

Mt. Helix Park's Magazine

FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 3 SPRING 2014



MT. HELIX PARK
FOUNDATION

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

**Armed
Services
Volunteers
Lend a Hand**

**GARDEN
PARTY**

**History of
Mt. Helix**

**UPCOMING
EVENTS FOR
2014**

NATURE | EVENTS | LOCAL HISTORY | PEOPLE | PRESERVATION



Armed Services Lend a Hand

Volunteers from the Armed Services YMCA helped beautify the Park at a spring work day. "I am always amazed at how much we get done when these fantastic people give their time," remarked Executive Director Tracey Stotz. "There were about 30 armed services members and their families and combined with our volunteer project leaders Mark Allan, John Mead, Colleen Olsen, Andy Phemister, Jeff Safford and Jeff Swiney, we completed many projects," she added.

Much of the work took place on the Yawkey Trail with the addition of new footing, steps, bench staining and planting. Fence painting, trash pick-up and road clean-up were also on the agenda. ■

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 tstotz@mthelixpark.org.

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Tracey Stotz
Executive Director

From the Executive Director

Volunteers and donors, like water, are a precious resource which we are lucky to have at Mt. Helix Park. We will always work hard to make sure we waste neither one.

I went for a run in the rain yesterday. Not something we can say very often in San Diego. In January Governor Brown declared a state of emergency because of the drought. Although we have a long way to go to make up the water shortfall this rain certainly can help. The weather forecasters are calling for the largest storm in years. It couldn't come at a better time.

Kathleen Hedberg, a director on the Helix Water District Board, recently shared her concerns over the water shortage and the need to conserve. She inspired me to take a look at what the Park is doing in this area. I think we look pretty good. We use minimal water to keep our greenery alive and the drinking fountains flowing, and I was pleased to be able to tell her we are working to conserve. Currently, we are planting California natives (see article on the Garden Party) which are drought tolerant once established. Because we don't have irrigation throughout the entire Park, our wonderful volunteers are hand-watering these plants to get them started, also minimizing water usage. Eventually the plants should be able to make it with just a little help during a dry season.

We did notice an uptick in the water bill though. The culprit turned out to be a broken water line and valve. We were grateful to have Don and his staff at Ideal Plumbing and Heating come to our rescue and repair it before our bill spiraled out of control. A thank you goes to them.

While Ideal was out working on the water line, La Mesa Lumber was busy delivering donated materials to help improve the elevation changes on the Yawkey Trail. Soon a new "stair case," built by volunteers, will be completed on the north side of the trail. This will help visitors better navigate a spot where the trail goes around a small shed. On a dry day this section of the trail can be walked with the existing footing, but following a rain the stairs will be a tremendous help. A thank you also goes to La Mesa Lumber, the Armed Services YMCA volunteers and project leader John Mead for their support on this project.

As the wind howls outside and the rain splashes against the under-stage office window I am thankful for the water needed to address the drought. I am equally as thankful, however, for the donors and volunteers who support Mt. Helix Park. Volunteers and donors, like water, are a precious resource which we are lucky to have at Mt. Helix Park. We will always work hard to make sure we waste neither one. ■

Tracey Stotz



Star Party

Saturday, April 5, 6:45 pm to 9 pm.

This family-friendly, free event is being co-hosted by the San Diego Astronomy Association (SDAA). "Bringing the night sky to the public" is the stated goal of the evening. Members of the SDAA will have telescopes available for gazing into the galaxy. Amateur astronomers are welcome to bring up their telescopes as well. Picnicking prior to sunset is encouraged. Sunset will occur at 7:11 pm with viewing starting about 7:45 pm. Parking and a shuttle will be available next to the San Miguel Fire Station at 10105 Viverra Drive, La Mesa, 91941. The first shuttle will run up to the amphitheater at 6:45 pm. If it is cloudy the event will be cancelled. ■

April 8, 1952 Heartland News published in El Cajon

Easter Sunrise Services

Sunday, April 20, 6:30 am

Summit Church International will be hosting Easter sunrise services in the amphitheater. A tradition taking place at the Mt. Helix summit since 1917, services are free and open to the public. Parking will be at both the San Miguel Fire Station (address above) and the Brigantine parking lot on Fuerte. Shuttles will be running from both locations starting at 5:30 am. Dress warmly and bring a blanket to sit on.

Lecture Series

Saturday, May 17, 10:30 am to 11:30 am

Part Two of Mt. Helix Park's Nature/Sustainable Living lecture series

This free, one-hour lecture on landscaping with California native plants will feature guest speaker, Greg Rubin, owner of California's Own Native Landscape Design, Inc. Rubin will discuss the benefits and rewards of using these drought resistant, beautiful varieties which require little to no water once they are established. They also help sustain our local habitat and support a network of beneficial bugs, birds, and animals.

The presentation is the second of a two-part Nature/Sustainable Living lecture series sponsored by the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. There is no parking at the summit, so walk-up from the parking lots adjacent to and across from the San Miguel Fire Station (address above). Allow time to get to the top (a 10 to 15 minute walk). Coffee and pastries will be available. ■



CYT's *Les Miserables*

Theater Show dates: July 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, and August 1, 2.

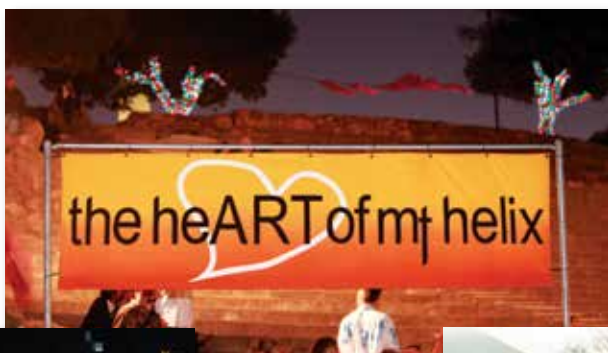
CYT San Diego is scheduled to bring theater back to the historic amphitheater in July. Enjoy the theater troupe's new production of *Les Miserables*. Tickets will go on sale on March 20 at cytsandiego.org. For more than 20 years theater was a big part of Mt. Helix. It is wonderful to have live theater back! ■



7th Annual heART of Mt. Helix

Saturday, August 16, 5:30 pm to 10 pm

A sunset event featuring local performing, visual and culinary artists—this is a night you won't want to miss! The Mighty Untouchables have been signed to close out the evening with dancing under the stars. Prior to that, the Park will be alive with musical vignettes, artists sharing their craftx, silent and live auctions, and delectable restaurant tastings from local favorites like BMH Italian, Grove Pastry and Mardi Gras Café. It is the largest fundraiser of the year for Mt. Helix Park (which, due to the beloved memorial cross, receives no government funding), so be sure to attend in support of the Park. Tickets go on sale in June and can be purchased through the park website or in the under-stage office. If you are interested in underwriting or have an auction item to donate, contact Executive Director Tracey Stotz at tstotz@mthelixpark.org. Co-chairs Dianne McCann and Susan Conklin and their fabulous committee are working hard to make this the best event yet. ■



For more information on any of the above, visit our website at www.mthelixpark.org or call the Park office at (619) 741-4363.



garden party

There is something brewing on Mt. Helix—a wave of interest in California native plants that appears to be contagious. Volunteers of the recently formed *Mt. Helix Garden Party* have been exposed to it and are now knee deep in a habitat restoration project to restore areas along the Yawkey Trail.

It all began when Garden Party Chair Dianne McCann, with the help of Park staff, assembled a group of community members who were like-minded gardeners interested in assisting with projects, increasing their expertise and discussing their common love for plants.

Add Mt. Helix Board member and Garden Party volunteer, Caroline Harrod, with her passion for California native plants, and you have a recipe for a movement that has taken root in the Park.

During a recent board meeting Harrod made her case for adopting a policy of henceforth using only California native plants on slope areas. Convinced, the board agreed to give the gardening team the go ahead. Restoration efforts began early in the year when 11 Garden Party volunteers planted over 50 native plants, donated by Harrod and her husband Mike, on the north side of the Park, along the Yawkey Trail.

As if the momentum was not strong enough, along comes volunteer and local plant aficionado, Ed Piffard. Through his own investigation of the historical California landscape, he has acquired a deep appreciation for the beauty and benefits that come with landscaping with native plants.

For Piffard, the whole process of cultivating these plants is an experience that takes a gardener far beyond the confines of the garden. What Piffard and many other California native plant advocates see is the greater picture which includes not only the plants, some of them rarely seen in nature these days, according to Piffard, but the birds, insects and wildlife that return to an area once the native plants are restored. This biodiversity is a healthy interaction of the natural components and conditions that once existed in San Diego, he points out.

“A lot of times in the modern world we are unaware of things. When people walk on a trail,



The Garden Party's challenge



L to R: Caroline Harrod, Ed Piffard and Dianne McCann



Dave and Barbi Mays

talking about their job, or the car they want to buy, they are missing the story." The plants and wildlife, he suggests, often go completely unnoticed.

As for the Park, Piffard muses, "It would be fun to get people on board propagating for the Park," adding that with limited funding the Park could gain the plants it needs to continue improvements and volunteers gain the knowledge necessary to multiply and grow their own plants for use in their gardens.

Piffard has been advising the garden team during the habitat restoration. A professional artist and muralist, he has cultivated an expertise in California native plants and has both assisted and educated volunteers throughout the process. In fact, the first of two lectures in the Park's Nature/Sustainable Living lecture series was given recently by Piffard. The next lecture, scheduled for May 17, will be presented by Piffard's long-time friend and advisor Greg Rubin, owner of California's Own Landscape Design, Inc.

"It has been absolutely awesome to see how 'many hands make light work,'" says McCann of the gardening team. "The work groups have been incredible! We have planted over 50 plants, helped to block off areas that we are trying to restore, and have established a watering regime to give these plants a real chance at flourishing, in the worst drought Southern California has experienced in years."

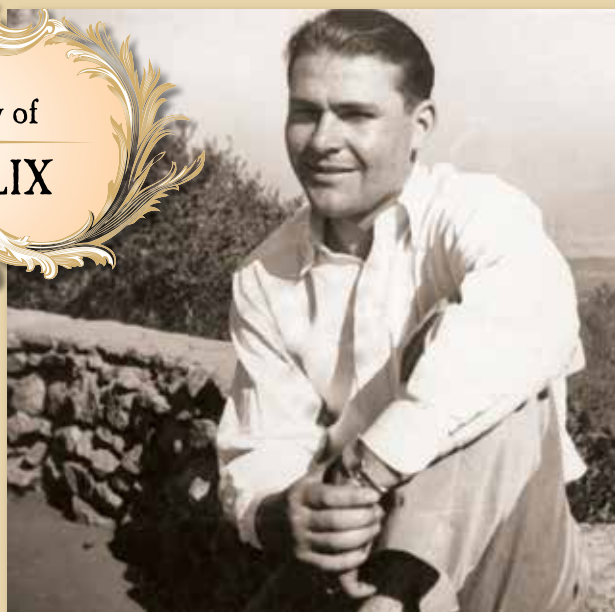
McCann's vision for the Mt. Helix Garden Party is simple, "To continue to build the network of people who are interested in the Park, to nurture the native vegetation, and truly make the Park a 'must' experience for San Diego residents and visitors."

For more information, or to become part of the Mt. Helix Garden Party, visit www.mthelixpark.org or call Office Administrator Peggy Junker at the office Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 9 am to noon at (619) 741-4363. ■

This photo, from 1942, shows Joseph Pospichal, from Schuyler, Nebraska, seated on a wall in the Park admiring the view. After becoming enamored of San Diego during his time here with the Army Air Force, Joe and his family relocated to Chula Vista in the early 1950s where he worked for Rohr Industries as a machinist. His love of the city was inherited by his grandson, Gregory May, who has created a Facebook page called *Vintage San Diego*. There visitors can enjoy an impressive collection of photos (and some videos) showing the history of the many diverse neighborhoods in our area including some of Mt. Helix.

SUBMITTED BY PARK VOLUNTEER HISTORIAN AMY HARGROVE

The History of MT. HELIX





MT. HELIX PARK FOUNDATION

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Contact us at tstotz@mthelixpark.org
if you are receiving duplicate news-
letters or would like to receive email
updates on Park events.

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California Poppies

Planned Giving Legacy

One way to make a lasting gift to Mt. Helix Park is through Planned Giving.

Remembering the Park with a bequest is an easy way to help serve as a steward of the Park for future generations. Although an attorney needs to set up the specific giving instrument, the following wording can be helpful. In all cases you want to either stipulate how the gift will be used, or give the Foundation discretion for its use. Remember, Planned Giving allows you to live on through the gift of helping others.

PROPORTIONAL BEQUEST – “I give to the Foundation for the Preservation of Mt. Helix Nature Park and Amphitheatre an amount equal to ____ % of the total value of the assets of my estate, whatever that amount shall be at the time of my death.”

SPECIFIC BEQUEST – “I give to the Foundation for the Preservation of Mt. Helix Nature Park and Amphitheatre, the sum of \$ _____ or (all my right, title and interest in the following described property _____).”

CONTINGENT BEQUEST – “In the event that _____ (name of wife, son, daughter, brother...) shall not survive me, then I give _____ (name specific assets) to the Foundation for the Preservation of Mt. Helix Nature Park and Amphitheatre.”

Annual Meeting Open to "Friends of the Park"

Join the Park Board of Directors for its annual meeting on Thursday, April 24 from 7 pm to 8:30 pm at the Grossmont Health Care District complex on Wakarusa. This is a great opportunity to meet the Board, find out ways to get more involved, learn about Park finances and activities, and celebrate all the positive things happening at Mt. Helix Park. If you plan to attend RSVP to Executive Director Tracey Stotz at tstotz@mthelixpark.org or (619) 741-4363.



Mt. Helix Park is proud to participate in San Diego Foundation's giveBig Campaign on May 6. If you give to Mt. Helix Park through their website, www.sdfoundation.org, on that day the Park will be eligible for additional matching funds from an incentive pool of \$150,000.

Matching funds will be awarded on a pro-rated basis to all participating charities but every dollar counts!