GMIA

viewpoints

FALL 2026 Volume 56 Issue 4

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



It's a Whole New SUCCULENT SWAP

Saturday, October 24, 2026

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The Succulent Swap is moving to a new location this year. To celebrate the opening of the new Casa de Oro Library, the Succulent Swap will be part of an inaugural Garden Expo at the library from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, October 24.

The swap will be held on a patio outside the new library at 9610 Campo Road, across from the pickleball courts. Bring your best cuttings and trade with fellow plant lovers.

The Garden Expo will feature informative speakers, activities and gardening fun for kids. You'll also get a chance to check out the beautiful new library.

GMIA is participating in the event as a member of the Casa de Oro-Mt. Helix Garden Collective, sponsored by the Friends of the Casa de Oro library and a collaboration of several local nonprofits in the area.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® FORUM

Just The Facts:

Wednesday, September 30, 6:30 p.m. at the Rancho San Diego Library

At most elections there are a number of ballot measures, many of which don't receive a lot of publicity. For some ballot measures there is so much conflicting information, it's hard to know what the measure actually says. Here's a way you can learn the facts and then make your own decision which way to vote. Members of the League of Women Voters will be at the Rancho San Diego Library, Wednesday, September 30, 6:30 pm, to discuss the upcoming propositions. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, nonprofit dedicated to encouraging everyone to vote. To learn more about their nonpartisan stance, see: LWV.org.

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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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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.

New Casa de Oro Library Opens

The new Casa de Oro Library is opening September 21. Located at 9610 Campo Road across from the pickleball courts, this state-of-the-art facility brings a host of amenities to our community and exciting new programming for children, teens and adults.

Stop by and shop at the Friends of the Casa de Oro Library bookstore. Run by volunteers, proceeds from book sales pay for programming for all ages. Gently used book donations are welcome, no textbooks please. Volunteers are still needed and you may contact the Friends to inquire at www.casadeorolibrary.org.

Check out the spacious, light-filled building including a 2,000-square-foot community room equipped with the latest technology and an adjacent poet's patio. Both will be available to reserve for use by community groups after hours. A dedicated children's area includes an outdoor covered patio, the only library in the county to have this special feature. The teen space was designed with input from local teens in our area with study rooms and appealing furnishings.

All county library services and programs are presented at no cost to attend. Library cards are free and helpful staff will gladly help you acquire a card. Printed materials and eBooks are available to check out at no cost.



Thank You Donors!

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

Laura Berend and William Ziegler
Garrianne Bradt and Carlos Richardson
Leo & Adrienne Culp
Joan Ecklund
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Sandra & David Polster
Claudia Powell and D. Lynn Reeves
Kathleen and Jay Rains
Barbara & Joel Stewart
Susan Tyler and Alfred Pagano
Tim Young

GMIA 2026 Annual Dinner

Community members welcomed the start of summer at GMIA's Annual Dinner at the Cuyamaca College Student Center. Lynn Neault, chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, gave an update on how Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges are contributing to the community. San Diego County Sheriff Kelly Martinez responded to a wide variety of questions about the Sheriff's Office.

Guests enjoyed some delicious barbecue by Major Catering and got a chance to bid on some awesome auction items.

Thanks to these companies and organizations for helping to make the annual dinner a success.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
EDCO, Inc.
Helix Brewery
San Pasqual Winery

Silent Auction Donations:
Koolstone Boards
Dirty Birds restaurant
U.S.S. Midway Museum
Kelly Williams Ceramic Studio
Hooleys
Water Conservation Garden
Lake Jennings
Camp Bow wow
Cameron Fitness
Gladly Coffee







New Fire/Rescue Strategic Plan

by Andy Lawler
Chief, San Miguel Fire & Rescue

After much research and community input, the San Miguel Fire and Rescue Department has developed a strategic plan to carry the department into the next three years. The plan is called "Building San Miguel's Three-Year Playbook: A Responsible, Inclusive Plan Forward."

Fire staff investigated local threats, infrastructure challenges, and potential solutions. To achieve the goal of optimal emergency services, they also conferred with frontline crews and staff. A public survey was conducted, and a community strategic planning meeting was held with leaders and residents from Mt. Helix, Spring Valley, Rancho San Diego, Jamul and Crest, as well as the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Grossmont Healthcare District and the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.

An independent facilitator was used to conduct the two-day workshop that created the final strategic plan that reaffirms the fire service's goal to deliver the highest standard of emergency and medical services.

The master plan noted that San Miguel Fire & Rescue has a strong financial position. It said that the department's Operations Division and Fire Prevention Bureau are understaffed. It noted that the department's fire stations are aging, but have been updated and are well-maintained.

A survey conducted by the department showed a strong, positive relationship between the fire district and the residents it serves, and the survey responses demonstrated high levels of trust, satisfaction, and appreciation for the department's emergency response, professionalism, and presence in the community.

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Please look at your mailing label on this newsletter to ensure your membership is current. If the date is June 2027 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.

What Are They Saying?

Did you hear announcements from a San Diego Sheriff's helicopter (ASTREA) but you can't understand the words? Here's what you can do: Call or text "Hello" to (858) 866-HELO (4356) to receive helicopter messages straight to your phone.

Some people have reported that the number didn't work for them, but it's worth a try to find out what's happening.

