



# viewpoints

FALL 2023

Volume 53 Issue 4

## Join Us at the Succulent Swap & Share

**Saturday, October 7 | 10 a.m. – Noon**  
**10805 Melva Road**

**B**egin your autumn with a visit to GMIA's Succulent Swap and Share on October 7. For the third consecutive year, Wendy and Ron Caragher have volunteered to host at their home, 10805 Melva Rd., La Mesa.

This year, the Succulent Swap and Share is a Members Only event, free to all GMIA families. It's an opportunity to discover new varieties, learn more about GMIA, and enjoy the Caraghers' magnificent gardens. As a special treat, Master Gardener Sharon Reeve, a La Mesa resident, will join us to share her expertise.

Larry and Susan Nichols and their team of GMIA volunteers organizing this event will provide coffee, water and light snacks. Whether you are swapping, sharing or taking home samples for your own garden, you will be welcome. And don't forget to bring along a bag or box to transport your new plants home (No fire sticks please). New members are always welcome. Tell your friends to join GMIA at [www.gmia.net](http://www.gmia.net) and join the fun! ▲



## Pick a Date and Clean Up



**K**eeping our neighborhood clean and free from street litter is everyone's responsibility. Working with friends and neighbors makes the task a lot more fun. Consider attending a monthly cleanup with one of the following community groups.

- ◆ GMIA members lead a monthly cleanup at the Park & Ride at the junction of Fuerte Road and I-8 eastbound on the third Saturday of each month beginning at 9 a.m. This volunteer effort to keep our "front porch" clean is now in its eighth year. Info: [gmia.net](http://gmia.net)
- ◆ The Casa de Oro Alliance does a monthly cleanup along the business district on Campo Road on the first Saturday

of the month starting at 8 a.m., occasionally partnering with I Love a Clean San Diego. Volunteers are rewarded with a clean community plus donuts and coffee. Info: [casadeoroalliance.org](http://casadeoroalliance.org)

- ◆ Kiwanis Rancho San Diego sponsors a regular cleanup walk along SR94 eastbound from Avocado Avenue to the Campo Road Junction on the fourth Saturday of each month starting at 7 a.m. from Smart & Final. On the second Saturday of each month, the group cleans the walking trail behind the McGrath YMCA. ▲



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX  
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

### Officers

Anne Krueger, President  
619-252-2295

Joan Camana, First Vice President  
858-449-9796

Pat Ryan, Second Vice President  
619-248-1619

Pam Coe, Treasurer/Membership  
Dania Barroso-Conde, Secretary

### Directors

Teri Buehler	Linda Miller
Pete Camana	Larry Nichols
Lidia Chang	Jay Steiger
Gwen DeHaven	Mike Valley
Leslie Gardner	Marybeth Wilson
Kathleen Hedberg	Holly Yarris
Vaughn Jeffery	

**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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**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

**I**t was wonderful to see so many GMIA members at our Annual Dinner in June. The Cuyamaca College Student Center was a perfect venue for the event.

Attendees got into the aloha spirit, wearing Hawaiian shirts and floral dress in keeping with the evening's theme. We heard a fascinating presentation by California State Parks historian Jim Newland, who outlined the history of Mt. Helix and displayed photos showing how much the area has grown and changed through the years.

As part of the event, we asked people to fill out surveys indicating what they liked about GMIA and suggesting ways we could better serve our community. The results demonstrated to me that our members support GMIA's efforts and our vision for the area.

Here's what members think GMIA does well:

- ◆ Organizing community activities, educating about local issues
- ◆ Bringing the community together
- ◆ Advocating for the community
- ◆ Sponsoring great community events like the Garden Tour and Succulent Swap
- ◆ Connecting the neighborhood and communicating the news of the area
- ◆ Organizing the community to act on crucial issues

We also got some excellent suggestions on how GMIA can better serve the community:

- ◆ Sponsor more events, perhaps in some of our community parks
- ◆ Provide more classes on California native plants
- ◆ Support our new library
- ◆ Make sure we all know the rules and regulations regarding Airbnbs and rentals
- ◆ Keep improving the area
- ◆ Doing great!

Thanks for your feedback. We always welcome volunteers to help plan and put on events. If you would like to volunteer to help with the Succulent Swap on October 7, or any other GMIA event, please contact us at [yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com](mailto:yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com). 🌱

*Anne Krueger*

## Thank You Donors!

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

Kathleen King  
Yvonne and Mike Gagen  
Paul and Janel Pehau  
Marion Eggertsen  
Patricia Ludwick  
Tim Young

George and Penne Roach  
Michael and Jackie Kirby  
Cathrine and Wesley Whitaker  
Paul B and Carol Wells  
Leo and Adrienne Culp  
Julie and Tom Karlo





## Kathleen Hedberg

**K**athleen Coates Hedberg has community in her heart and water in her blood.

She is this year's deserving winner of the Al Platt Memorial Award for Service, given by GMIA to a resident who has worked indefatigably on behalf of our community. The award was presented by GMIA president Anne Krueger at our annual dinner in June.

The immediate past president of GMIA, Kathleen is currently president of the Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council and the Helix Water District board. She also participates in the Valle de Oro Planning Group and is on the board of the Water Conservation Garden.

Over the years Kathleen has been active in PTA, Girl Scouts, AYSO Soccer, Little League, and her children's football and basketball teams—earning the monikers “Mom of the Community” and “Mom of the Water.” Her social media handle is Mom4H2O.

With all that community spirit and involvement, you could be forgiven for thinking Kathleen is eyeing higher office. But you would be wrong.

“I looked at higher offices. I'm not interested,” Kathleen said. “My job is here with the community and in water. It's these local things that really impact us.”



A member of the Helix Water District Board since 2006, she was bred for the job. Her father and grandfather were general managers of Southern California water agencies. She is a registered civil engineer and also has a Master of Public Health degree. Kathleen has been a volunteer and/or staff member for numerous water agencies and companies over the years.

Recently, she joined the National Water Resources Association, which works with the federal Bureau of Reclamation. She represents California water agencies, in particular to address the needs of

those served by the Colorado River.

“Southern California does a lot with recycling, conservation, and system improvements. Other states along the Colorado River need to know about these,” she said.

Kathleen is the mother of two young adults and is married to Jon Hedberg. She says he deserves a large share of the credit for her activities and successes. He is also a computer engineer, and usually joins her at her meetings, hearings, and other events.

Asked about why she gives so much of her time to others, Kathleen said, “I like to be involved. I like to be busy. I want to make sure our kids and our community get the best.” ▲

**Join us on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, for the annual Walk to the Top of Mt. Helix,  
co-sponsored by GMIA and the Mt. Helix Park Foundation.**

**Details to follow in our winter newsletter.**





## GMIA Annual Dinner

### *A Memorable Evening*

**M**ore than 150 members attended the GMIA Annual Dinner in a new venue—the Student Center at Cuyamaca College. Preceding the dinner, the newly appointed president of Cuyamaca, Jessica Robinson, led a tour of the campus.

Guests wore Hawaiian shirts and flowered dresses and enjoyed an Aloha-themed dinner catered by Major Events and Catering.

Featured speaker Jim Newland, the Parks Department historian, told guests the fascinating story of Mt. Helix history, while displaying photos of the area throughout the decades.

The event was sponsored and supported by Cuyamaca College, EDCO Disposal Company, Helix Brewery and San Pasqual Winery. 🌿



[ Masterful photo bombing by Kathleen Hedberg ]





## WENDY AND RON CARAGHER Sharing Their Dream Home for the Succulent Swap

by Anne Krueger

**W**endy and Ron Caragher found their dream home on Melva Road – and they're delighted to share it with the community during GMIA's Succulent Swap and Share.

When the Caraghers moved into the 1½ acre property in June 2020, they didn't know the previous owners, Tere Trout and Jonathan Becker, had hosted the annual swap on their property for many years. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event wasn't held in 2020. When GMIA approached the Caraghers about hosting the swap in 2021, they were happy to oblige.

"We're grateful that we can share this wonderful property," Wendy said. "We're living the dream and we want to share it."

Their property is lush with flowers, succulents and other plant life. It also features a putting green, a bocce ball court, and a menagerie of chickens and cows who supply the Caraghers with eggs and milk.

Wendy and Ron moved to the house when they returned to San Diego after Ron ended a four-year stint as head football coach at San Jose State University. He previously held coaching jobs at UCLA, University of Kentucky, University of San Diego, and San Diego State University.



Married 33 years, Wendy and Ron are both big sports fans. Wendy was a college tennis coach after playing professional tennis, where she reached a world ranking of 250. She now coaches players of all levels on a tennis court owned by a neighbor.

(Author's note: I take lessons from Wendy and she is an excellent tennis coach. She can be reached at [wcaragher@gmail.com](mailto:wcaragher@gmail.com).)

The Caraghers have come to love their community and their neighbors, and they look forward to interacting with the visitors to the Succulent Swap and Share this year on Saturday, October 7. 🌱

## Friends of the Casa de Oro Library

**F**ree one-on-one help with technology is available at our branch. Book a one hour appointment, Monday through Friday, with staff person Phillip. Two appointments per day are available; no same day appointments, limited knowledge of Apple products, and no malware please. Call 619-463-3232 to schedule help with your devices.

Mark your calendar for our Sunday Afternoon Soiree on November 12th. Just in time for the holidays, enjoy a unique event in a beautiful private home belonging to a member of the Friends of the Casa de Oro Library. Our host is downsizing her art collection and offering attendees an opportunity to take home something special in exchange for a donation to support our library. Items range in value and style with something for everyone. This event is complimentary for members and light refreshments will be provided. If you would like more information or wish to make a tax deductible donation of an item (art, antique or jewelry) please contact Susan Nichols, Friends President, at [casalibrary-friends@gmail.com](mailto:casalibrary-friends@gmail.com).

Progress continues for our new Casa de Oro Library project. Developers have submitted proposals to design and build our 12,000 square foot free-standing library located on Campo Road, across the street from the pickleball courts. A committee comprised of County staff and Friends of the Casa de Oro Library is in process to select the proposal to move forward with the project. Help us get the library we need by attending future meetings to review, comment and make suggestions on the selected design.

Casa de Oro Library has programs for children, teens and adults. A special highlight: families with little ones will enjoy the much beloved Storytime with Mr. Dave on September 21 and October 19 from 10:30 -11:15 a.m. Lots of after school programs will commence with the start of the school year. We host a book club and other offerings for adults. Please stop by the library and pick up the monthly calendar showing all activities or go online to [SDCL.org](http://SDCL.org), click "events", and click "Casa de Oro." See you at the library! 🌱

# CURB APPEAL AWARD

Marion Eggertsen

“Disbelief” was Marion Eggertsen’s first reaction to learning she had won the 2023 GMIA Curb Appeal Award.

“There are so many beautiful gardens in the Mt. Helix neighborhood,” she said. Hers is certainly among them.

Some of the plantings most evident in the Eggertsen garden are Pride of Madeira with its tall, blue flower spikes and several rock rose bushes that bloom with coral daisy-like flowers. Lantana in lavender and yellow provide dazzling color as well as nectar for birds and butterflies.

There are five young olive trees along the edge of the garden and red bougainvillea follows the fence line just below the olives.

The Eggertsens moved into 5115 Mt. Helix Drive in 1959, 14 years after its construction and 10 years after it was featured in San Diego magazine. Marion recalls it was only the second home on Mt. Helix Drive to be built in the Spanish modern style of architecture.

As the Eggertsen family grew to six, another bedroom and a garage were added. But it wasn’t until eight years ago that they decided to replace the traditional front lawn with new plantings. Jeffrey Rule, a local landscape architect, led the project.

“We added cacti and succulents throughout the garden and it seems that they take turns blooming,” Marion said. “Sadly, we lost several very large blue cacti due to the over-abundance of rain this spring, but the survivors thrived during our hot summer weather.”

From their front porch—beyond the giant sentry plant and the beautifully weathered wooden fence—the Eggertsens have a clear view of the San Miguel Fire District Station on Vivera Drive and of the road leading up to Mt. Helix, the site of many happy family memories.

Reflecting on our community, Marion said, “This part of our county, in the shadow of Mt. Helix, has been a comfortable place to raise a family and call ‘home.’ People walk their dogs along this road and stop to chat. It truly is a friendly neighborhood. I am so lucky!” 🌱







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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](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 2023 or later, your dues are paid in full, but you are welcome to renew in advance.

## Save the Date

Five fabulous gardens are on the schedule for

**GMIA's 2024 Art & Garden Tour on Sunday, April 28.**

Artists interested in participating should contact

garden tour coordinator Teri Buehler at [teribuehler13@gmail.com](mailto:teribuehler13@gmail.com).



## CALENDAR

**Sat., Sept 23**

**Cleanup 9 am PARK N  
RIDE - I8/ Severin Dr.**

**Sat., Oct 7**

**Succulent Swap  
See Page 1**

**Sat., Oct 21**

**Cleanup 9 am PARK N  
RIDE - I8/ Severin Dr.**