FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 10 FALL / WINTER 2017



Dedicated to Preserving Mt. Helix Nature Theatre and Park

Park Launches Campaign for RESTROOMS! 10th annual heart of Mt. Helix HUGE SUCCESS

Eagle Scout Project

Volunteer Spotlight Turning the Park Back to NATURE

PARK HOURS

SEPT 1 - OCT 31: 5:30 AM TO 7:00 PM | NOV 1 - FEB 28: 5:30 AM TO 5:30 PM MARCH 1- MAY 31: 5:30 AM TO 8:00 PM | JUNE 1 - AUG 31: 5:30 AM TO 8:30 PM

Halloween Harvest Festival





ore than 450 visitors celebrated Mt. Helix Park's inaugural Halloween Harvest Family Festival on Sunday, October 29th. This wildly successful community event, co-hosted with Grossmont Mt. Helix Improvement Association, was energized with a live performance by Lenny and the Lounge Lizards. Parents, teens, children and others came dressed in colorful costumes and enjoyed games, crafts, treats and delicious food. The park's outdoor stage was the perfect setting for the children's costume parade.

Thank you to our local businesses:

Christian Brothers Emergency Building Services | Dixieline Lumber | Heritage of the Americas Museum | Jiu Jitsu Foundation | McGrath YMCA | Menchies Frozen Yogurt | La Mesa Springs | Move Fitness & Dance | Think your T-Shirt | Wagner's School of Music | Young Actors Theatre | The Hills Local Pub | Marcel Authentic Belgian Waffles Food Truck | Balloon Art Ministry | Rock Church Face Painting Ministry

Special thanks to:

Shuttles provided by Foothills Christian Church

Live Music by Lenny and the Lounge Lizards

San Diego County Sheriff's Department RSD - Deputy Daniel Sloppye and his Patrol SUV

Volunteers - GMIA, SPRITES of East County, Bardin Family, Mike Harrod, Joseph Brennan, and Kathy Deane.



Mt. Helix Park

From the Top is a semi-annual publication of Mt. Helix Park.

To contact the Editor call 619-741-4363 or email nroberts@mthelixpark.org. © Copyright 2017 Mt. Helix Park

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Bring in your used ink cartridges and we will recycle them with profits going directly to Mt. Helix Park. Drop them in our mail box (located behind the stage) anytime or stop by the under-stage office Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 9 am until noon.





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www.mthelixpark.org

From the Executive Director

CHRISTMAS CAROLING ATOP MT. HELIX RETURNS FOR THE 27TH YEAR

The spring, summer, and fall seasons yielded several successful community events at the Park, from a gorgeous Easter morning sunrise service to a warm summer



Nicole Roberts
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mt. Helix Park Foundation

evening star-party, rounded out by a spirited Halloween family festival. As we move into the holiday season, I look forward to my role in producing the 27th annual Christmas Caroling event at Mt. Helix Park—one rich in tradition which has become a top-priority holiday celebration in our community. The Park is open at night only three times a year, and the views during the month of December are even more spectacular with so many homes around the hill decorated in festival holiday lighting. This year we are partnering with a local church which is sure to raise the attendance level. They will provide all the entertainment including solo, group and choir performances, plus a cookie decorating station for the little ones. There will be a mixed program of singing and discovery for your enjoyment as well as short stories about how several popular carols were created. Hot cocoa, coffee or cider will keep you warm and a holiday cookie provided by the SPRITES will add just the right touch. I suspect the most exciting element of the event will be the look on the children's faces when Santa hands them a special gift. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, December 16, so not to miss this most special holiday gathering in Mt. Helix this vear.

2017 Foundation Grants

Thank you to the following local foundations for supporting the Mt. Helix Park Foundation's preservation and enhancement projects.

\$2500 from SPRITES of East County

To support the amphitheater restoration work.

\$3500 from the Ed and Mary Fletcher Family Fund

To purchase new event rental supplies including white chairs, table linens, informational signage, and electrical equipment. These supplies will continue to generate revenue for the Foundation for years to come.



A gorgeous summer day for a Mt. Helix Park wedding enhanced by new white chairs purchased from the Ed and Mary Fletcher Family Fund grant.

DOUBLE Your Charitable Donation Towards Permanent Park Restrooms

Help us reach our \$50,000 goal by April 12, 2018—Mt. Helix Park's 93rd Birthday

Steve Spire, great-grandson to Cyrus Yawkey, and his wife, Marti Albrecht, have offered to match up to \$50,000 of charitable donations given to support the building of permanent Park restrooms—a top Foundation priority currently under the direction of the Capital Improvement Committee. Tens of thousands of visitors come to Mt. Helix Park each year, and while not glamorous, raising

or call the Park office at 619-741-4363 for more information. \blacksquare

funds for restrooms for the Park is vital. This will be the largest capital improvement in

the Foundation's history, and we thank
Steve and Marti for providing both the
matching funds and the inspiration for
all of us to contribute to this major
project. No donation is too small!
Please visit our link to the Permanent
Park Restroom Matching Challenge
Campaign at:

www.mthelixpark.org/permanent-restrooms

Steve Spire and Marti Albrecht



10th Annual heART of Mt. Helix Embraces Change

By: Peggy Junker

ndaunted by change, the 25-person heART of Mt. Helix planning committee has consistently embraced new ideas for the "Party on the Hill," keeping the event fresh, energized and meeting fundraising goals for this one-of-a-kind nature Park and amphitheater.

Ultimately raising more than \$117,000, slightly surpassing this year's goal, the committee annually faces the challenge of raising more than one-third of the Park's yearly budget in a single evening.

Executive Director, Nicole Roberts, highlighted some of this year's significant changes, starting with a new point of entry behind the stage rather than at the parking lot. She stated that this, combined with a remote check-in process made a huge difference. "It's probably the most significant alteration that we have made to the event in the past 10 years. It had a positive affect on the event because it created a warmer, friendlier entrance where people could flow into the event."

Another first for this year's heART was master of ceremony, Zack Krone, from California Coast Auctions.

"Zack brought a high level of energy, charm and fun—ultimately helping us raise record-breaking revenues for both our live auction which netted \$20,000 and paddle raise pledges which brought in \$85,000," noted Roberts.

Infusing new energy into the fine-art exhibit, committee member Roz Oserin introduced a juried art contest with Mt. Helix Park images as its theme. Highlighting the work of contemporary local artists aligned with the heart's tradition of showcasing the historic association of Mt. Helix with the arts. Winning artwork from the July juried show were exhibited at the event and heART committee member Susan Conklin's entry was featured on the invitation cover and program.

Some things, thankfully, did not change. For the fourth straight year, the tone of the event peaked as the crowd danced to the Mighty Untouchables. Similarly, celebrated beverage companies

such as the Ballast Point Brewery (which has participated since the inception of the event), Helix Brewery, and St. Petersburg Vodka, as well as a variety of culinary vendors, returned to provide a delicious selection of local food and drinks. All of these establishments donated their time, goods and services to ensure the Park's continuing success.

At the core of it all is Mt. Helix's exceptional volunteer spirit. As Roberts explained, "The fundraising success of the heART would not be possible without the amazing volunteers who give so much time and devotion to making this the premier summer party on Mt Helix. We are fortunate to have so many service groups and individuals alike who genuinely enjoy helping the foundation with this annual event. We strive to keep the planning and coordination lighthearted and fun which contributes to the retention of our committed volunteers," she added. For more information on the heART of Mt. Helix event and how you can become involved, contact Nicole Roberts at nroberts@mthelixpark.org.









the hearT of mt helix





Karen Eames - Hernquist
Small Business Consultant
Special thanks to

for providing tonight's linens.

Sponsor

2017 heART Paddle Raisers Succeed in Meeting Their Challenge

The Frank Goicoechea Family

Total pledges from the live auction paddle raise set a record at this year's heART bringing in \$85,000. The excitement kicked off with an initial matching challenge of \$15,000 put forth by Ron and Mary Alice Brady which was immediately matched by generous Park supporters Susan and Cliff Clifford. When the pledge level reached \$1000, the Brady's offered an additional \$10,000 matching challenge that was achieved quickly with 14 raised hands. The Mt. Helix Park Foundation is fortunate and grateful for the outpouring of support from this portion of the fundraising event. The cash donations from the paddle raise accounted for roughly 70% of the total net event revenue. Many thanks to Ron and Mary Alice Brady for encouraging and motivating others through their major giving support.

Thank you to our \$5000+ paddle raise donors:

Mary Alice and Ron Brady | Susan and Cliff Clifford

Eric and Babs Fletcher | Valerie and Norm Hapke

Alice and Joe Smith

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT **Joseph Brennan**

by Nicole Roberts

n this issue, the Mt. Helix Park Foundation honors Retired Army Avionics Technician Joseph Brennan for dedicating over 50 hours of his time to assist the Foundation's Vice President of Facilities, Jeff Swiney, to re-paint 137 four-sided steel posts that surround the Mary Carpenter Yawkey Memorial Cross — a maintenance job that has been on the Park's to-do list for several years.

Brennan was first introduced to Park staff in April of 2017 when he was exercising in the newly landscaped area in front of the Park office with his contact staff — a type of workout he enjoys, as it employs natural body movements to spin a staff without using the fingers or thumbs. Brennan said it was the first time he realized there was a Park office. He was pleased to learn more about the Foundation's volunteer opportunities because, since age 12, he's been driven to do all he can to keep the Park, which he considers a very special place, clean and maintained for all to enjoy.

Within a few months, Brennan's passion for the Park became very apparent as he grew increasingly involved in various volunteer opportunities including helping set up Park events, working on Park clean up days, and assisting with trail maintenance. It was not long before staff and board members felt confident approaching him for help because he could be trusted to get the job done right with little supervision. When asked last June if he would be interested in helping paint the cross fence, he answered, "It would be an honor." According to Swiney, during his 10 years on the board, he has never heard that type of response from a volunteer, and it really impressed him.

Brennan and Swiney spent almost 100 hours on the fence painting project challenged by the summer heat, scheduling conflicts and the pressure to finish by the heART fundraiser. Regardless of these hurdles, they were motivated by the desire to do a professional job and took the necessary time to prep all four sides of the posts by hand sanding the rust and loose paint, applying a special agent for galvanized steel, and finally painting a coat of primer. To ensure the small crevices of the finial tops were stripped, Brennan used a special sanding brush from his own tool collection. Not only was the goal to produce long lasting results, but also to enhance the beauty of the fence itself. As Swiney affirms, "The finished product speaks for itself."

When Brennan was asked what the most interesting thing he experienced during this rather mundane project, he replied, "All the wildlife I saw." Luckily, Brennan was able to use his phone to capture a picture of an unusual insect that jumped into his view one day. He later learned it is called a Green Lynx Spider. Other wildlife he noticed included butterflies, hawks, ravens, falcons, and even a praying mantis.



Volunteer Joseph Brennan contributed 50 hours of his time and talents to help repaint the fencing around the memorial cross. Attention to detail was a top priority every step of the project. Brennan uses a special power tool sander to prep 137 finial tops.



Financially speaking, Brennan and Swiney saved the foundation roughly \$2000 in contracted labor costs. The value of their time, dedication, and skillful talents enhancing this treasured landmark is simply priceless. Tens of thousands of people view the Memorial Cross every year, and the Foundation is very fortunate to have individuals like Brennan and Swiney, who volunteer to serve us with honor, ultimately leaving the Park a much better place because of their efforts.



Brennan's photo of a Green Lynx spider captured during the brief moment it held still.

Turning the Park Back Over to Nature

by: Peggy Junker

Since the creation of the Habitat Restoration Team four years ago and the subsequent Adopt-A-Plot program, Mt. Helix Park has seen a steady improvement in the health of its native landscape. The introduction of more than 300 California native plants to slopes along the Yawkey Trail and the consistent removal of invasive weeds have paved the way for a healthier ecosystem. Evidence of this are the number of birds, insects and other wildlife visible in the Park as well as the fact that plants which should be propagating themselves, are doing just that.

The restoration teams have been busy in 2017. So far five official work-days were devoted solely to the removal of invasive mustard, especially along the western slopes, leaving space for the native buckwheat that dominates the terrain to reseed itself. A steady stream of Adopt-A-Plot volunteers have come in week after week, some even using vacation time to clear their plots to keep the tide of progress going.

California native plant enthusiast and Mt. Helix Park board member, Ed Piffard, says the Park looks better than it has in years. Looking past the seasonal browning that happens with most indigenous plants, Piffard predicts most will green-up with the rainy season.

Seeing the change in the Park reminds us all that what we are doing is, in fact, affecting change. If we weren't making a difference, this level of effort would be difficult to sustain. Always looking for new helping hands, the Park still has plenty of plots available for adoption and we invite anyone who wants to be part of this great effort to do so.



To join the Habitat Restoration Team or to Adopt-A-Plot, contact pjunker@mthelixpark.org or call the office at (619) 741-4363. Shown here are a few of the California native plant species successfully self-propagating this year.



Eschscholzia californica,
CALIFORNIA POPPY



Artemisia californica,
ARTEMESIA



Eriogonum fasciculatum,
BUCKWHEAT



Lupinus hirsutissimus, LUPINE



Legend Rotsart and Mt. Helix Park Vice President of Facilities, Jeff Swiney, discuss project plans on site.

Eagle Scout Project Gives Park Habitat Restoration A Boost

by: Peggy Junker

Mt. Helix Park Foundation directors voted unanimously in favor of 13-year-old Legend Rotsart's Eagle Scout project which he presented during the 2017 October Mt. Helix Park Foundation board meeting. Thanks to Rotsart, the Park is slated to receive a permanent irrigation system in an area that is currently being hand watered as part of the Park's ongoing restoration efforts.

Legend and recruits from among family and friends will begin work in late November. In the meantime, Rotsart has launched a Go Fund Me account titled, "Legend's Eagle Scout Project," in hopes of raising \$675.54 needed to purchase approximately 150 feet of ¾ inch PVC pipe and 12-inch riser sprinkler-heads which will be placed every 12 feet in the affected area.

Rotsart says he and his family have been visiting and volunteering at Mt. Helix Park for years, adding that the idea of contributing to it as part of his Eagle Scout project is "amazing."

"On multiple occasions I walk up in the morning just to see the view from the top of the Park," said Rotsart. "When I was younger I would go there to explore the trails. I've been to the Park so many times and it doesn't get old – there is always something new to see there," he added.





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Please visit www.mthelixpark.org and from the home page select "Contact Us" to send your email to be included in the electronic magazine distribution. Park members will continue to receive a mailed hardcopy of the magazine.

Make a Year-End Gift: Become a Friend of the Park.

Become a Park Member

Please consider becoming a "Friend of the Park" member by making a tax deductible donation in the enclosed envelope. Your donation helps ensure Mt. Helix Park remains an oasis of beauty in our community by supporting on-going operations and free public programs.



News from the Board...

The Mt. Helix Park Foundation applauds the Casa de Oro Alliance for their efforts leading to a funding approval of \$50,000 from the County Board of Supervisors for a professional urban planner to assist them in revitalizing the business district along Campo Road. The Mt. Helix Park Foundation endorsed the CDOA's request for urban planning assistance in a letter dated last June to Supervisor Dianne Jacob. Improvements to the Casa de Oro community, a mere two miles from Mt. Helix, will have a positive effect on the safety, upkeep, and programming at the Park. The Foundation thanks CDOA for their hard work and wishes them continued success.

CALENDAR OF FREE PARK EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 16, 4 - 7 p.m. **27th annual Sing-along Christmas Caroling**

Enjoy a Mt. Helix tradition complete with Santa Claus, Christmas caroling, hot cocoa and cookies. Parking and shuttles will be available in the lower lots at the intersection of Vivera and Mt. Helix Drive near the San Miguel fire station.

Sat. Jan. 6, 10 a.m. to Noon **GMIA Walk up Mt. Helix**

Walkers will gather at the Fire Station on Vivera and walk to the summit for this traditional neighborhood event. At the amphitheater, enjoy live music, tasty refreshments, and the beauty of this unique community.

Weekly, M-W-F, 9 to 10:15 a.m. Yoga in the Park

Lower Amphitheater Stage: This drop-in class is designed for all levels of experience. Every day and every class is new, different and special. All you need to bring is a mat (or towel), water and an openmind. Suggested donation \$10-15 or students are asked to join the Friends of the Park annual membership program.







2017 heART Donors

Thank you to the following business and individuals for contributing to the 2017 heART of Mt. Helix through a gift of time, product, or service. Contact Nicole Roberts at 619-741-4363 to support the 2018 heART with a sponsorship or auction item donation.

heART Committee Members

Dianne McCann. Chair Kimberly Bardin Donna Bloomer Emmy Camarena Sam Carr Dick Conklin Susan Conklin Jamie French Claudia Hicks Chuck McPherson Rhona Moore Colleen Olsen Roz Oserin Anice Plikaytis Ammy Provancha Mary Qualls Mike Qualls Betsy Quinn Christopher Quinn Larisa Rotsart Kimberly Sant Marlette Seward Ruth Simpson Sharon Smith Kathy White

Tasting Booths and Beverages

Anthony's Fish Grotto Ballast Point **Brigantine** Cali Comfort BBQ Casa de Pico D'Amatos Pizza **Dream Dinners Edible Arrangements** Helix Brewing Company Himalayan Cuisine Hoolev's Menchie's Frozen Yogurt Pick up Stix Posh Nosh St. Petersburg Vodka Terra American Bistro The Edge Mediterranean Grill The Hills Local Pub Vom Fass

Musicians

Adrian Ahearn The Jamacha Project Tom Hawk The Mighty Untouchables Carlos Velasco

Live Demo Artists

Sally Ault Nora Clemens-Gallo Chuck McPherson Penny Quirk

Table Centerpieces

Marlette and Dave Seward Direct Sheetmetal, Inc.

Auction Items

Mark and Maria Allan The Clarendon Hotel AnnMarie Provancha and LaMar B. Brown Gloria Applegate Mike and Stacy Atkinson Sally Ault Barona Bay Club Fairbanks Ranch Belmont Park Jennifer Bennett Bikes and Beyond **Bradford Renowned Portraiture** Mirjam Butz Brown Marilyn Brucker California Center for the Arts Carnegie Hall CBS: The Dr. Phil Show **Continental Catering** Coronado Playhouse

Jimer and Jack DeVries Dream Inn East County Family YMCA Elite Island Resorts **Embassy Suites Santa Ana** Jacuzzi Family Vineyards Dr John C Fleming Eric and Babs Fletcher Fossil Trace Golf Club Cyndi Gant Connie Garrett

Golden Gate Hotel and Casino Grand Lux Cafe Nora Clemens-Gallo John Grasberger Caroline Harrod Marcella Hernandez

Leah Higgins Hiller Aviation Hilton San Diego Hotel del Sol Hotel Irvine

I P Casino Resort and Spa Ideal Plumbing

In-n-Out Burger Al and Janet Johnstone **Enhancery Jewelers** Larry Kennard Kings Seafood Company Anne Kobernick

KPBS La Jolla Music Society Le Vigne Winery

Mainly Mozart **Gaston Martinez** Dianne McCann Chuck McPherson

Miracle Springs Resort and Spa Mission San Juan Capistrano Morongo Casino Resort and Spa, an enterprise of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians Tribal

Government

Mt. Helix Park Foundation New Orleans Paddlewheels

New Village Arts

North Coast Repertory Theatre

Dan and Roz Oserin Palm Springs Air Museum Paradise Cove Cafe

Pariah Jim Perez

Pioneer Hotel

Porto Elounda Resort Potomac Riverboat Company

Poway On Stage **Punch Productions** Mary and Mike Qualls Penelope Quirk RCP Block and Brick

Nicole Roberts **Rowley Portraits**

San Diego Air and Space

Museum

San Diego Zoo Global San Diego Ballet

San Francisco Ballet **Bernerd Santos**

Sawdust Art Festival

Shadow Mountain Resort and

Small Luxury Hotels of the World

Alice and Joe Smith

Sony Interactive Entertainment Spring Valley Veterinary Clinic,

Dr. Gary and Ruth Simpson Springs at Borrego

Terra American Bistro, Chef Jeff Rossman The Antigua Group The French Gourmet **Urban Decay Cosmetics** Verde Canyon Railroad

Vom Foss

Wailea Beach Resort Wheel Fun Rentals Wheel of Fortune

Yosemite Mountain Railroad Zanies Comedy Clubs

Fleet Science Center Vault PK San Diego

Potted Plant Rental

Rancho Valhalla Nursery

Entertainers Meals

The Lunch Box

Golf Cart Rental

Anne Erdman Cottonwood Electric Cart Service

Art Gallery Space for Jury Show

Nainsook Framing + Art

Merchandise Printing

Think Your T-Shirt

Linen Cleaners

Mart Cleaners

Volunteer Groups

Boy Scout Troop 319 Delta Airline Flight Attendants **East County Transitional**

Learning Center

Just Serve

SPRITES of East County

Valhalla High School Boys' Water Polo team members

Local Pageant Title Holders

Marlene Reerksen

Miss La Mesa Heather Bardin Miss Rancho Jamul Jennifer Shorez Miss Singing Hills Kaylyn Rambo Miss Teen Rancho Jamul Erin O'Brien Miss Teen Singing Hills Emily Camacho Miss Teen Santee Kamryn Correll Miss San Diego Cities Teen

Mt. Helix Park Lecture Series Presents

"Restoring California Native Plants through Eradication of Invasive Species"



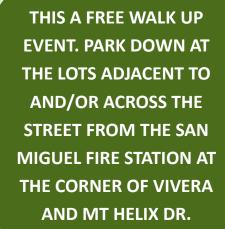
San Diego Audubon Society

Saturday, November 18

9 a.m.—11 a.m.

Mt. Helix Park Amphitheater

Good for anyone landscaping with native plants around the yard, or wanting to learn how this balance affects open space.







A free traditional holiday gathering at Mt. Helix Park

Saturday, December 16 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Join us for our 27th annual sing-a-long atop Mt. Helix! Come discover the stories behind Christmas carols and sing along as the Nativity from Luke 2 is reenacted. There will be a special visit from Santa Claus, the icing of sugar cookies, warm drinks, as well as a special surprise for the first 300 little boys and girls in attendance.



MT. HELIX PARK FOUNDATION



PARKING

Parking and complimentary shuttle lots are located at the intersection of Vivera Dr. and Mt. Helix Dr. near the San Miguel fire station and at Grossmont High School. Shuttles will begin at 4 p.m. and run continuously throughout the event. The last shuttle ride down the mountain will be 7:45 p.m.