehler knew she wanted to live in Mt. Helix long before she and her husband, Paul, purchased their home in 2019. She had driven through the neighborhood while working and was awed by its beauty.

"After that introduction, it was always in the back of my mind that we would live here someday," she said.

The notion moved front and center when a book club friend mentioned that her parents were selling their one-acre Mt. Helix property. The Buehlers jumped at the opportunity.

Before they moved in, Paul, a retired engineer, reinforced the slopes and made other changes to reduce water use—an important consideration on a property with more than a dozen fruit

trees. The couple enjoy fresh oranges, apricots, plums, peaches, grapefruit and Anna Apples, the latter from a 40-year-old tree.

Teri is looking forward to spending more time gardening after she retires in September. For 17 years, she has worked as an investigator for the San Diego County Counsel, gathering evidence used to defend against civil suits brought against the county and/or Board of Supervisors.

Post-retirement, she also wants to give back to the community she has come to love. Joining the GMIA board was a first step. "Because we don't have a mayor or city council here, it's important for GMIA to represent us on issues like traffic and keeping sexual predators out," Teri said.



She has volunteered to co-chair GMIA's Art and Garden Tour next year and is already looking for homeowners willing to open their gardens for the day.

"I've never lived in a place where people are so welcoming," Teri said. "There is so much community spirit here and I want to contribute." ▲



A Garden Tour to Remember

More than 300 GMIA members and guests turned out to view the magnificent gardens opened this year for the Art and Garden Tour. Thanks to the generous homeowners who participated and to our capable and hard-working volunteers: Sue Ellen Benson, Kay Bickley, Bob and Carole Caparas, Mary Clemmons, Janet and Jack Gambrell, Zita Gardner, Valerie Hapke, Jon Hedberg, Frances Hill, Beth Jacobson, Barbie and Dave Mays, Marie Meek, Kay and Vince McGrath, Jane and Mike Pisor, Carol and Gary Prior, Valerie Richardson, Jeremiah Shulz, Jay Steiger, Harris Steinberg and Bob Yarris. ▲

Expanding Resources at the Casa de Oro Library

by Susan Nichols

Thanks to the generous supporters who raised more than \$10,000 at our May 1 Tea Party, the Friends of the Casa de Oro Library is expanding library resources for our community. We've allocated a portion of the proceeds to purchase four new book collections for our branch, including Spanish language selections for children and adults, adult fiction, and children's picture books. The Friends also purchased a series of magazine subscriptions to supplement the library's offerings. We plan to fund new adult and children's programs in the fall. Under consideration are musical presentations, STEM activities and art experiences. Email us at casalibraryfriends@gmail.com to submit your ideas for new programming.

Moving forward, the Friends of the Library board is busy planning the Fall Annual Meeting to provide updates and share important news. We continue to advocate to ensure our new library is built in a timely fashion and meets the needs of our community. You can support our efforts by letting the County know you want our new library to happen as soon as possible. Email Migell Acosta, Director of Library Services at migell.acosta@sdcounty.ca.gov and Nathan Fletcher, Chair of the San County Board of Supervisors at Nathan.fletcher@sdcounty.ca.gov. Your voice matters! ▲

For more information or to see photos of our Tea Party, check out www.casadeorolibrary.org.



Lots to Offer at County Libraries

By Anne Krueger

Your San Diego County library card can open up a world of resources. If you haven't checked out your local library in a while, you might be surprised to find out the variety of services offered.

Two library branches are located in the GMIA area: the Rancho San Diego branch at 11555 Via Rancho, El Cajon; and the Casa de Oro branch at 9805 Campo

Road, #180, Spring Valley.

In addition to printed books, libraries also offer ebooks, movies and CDs for checkout, public-use computers, printing and copying services, and Wi-Fi access. A late fee is no longer charged if you forget to return a book by the due date. As long as you return the book, no fee is charged. Books and materials can be returned 24 hours a day at the book drops, generally located at the front of the library.

Here are some of the features offered through the San Diego County libraries:

- ◆ Online books and audiobooks through the Libby app. Download the app, enter your library card number, and access the collection on your phone or laptop.
- ◆ NewsBank offers access to a digital version of the San Diego Union-Tribune and 44 magazines ranging from Air & Space to Working Mother.
- ◆ A consortium with other libraries in the area – the San Diego Public Library, San Diego State University, UC San Diego, and University of San Diego – that allows access to their materials.
- ◆ Community rooms available for rental, with fees waived for nonprofit organizations.
- ◆ Library High School, a free online program that confers a high school diploma to adults whose education was interrupted.
- ◆ Classes and workshops. The Rancho San Diego branch offers a Feeling Fit Club on Monday and Wednesday mornings to improve balance, strength and flexibility for those 60 years and up. The Casa de Oro branch offers craft activities for teens and a chess club.
- ◆ A food pantry is offered at the Casa de Oro branch every other Tuesday.
- ◆ Many libraries have ballot drop-off boxes during election season.

If you don't have a valid library card, visit your local branch to apply. Bring a photo ID and proof of your current address. If under 18, bring a parent or legal guardian. Library cards are free for California residents and military. ▲

News from Helix Water District

The County of San Diego's Waterscape Rebate Program offers incentives to homeowners and businesses in the unincorporated area for the installation of landscaping and other water-wise features. Participants can save water and reduce their water bills while protecting our semi-rural environment.

Rebates are available for a wide variety of improvements—including turf replacement, water-smart edge scaping, rain-friendly pavement and rain collection containers. Even septic pumping is eligible.

One GMIA member had the entire cost of a new rain gutter covered by the program. "After looking at photos and a diagram of my home on the Internet, the Helix Water staff determined my new installation was saving 472 gallons of water per storm!"

Visit:

www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds/RebatesIncentives.html

Road Work

Starting in June, Helix Water District will begin replacing 2,300 feet of cast-iron pipe on Fuerte Drive between Russell Road and Crestland Drive. The project is part of a multi-year project to replace all remaining cast-iron pipe in our water distribution system with PVC pipe to improve the reliability of water service in the area.

Please note, traffic delays may occur periodically between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The work is expected to take about three months to complete. Your patience is appreciated as we complete this important infrastructure project.



Casa de Oro Alliance News

by Bonnie Bertano

Have you noticed the aesthetic improvements along Campo Road lately? Several San Diego Gas & Electric utility boxes have been colorfully wrapped with beautiful graphics, made possible by private donations. We also added planter pots and banners with the funding from our Neighborhood Reinvestment Program (NRP) grant, adding to other improvements such as landscaping and MTS bench covers. We recently hired two “Ambassadors” to assist us in reaching out to the community, and they have been connecting with business owners and residents, maintaining our website and social media accounts, and generally assisting us to move forward with several ambitious plans for the Casa de Oro community.

If you would like to volunteer to help the Alliance achieve our goals, we want to hear from you! One simple way is to participate in our monthly cleanups along Campo Road at 8:00 am on the first Saturday of each month. You can also follow our progress on social media (Facebook “Casa de Oro Alliance” and Instagram “casa_de_oro_alliance”); subscribe to our newsletter for regular updates (through our website or Facebook page); volunteer to be on our Advisory Council; or make a private donation. Yet another way you can support our work is to participate in our Community Survey. The results help guide the Alliance in planning to meet the needs of local residents and businesses. You can find the survey at www.casadeoroalliance.org/survey.

The Campo Road Corridor Revitalization Specific Plan is still moving forward and is now in public review. The County has compiled a list of comments made by the community and revised the plan, which was approved by the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group in April. The Planning Commission will vote on the plan this summer, then it will be presented to the County Board of Supervisors for a vote, likely at the end of this year or early 2023. Representatives from the County’s Planning and Development Services Department were present at our April CDOA Board meeting, taking notes on community member comments. The County is accepting comments until the public hearing is closed at the Board of Supervisors’ meeting so it’s still possible to get involved. You can find more information by going to www.sandiegocounty.gov and typing Casa de Oro in the search bar. 🌱

Are You Ready for Wildfire Season?

The Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council is committed to making San Diego fire safe. The council’s priority is to provide ongoing community education to ensure that citizens are aware of critical preparedness information. This includes defensible space, brush clearing, structural hardening, vents, roofing, emergency alert systems, and smoke alarms.

“As we move into our summer season, it is critical for us to act now to mitigate the danger at home and prepare ourselves for a wildfire,” said Kathleen Hedberg, a GMIA board member and past president of the Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council.

The council publishes three guides, available at ReadyForWildfire.org, to help area residents prepare for and survive a wildfire. Funding and support are provided by a grant from the San Diego River Conservancy to the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County. 🌱



About Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council

The Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council was formed in 2019 and represents over 8,000 homes in the San Diego County unincorporated areas, including and surrounding Mt. Helix, Casa de Oro and parts of Rancho San Diego. It is led by volunteer community board members. Please visit www.HelixFireSafety.com for more information or call us at 619.660.7487. 🌱

TIPS FROM A MASTER GARDENER

Attracting Wildlife with Drought Tolerant Natives

by Sharon Reeve

Few places possess the biological richness of San Diego County. One way we can help protect the large number of unique species is to landscape our homes with native plants. It's easy to fall in love with flowers, but once I realized I can have flowers, birds, butterflies, lizards, and so much more, I was hooked.

Local plants offer optimal nutrition for local fauna. Exotic species, though attractive, can be poisonous. For example, local birds will eat Nandina berries, but may be killed by consuming too much. Let's give our local fauna the local plants that offer them the chance to thrive.

Recent studies show that nutrition is superior in local plants, and the phenology or timing of the plants makes all the difference to our wildlife. In addition, native plants are drought tolerant. This is even more important now as water restrictions are imposed. In La Mesa, we typically get less than a foot of rain a year—all of it in the winter and spring months. Native plants have evolved to survive on little water. Better yet, using locally sourced native plants fine-tunes the drought tolerance to the same conditions as exist in your garden at home. That means little-to-no supplementary water, even in the summertime.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when seeking to attract wildlife to the garden:

1. Plant trees. There is nothing better you can do than to plant a native oak—as they support far more species of wildlife than any other plant.

2. Plant mostly natives. Studies show that if a garden has at least 70% natives, wildlife reproduces more successfully.
3. Use plants to feed hummingbirds instead of feeders. Keep in mind a hummingbird's ideal diet is 80% INSECTS not nectar from a feeder. Plants provide a home to the insects a hummingbird and her babies depend on for good health.
4. Leave some mess in your garden. Hollow stems and bare earth provide nesting sites for bees.
5. When planting, keep in mind vertical space. Species richness is always higher in gardens with many forms of plants.
6. Include a water feature accessible to wildlife.
7. Keep an organic garden free from all pesticides.

The biological richness of San Diego County means we have many species of plants to choose from. Let's plant natives and bring back the waning populations of birds, butterflies, and bees. We have the power to keep San Diego biologically rich and diverse. ▲

Sharon Reeve is a UCCE Master Gardener since 1998. She has earned a BS in horticulture, a BA in landscape architecture, and a MS in ecology. Sharon enjoys studying, growing, and blogging about plants in her La Mesa garden. Her design business, ReWild, specializes in drought-tolerant, native wildlife gardens.





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

84TH ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, July 30th, 2022

5:30 – 8:00 pm

Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College.

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

Admission: members \$20 each | Non members \$25

Dinner includes Phil's BBQ buffet
beer, wine, soft drinks, dessert.

PROGRAM

4:30 Complimentary docent-lead garden tour (must reserve)

5:30 Approval of GMIA Board of Directors

Presentation of the Al Platt Memorial
Award for Community Service

Keynote Speaker: Summer Stephan
San Diego County District Attorney

PLEASE RSVP BY JULY 26, 2022

Questions? Contact Holly Yarris,
Annual Meeting Chair 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 _____

☐

Members
at \$20 each

☐

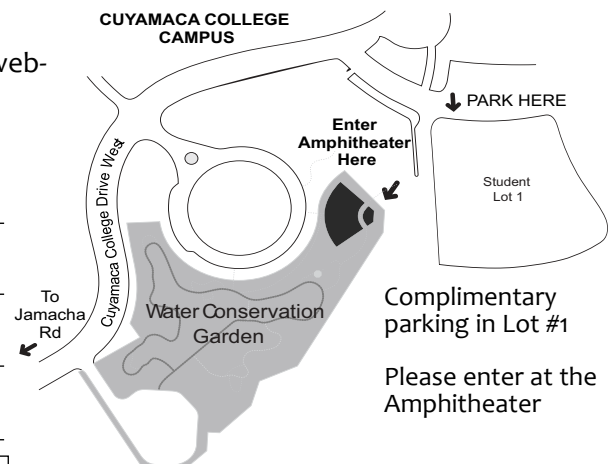
Non-members
at \$25 each

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Vegetarian
Menu Options

☐

Attending 4:30 pm
Garden Tour





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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 \$20 (2 years - \$40; 3 years - \$60). You may renew online at our secure website 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 2023 or later, your dues are paid in full, but you are welcome to renew in advance.



An Abundance of Gratitude

Many of us in the Grossmont-Mt. Helix community are fortunate to have abundant gardens and ample produce. If you have more fruits and vegetables than you can utilize, organizations including Senior Gleaners, and Produce Good would like to harvest your surplus to feed hungry residents of limited means.

Visit www.sdfsa.org/gleaning to find out how you can help. 🌱

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The 2022 GMIA Succulent Swap is set for Saturday, October 22. Wendy and Ron Caragher have once again volunteered to host this popular event at their home, 10805 Melva Road, La Mesa. Check out our Facebook page or the GMIA website (gmia.net) for more information as the date approaches.

CALENDAR

