

Mt. Helix Park's Magazine

# FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 14 FALL/WINTER 2019-2020



MT. HELIX PARK  
FOUNDATION

*Dedicated to Preserving  
Mt. Helix Nature Theatre and Park*

**ASTRONOMY  
NIGHT  
ATTENDANCE  
SKYROCKETS**

**13<sup>th</sup> annual  
heART of  
Mt. Helix  
A Culinary Stroll  
in the PARK**

**The GOOD BUGS  
of Mt. Helix**

**Volunteer  
Spotlight**

#### PARK HOURS

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

NATURE | EVENTS | LOCAL HISTORY | PEOPLE | PRESERVATION



# Make A Difference!

OUR MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS, AND DONORS ALLOW  
US TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND KEEP THE PARK  
OPEN FOR ALL TO ENJOY.

## Memberships Start At Just \$35

Park members receive invitations to Members Only  
events and Discount Admission to all events.

### Our Purpose

"To promote knowledge and culture, to relieve the  
distressed in body, mind and spirit, to cultivate a love  
for beauty in art and nature, to foster an interest in  
the love of music and elevate and refine mankind."

- Yawkey Family Trust governing Mt. Helix Park

[MtHelixPark.org](http://MtHelixPark.org)

## 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 [pjunker@mthelixpark.org](mailto:pjunker@mthelixpark.org). © Copyright 2019 Mt. Helix Park

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(located behind the stage) anytime or stop by  
the under-stage office Monday, Wednesday or  
Friday from 9 a.m. until noon.



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[www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org)

Krista Powers

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR



## From the Executive Director

**M**t. Helix Park has been a part of my life for over 40 years. As a little girl, I played among its boulders and trees. Growing up as a resident, I remember the 2 A.M. helicopters and crime before the Foundation took over the Park. I learned about volunteerism and activism advocating as a high school student for the Park and getting petitions signed. I was thankful when the Foundation was created to privatize the land and save the Park, in 1999 while I was away at Whittier College. During the 20 years I lived away from the area, I was still a frequent visitor when I came home to see my parents and take my mom to the heART. I have always taken pride in showing my friends from college and other parts of the world the beauty of Mt. Helix Park.

I love talking to people in our Park about where they are from, what they enjoy about the Park, and more. It is wonderful how many of our visitors are from out of town. Community members enjoy bringing their guests to show off our special place. Those who have moved away return for visits, and those who are tourists to San Diego seeking out a historical and awe-inspiring place of beauty come to our Park. This is in addition to our daily walkers, yogis, cyclists, stair runners, trail hikers, busy kids while mom and dad get some exercise, and those who just need a place to come and pray. Spend a few days in the Park and you will truly bear witness to how many purposes in life, regardless of demographics, the Park serves.

Personally, experiencing the Park through life's many stages (child, teenager, adult, wife, mother, resident, donor, volunteer, board member, executive director) has been eye-opening to not only the challenges but also the opportunities we have to preserve this historical place for future generations and our community.

We hope you enjoy this issue of From the Top. We have articles from experts on "The Importance of Hilltops" to our wildlife from Ed Piffard, native plant specialist, artist, and landscape designer. Jim Merzbacher, Dictionary Hill nature preserve founder, discusses "The Good Bugs of Mt. Helix." Our volunteer spotlight features board member Helgi Gudmundson who has brought a wealth of financial knowledge and advice on operational best practices to our board. His adorable dog Reva is one of our frequent furry visitors. You will also find a lovely recap of the heART, our unique annual Food and Wine Festival fundraiser, from our Assistant Executive Director Peggy Junker. We are already planning next year's event, heART of Rock N Roll, with themes focusing on decades of music in America. From Sock Hops to Hair Bands, we all have memories in the soundtracks of our lives.

The holidays are approaching, and we are taking a magical turn in the planning of our upcoming Christmas event! After more than one recommendation from our neighbors, we will bring a bit of a "European Christmas" to our 29th Annual event. Read more on page 12. ■

Norm Hapke  
PRESIDENT  
Mt. Helix Park  
Foundation



## From the Foundation President

**W**hile talking today with our assistant director, she told me about a recent memorial service at the Park. Her description of the family service and the mother's devotion to the Park was both touching and gratifying. We often tend to think about activities in the Park in economic terms, but one of the things that strikes me is we need to recognize how important our Park is in communal terms.

Some communities have man-made defining features. Indianapolis has a central square with a large statue commemorating soldiers and sailors that served from the Revolutionary War through the Spanish-American war. Others have physical features like a lake or shoreline. We are blessed to have in our community a defining feature that is both of these. That is, we have a mountain that is recognizable for miles from all around us. Additionally, we have a cross and amphitheater with a wonderful story that is meaningful to all our community. For many people it has come to represent a special place where celebrations of all kinds can take place, in beauty and solitude. It is also a fitting location for the kind of family and organizational functions that are so important to the life of our community. For those of us who are protectors and curators of this Park, we have both a blessing and calling.

In order to maintain the quality of our Park, we have, in conjunction with our city, placed signs explaining the pertinent regulations that will keep our Park beautiful, safe, and for everyone to use. We thank you for your cooperation in complying with these regulations for the enjoyment and pleasure of all. ■

## The Importance of Hilltops

by Ed Piffard, Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board Member and Horticultural Advisor

**I**t's hard to overstate the importance of hilltops in the beautiful ecology of Southern California. Many people are familiar with the diversity the microclimates on the slopes of hills and mountains create, but the tops, more importantly, are sanctuaries for plant rarities, and a vital playground for flying animals.

The upper slopes of Southern California's mountains are the last refuges for dozens of now rare plants that once carpeted much broader swaths of land during the last ice age. These relic populations, from a cooler, wetter time, need these crests for the lower temperatures and moisture from low passing clouds to survive. Many other rare plants grow only where unique volcanic soils are exposed upon which they have developed a dependency, creating niches for themselves and the insects that have made them their special home. San Diego County's hilltops and mountains are home to more endemic and endangered kinds of plants and insects than the hilltops of any other county in the continental US!

Hilltops are also the places where count-



Bridalveil poppy favors higher elevation with other Pleistocene plants

Photos by Ed Piffard



Dunn's Mariposa extremely rare mountain top endemic

less species of insects breed. On warm days, especially in late spring and early summer, you can see them swirling and staking out tiny territories on small branches and chasing away all comers. People mostly notice the butterflies that can gather so thickly they look like leaves in a dust devil. A closer look reveals there are dozens of kinds of native bees, and wasps, hover flies, robber flies, beetles, and veritable clouds of the tiniest of creatures. All these marvelous animals need hilltops to ensure that the females get the healthiest mates. Drawn to these mating games for a sumptuous feast are flights of swallows, phoebes, songbirds and shrikes. Squadrons of bats and nightjars make up the evening supper club.

Naturally humans are drawn to hilltops because, like our ancestors, we want to survey the land we live on and discover new places to explore down below. Nothing thrills a human like a view. Unfortunately, many of us want to possess and change these hilltops,

[See HILLTOPS on page 8](#)

## The GOOD Bugs of Mt. Helix

by Jim Merzbacher, Dictionary Hill Openspace Advocate/Biologist

**I**t should be recognized that there are many more insect and butterfly varieties on Mt. Helix than in surrounding neighborhoods. Why would that be?

The answer is diversity and, in this particular instance, plant diversity on Mt. Helix. A good friend involved in planning community parks in Pt. Loma, once exclaimed, "Here we have diversity. Look elsewhere at how many Cabbage Butterflies there are in the fields of nonnative Black Mustards and Crown Daisies." Originally from the Mediterranean region, nonnative invasives choked out our native species. For example, the little white Cabbage Butterflies, a native species, adapted to the thousands of acres of nonnative Mustard hosts that spread like wildfire over many years, indeed centuries. They enjoyed a population boom while most other species in Southern California did not. What resulted was the opposite of diversity.

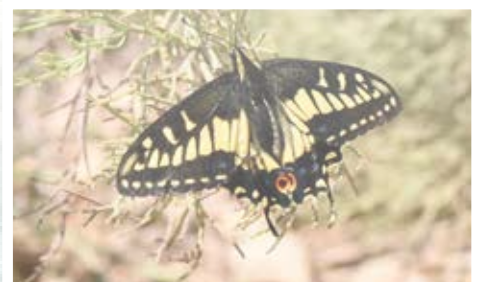
In 1968 there were 46+ species reported on Dictionary Hill, according to research done by Ogden Shields. Many of these were likely to be on Mt. Helix. They existed because of the myriad of native plants that served as food hosts for larvae of the numerous Fritillaries: 2 - 3 Checkerspot varieties, 2 - 3 Swallowtail varieties, Cabbages, Whites and Sulfurs, and Hairstreak Butterflies; they remained intact.

Mt. Helix has been beautifully restored to include many of those original native plant hosts, and this has allowed diverse insect varieties to return and survive. Recent studies, however, conducted on nearby Dictionary Hill in 2017-18 (Shiraiwa, Merzbacher) discovered fewer than half of the original 20th Century Butterfly species are in the area today.

[See BUGS on page 8](#)



Gray Hairstreak,  
photo by Jim Merzbacher



Anise Swallowtail Bacharris,  
photo by Jim Merzbacher

## Selecting Plants That Live

by Peggy Junker

At the core of Patrick Montgomery's landscaping philosophy is, planting for success. "You aren't going to be providing much habitat with dead plants," muses the nursery sales manager. While his advice seems obvious, achieving it can be another matter. Montgomery has been working for RECON Native Plants near Imperial Beach for the past seven years and he says when his customers choose from tried and true varieties, their success rate, and satisfaction levels increase.

Montgomery and RECON Native Plants have been the primary source for more than 500 individual California native plants that have been added to the Park's landscape since the creation of the Park's Habitat Restoration Group 6 years ago.

With a degree and background in landscape architecture, Montgomery also draws on experience working with several open-space projects such as San Elijo, the Tijuana River basin, Rancho Penasquitos and the San Diego Canyon lands.

What makes RECON unique is unlike most commercial nurseries, they employ two full-time botanists who collect seeds locally, thereby ensuring the plants they grow and sell are perfectly suited for this area.

Often combatting the misnomer that native plants make for a brown garden, Montgomery assures his customers that they can achieve a green landscape year-round with the right care.

While RECON is a wholesale nursery, they do occasionally open

their doors to the public. Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the next RECON Native Plants plant sale. Montgomery notes that this event will give gardeners and those landscaping their property the opportunity to buy plants that are not widely available at prices lower than what you would find at a garden center. ■

**FALL NATURE TALK**  
**SATURDAY NOV 2ND**  
**8:30 AM - 12 NOON**

*Plant for  
Success with  
California  
Natives*

**With Experts Patrick Montgomery  
from Recon Native Plants & Ann  
Baldrige from the Resource  
Conservation District.**

Parking is Limited  
Please RSVP for Parking Permit 619.741.4363  
or PJunker@MtHelixPark.org  
or Park at the Fire Station, 10105 Vivera, and  
enjoy a lovely half mile walk to the top.

**www.MtHelixPark.org**

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT Helgi Gudmundson

by Peggy Junker

For Helgi Gudmundson, the view looking out from the Park holds the strongest appeal, but for this native San Diegan and 40-year resident of Mt. Helix, looking inward holds the key to the Park's future.



Recruited onto the Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board of Directors by current President, Norm Hapke, Gudmundson says he has enjoyed observing the process the Board follows to conduct business.

"A lot of effort goes into making these decisions and trying to get the right decision made," observes Gudmundson. "It's a very different organizational method."

Having served previously as the CEO of an internet company and currently as the head of operations for a local loan company, he says he is used to the "command and control" style of a traditional business. He notes the Park board's management style is very different in that the melding of personalities has a strong impact on the outcome of every decision.

Locally born and raised, this Mt. Miguel High School/San Diego State University graduate brings a wealth of industry experience in both management and accounting to the board. Jumping in with both feet he has, in less than a year, served as the Park's Vice President of Operations, and served, as well, on the facilities and finance committees.

Known for his calm demeanor and effective style, Gudmundson has already helped to navigate the foundation through the hiring of a new executive director, the completion of a voluntary audit and the reorganization of its management and administration.

His goal for the Park is to achieve financial sustainability. He believes his ability to help forge a long-term vision of solvency will be contingent on the Park's significance to the community.

In order to accomplish this, Gudmundson asks himself, "How can we make the Park more important, so more people appreciate it, get the benefit of it, and enjoy it."

As for Gudmundson's personal connection to the Park, he added his name to the list of successful marriage proposals made atop this historic spot where he now serves. ■



Plein air painter Drew Bandish is among several artists who created pieces on the spot for sale at the event



Reflection of the cross in the Brigantine display



heART 2019 artists



heART 2019 wine pull booth

# the heART

## Another Comm

by Peggy Junker

**D**ressed up in a citrus theme with boutique lounge-style seating and a long list of local restaurant and beverage companies, the 12th annual heART of Mt. Helix was a success, raising just over \$80,000, a significant portion of the Park's operating budget for the year.

This year's heART committee had the privilege of working with more than 150 volunteers. Hats off and a bow to these men, women and kids who pitched in to produce the largest annual festival benefitting this historic non-profit Park. Simply put, this event could not take place without them.

Organizations represented included Sprites of East County, East County Transitional Living, Just Serve, The La Mesa Shrub Club, Boy Scouts of America, and the East County pageant winners.

More than a dozen restaurants, serving some of East County's most loved dishes, supported this event. They included local favorites Anthony's Fish Grotto, Brigantine, Broken Yolk, Casa de Pico, Cooking For Life, D'Amato's Pizza, The Grill at Vine Ripe, The Hills, Hooleys, The Lunch Box, Pick Up Stix, and Terra American Bistro. Brew Coffee Spot, Café Caramel, Sweet Bouffant, Menchie's Frozen Yogurt and Mary's Donuts provided coffee and delicious desserts.

Adding credence to the event's new title "Food, Wine & Art Festival" were local wineries San Pasqual, Cielo, Bartenura, Trevi Hills and Herzog. Representing the local brew scene were Ballast Point, Bolt Brewery, Creative Creature, Helix Brewing and



Donna Bloomer  
Susan & Dick  
Conklin  
Claudia Hicks  
Jason Kardos

### THANK

### 2019 heART

### ch

Dianne

Celina La

Chuck M

Roz C

Anice P

Ammy P

Mike & M

## GET INVOLVED

Come be a part of our fun  
heART committee!

We have something for everyone.

Call or Email Krista:  
619.985.1445

KPowers@MtHelixPark.org

# of mt helix

## Community Success

Mike Hess Brewery. Rounding out the evening with tastings were St. Petersburg Vodka and Malahat Spirits Co. Rum.

"I think the opportunity to get to know wineries in the area gave our guests a tasteful view of what's out there," observed restaurant co-coordinator Donna Bloomer, who worked with partner Ruth Simpson to bring on board this year's local food vendors. Bloomer recalled one guest who excitedly confessed to discovering one of her personal favorites, San Pasqual's locally-famous Summer Vine Habanero Passionfruit Wine.

"Our personal contact with each restaurant owner lets them know how appreciative we are for their generous donation of food-tastings and time. They jump at the chance to be involved in this event," Bloomer exclaimed, adding that the one-on-one attention she and Simpson devote to each vendor has made recruiting these restaurants easier every year.

Bringing the Art portion of the event to a whole new level were five plein air artists, in addition to eight other fine artists, who created works of art on the spot. Their talents, in addition to pieces from this year's juried art show, produced a visual feast. For a glimpse of the winners of the juried art contest, visit [Nainsookframing.com](http://Nainsookframing.com) website.

## Thank you!

### Committee

Chair  
McCann

framboise  
cPherson  
Oserin  
likaytis  
rovancha  
ary Qualls



Ruth Simpson  
Sharon Smith  
Don Teemsma  
Frank & Emmy  
Uotani

Already in the works are plans for next year's event themed "heART of Rock N Roll." Check the website for dates and details at [www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org).

To find out about how you can become involved with the heART of Mt. Helix event as a volunteer or sponsor, contact Krista Powers at [kpowers@mthelixpark.org](mailto:kpowers@mthelixpark.org) or call her directly at (619) 985-1445. ■



Auctioneer Zack Krone entertains prospective bidders during the live auction



Good Mojo Band singer Chloe Liddell enjoys the crowd before her performance. The Good Mojo Band closed out the event with dancing under the stars



American Idol veteran Mica Gianconi performs flawlessly at the upper stage

## SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY  
SEP 12  
2020

*The heART of ROCK N' ROLL*

EAST COUNTY'S PREMIER

**FOOD, WINE & ART**

FESTIVAL

Benefiting Mt Helix Park

FROM SOCK HOPS TO HAIR BANDS, WE CELEBRATE MUSIC THROUGH THE DECADES.

SPONSORSHIPS

KRISTA POWERS  
[KPowers@mthelixpark.org](mailto:KPowers@mthelixpark.org)  
619.985.1445



Perched on a vintage truck, Alexandria Junker performs for guests at the entrance

# Astronomy Night Draws Record Numbers

by Peggy Junker

**A**stronomy Night coordinators experienced record-breaking numbers as shuttle after shuttle brought visitors to the Park's annual star-gazing event on the evening of Saturday, September 14th. Eight hundred fifty community members participated this year, far exceeding previous years which topped out between 100 and 200 guests.

While the lights at the memorial cross were switched off to highlight the night sky for Park visitors, lines formed allowing guests to view the heavens from the hilltop through 9 high-powered telescopes provided by members of the San Diego Astronomy Association (SDAA).

Visible were the moonrise, Venus in the west and Saturn in the south, as well as Scorpius, Sagittarius, Pegasus and Andromeda. Also visible were several galaxies and star clusters.

Powered by Mt Helix Park Foundation board members, Executive Director Krista Powers and a handful of Just Serve and other volunteers, in conjunction with the SDAA, this event is one of only three evenings the Park holds after-dark events.

Since 2014, the SDAA has been partnering with Mt. Helix Park to bring Astronomy Night to the public. This year's turnout spoke volumes to Park coordinators about its growing popularity and has prompted them to consider limiting future attendance by requiring guests to RSVP.

"Astronomy Night 2019 far surpassed our expectations and the attendance was the highest in history," Powers pointed out. "We are so lucky to be blessed with so many wonderful volunteers and board members. Without the support of our community, we could never pull off an event like this." She noted that Dave Duncan and the SDAA bring not only their telescopes, but also their cumulative knowledge to share with all the attendees, adding a level of technology and expertise to the evening that would otherwise not be possible. ■



Photo above by Gary Junker, below by Judy Meeker



For more information about the San Diego Astronomy Association or for a list of the organization's upcoming events, visit their website at [www.sdaa.com](http://www.sdaa.com).

For information about next year's Astronomy Night, check the Park's website at [www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org).

BUGS from page 5

How can those charismatic varieties be increased? By gardening with our own diverse San Diego native plant species. Some of these beneficial native plants are Wild Lilac, San Diego Sunflower, Chaparral Snapdragon, Chaparral Pea, California Sagebrush, Deerweed, Flat-topped Buckwheat, California Fuchsias and Monkeyflowers. One particularly beneficial plant is Native Narrow Leafed Milkweed. This graceful native is a gold mine for native insects, from Monarch Butterflies to Milkweed Bugs and, although rare, the elegant Orange Tarantula Hawks. Monkeyflowers and other long tubular flowers have attracted numerous pollinators that hadn't been seen in large numbers for years. Insects inadvertently pollinate all of these native flowers while feeding upon them, of course. Often a nectar source for Hummingbirds, the long straw shaped mouthparts of the Striped Hawk Moth also feeds on Monkeyflowers and native California Fuchsias. Because of its size, it is often called the Hummingbird Moth. Seeing this dazzling brightly colored Moth is always breathtaking and you will want to have your phone camera or other camera ready. The Hawk Moth needs our local natives like the plants at Mt. Helix Park and nearby Dictionary Hill.

For native butterflies and insects, I always tell my gardener friends, "Plant natives and the native insects will come." ■

HILLTOPS from page 5

placing our houses and palms and roads across them. This not only wipes out the rare plants but makes it extremely difficult for the insects. Lack of native nectaring sources, scraped away cover, and pesticides dramatically disrupt the ancient breeding games.

Much of the top of Mount Helix was preserved as a nature park and so today you can still witness a portion of the insect fiestas. Sadly, the rare relic Pleistocene plants are gone. At Mount Helix Park we are eliminating invasive weeds to encourage the growth of the native pioneer plants on the southern and western slopes, and the more mature chaparral on the northern and eastern slopes. This is where we can use your help. We need more volunteers to adopt a plot to water and weed! Nothing gives a person more joy than being in on nature's secrets. ■

# Riding to the Top



Albert Ayala at Mt Helix Park

Photos by Peggy Junker



Hope Sports Riders



Mark Allan and his crew

by Peggy Junker

It is a warm fall morning at Mt. Helix Park and Hope Sports riders crest the summit as they have been doing almost every Thursday for the past 15 years.

"The climb is very good for our training," explains team rider Roberto Gallegos, "plus we do a little bit of meditation, 5 to 10 minutes, when we get up here." The crew is part of a non-profit whose mission is to unite athletes through service to the poor and to be catalysts for positive change.

Gallegos and co-rider, Kanno Rosario, said they begin their ride at 8 A.M., gathering at a café in Bonita before beginning the 12-mile trek to the Park. One of the riders, Isreal Rangel, rides all the way from Mexico, joining the others along the way to the Park and bringing his tally for the day to 55 miles round trip.

Sitting atop the rock wall, in the shade of the Park's

Jacaranda tree, today's crew is smaller than usual, Rosario says. Four in total, they take in the view and a few moments to cool down before their descent.

Like Gallegos and his team, Albert Alaya enjoys the climb that Mt. Helix offers. "It's one of the few climbs that's near the center of the city," says the North Park resident adding that Mt. Helix and Mt. Soledad are his two favorite hills, but the higher climb here, coupled with the view, put this destination at the top of his list.

A healthcare professional at nearby Sharp Grossmont Hospital, Ayala says the proximity to his work makes the ride here ideal. In fact, muses this native San Diegan and SDSU graduate, he doesn't recall visiting the Park by any other means.

"My first time ever on Mt. Helix was through bicycling," he recalls. "After all these years, now that I think about it, I've never driven up there. I've always biked!" ■



## DOCENT VOLUNTEERS WANTED

- DO YOU LIKE PEOPLE AND LOVE THE PARK?
- WANT TO SHARE THE RICH HISTORY WITH VISITORS?

**JOIN OUR NEWEST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

**TRAINING PROVIDED**

EMAIL - PJUNKER@MTHELIXPARK.ORG OR CALL - 619.741.4363



## THANK YOU

Major Supporting Families of Mt. Helix Park:  
**Albrecht ~ Allan ~ Brady ~ Hagge**  
**~ Hapke ~ Fisher ~ Fletcher ~**  
**Spire ~ Tuckey**

## Habitat Restoration Volunteers

COME VOLUNTEER WITH US THE  
 FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 9 AM

Upcoming Workdays:

Dec 7, Jan 4, Feb 1, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2

All volunteers are welcome to participate. Learn from experienced native habitat team leaders, meet other gardening enthusiasts, give children the gift of nature, and enjoy a morning of restoration.

For more info or to RSVP: [pjunker@MthelixPark.org](mailto:pjunker@MthelixPark.org) or 619.741.4363

## A Gathering Place

by Krista Powers

Since the late 1800s, Mt. Helix Park has been a "Gathering Place" for both people and wildlife. In this world full of devices, lacking in the feeling of community, where people do not know their neighbors, we provide a safe space for togetherness. A place where individuals can convene, meet their neighbors, make friends, and find joy in our beautifully preserved piece of nature. At 1300 feet, it's possible to let the hustle and bustle of the large city below wash away. Our wildlife seems to enjoy congregating at Mt. Helix's peak as well. Butterflies meet with each other to dance about, often referred to as "hill-topping," and our resident hawks expand their families in our trees. I even have a friendly lizard I call "Hank" greet me in the mornings.

Mt. Helix Park also is where visitors form life-long friendships. Whether you are "breathing in" a morning yoga class, joining our community volunteer days, helping with one of our wonderful events, or just taking in the peacefulness and views along the Yawkey Trail, Mt Helix Park provides a place for people of all ages to commune with nature and each other.

We have a plethora of bugs, lizards, birds, and wildlife from which to learn, whether from an infant's viewpoint seeing creatures for the first time or your own reflecting on the variety of species you encounter while enjoying the warmth of the sun.

From the largest humans I watch enjoying the sense of community at our events and volunteer days to the tiniest creatures I see interacting with each other among our native plants, Mt. Helix is a special place for every living thing. From the Pollinators to the People, Mt. Helix Park serves all. ■



From the Pollinators  
to the People,  
Mt. Helix Park  
serves all.

## Welcome 1925 Conservation Society Business Member

Last winter it came to our attention that the pump house located next to our beautiful Yawkey Trail was facing severe erosion issues around it from people continually jumping on the roof. The board looked at several possibilities for repair and solicited bids. It seemed it was going to take a valiant fundraising effort to fix the issues.



Around the same time, board member Caroline Harrod was in the process of a renovation on her home. She asked her contractor, Steve Martin, owner of Harvest Construction, to come and take a look. That evening Steve called Caroline and told her they would be more than happy to donate their time, labor, and engineering efforts to put a pitched roof on the building. This roof would ensure that people would not continue jumping on it, hence mitigating the erosion problems and trash around the building.

Materials donated by Harvest Construction, La Mesa Lumber and the Home Depot in El Cajon brought the project to full completion in just one day. The result is beautiful!

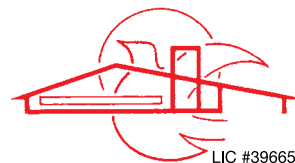
Additionally, Harvest Construction just became our newest business supporter of Mt. Helix Park at the \$1,925 level. We thank Harvest Construction for donating not only to our Pump House Project but also financially contributing at a level that will truly help cover the costs of our upcoming FREE community Christmas event on December 7th. There is talk they are even going to build a manger scene for us. ■

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Est. 1980



LIC #396659

# Mt. Helix Park 2020

by Krista Powers

The original founders of Mt. Helix Park, a son and daughter honoring their mother, which was made possible through the generosity of their friend, Colonel Fletcher, truly understood what Mt. Helix Park would mean to the community long after they were gone. In 1925, they documented their understanding in the trust that governs the Park to this day.

## OUR MISSION

*"To promote knowledge and culture, to relieve the distressed in body, mind and spirit, to cultivate a love for beauty in art and nature, to foster an interest in the love of music and elevate and refine mankind."*

It is beautiful to see a mission statement that transcends generations and still rings true to this day. The Foundation board, Peggy, and I, understand the responsibility and significant task we have to ensure our Park continues to serve the community for generations to come. We are SO THANKFUL for the many volunteers and donors who make this all possible.

As I began my Executive Director tenure in March, I quickly realized 2019 would represent a time for the Park to identify what we can do better. We

have updated policies, cracked down (addressed?) on security issues, provided more benefits to our members, and embarked on new software systems. Our members can now easily track donations and receive discounts or free tickets to events through their own login. As we continue to build out this platform, we will soon have a volunteer module available that will allow people to easily sign up and select the volunteer opportunities they enjoy most. We also have a new digital monthly newsletter to keep everyone abreast of the happenings in the Park. If you are not receiving it and would like to, please shoot me an email at [KPowers@MtHelixPark.org](mailto:KPowers@MtHelixPark.org).

2019 also saw community businesses come together in support of Mt. Helix Park. Harvest Construction, La Mesa Lumber, and Home Depot in El Cajon, together, donated the labor and materials to build a much-needed pitched roof on an old pump house built by the county. This action has not only beautified the Park, but also reduced the amount of erosion, trash, and vandalism caused by people previously jumping onto the flat roof. This project could have been costly for our nonprofit, and we greatly appreciate their support. We saw help from Morales Tree Service and

Mt. Helix Bees who donated their time to help with tasks in the Park. We also greatly appreciate EDCO's donating and then removing bins for our volunteer work days.

In November, our board will be gathering for an annual retreat. We have many items on our wish list for 2020. Some of these projects include much needed sealing and patching on the road to the cross, fixing the sprinkler system at the Fire Station, stabilizing the soil on the property, redoing an old gate for better access to the road to the cross, modifying a barrier on our adjacent lot used for vendor parking during events, and continuing security improvements, as well as Yawkey Trail maintenance, Habitat Restoration efforts, community events, and more.

We also have some inspirational volunteers and community members who would like to see a Mother's Day brunch, Christian Music Festival, and possibly a July 4th fundraiser. These events require both financial and volunteer support so, at the moment I write this, we realize how critical it is to not only build our volunteer team, but also acquire sponsorships from community businesses. ■

## Security in the Park



You may have noticed some new signage and security measures in the Park. The goal of our Park is to serve families and the community while keeping the Park safe and clean. We have a new camera system, an increase in security patrol, and new signage that clearly states the activities that are illegal in the Park. Yes, marijuana has been legalized to smoke in your home but it is still ILLEGAL in public places and Mt. Helix Park. We are also trying to work with the CHP to increase ticketing up and down Mt. Helix Drive where people will blatantly park in front of NO STOPPING signs. If you see people illegally parked, please call the CHP non-emergency line at 858.637.3800.

If you would like to join our Security Sub-Committee Task Force or Donate to this specific cause, please contact Krista at 619.985.1445. ■



## MT. HELIX PARK FOUNDATION

4901 Mt. Helix Drive  
La Mesa, CA 91941

Please visit [www.mthelixpark.org](http://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.

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**Make a 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.



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**29TH ANNUAL**

*Christmas on Mt. Helix*

**SAT DECEMBER 7**

**2 - 5 pm - European Christmas Markets  
with local artisans**

**5 - 6 pm - Family Caroling Sing-A-Long**

**6 - 7 pm - Nativity Story**

**\*\* FREE Park & Shuttle \*\*  
Grossmont High School**



**[www.MtHelixPark.org](http://www.MtHelixPark.org)**