



viewpoints

SUMMER 2023

Volume 53 Issue 3

A New Venue for the GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting

Mark Your Calendar for the June 24 Event

Come join your fellow GMIA members at this year's Annual Dinner Meeting on June 24 at the Cuyamaca College Student Center.

GMIA is planning a special event with an aloha theme and a fascinating speaker. The menu includes teriyaki chicken, coconut rice, stir-fried veggies and salads, and a vegetarian offering of teriyaki mushroom medley. In keeping with the theme, wear your Hawaiian shirt!

The cost is \$25 for members and \$45 for nonmembers. Parking is free. A map of the campus is on page 7 of this newsletter. Thanks to the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District and EDCO Disposal Co. for supporting our community event.

To register for the dinner meeting, go to gmia.net/events or mail the form below along with your check. Reservations are required.

The featured speaker is Jim Newland, a historian and planner for the California State Parks Department and author of the definitive history of Mt. Helix, "Images of America: Around Mt. Helix." His presentation will detail the history of Mt. Helix with historic photos from the book.

A reception will be held at 5 p.m. on the Cuyamaca College Student Center terrace. Complimentary beer and wine are being provided by San Pasqual Winery and Helix Brewing Company.

At 4 p.m., a tour of the Cuyamaca College campus will be led by Interim College President Jessica Robinson. If interested, sign up for the tour when you register for the dinner.

We will be playing the 50-50 game at the event to raise funds for GMIA. Buy a ticket for \$1, or an arm's length of tickets for \$20. At the end of the evening, the owner of the winning ticket will receive half of the money collected, with the other half going to GMIA.

YOUR GMIA ANNUAL DINNER CHECKLIST

- ✧ Register for the dinner and the Cuyamaca College pre-tour at gmia.net/events or by mailing in the form below.
- ✧ Wear a Hawaiian shirt to the dinner to get into the aloha spirit.
- ✧ Bring some cash to play the 50-50 game.
- ✧ Enjoy your meal and the company of your neighbors and learn more about the history of our Mt. Helix community!



GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



Annual Dinner Registration

Reserve your place at GMIA's Annual Dinner Meeting on June 24 at the Cuyamaca Community College Student Center. Please RSVP before June 15 by returning this form with your check (\$25 for members, \$45 for non-members) to GMIA, PO Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751. Or reserve online at our secure website, www.gmia.net. Your reservation will be held at the door.

Name(s) _____

☐

Members
at \$25 each

☐

Non-
members at
\$45 each

Address _____

Phone _____

☐

Vegetarian
Menu

☐

Attending
4:00 pm
Campus Tour

Email _____



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

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Teri Buehler	Vaughn Jeffery
Pete Camana	Linda Miller
Lidia Chang	Larry Nichols
Leslie Gardner	Mike Valley
Coleen Geraghty	Marybeth Wilson
Kathleen Hedberg	Holly Yarris
Tom Huffman	

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

What can \$20 buy you these days?

- ✱ Four grande cappuccinos at Starbucks
- ✱ 4 ½ gallons of gasoline
- ✱ One pepperoni pizza

Twenty dollars can also pay for a year's membership in GMIA, and it's a bargain that will last you all year long. Membership in GMIA is your way of connecting with your neighbors, staying informed about your community, and ensuring that our semi-rural area is protected.

Perhaps your main reason for being a member of GMIA is because you enjoy the community events. The Walk to the Top of Mt. Helix, held the first Saturday in January, is always popular with families and dog lovers. The Art and Garden Tour, a spring event, gives members an opportunity to visit some spectacular yards in our community and think about how to improve their own landscaping—with a boost from our Succulent Swap and Share in the fall.

Our annual dinner meeting, to be held June 24, will have a different feel this year. Thanks to a partnership with the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, we will stage the event at the Cuyamaca College Student Center. Arrive early to get a tour of the Cuyamaca College campus led by Jessica Robinson, the college's interim president. This year's dinner will feature a Hawaiian feast with tiki chicken, and we encourage everyone to wear tropical-style shirts to enhance the mood. Our very special guest speaker this year is Jim Newland, a California State Parks Department historian, who will present an illustrated talk on the quirky and fascinating history of Mt. Helix.

Even as we sponsor these fun events, GMIA also acts as an advocate for the community. We keep in touch with county and other government officials so we can act quickly to inform the community of issues that affect us. In recent years:

- ✱ GMIA informed the community when county officials considered using a Park and Ride lot in our area as a site for safe parking for the homeless.
- ✱ GMIA acted when state officials proposed housing two sexually violent predators in the area. We notified the community and spoke against the state proposals at court hearings, convincing judges that the location was unsuitable to house the predators.
- ✱ GMIA alerted the community when the California Department of Corrections proposed locating a parole office in the community. Following a public uproar, the Department of Corrections decided against locating the office at that site.

You can see that your membership fee for GMIA is money well spent. Please check your expiration date on the back page of this newsletter to make sure your membership is up to date. If you have questions or suggestions for us, please email yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com to make your voice heard.

Please urge your neighbors to join, and if you would like to volunteer for an event, contact us at gmiavolunteer@gmail.com! 🌱



Anne Krueger

Board Member Profiles



Joan Camana

I served 45 years as an education professional—20 years teaching and eventually stepping into the role of high school principal. During that time, I also was a staff developer and coach, working with staff to create high performing schools where all students

can learn. It was a most rewarding career that I loved, but I was finally ready to spend time doing other things.

My husband, Peter, and I had lived on 20 acres in Ramona. Determined to find a semi-rural community with some land to garden, we began searching in the Mt. Helix area. I had raised my sons in La Mesa for 25 years and often visited friends who lived on Mt. Helix. It took almost two years to find a half-acre with a one story but we finally purchased a real fixer upper with dirt for front and back yards!

Having been to the GMIA Garden Tour in the past, we resolved to plant a drought-tolerant garden and do it all ourselves. Six years later we were given a Curb Appeal Award for our efforts, and a year after that, we opened up our property for the Art and Garden Tour.

As Peter and I became acquainted with the GMIA board and volunteers, we were impressed with their dedication and hard work. They not only unite the community through many special events, but also act as a voice for residents by working with county and regional entities on issues that affect us all.

Peter joined the GMIA Board of Directors in 2018 and offered my services to organize and facilitate a planning retreat. Given the opportunity to work up close and personal with the all-volunteer mission: to preserve and enhance the character and quality of the community and foster pride in the area.

I joined the board in 2022. In my role as 1st vice president, I am primarily responsible for organizing the agenda and materials for our monthly board meetings. In addition, I work to support the four major community events we sponsor each year—the Walk to the Top of Mt. Helix, the Art and Garden Tour, the Annual Meeting and the Succulent Swap. 🌱

Vaughn Jeffery

After several years of renting apartments in the overcrowded neighborhoods of San Diego's beach communities, my fiancé, Judi, and I decided it was time to purchase our first home in May 1976. The plan was to host our wedding reception at the newly purchased Mt. Helix property and eventually relocate to another community with our growing family. All came to fruition except for the relocation part. We soon realized that the Grossmont-Mt. Helix area was a perfect place to raise our daughter and son.

Throughout 47 years as a resident, I have been actively involved in the community. A GMIA member for many years before joining the board, I currently serve as President of the Rancho San Diego Kiwanis Club that, among other projects, maintains the RSD County Trail and a two mile Adopt-A-Highway section along Hwy 94.

I have also served as Committee Chair of La Mesa Boy Scout Troop 319, Fundraising Co-Chair of the Grossmont High School Marching Band Parent Boosters, Chair of the Spring Valley Middle School Parent Advisory Committee and a member of the Murdock Elementary School PTA during the construction of its lunch area sunshade. As active supporters of numerous elected officials who represent our community, Judi and I are committed to maintaining the Grossmont-Mt. Helix area as a safe and livable neighborhood for all residents.

While serving in the U.S. Army and California Army National Guard, I began a professional career with the County of San Diego in 1972. By the time I retired, 34 years later, I held the post of Chief Operating Officer for the San Diego County District Attorney's Office.

Judi and I travel globally a few weeks each year and enjoy road trips to the Western states each summer. A favorite memory is a 14-week RV trip along the Alaska Highway. I am also a seasoned "Jeep" with 45 years of experience driving on off-road trails up, down, and across the Baja Peninsula with a group of close friends.

I earned a bachelor's degree from San Diego State and remain involved as a board member of the San Diego State Delta Upsilon International Fraternity Alumni Association and advisor to the SDSU chapter. 🌱





A Memorable Art and Garden Tour



In a strong measure of support, nearly 400 members turned out for this year's GMIA Art and Garden Tour. The route took visitors to five unique gardens across the length of the GMIA community, each one featuring a local artist.

Board member Teri Buehler staged the event with heavy lifting from Peter Camana, Coleen Geraghty and Pat Ryan.

Thanks to homeowners Rob Brockman and Gail Stewart; Adrian Calderon and Kamil Godula; Joyce and Peter McGraw; Cheri and Rick Sparhawk; and Dianne and Jerry Cantwell, who graciously opened their gardens for the afternoon.

We also appreciate the volunteers who helped direct traffic, welcome visitors and assist visitors to the gardens: Judy Zika, Karen Yocum, Bob Witmond, Shirley Valley, Sandia Tuttle, Jay Steiger, Susan Schalin, Janice Paul, Marie Meek, Kay LeMenager, Christine Leefeldt, Amelia Knezevich, Janet Johnstone, Stephanie Hurtado, Valerie Hapke, Julie Brennan, Sue Ellen Benson, Paloma Barroso-Conde, Donna Andrisani, Nancy Acevedo, Carole and Bob Caparas, Judi Jeffery, Gwen and Rick DeHaven, Janet and Jack Gambrell, Barbie and Dave Mays, Kay and Vince McGrath. 🌱



Taking Inspiration from Mt. Helix

Roy Davies has climbed Mt. Helix hundreds of times in the 26 years he has lived in our community. He recalls the aftermath of many hikes—sitting on a wall at the top, legs over the edge, savoring the view.

So when GMIA board members Jim Marshall and Susan Nichols asked him to design a new welcome monument at the foot of Mt. Helix, the architect drew inspiration from his own experiences.

“Mt. Helix’s sloping stone walls are striking,” Davies said. “I wanted to capture that look in a pragmatic design.”

In 1933, the State Relief Administration (later renamed the Civil Works Administration) was hired to build the rugged, natural stone walls that surround the Mt. Helix Park and most of Mt. Helix Drive. The stones were shaped and fitted by hand.

The new welcome monument at the intersection of Avocado Avenue and Fuerte Drive is now complete, and it reflects Mt. Helix’s iconic aura.

Davies designed it pro bono after then-County Supervisor Dianne Jacob threw her support behind the initiative. Grants from the county Neighborhood Reinvestment Program provided

funding, and GMIA board member Tom Huffman worked with Integrated Signs and county officials during the permitting and construction.

The new sign will be dedicated during GMIA’s Annual Dinner Meeting to be held June 24. 🌱



News from the Helix Water Board

The Helix Water District Board in April declared an end to the mandatory reduction of water use in our region. This means consumers are no longer required to cut back on water use. However, efficiency measures remain in effect, including:

- ♦ elimination of runoff from irrigation
- ♦ no watering for at least 48 hours after rain
- ♦ no watering of turf on public street medians
- ♦ use of recirculated water in fountains and water features

The board also imposed rate adjustments for the 2023-2026 period with a maximum increase of 3.9 percent annually. Rates will be reviewed each year.

Kathleen Coates Hedberg, board president, said the Helix board has also advised the San Diego County Water Authority to reduce its projected water rate increase of 14 percent, arguing that it could have “onerous and far-reaching impacts” on consumers and member agencies.

Visit the website, hwd.com/189/Get-Rebates to learn about new rebates for customers. 🌱

Thank You Donors!

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

Andrea and Frank Goicoechea

Eva B. Goode and John Grasberger

Warren Ruis

Molly and Rey Nocon

Robert and Holly Yarris

Alan and Jennifer Westermeyer

Richard and Nancy Fassett

Del Lisk

Charles and Beverly Little

Mary Jo Stalder

Dr. Paul Liederman

Claudia Powell and Lynn Reeves

John D. and Cindy Mead

John and Becky McMullen

Ruel and Carol Bench

New Student Services Building at Cuyamaca College

Cuyamaca Community College has opened a \$38.3 million Student Services Building, which was funded by Proposition V, the bond measure approved by East County voters in 2012.

The 36,374-square-foot building is a centralized hub for the college's student services, including Admissions and Records, Counseling and Financial Aid. A Welcome Center is also located inside. Construction began in November 2020, and the building opened this spring.

Be sure to check out the building, which you will pass on your way to the GMIA Annual Dinner in the Cuyamaca College Student Center. If you have a moment, go up to the fourth-floor patio, which offers a stunning view of East County. 🌱



Senior Gleaners Seeking Volunteers for Harvest

Senior Gleaners of San Diego County, a volunteer organization with a mission to address community hunger, is looking for volunteers to pick surplus fruit as the summer harvest nears.

"Early each year, we get more requests for picking citrus trees than our crews of seniors can handle," said Margaret Burton, Senior Gleaners board president. "We need help to get the food to hungry families before it falls off the trees or gets put into the garbage," she said.

The group also needs people who can haul several filled banana boxes of fruit in their own vehicle. Most deliveries are within 10 miles of the picking site.

Most gleaners volunteer one day per week for 3-4 hours, but there are no required minimum commitments. Volunteers join crews working near their communities. Some volunteers form small groups that work independently and set their own schedule.

To learn more about the group, to register as a volunteer, or to request to have excess fruit picked by a gleaning crew, visit: www.seniorgleanerssdco.org or call 619-633-9180.

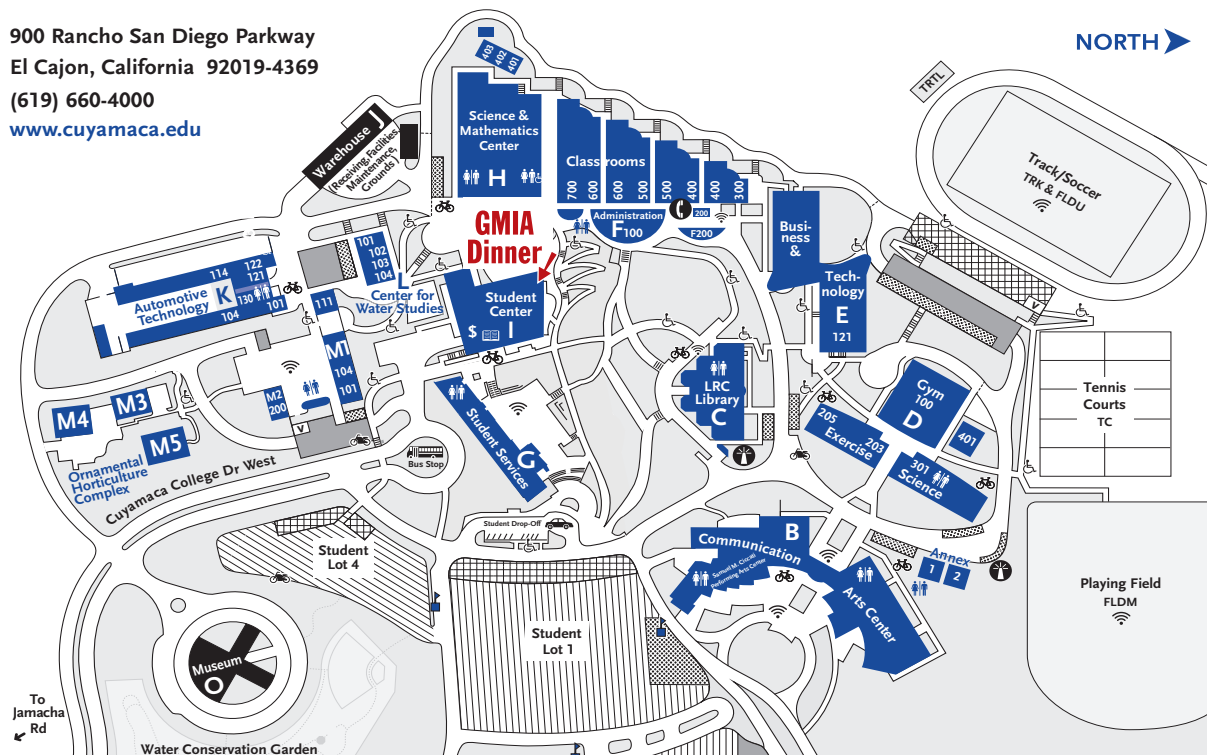


About Senior Gleaners of San Diego County

Since 1994, Senior Gleaners volunteers have gleaned tons of food annually throughout the county. Besides gleaning produce, the group collects unsold products donated by grocers. All the food is provided at no cost to the San Diego Food Bank, Feeding San Diego, churches, food pantries and similar organizations. In 2022, the group collected more than 185,000 pounds of food that otherwise would have been wasted.

CUYAMACA COLLEGE

900 Rancho San Diego Parkway
El Cajon, California 92019-4369
(619) 660-4000
www.cuyamaca.edu



News from Friends of the Casa de Oro Library

There's a lot happening at the local Casa de Oro Library. We kicked off the design process for our new library with a meeting to gather a "wish list" from the community. The well-attended April gathering was the first of several to ensure that our neighborhood gets the library we need and deserve. The site at 9610 Campo Road has been acquired and funding set aside by the County Board of Supervisors. The selection of a design/builder is in the works. Please add your voice to our advocacy and receive updates about future meetings and events. Contact us at casalibraryfriends@gmail.com.

Interested in volunteering? We are looking for volunteers to help library staff with programs for children and library tasks such as shelving books. Because the county must ensure the safety of library patrons, there is a formal application process including fingerprinting and a background check. If you can lend a hand, please pick up an application form at our branch located next to the post office on Campo Road. We'd love to have your support.

Celebrate with us on June 4 at our Moonlight & Music fundraising concert. This special event will be held under the stars at a private home and features the award-winning music of guitarists Fred Benedetti and Robert Wetzal. There will be a silent auction, champagne and dessert. Tickets are \$50, and reservations can be made online at www.casadeorolibrary.org. 🌱

Casa de Oro Alliance News

The Alcohol Policy Panel of San Diego County presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Casa de Oro Alliance on April 14, "in recognition of your work in community revitalization and addressing alcohol and other drug-related issues using upstream prevention strategies that promote community reinvestment."

This recognition is a testament to the MANY residents and businesses who are getting involved in the Casa de Oro community. Thank you, GMIA, for your continued support and involvement.

Do you know a Casa de Oro business owner who would benefit from professional marketing services? The CDO Alliance received grants from Union Bank and the County of San Diego to support economic development in our community, including free assistance with business websites, Google My Business profiles, social media outreach, and event promotion. Email us at casadeoroalliance@gmail.com.

Be on the lookout for the latest utility box wrap, designed by the art students at Spring Valley Academy! The Alliance is raising the \$700 needed to install the wrap. If you would like to help us reach our goal, please send your donation to Casa de Oro Alliance, PO Box 521, Spring Valley, CA 91976 or make an online donation at www.casadeoroalliance.org.

Do you have ideas, concerns, questions about the Casa de Oro community? Send them to casadeoroalliance@gmail.com. 🌱



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

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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.

In the Next Viewpoints

- ✱ Succulent Swap information
- ✱ GMIA Curb Appeal Award
- ✱ Al Platt Memorial Award

CALENDAR

Sat., June 17

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

Sat., June 24

Annual Dinner
Cuyamaca College
Student Center

Sat., July 15

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