



viewpoints

SPRING 2026

Volume 56 Issue 2

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



Art & Garden Tour

Sunday, May 3, 2026 | 12 – 4 pm

Five beautiful gardens in the Mt. Helix area will be open to tour Sunday, May 3 in GMIA's annual Art & Garden Tour. This is a great opportunity to gather landscaping and planting ideas, meet your neighbors and enjoy some local art. Each of the unique gardens may inspire you and it's always fun to view the hard work of our garden owners.

This year's tour is in memory of GMIA board member Joan Camama for her dedication and service to GMIA, the annual garden tour and her love of gardening.

The gardens range from beautifully terraced yards with landscaping and cozy

hidden areas to villas made for entertaining. You'll see an estate that transports you to a fairy tale, and an example of low water gardening and conservation at its best. Each garden will showcase a local artist, some using recycled materials. In addition, a couple of the gardens will have local musicians, including a harpist.

This year, three of the gardens will only be accessible via shuttle. You can drive to the other two: the Dosik and Westermeyer gardens. Choose your route and start or end with the shuttle. Parking is available in the lot by the San Miguel Fire Rescue Station at 10105 Vivera Drive. Four shuttles will be operating

continuously throughout the afternoon. The shuttle buses were made possible by a grant from County Supervisor Monica Montgomery-Steppe.

This event is free and open to GMIA members only. Please check your membership status. You can join or renew your membership on the GMIA website, or you can sign up that day. Membership is only \$25 per year for your entire household. There aren't many garden tours that charge only \$25!

Parents can bring their children, but the gardens cannot accommodate strollers. No pets, please. 🌱

We Love Volunteers!

The Art and Garden Tour on May 3 needs some helping hands. Here are some of the needed volunteer positions:

- Check-in desk – check the membership roster and place bracelets on visitors
- Garden guide - help visitors as they walk through the gardens.
- Shuttle conductor – help people on and off the shuttle
- Traffic assistant – help with parking and pedestrian safety

If you volunteer for the tour, you can see the gardens on a private tour and enjoy a volunteer appreciation reception on Saturday, May 2. The volunteer shifts are from 11:45 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 2 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Please let us know if you

can do one or both. We also need to know if you need to limit walking or standing, and if you're volunteering with a friend and wish to be at the same garden.

We are interested in your job preference and will try to accommodate it, but please be flexible. Also let us know if you are interested in volunteering at any of the other events that GMIA holds each year.

**To volunteer or get more information,
email us at GMIAvolunteer@gmail.com.**



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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619-252-2295

Del "Buzz" Lisk, First Vice
President

Pat Ryan, Second Vice President
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Pam Coe, Treasurer/Membership
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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 83-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.

IN MEMORIAM JOAN CAMANA

Our community lost an enthusiastic, generous volunteer last winter with the passing of Joan Camana. At the time of her death, she was first vice president of the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association.

"Joan cared deeply about GMIA and our community," said GMIA President Anne Krueger. "She always encouraged the board to think strategically about how GMIA could function better as an organization."

In March 2022, Joan joined the GMIA Board as first vice president. "I had worked with her to prepare for a GMIA retreat and I could see she would be a real asset to our Board," Anne said.

Joan and her husband, Pete Camana, who is also a GMIA Board member, generously shared their garden twice on the GMIA Spring Art and Garden Tour. Because of their artistic talent and skill, their home won the GMIA Curb Appeal Award.

Joan served on several GMIA committees, especially helping to choose gardens for any upcoming Art and Garden Tours. She was a master when dealing with administrative issues.

"Joan was very generous with her time and very civic oriented," said Pete. "She was always finding things to be involved with."

She was a member of the American Association of University Women and served as their president at one time and she volunteered with the Casa de Oro Friends of the Library. In addition, Joan took their dog, Sadie, to learn how to become a therapy dog and together they visited hospitals, senior living centers, and libraries.

Along with her volunteer activities, Joan had a very successful career. She retired as Mt. Carmel High School principal in 2005, and in the 1992-93 academic year she was California's Vice Principal of the Year.

"She was always joyful and eager to help out in any way she could," said Anne. "I'll miss her smile, her wit and her sharp mind." 🌱



Thank You Donors!

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

Dean and Judith Allen	Joe McMullen and Michael Medeiros
Thomas and Donna Bloomer	Alfred Pagano and Susan Tyler
Justin Detmar	Warren Ruis

Grossmont - Mt. Helix Improvement Association

Art & Garden Tour 2026

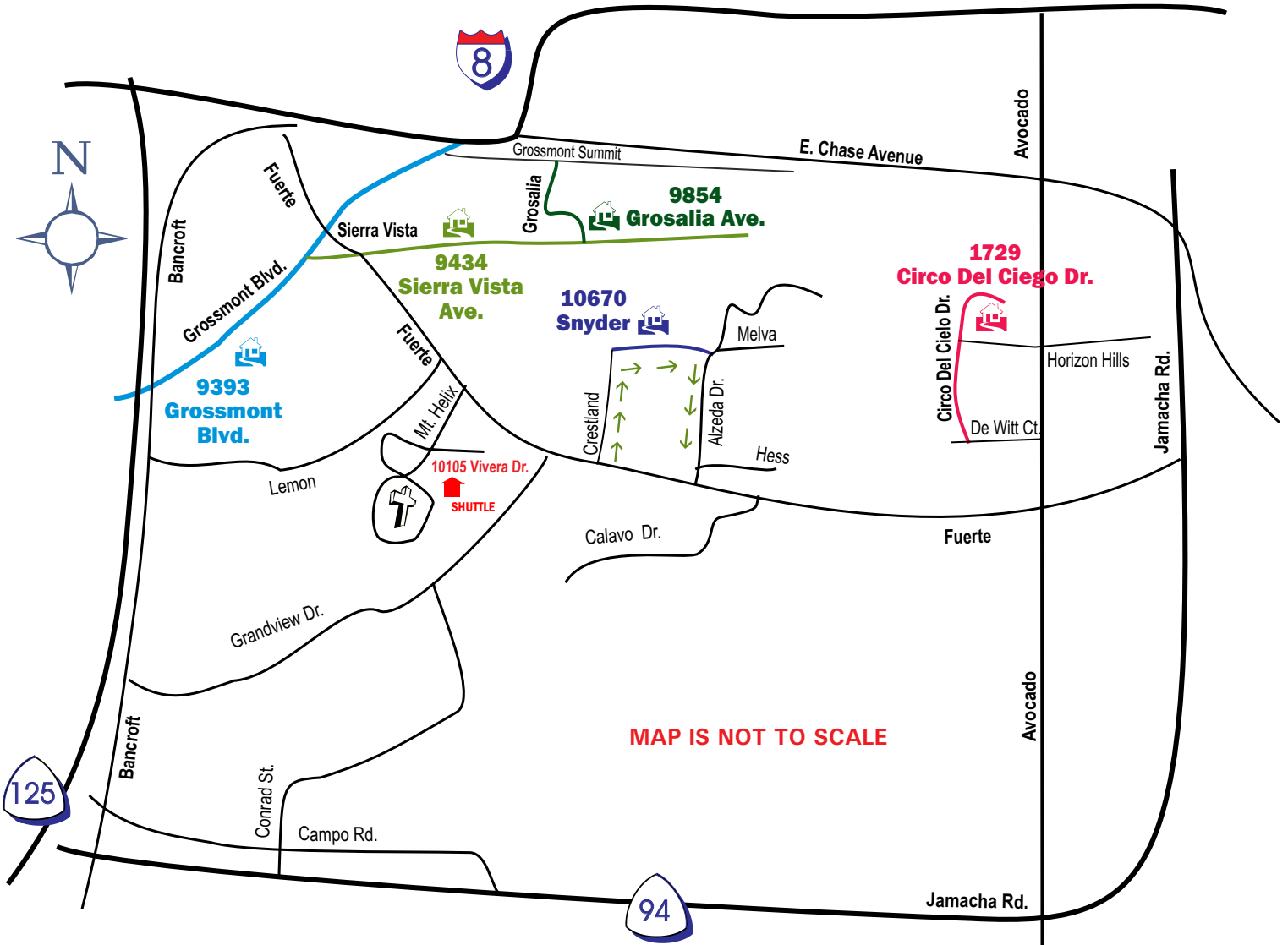
Sunday, May 3 | Noon - 4 p.m.

Thank you to our Art & Garden Tour hosts for generously offering their five beautiful gardens for us to visit this year. For over 50 years, our unique GMIA Garden Tour has featured remarkable gardens transformed by each owner's vision and hard work. Be ready to enjoy dramatic views and great landscaping ideas from this year's large properties. Thank you also to our fine artists whose work will be on display for purchase and enjoyment.

Be prepared! Wear sturdy comfortable shoes, as some gardens have slopes, stairs and unsure footing.

To best enjoy the gardens, start or end your tour by driving to the Dosik and Westermeyer gardens. The other three gardens are only available by shuttle, which you can ride from the San Miguel Fire Rescue Station parking lot at 10105 Vivera Drive.

Tour produced by Teri Buehler. Artist coordination by Buehler and Del "Buzz" Lisk. Volunteer coordination by Leslie Gardner. Logistics by Peter Camana, along with Jay Steiger, Lisk, and Vaughn Jeffery.



The Garden of Michael Medeiros & Edward McMullen 9393 Grossmont Boulevard



The McMullen/Medeiros property consists of 0.4 acres and has been developed and nurtured over the past 15 years. To ensure authenticity of the era, the owners explored Spanish Colonial gardens such as Lotus Land and Casa del Herrero in Santa Barbara, and San Diego's own Balboa Park before embarking on the creation of spaces to evoke romanticism of the 1930s. The garden includes a main water feature carved out of stone in Mexico and covered in Tierra y Fuego tiles. Plant varieties include specimens to support the wildlife of birds, butterflies, and an occasional skunk and raccoon. The striking plants include variegated agave, yucca, cactus, milkweed, bougainvillea, wisteria, roses, cup of gold, citrus trees, fig, peach, and more. The property also has two raised boxed beds for seasonal vegetables and herbs. It is a tranquil space perfect for relaxing and enjoying, as well as a wonderful entertainment space to share with family and friends.



The Garden of Adam and Dania Barroso-Conde 9434 Sierra Vista Avenue



Step through the gates of this 1935 Cliff May home and you're greeted by the striking silhouette of a mature dragon tree rising through the hand-painted clay tile roof — a testament to the philosophy that guided this home's creation: nature comes first. Wander deeper into the interior courtyard and the true centerpiece reveals itself: a magnificent 150-year-old olive tree, its sculptural trunk and sweeping canopy so commanding that the home was designed and built around it. Look around and you'll find yourself surrounded by layers of Southern California abundance. Mature citrus trees are heavy with fruit, stone fruit varieties, and passion fruit vines. Giant agave and towering yucca punctuate the landscape with their dramatic forms, while vibrant bougainvillea cascades in bursts of color against the historic architecture. A collection of cacti add texture and desert beauty throughout, and multiple fountains provide a soothing soundtrack that draws you deeper into the garden. Adam, Dania, and their children have called this home for five years, and they love spending time tending every corner of it — pruning, planting, and preserving the legacy that Cliff May set in motion over 90 years ago. Their stewardship honors the original vision: a home where the boundary between indoors and outside dissolves, and the garden is as much a living space as any room beneath the roof.



The Garden of Jennifer and Alan Westermeyer 10670 Snyder Road



The Westermeyer property consists of almost two acres. Jen and Al have spent the last 34 years making changes to reflect their family's lifestyle.

The existing house was removed in 2005 and after extensive grading and a 3-year build, the new residence was habitable in 2008. The new home and surrounding gardens are enchanting and welcoming. You feel transformed when you arrive. The landscaping was removed and replaced with water-wise plants. A blackberry and strawberry garden were added along with a seasonal garden. Fruit trees are abundant, with plenty of avocado types including Hass, Fuerte, Butter, Bacon, as well as lemons, oranges, tangerines, limes and pomegranates. The rose bush types vary, but in total they amount to 125! A wisteria trellis covers the lower walkway down towards a gazebo, and three water features are onsite. One drops into the saltwater pool that has a beach entry ideal for young children, another is a tranquil upper waterfall area for reading and relaxation, and another water feature is located by the gated entrance. You will find many places that you can sit back and relax on this property!



The Garden of Rosalie Dosik 1729 Circo del Cielo Drive



In 1997 Paul and Rosalie Dosik purchased their "fixer" house and garden, where they saw the potential for a beautiful place to live. The 1/3 acre property once included a pool and hot tub, but they were removed in 2012 following flooding and heavy rains. They were replaced with a 900

square-foot Asian-style garden with meandering paths, dry stream beds, and dry ponds. Visitors will see Asian touches everywhere with garden art on walls and in planting beds, all inspired by the couple's trip to China in 2010. Rosalie choose the plants and their placement for her design using her experience as a mixed-media fiber artist. She has been a volunteer at the Water Conservation Garden for 20 years and gleaned a wealth of information about irrigation and drought-tolerant plants. The Dosik garden took first place in the 2021 Helix Water District's WaterSmart landscape contest. A list of plants in the garden will be available.



The Garden of Beth & Aaron Duggan

9854 Grosalia Avenue



The Duggans are only the second owners of their 1940 home on two-thirds of an acre, that boasts view east to El Capitan. When they purchased the property in 2000, the areas immediately surrounding the house featured mature plantings, but the backyard was largely unde-

veloped — aside from several fruit trees and the previous owners' collapsed chicken coop, which was occupied by a large beehive.

Over the past 23 years, the Duggans have added flagstone patios and walkways, along with numerous outdoor structures, water features, and living spaces. These include an outdoor kitchen and dining room, a meditation garden with a recirculating waterfall, a greenhouse, an artist's studio, a guest house, an in-ground fire ring, a wildlife-proof garden enclosure, a chicken coop (with chickens, not bees!), and multiple entertaining areas. In 2019, they removed the lawn that once ran the length of the house in front, replacing it with a Mediterranean-style patio and fountain that has become incredibly popular with local birds, including hawks.

The yard is truly an edible paradise, complete with vegetable and herb gardens; wine grapes; olive, macadamia, and pecan trees; avocados, apricots, plums, persimmons, loquats, strawberry and tropical guavas; peaches, nectarines, and figs; and 18 varieties of citrus, including lemons, oranges, tangerines, citrons, limequats, grapefruit, finger and kaffir limes, yuzu, and calamondin.

Other unusual plants and trees include a coastal redwood, a young dawn redwood (a deciduous conifer), a collection of epiphyllums and cymbidiums, a rainbow plumeria, blue and purple kangaroo paws, several immature Joshua trees, and a varied collection of home-trained bonsai.



A Walk in the Park!

We welcomed 337 walkers, many dogs, and even one adventurous kitty to the 2026 Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association Walk to Top of Mt. Helix last January 3.

It was a day of wagging tails, laughter, and camaraderie. We were led up the hill by the Grossmont High School Foothiller Pep Band and the Dixieland Preservation Jazz Club, and at the top participants found complementary sweet rolls, bananas and tangerines, plus fresh coffee, tea and hot chocolate. Also, there were home baked cookies for the dogs!

The drizzle cleared just in time for the San Miguel Fire & Rescue Station 21 Open House, leaving us with cool walking weather and beautiful skies for still, video and drone photos.

We want to thank all our volunteers and these organizations:

- Gladly Coffee
- Casa de Oro Alliance
- Casa de Oro Friends of the Library
- Grossmont High School Bands
- Helix Water District
- La Mesa History Center
- Mt Helix Park Foundation
- Rancho Helix De Oro Firesafe Council
- San Miguel Fire & Rescue Station 21
- SDG&E Vegetation Management
- Senior Gleaners
- The Animal Pad
- Water Conservation Garden



A Report from the San Miguel Fire District

by Andy Lawler, Chief, San Miguel Fire District

At the San Miguel Fire District, our emphasis remains service first. One of my top priorities this year is service enhancement—specifically, evaluating the potential addition of a squad program within the district. A squad is a two-person response unit designed to improve response times while reducing wear and tear on our heavy fleet, particularly fire engines, by handling appropriate medical and service calls more efficiently. This model is used in many communities and has proven to be both cost-effective and operationally sound, allowing agencies to deploy the right resource to the right call.



We are currently in the research and evaluation phase of this effort, with cost being one of the most important factors in determining whether a squad program could be implemented.

In addition, the district will be bringing forward a comprehensive Master Plan that will help guide a wide range of decisions intended to positively impact public safety. That report is scheduled to be presented this spring and will provide a long-term framework for service delivery, facilities, and resource deployment.

We look forward to sharing more information as these efforts progress and appreciate the continued support and engagement of our community. 🌱

Please look at your mailing label on this newsletter to ensure your membership is current. If the date is June 2026 or later, your dues are paid, but you are welcome to renew in advance. An annual household membership is \$25. You can renew online at www.gmia.net or mail your payment to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943.



Watch Out for West Nile Virus

“Prevent, Protect, Report” is San Diego County’s advice to help our residents avoid the potentially deadly disease, West Nile Virus, that can be spread by mosquitoes. Empty any standing water in your yard to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Be sure to wear long sleeves, pants, and insect repellent when outdoors. Make sure your window screens fit properly and don’t have any holes. Report increased mosquito activity, unmaintained green swimming pools and other mosquito-breeding sources, as well as dead birds to 858-694-2888 or email vector@sdcounty.ca.gov. Learn more at [Fight The Bite](#) on the County website. 🏞️