



# viewpoints

SUMMER 2026

Volume 56 Issue 3

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

## GMIA Annual Dinner

Saturday, June 20, 2026 | 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Cuyamaca College Student Center

Celebrate the start of summer at GMIA's Annual Dinner! You can visit with neighbors, enjoy a barbecue dinner, and learn about the Sheriff's Department from County Sheriff Kelly Martinez.

The social hour begins at 4:30 p.m., with beer, wine, and soft drinks. A silent auction will offer a variety of items that are sure to pique your fancy.

If you're interested, sign up for a quick tour at 4:30 p.m. of Cuyamaca College's Ornamental Horticulture department, a short walk from the student center. The innovative program trains future horticulturists and landscapers with a full nursery of plants.

A tasty barbecue dinner will be offered, along with a vegetarian option. After dinner, the winner of the Al Platt Award, honoring a person who has contributed to GMIA and the community, will be announced, and a brief business meeting will be held.

The keynote speaker is Sheriff Kelly Martinez, She was elected sheriff in 2022 after serving in the department since 1985. As



sheriff, she oversees law enforcement for 4,200 square miles of unincorporated San Diego County, nine contract cities, seven jails, and courthouse security. Her department has a \$1.2 billion budget and more than 4,700 employees. If you have a question you would like to have Sheriff Martinez address, send an email to

[yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com](mailto:yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com)

or write down your question at the dinner.

Dinner is \$30 for members who pay before June 12, and it goes up to \$35 per person after that. The dinner is for members only. Memberships are available for \$25 per household at [gmia.net](http://gmia.net). Reservations are required, so sign up at [gmia.net](http://gmia.net) or mail your check with the form below.

A special thanks to our sponsors: Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District; Edco Disposal Co.; San Pasqual Winery, and Helix Brewing Co. 🏔️

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### Annual Dinner Registration

Reserve your seats at the GMIA Annual Dinner Meeting by returning this form with your check made out to GMIA, PO Box 2751, La Mesa CA 91943, or reserve online at our secure website, [gmia.net](http://gmia.net). You must be a GMIA member to attend. Cost for the dinner is \$30 per person before June 12 and \$35 afterwards.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

# Attending

# Vegetarian Menu

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# Attending 4:30 p.m. College Tour

Email \_\_\_\_\_



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.*

**Editors:** Anne Krueger  
Linda Miller

**Design & Layout:** Victoria Vinton,  
victoriavinton5683@  
gmail.com

**www.gmia.net**

**Email us at:**  
**yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com**

#### 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.

## Is Your House Fire-Safe?

The devastating Los Angeles County fires in January 2025 showed us once again how vulnerable our dry California landscape is, especially when strong winds arrive, creating infernos and leaving destruction in their path.

The need for preparation against wildfires has motivated neighborhoods to create groups within the California Fire Safe Council (FSC), a non-profit dedicated to wildfire mitigation and resilience. Today, there are 50 FSC's in San Diego County.

Our community chapter, the Rancho Helix de Oro Fire Safe Council was created with the help of GMIA and participates in many GMIA and Casa de Oro events.

The FSC distributes educational fire safety information and interacts with neighbors in our area.

In April 2026 Colton Israels, of the San Miguel Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's office, assessed a Mt. Helix-area home to a group of residents.

Israels pointed out improvements that could prevent embers from entering the house through the garage, roofs, vents, gutters, double-paned windows, and other areas of the exterior of the house. He talked about keeping Zone 0 (0-5' around the house) with sparse vegetation. It should be well-maintained, well-irrigated and free of dry flammable materials like wood mulch.

Studies done after the Palisades fire show that homes with non-combustible roofs, fire-resistant siding, double-pane windows and enclosed eaves survived at least 66% of the time.

The Rancho Helix de Oro FSC will continue to find opportunities for community residents to become better prepared for wildfires. Visit our website at [helixfiresafety.org](http://helixfiresafety.org) and look for our booth at GMIA events. We want to hear about your concerns and your interest in joining us as an FSC volunteer. We will be posting a video about the April 2026 Fire Assessment Tour in June. 🌱



## Thank You Donors!

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

Sarah Almujaheed and Dalin Young  
Jenni and Les Biggins  
Lucy Burni  
Mary F. Gelber  
Judi and Vaughn Jeffery  
Cathy Long  
Patricia Ludwick  
Diana and James Medina  
Kathy Nutting

Kathleen and Jay Rains  
Danny and Lauri Riley  
Karen Stewart  
Gary Toma and Terry Casey  
Ariana Vigil  
Judi Walton  
Cathrine and Wesley Whitaker  
Judi and Terry Winegar

## GMIA 2026 Art and Garden Tour A Blooming Success

**H**undreds of people walked, shuffled, and climbed their way through five unique beautiful gardens during the annual GMIA Art and Garden Tour.

The creativity of our neighbors is extraordinary! We saw tall trees trimmed like Bonsai, a romantic Spanish Colonial garden, a huge 150-year-old olive tree, several stand-alone workshops and libraries, a yard designed by well-known architect Cliff May, and a chicken coop where the rooster let us know who was boss.

At most of the homes there were musicians and artists, some selling their wares.

Shuttle buses traveled to three of the houses, and two gardens were available for visitors to drive to. Thanks to County Supervisor Monica Montgomery-Steppe's office for providing the funding that allowed GMIA to offer the shuttle buses.

Thanks to the owners who opened their homes, the artists and musicians who shared their talents, and to all the volunteers who helped make this garden tour a success.

If you would like to have your garden included in the 2027 tour, please contact us at [yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com](mailto:yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com). 🌱



### The Hardy and Vibrant Bougainvillea

**T**he showy bougainvillea is one of our area's star performers, spilling over fences and walls, climbing up trellises, and forming eye-popping displays of color nearly year-round. Virtually pest-free, hardy and disease resistant, it is also drought-tolerant. A native of coastal Brazil, today there are at least 300 different varieties around the world.

Bougainvillea can thrive in our climate and will produce a maximum amount of their legendary colors if these five requirements are met:

- 1 It needs direct sunlight for at least five hours per day. Too much shade and they will have nice vegetative growth, but little or no color. The bougainvillea colorful "blossoms" are, in fact, plant parts known as bracts. The actual blossoms are creamy white and quite inconspicuous.
- 2 They require regular feeding, and bougainvillea are heavy feeders. A 6-8-10 formula is the right balance to intensify the color of the bracts and foliage.
- 3 Bougainvillea needs very little water once established. It should dry out between thorough waterings, and every inch of root needs to be watered. Frequent light watering will promote a weak root system and prevent any major coloring.
- 4 Prune and pinch to promote flowering. It will only bloom on new growth. Pinching off about ½ inch from the tip of new soft growth will encourage fuller growth. The best time to prune or pinch is after flowering, which is typically in four-to-six-week cycles.
- 5 Bougainvillea, with their very fine shallow root system, should be planted in well-drained soils.

Follow these five tips for success to produce vibrant and showy plants so characteristic of our Mt. Helix neighborhood. 🌱



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

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



## County Urges Residents to Use "Tell Us Now"!

**G**ot a question about a neighbor who's building a structure without a permit? Or how about an issue with maintenance of a county road? You can report those concerns—and many other areas involving San Diego County government—in an app called Tell Us Now!

The app allows users to report a complaint to county officials, with their contact information being kept confidential. The categories in which complaints can be filed are: Price and Scales, Air Pollution, Code Compliance, Road Service Request, Fight the Bite (mosquito abatement), and Parks.

In a presentation about the app at the Casa de Oro Library, Conor McGee, a chief in the county's Code Compliance Division, said county officials will acknowledge receipt of

the complaint within 24 business hours and will begin an investigation within five business days.

Cases reported to Code Compliance include inoperable vehicles, unpermitted structures and conversions, solid waste, and unpermitted property use. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the county's Code Compliance Division received 4,142 complaints and opened cases on 2,667 complaints. The department closed 2,739 cases that year, with some cases taking more than a year to resolve. In addition to the app, residents can also reach Code Compliance by emailing

**[PDS.Code.Compliance@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:PDS.Code.Compliance@sdcounty.ca.gov)**

or by calling (858) 694-2705. 📍