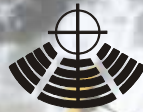


Mt. Helix Park's Magazine

FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 15 SUMMER 2020



MT. HELIX PARK
FOUNDATION

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

**95th EASTER
SUNRISE
SERVICE**

**Livestream Amid
COVID Crisis**

**RECREATING
the Lost Beauty
of the Past**

**CLOSING
DOWN
THE PARK**

A Time of Healing

**SUSTAINABILITY
and Mt. Helix**

**heART 2020
Update**

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MT. HELIX PARK

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

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Krista Powers

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



From the Executive Director

I can honestly say, I don't believe any of us will ever forget 2020.

First, I want to apologize for our Spring/Summer Issue becoming a Summer issue. We have been laying out this magazine for over four months and, even as I write this, we are again facing a possible change in the regulations for what we can and cannot do. This is probably my tenth rewrite, but it's time to get this out the door and into your hands. I hope we can bring you a bit of joy and sunshine as our member magazine reaches your fingertips.

Many things are out of our control at this moment in time. My heart broke when the county closed all the hiking trails and I knew we had to follow the recommendation for our Park. Tears came to my eyes as I sat in an empty amphitheater reflecting on the importance of the Park to our community. I received countless stories of personal restoration and family adventures. Some lives we have even saved. Our piece of nature, our community green space, our place where we can let the worries of the bustling city below melt away, will one day soon return to normal hours. Hopefully, by the time this magazine reaches you!

As I look around, I think about the history this Park has lived through. I think about the hands that laid our rock walls. Those who hand-mixed the cement to pour into the cross mold, and the Model T hoisting it up. The family and friendships that have formed their legacies in support of our beautiful Park. I think about the costly repairs we are facing as we inch closer to our 100-year anniversary. I worry about how we will raise the money, but I remember our community is strong and the love for our Park runs deep.

We are a partnership. We are the ones who come together to ensure this Park will remain open and safe for generations long after we are gone. It is here, in this beautiful Park, we leave our legacy showing the next generation the importance of volunteerism and financial support for our community nonprofits.

Thank you to all the individuals, families, and community businesses contributing their own legacy to our Mt. Helix Park family. ■

Norm Hapke
PRESIDENT
Mt. Helix Park
Foundation



From the Foundation President

In these perilous times, many residents of East County and certainly those of us at the Park Foundation have recognized the truism of Joni Mitchell's classic song Big Yellow Taxi: "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got till it's gone." Forced to pass by the gates blocking entry to the Park, we've all experienced a sense of loss at our inability to visit this very special place and take advantage of its many amenities.

During this time, those of us on the board, staff, and volunteers have swallowed our disappointment and gone about the business of taking care of the Park. We are in the process of addressing some difficult maintenance issues and excited that we have almost completed a safety barrier fence on Sunrise Point.

We have just received word of the imminent opening of parks in San Diego as the city's administration has realized how important they are to the health and well-being of its citizens. They have decided to trust all of us to act responsibly regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) prevention measures.

We at the Park are planning a careful opening. We want to make sure our maintenance and beautification efforts are completed so visitors returning to our lovely park will enjoy an enhanced experience and derive even greater pleasure from their time here. We simply ask that everyone be reminded of their responsibilities as good citizens, now and always. ■

Recreating the Lost

by Ed Piffard, Mt. Helix Park Foundation Horticultural Advisor

Every spring before the arrival of the Europeans all the open spaces in California exploded with the colors of thousands of different kinds of annual flowers. This spectacle could still be seen in many places into the early 20th Century before agricultural weeds drowned out all but a few special areas that have soils weeds don't like. John Muir wrote incredible descriptions of these displays and they were also immortalized in paintings and old black and white photographs. The occasional "superblooms" are but a faint echo of the past. Fortunately, you can bring back that glory on a small scale in your own garden and, when you succeed, few things bring more joy. I want to tell you all how you can do it, and why you should.

Over twenty-five years ago, while visiting the Theodore Payne Foundation, I was inspired by an area of the nursery grounds called Flower Hill, a place dedicated to local annual wildflowers. I determined to recreate it in my garden. I proceeded to make every mistake in the book from lack of preparation, to shrugging off weeds, to bad sowing timing, and bad species choices. Apart from the ephemeral beauty these plants bring, they are perhaps more important to restoring the vast array of pollinators and their intricate relationships with a healthy ecosystem. If only a few gardens out of a hundred had these oases, the benefits would soon become apparent as wildlife shows up in hordes.

The first step is to dedicate an area of your garden to the ephemerals. Unlike the chaparral plants that make up most native plant gardens, meadow plants don't form a permanent symbiotic underground network that can suppress weeds. The native grasses and annuals are by nature a welcoming bunch, which was an evolutionary adaptation to the fickleness of the weather gods. So your plot must be weed free and, other than bulbs and other geophytes, mostly perennial free (more on native bunch grasses later). This requires strict site preparation. Clear the area and remove all weeds. If you have Bermuda grass or Oxalis Pes-caprae or Nutsedge, you will need to take special steps. For maximum diversity, first dig in some topography. Natural landscapes are seldom if ever flat and many species have used these differences to make niches for themselves. You don't have to make it drastic. Gentle mounds and swales work great.

Now comes the most important step – Soil prep! Weed seeds must be destroyed. There are a couple ways to do this. Solarizing is the easiest and quickest way but unfortunately requires a lot of plastic. First soak the area to be planted then take fairly thick clear plastic sheeting and lay it over the area, anchoring it with stones or soil making sure little if any air can get in. Then let the summer sun cook the soil for three months. Weed seeds down to six inches will be dead. The more organic cardboard method takes longer but it is better for the environment overall. Go get used cardboard boxes from your grocery store and, after soaking the ground, lay the board down covering every inch of soil. Anchor it and/or cover it

Continued on next page



Nemophila menzeisii
or Baby Blue Eyes



California native wildflowers



Dichelostema puchella or Blue Dicks
California native wildflowers

Beauty of the Past



Layia platyglossa or Tidy Tips



California native wildflowers



Foreground are *Castilleja exserta* or Owl Paintbrush back ground *Layia platyglossa* or Tidy Tips

with well composted mulch. Leave it for an entire year. Yup, an entire year.

Once you have your soil clean you can sow the seed in mid-September. The heat of early autumn is important to reduce the germination inhibitors in many wildflowers. Very lightly scratch the soil surface with a steel rake and LOOSELY scatter the seed. A big mistake is to sow too thickly. This not only weakens the sprouts but allows weeds to sneak in where you can't see them. Tamp the soil down with clean bare feet. Then wait for the rains to do all the rest.

Final step and an important one!! Learn what weeds look like when they are new sprouts and concurrently what wildflower sprouts look like. Early weeding makes everything easier. You will need to be forever vigilant, but if you have properly prepped your soil this remains easy. Weeds are always your primary enemy. Even worse than gophers! Don't plant an area larger than you can reasonably take care of.

Lastly, I must emphasize seed choice. Almost all seed mixes in nursery centers or garden supply places are not good. There are online suppliers but get individual species and make the mix yourself. Here is a beginner's list for San Diego County that are eager growers and reliably beautiful.

FOR THE SWALE AREAS

Collinsia heterophylla (Chinese Houses);
Nemophila menzeisii (Baby Blue Eyes);
Clarkia purpurea (Winecup Clarkia);
Trifolium wildenovii (Tomcat Clover)

FOR BOTH MOUND AND SWALES

Layia platyglossa (Tidy tips);
Lasthenia californica (Goldfields);
Eschscholtzia californica (California poppy);
Lupinus succulentus (Arroyo lupine);
Lupinus nanus (Valley lupine);
Allium haematochiton (Wild onion)
Castilleja exserta (Owls paintbrush);
Cryptantha microstachys (Popcorn flower);
Phacelia parryii (Parry's Bluebell)

A final note on grasses. You may be tempted to add native bunch grasses (*Stipa pulchra* etc) to your meadow to give off season interest and structure, but be aware that they are also welcoming of any plant volunteering to grow in their shelter, including weeds. When planting your meadow, be sure to consider how much time you can devote to maintaining it because weeds will destroy it if you neglect them. The rewards, however, are worth every minute of work. ■

Healing

by Peggy Junker

Shutting the gates as the Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board of Directors did on March 25 in response to COVID 19 restrictions caused an immediate ripple effect throughout the community as the public phoned in, drove by, emailed and reached out to Park staff to confirm what the newly placed sign on the gate read: "Mt. Helix Park is closed."

It was difficult for staff who had to turn away regular visitors who clearly missed their routine walks, to locals hunkering down in quarantine and looking for a diversion, and to families looking for a place to let their kids release energy. Unfortunately, it was necessary.

Uncertain about the length of time it would take for the County to reverse the order to close, Park stewards quickly decided to use this as a period of recovery for the grounds — a time to allow the native habitat, normally subject to a steady flow of foot traffic, to heal. It was also a time to address our "to do" list.

With maintenance projects already slated, and by reducing volunteers and staff to a skeleton crew, coordinators went into action creating a plan to pull weeds, remove graffiti and trash, and complete trail projects in the absence of a public presence, while keeping a safe distance.

Creating a barrier fence within the Park's Sunrise Point lot, below the main road, was the most ambitious project to be completed during the closure. The addition of this barrier and berms will allow staff to open up the lot to the public for use during smaller events, thereby increasing the parking available within the Park gates and eliminating the need for expensive shuttle service.



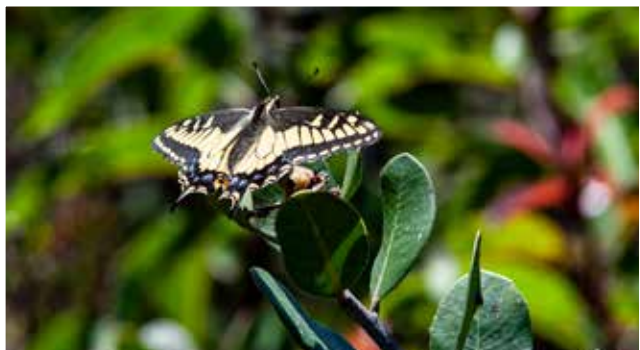
Northern Harrier Hawk



MHP park during covid closure



Sceloporus occidentalis, California fence lizard, blue belly



Papilio zelicaon or Anise Swallowtail



*California poppies or
Eschscholzia californica*



*Volunteer Hayden
Dagman
cleans up during
Park closure*

the Park

In addition, the absence of car traffic made this an opportune time to install a backup motor to the Park gates which will allow staff to enter in the event of a power outage.

Thanks to our friends at the East County Transitional Living Center, lower parking lots at the corner of Vivera and Mt. Helix Drive underwent some much needed weed abatement. Having already donated three volunteer workdays at the Park with a full crew this year, the Park hired them to do this important job.

In addition, regular Habitat Restoration Team volunteers, staying at least six feet apart, filled in where the landscaping crew left off, picking up residual litter, emptying trash cans, pulling weeds and repairing temporary rabbit fencing in areas being restored.

Noticeable are a bump in the number of wildflowers and blooms throughout the Park and along the Yawkey Trail. Free from competition for space, the birds, lizards, butterflies and rabbits have been increasingly visible. Even the elusive road runner has been spotted several times.

As the Park reopens, slowly, we are reminded of what a group effort the preservation of the Park is and encourage those who enjoy it to continue to support this peaceful corner of the mountain with their time and contributions.

Membership contributions generate critical funds that help preserve this historic Park for the benefit of all of us. Please consider joining or increasing your membership donation today at mthelixpark.org. ■

*Volunteer photos courtesy
of Mt. Helix Park*

Nature & wildlife photos by Gary Junker



*East County Transitional Living
crew clean up lower lots*



Volunteers remove debris



Alpha Project crew at work



Yawkey Trail Signs added by Mike and Caroline Harrod



Sunrise Point Barrier Fence

Sustainability and Mt. Helix Park

by Celina Laframboise

In 2018 the City of La Mesa adopted a climate action plan to reaffirm its commitment to sustainability. This long-term plan focuses on multiple goals to improve the quality of life for everyone. The main objectives of the plan include decreasing energy and water waste, creating safer streets for bikers and pedestrians, increasing recycling, renewable energy, reducing vehicle trips, and increasing the urban tree canopy. Serving as a natural oasis within the city limits, Mt. Helix Park is in a unique situation to help with many of those goals.



Photo by Gary Junker

Growing up in San Diego, I always knew about Mt. Helix Park, but it wasn't until I joined the board of directors in 2018, that I came to understand its importance. Over the last year, I have spent hours in the dirt, side by side with some incredible individuals who volunteer and love the Park. Together we have worked to create land for native plants to thrive. This is what sustainability looks like at the community level, and how we work together to preserve a place for future generations.

When visiting Mt. Helix Park, it might not look like what you think of when you picture sustainability. There are no solar panels, you have to drive to get there, and there is no recycling, but it is a model for sustainability. People have been visiting Mt. Helix for over one hundred years, even before it was an official Park. The Park has been restored to its natural flora and fauna, with the help of lots of dedicated volunteers, and has helped to protect the natural biodiversity of Southern California. In a time where butterflies and bees seem to be disappearing from San Diego, they are prevalent in the Park. It serves as a natural carbon sink, helping to clean the air of some greenhouse gases. Mt. Helix Park is also a place where people can go to reconnect with nature in order to sustain their daily lives. One of the most important things the Park can do is to serve as a gathering place for friends, family and neighbors so they can enjoy what San Diego has to offer. ■

Celina Laframboise holds a degree in Sustainable Businesses from The Ohio State University and sits on the Park's Habitat Restoration Committee, focusing on the future conservation and sustainability of Mt. Helix Park.



Celina and her mother, Christine, caring for their plot

Photos courtesy of Mt. Helix Park

Thank you!

MT. HELIX VOLUNTEERS

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 Alexandria Junker
 Bonnie & Katie Stinchcomb
 Bruce & Kim McIntyre
 Mike & Caroline Harrod
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 Andy Phemister & Susan Cunningham
 David & Paula Block
 Dianne McCann
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Easter Sunrise Service

Livestreamed Amid COVID-19 Restrictions

by Peggy Junker

Unlike the annual Easter Sunrise Service held atop Mt. Helix before a crowd gathered at the peak for the past 103 years, this one was different. There was no choir, and no children dressed in their Sunday clothes, no shuttles or volunteers. Instead there was a pastor, a two-man worship band, and a few closing remarks from the executive director. Despite the pared-down event, and thanks to the miracle of technology, the celebration reached thousands of people, picking up audiences around the world as GODRadio1 broadcast the service live on Easter morning via YouTube.

"The response has been just incredible," enthused Pastor George Runyan of City Church Ministries, who delivered the Easter message amidst COVID-19 restrictions limiting gatherings to no more than 10 people.

"I heard from people that they had an empty feeling, that there wasn't going to be a service on Mt. Helix," he said regarding concerns that the over century-old tradition would be canceled, "but when they found out there was going to be a service, that feeling went away and they felt fulfilled."

"This is the day that the Lord hath made and I will rejoice and be glad in it," he began shortly after the 7 a.m. sunrise, delivering an energized sermon despite the absence of a live audience.

As he spoke and the worship band played, comments began to flood the livestream:

From overseas - "Watching from Paris, France! It's comforting to see a familiar spot near home."



Krista Powers, Derek Runyan and Pastor George Runyan



GodRadio1 crew, masked



Pastor George Runyan, Derek Runyan (guitarist & vocals) and Leonard Patton (keyboard & vocals)

From Washington - "What a blessing to have this service today. I'm joining from Seattle today, though I grew up going to Easter Sunrise Services on Mt. Helix until 1982."

From an unknown location - "One world, one hope."

Newsire services such as the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and Getty Images later picked up the stream and shared it on social media, making the numbers reached almost incalculable.

Runyan, who also hosts weekly pod-

casts on GODRadio1 and has been hosting radio shows since the 70's, is comfortable with live broadcasts. Backed by his son, vocalist and guitarist Derek Runyan, and pianist and vocalist, Leonard Patton, he opened with a prayer and a passage from Psalm 118 and then acknowledged the COVID-19 pandemic, which had caused Park Executive Director Krista Powers to shift the entire event to a livestream only platform.

Realizing the implications of the Park's closure on March 25 as mandated by the County of San Diego, Powers said she felt a responsibility to save the Park's Easter service. Runyan was the answer to her prayers. She also noted the Yawkey Family trust, which governs Mt. Helix Park, states that stewards of the Park must have an Easter Sunrise Service each year.

"I wanted to make sure that the tradition originally established by Colonel Ed Fletcher and the Advertising Club in 1917 and then memorialized when the Park and amphitheater were dedicated in 1925, did not come to an end in these uncertain times," she stated, adding that while nervous about how the Park's first livestream service would go, she knew the community needed the hope, light and unification that Easter Sunrise Service on Mt Helix brings.

To access footage of the livestream event, and to view Pastor George Runyan's podcasts or any of the GODRadio1 worship events, visit GODRadio1.com. To see pre-recorded Easter messages from the All People's Church and media coverage of the Easter Sunrise Service, visit the Park website at mthelixpark.org/news-media. ■

Time Capsule Unearthed 21 Years Later

by Peggy Junker

While adding plants to the habitat on the northern end of the Yawkey Trail one morning, Vincenzo Zizzo's shovel hit something. Reaching down to unearth the obstacle, the 14-year-old volunteer discovered that instead of a rock, or a tree stump, he had discovered a box. Cracked to pieces, and wet from rain, many of its contents, which had been placed inside food storage bags, had been spared. Among them an aqua blue pager, a home-made cassette tape, Sea World I.D. badges, class of '99 graduation memorabilia, journals, photographs, a custom T-Shirt with the caption "Happy Halibut," and letters written between friends, addressed to one another in the future.

The contents had evidently been assembled by a group of eight friends, most of whom were graduating high school seniors from the class of 1999. Clues pointed to a group of Christian Youth Theater actors, who confirmed they had been looking for the time capsule but had never found it.

"We buried it in 1999 and planned to dig it up in 10 years," explained Liz Ramsey, one of the eight who created and buried the capsule. "Some members of the group tried to in 2009, but they couldn't find it. The fact that you guys found it, and it made its way back to us, is really something special."

Now 21 years after graduation, these local kids are all married with their own families, and still remain close friends. Two



Vincenzo finds a time capsule

Photos by Liz Ramsey



Contents of the time capsule

of the group's members, Jason Russell and Danica Jones, would go on to get married, and later help found the nonprofit organization, Invisible Children. Another two would continue on to work for CYT: Janie Russell Cox, as the President, and Renee (Rebold) Kauffman, as the VP of Creative. Another member of the time capsule group, Ryan Hansen, would go on to become a Hollywood actor, who's credits include Veronica Mars, Party Down, and Ryan Hansen Solves Crime on TV. Hansen would also later marry Amy Russell, daughter of CYT founder Paul Russell, and sister to Janie and Jason. Jeremiah Smith, another member of the group, made his way to L.A. as well, where he works as an Executive Producer for the television show, Vanderpump Rules. Of the eight, Peter Hansen has move the farthest away to Illinois, where he works as an Enterprise Business Consultant for LinkedIn. "We hope to get together in person someday soon to go through the time capsule contents, and perhaps bury a new one," Ramsey stated, who also serves on the CYT Board of Directors.

If ever there was an organization that has become synonymous with theater at Mt. Helix Park, it is CYT. Producing more than a dozen shows from Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat to Grease, Mary Poppins and Les Misérables, it is fitting that these actors from the class of 1999 should have preserved their moment in time.

"I saw my first play up on 'the hill' in 1988," recalls Ramsey. "It's like we all grew up on Mt. Helix." ■

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Married in the Park



From first dates to promposals, engagements and weddings, Mt. Helix Park has been connecting couples for almost a century. In the past decade alone, roughly 100 couples have held their wedding celebrations within this unique space, surrounded by rustic stonescape and sweeping vistas amidst birds, butterflies, trees and wildflowers.

Some couples discover the Park for the first time as they search local wedding venues, while others choose it for sentimental reasons. In some cases they came as kids with their parents, as teenagers with their friends, or with out-of-town guests wanting to experience some of our area's splendor.

Voted "Best Place for a First Date"

and "Prettiest Part of East County" by East County residents, it offers couples united here the opportunity to return to that special place where they celebrated their wedding with a picnic, a walk, to watch a sunset and to reminisce.

To inquire about weddings at Mt. Helix Park email pjunker@mthelixpark.org or call (619) 741-4363. ■



John and Tricia Foley, married April 13, 2019: "We chose to get married at Mt. Helix because this was one of the first places I took my now husband. He remembered this place vividly!" Tricia Foley recalls. "Mt. Helix also had a special meaning because of the cross. Our relationship thrives, and thrived then, because we knew God was right in the middle of it."



James Gehman and Ryane Gehman Hughes, married March 14, 2015: This couple loved how family friendly Mt. Helix Park was for their small, intimate wedding. With no immediate family in the area, most of the guests traveled from out of town, so the Gehman's liked being able to offer gorgeous views for them to enjoy and photograph. Additionally, as they are Christian, they loved having the cross as the backdrop for the ceremony. The Gehman's continue to attend events at the Park and are at the annual heART of Mt. Helix gala/fundraiser for the Park every year.



Adam and Darla Chapman, married Nov. 2, 2019: "Jesus would go to the mountains to be alone and pray. God talked to Moses on the mountain. We couldn't think of a better place where Earth and Heaven meet at the cross. It's a great reminder of our mortality and eternity of our covenant together with God," said Darla.



Jason and Raquele Kardos, married Aug. 22, 2004: The Kardos's had their engagement photos taken at the Park. "I suggested that we do it at Mt. Helix Park because it meant a lot to me and I thought that was appropriate," explained Park board member Jason Kardos. Raquele, from Clairemont and Banker's Hill, was introduced to the Park by her future husband who says it has always been special to him. "Little did I know I'd be a member of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation," he muses.



Caroline and Mike Harrod, married in November 2009: "One of our first dates was a visit to Mt. Helix to watch the sunset," explains Caroline Harrod. To my surprise, one day while having a picnic at the top near the cross, Mike proposed." Caroline, who serves on the Foundation's board of directors, says the Park is an inspirational mountain top to her family, "a legacy place full of history, beauty, peace and natural wonder," where they have watched beautiful sunrises, sunsets, laughed with friends and shed tears with family.



Eva and John Grasberger, married Oct. 1, 1988: "Eva chose the Park because it was cheap, yet beautiful. It was a small wedding, recalled John Grasberger. "At the time, we lived in Eastridge, right across the 125 from Mt. Helix, and we had a view of Mt. Helix from our backyard. We never dreamed at the time that we would one day live on the hill, and practically IN the park! From Eastridge, we moved to Mt. Merritt (overlooking El Cajon), then to San Francisco for 5 years, then back here in 1999. Since then, the Park has been a great venue for socializing with our neighbors and for Torrey (the unofficial "park mascot") to forage for scraps of food!"

Thank You from Mt. Helix Park

by Alice Smith and Peggy Junker

Dedicated in 1925 and built through the vision of the Yawkey and Fletcher families, Mt. Helix Park continues to evolve, in no small part thanks to the dedication and foresight of the following three individuals who worked countless hours and whose expertise not only served to preserve the Park, but also to make sure this special place remains relevant to today's visitors, whether from within our community or from afar, as well as to those who come in the future. Fortunately for Mt. Helix, their stepping down from the Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board does not mean they will no longer be contributing to the Park's 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."

Please join us in thanking Ed, Tracey, and Jeff for their incalculable contributions to the growth, health, prosperity and well-being of Mt. Helix Park. ■



Ed Piffard

Ed joined the ranks of the Park volunteers as a California native plant consultant in 2014 and was invited to join the board shortly thereafter. He was instrumental in the development of the Park's Habitat Restoration Team and related programs which resulted in his overseeing and helping to plant more than 1,000 new native plants on the slopes and along the Yawkey Trail. By adding new plants and eradicating invasive ones, he was responsible for transforming the landscape of this 12-acre nature preserve. He also was the featured lecturer for the Park's nature lecture series which included several landscaping and propagation workshops. Ed will continue to serve on the Park's Habitat Restoration Team and has selected an area to personally restore as part of the Park's Adopt-A-Habitat program. In demand as both a muralist/fine artist as well as a California native landscape consultant, Ed hopes to divert some of his time to his businesses while remaining a valuable resource for the Park.



Tracey Stotz

Tracey has a master's degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in public finance. She served as the Park's Executive Director from 2008 to 2014 and then as a Board officer until 2019. Her legacy graces every aspect of Mt. Helix Park. Known for her ability to get things done with limited resources, she oversaw the addition of staff and the creation of an on-site Park office. With the help of past Board member Kathy White, she launched and oversaw the growth of the Park's highly successful heART of Mt. Helix fundraiser. With former board member John Mead, she added the Yawkey Trail. Just as important, she was instrumental in creating the Park's Master Plan and working to ensure the financial stability of the Park for future generations. Tracey will continue to serve as a volunteer for the Park and resource for the Foundation and staff. She currently serves as the Vice President of the La Mesa Historical Society and will be devoting more of her time to her growing real estate business.



Jeff Swiney

Jeff served as an executive for the County Public Works Department before retiring and joining the Board of Directors in 2007. Utilizing his expertise, he has served since 2007 as both Facilities Manager and Vice President of Facilities, overseeing more than a dozen Park improvement projects including the restoration of the amphitheater steps, the additions of the Park's front gates and security cameras, as well as the expansion of the Park's irrigation system.

Jeff has spent countless hours onsite, weekly, and sometimes daily, as he diligently worked to maintain the Park's physical operations.

He will continue to serve in an advisory capacity on the Park's Facilities Committee and remains available to Park staff who rely on his extensive knowledge of the Park's infrastructure.

Welcome New Board Members

by Peggy Junker

The Mt. Helix Park Foundation Board of Directors is pleased to welcome three new board members. Bringing a variety of expertise to the table are:

STEVE CLAY

Steve and his wife, Janelle, are the owners of Postal Annex, La Mesa, and long-time area residents. Steve is also the president of Business Boosters of East County and has served on a number of other local boards, including Kiwanis of La Mesa. The management of the Park will benefit from Steve's personal and extensive local business connections.



JASON KARDOS

Local real estate broker Jason Kardos grew up coming to Mt. Helix Park and recalls some of his best childhood memories were of watching Christian Youth Theater in the amphitheater. He is currently president of the East County Referral Group, a business networking organization and past president of Rebuilding Together, an organization that provides critical repairs and renovations for low-income homeowners. He is also the former Marketing Coordinator for the Auto Trader Magazine. This long-time resident of La Mesa and devoted Park volunteer brings his love and knowledge of



the area as well as his marketing savvy and penchant for outreach to the Foundation.

SARAH GEHMAN

Sarah Gehman currently serves as the Individual Giving and Stewardship Officer for The New Children's Museum in Downtown San Diego. She earned a BA in Marketing with a minor in International Business from Gonzaga University, where she also learned the power of social responsibility. As a native of San Diego, she has fond memories of her time in high school volunteering at Mt. Helix Park where she first "fell in love with the beauty and peace of the Park." She has a passion for supporting local nonprofit organizations, helping them reach their impact goals and making a positive difference within the community. In these unprecedented times, she is excited to play an important role in the Park's ongoing quest to bring our community together like never before.



Every one of our board members works tirelessly to assure the Park is preserved, maintained and fiscally sound. The time that goes into managing and planning for the Park is a labor of love. Please join the board and staff at Mt. Helix Park in welcoming these new members. ■

Drones vs. Solace at Mt. Helix Park

by Peggy Junker

It is a beautiful Saturday afternoon at the Park and a happy couple is exchanging their vows on the stage of the amphitheater before a small, intimate group of their closest loved ones who have gathered to witness this moment. As the officiant is setting up the exchange of rings a humming black disc appears over the eastern horizon. It stops directly in the middle of the theater steps and hovers roughly 50 feet in the air, then moves in closer to the wedding party and continues to hover just above the guests. Distracted, many of them begin to follow it with their eyes as it floats above them. Staff, discovering that the drone pilot is not part of the wedding party, asks him to put his drone away, pointing out signs in the Park that indicate "No Drones."

Why do we have that rule?

"The FAA has released a free smartphone app called 'B4uFly' to show drone operators where they can and cannot fly," according to local helicopter pilot and Park supporter, John Grasberger. "That app (as well as the San Diego aeronautical chart) shows that Mt. Helix is within Gillespie Field's airspace and that drone flight therefore requires authorization from air traffic control," he adds.

But even if drone flight were authorized by ATC, there's a more important reason for the prohibition.

Mt. Helix Park was originally established on private property to be a place of solitude and contemplation. The founders specifically provided that the Park should be a place which would "relieve the dis-

tressed in body, mind and/or spirit..." Although the Park is open to the public, it is not a "public park." We receive no public funding; rather, the Park is supported by the community and managed by the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. As such, the Mt. Helix Park Foundation may establish appropriate rules and regulations governing visitors.

All too often the presence of drones in the Park has been noisy and invasive. In order to maintain the founders' stated purpose, the Foundation has determined that the use of drones in the Park by the public is inappropriate and should be prohibited.

We appreciate your support and understanding. ■



Mt. Helix Park

BINGO

What can you find?



Once you have BINGO, fill out your information below and place this page in the metal donation box by the wood kiosk. We will contact you with what you have won.

NAME

IF UNDER 18, WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

EMAIL OR PARENTS' EMAIL

CARVING ON AN OLD TREE STUMP HINT: NORTHSIDE OF TRAIL	CLIMBED STAIRS ON YAWKEY TRAIL	SAW A BUTTERFLY OR MOTH	DANCED ON THE STAGE	LOOKED AT THE VIEW WEST
FOUND THE WOOD YAWKEY TRAIL SIGN	SMELLED A NATIVE SAGE PLANT HINT: COASTAL SAGE IS EASIEST	SAW A HUMMINGBIRD	PUT WATER IN A DOGGIE WATER BOWL BY FOUNTAINS	FOUND BUGS UNDER A ROCK
READ HISTORICAL TIMELINE IN WOOD KIOSK	SAW AN ANT	<i>Free</i>	SAW A BEE	SPOTTED A LIZARD SUNBATHING
WALKED ENTIRE YAWKEY TRAIL	DID A CARTWHEEL IN THE ORCHESTRA PIT	SAW A DOVE	SPOTTED A HAWK OR CROW	WALKED UP AMPITHEATER STEPS FROM BOTTOM TO TOP
SAT ON A BENCH ALONG THE TRAIL AND TOOK IN VIEW	WALKED THE ROAD TO THE CROSS	HAD A PICNIC	FOUND A DEDICATION PLAQUE TO THE YAWKEY FAMILY	SPOTTED A YELLOW SENSITIVE HABITAT SIGN



COASTAL SAGE

Find that Native @ Mt. Helix Park
Plant Native Plants to Save our Pollinators
More Info @ MtHelixPark.org



BUCKWHEAT
Popular Native and possibly already in your yard already.

DUDLEYA

One of the most cherished native plants, the Short-leaved dudleya *D. brevifolia* flowers and leaves completely die back in summertime—an adaptation for avoiding water loss. But even when you can't see this petite plant, a corm (bulbous underground stem) lies dormant below the sand, ready to spring into growth mode at the first winter rains.



CALIFORNIA LIVE OAK



SAN DIEGO SUNFLOWER
AKA *Bahiopsis laciniata*

SPINY RED BERRY
The ONLY plant the almost extinct Hermes Cooper Butterfly will lay eggs on!



CLEVELAND SAGE
Salvia clevelandii, the fragrant sage, is a perennial plant that is native to Southern California and northern Baja California, growing below 3,000 ft elevation in California coastal sage and chaparral habitat



CEANOTHOS
"Tree" varieties
Full Bloom



CEANOTHOS
Groundcover variety

What Will Become of our Annual “Party on the Hill” in 2020?

heART 2020 LIVE - September 26

by Krista Powers

The heART Committee of 2020—coordinator of our annual Food, Wine, and Art Festival—which raises essential funds for the Mt. Helix Park Foundation, was off to a strong start with roughly 30 committee members organized into chair positions and sub-committees, when CV19 hit us like a brick wall.

Since then our Steering Committee, full of veterans from the event, has spent numerous hours running through scenarios of what this vital, much anticipated, annual fundraiser will look like in 2020. We want to follow the government guidelines while making sure our community is cared for and healthy. Additionally, many of

our restaurant and event partners have been financially devastated during this time and sadly some may not reopen.

The committee wanted to design something that would bring the annual event, community unity, and gathering of friends to everyone at home, while also supporting our local restaurant and beverage partners who have supported the Park for many years.

We do still hope to have a small donor dinner at the Park on Friday, September 25. However, we recognize that this may not happen. What we know for sure is that we are going to bring you an incredible night of fun to enjoy in the comfort of your home or at a watch party with friends.

Wait ... did someone say “watch party”?

Yes, the heART will be taking the form of various watch parties throughout our community. Whether you are a team of 1, 2 or 10 at a watch party, there is fun to be had as we play trivia games, announce raffle and wine winners, and much more, while raising money for our historic community gathering place and nature preserve.

Our goal is to create a fun, interactive experience for everyone at home! We look forward to bringing the heART to you this year on Saturday, Sep 26.

Want to host a watch party at your house or sponsor the event?
Please contact Krista Powers at 619.985.1445 or email at KPowers@MtHelixPark.org

WE ARE GOING VIRTUAL

heART 2020 LIVE - MtHelixPark.org

Benefiting Mt. Helix Park

Tune in for the most anticipated party of the year coming to you live from Mt. Helix Park.

**Enjoy from the comfort of your home or
join a watch party at your friend's house**

- Fun, Interactive Experience
- Music Trivia Live
- Wine Pull & Raffle
- Auction
- Streets of Mt. Helix Fundraising Frenzy
- Prizes

**WANT TO HOST A WATCH
PARTY FOR YOUR FRIENDS?**

Call 619.741.4363 or email KPowers@MtHelixPark.org

SPONSORSHIPS

Krista Powers
KPowers@MtHelixPark.org
619.985.1445





MT. HELIX PARK FOUNDATION

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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.

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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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Permit 906

In Most Years - **ANNUAL EVENTS**

FALL

HALLOWEEN HARVEST FESTIVAL
NATURE LECTURE

WINTER

CHRISTMAS ON MT. HELIX
PRAYER & WORSHIP GATHERING
GMIA NEIGHBORHOOD WALK UP

SPRING

SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE SINCE 1917
CHRISTIAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

SUMMER

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENTS
ASTRONOMY NIGHT
FOOD, WINE, & ART FESTIVAL

Stay Tuned - **ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

The heART of Mt. Helix will be LIVE
STREAMED this year.

We are planning a night of interactive
fun and games.

If you would like to host a watch party
with your closest freinds, please
contact 619.741.4363 or
KPowers@MtHelixPark.org

SEP 26 th - LIVE STREAM - MtHelixPark.org
CHECK WEBSITE FOR DETAILS
SPONSORSHIPS
KRISTA POWERS
KPowers@MTHelixPark.org
619.985.1445
FROM SOCK HOPS TO HAIR BANDS, WE CELEBRATE...
Chef's VIP Dinner Friday Night