

Mt. Helix Park's Magazine

# FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 5 SPRING/SUMMER 2015



MT. HELIX PARK  
FOUNDATION

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

**heART to  
Embrace Park  
History with  
1920s Theme**

**Reseeding  
the Park**

**Executive Director  
"Changing of the  
Guard"**

**Custom Gate  
and Fencing**

# Family Milestones

Many families use the Park as a beautiful backdrop for important photos. Recently, Deysi Borbonio and her family were shooting photos to commemorate her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.



## MT. HELIX PARK

**From the Top** is a semi-annual publication of Mt. Helix Park. To contact the Editor call 619-741-4363 or email [nroberts@mthelixpark.org](mailto:nroberts@mthelixpark.org).

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Native ferns along the Yawkey Trail,  
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A heartfelt thank you to retiring Board member Chris Roberts who, as CFO, has played an instrumental role in the Foundation's success. For many years he has provided sage advice as well as countless hours of pro bono accounting work. Now that his wife is the new Executive Director, we expect he will still be helping behind the scenes.



Executive  
Directors Nicole  
Roberts (left) and  
Tracey Stotz

## Welcome Nicole Roberts, New Executive Director

Starting in March, Nicole Roberts will be the new Executive Director of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. Roberts will be replacing Tracey Stotz, who has served in the position for more than seven years. “While we will miss Tracey, and greatly appreciate all she has done for the Foundation, we know the transition will be seamless because Nicole has been a key volunteer on the heART of Mt. Helix committee and is a good fit for the position,” declared Board President Mark Allan.

For the past six years Roberts has chaired the Entertainment Committee for the heART of Mt. Helix – the Foundation’s largest annual fundraising event. “She is a very hard worker and has tremendous follow-through,” said Stotz. “I am very comfortable turning over the day-to-day running of the Foundation to her.”

Roberts has a background in marketing, video production and events. She and her family – husband Chris and son Alec – live on Mt. Helix, making for an easy commute to work. With Alec going to college in the fall Roberts has indicated it is a perfect time for her to return to the professional workforce.

“Through the past six years working on the heART committee, I have grown a strong passion for the park, its history, and the foundation’s mission,” wrote Roberts.

Stop by the under-stage office to say “hello” and join us in welcoming Nicole to the staff. ■

*Park office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
from 9 am until noon.*

## From the Executive Directors

I wish to thank the Mt Helix Park Foundation for this incredible opportunity to serve as Executive Director. Upon learning the rich history of Mt Helix Park and the formation of the foundation, I gained a stronger understanding of how much Mt Helix Park's vitality relies on the commitment and efforts of all the board members, office staff, and numerous volunteers working together towards one mission.

I am thrilled to join the team; I am thrilled to assist these hardworking men and women; I am thrilled to ensure Park operations run smoothly, and ultimately, I am thrilled to serve you and your family members so you always have a safe and serene place to come for fun, retreat and renewal.

Nicole Roberts



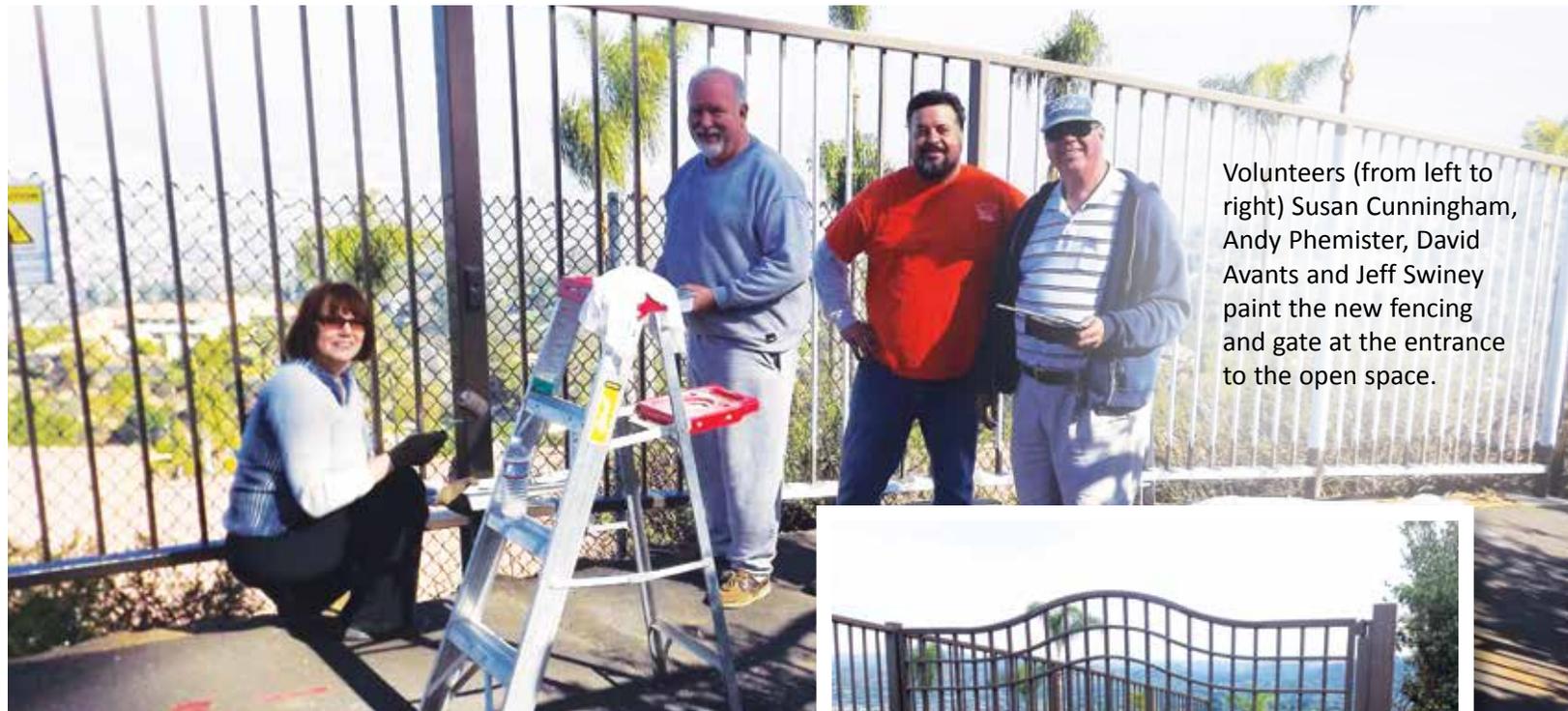
What a satisfying time these past seven years have been! As Executive Director I have worked with more amazing volunteers than I can count. We, as a team, have accomplished a tremendous amount including the unveiling of an electric front gate, opening an under-stage office, developing the Yawkey Trail, establishing the heART of Mt. Helix event, adding security cameras and paying off the loan on the open space. This list is only a sample of what has been achieved during the time I have had the privilege to serve.

This year the Park is celebrating its 90th Anniversary. Although my time as executive director has been a tiny sliver of the Park's history, I am amazed at how much has been accomplished. It is hard to put into words how fulfilling this experience has been for me. I will miss being involved on a daily basis but look forward to joining the volunteer ranks and giving my support for at least another seven years! I am making a career shift into residential real estate and am excited about the new challenge.

Know that Mt. Helix Park will always be close to my heart.

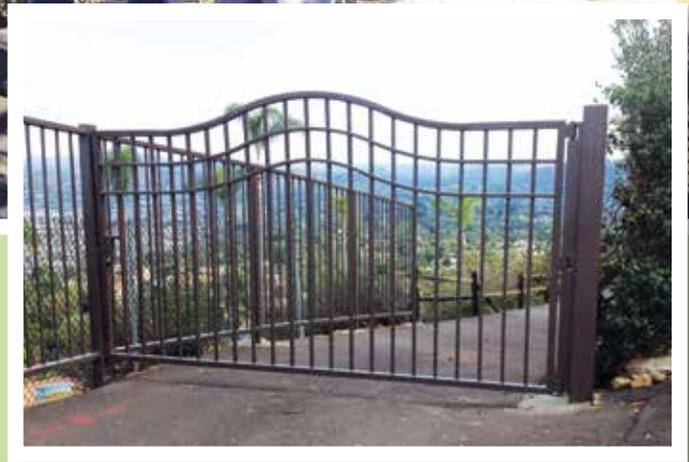
*Nancy Stoj*





Volunteers (from left to right) Susan Cunningham, Andy Phemister, David Avants and Jeff Swiney paint the new fencing and gate at the entrance to the open space.

## New Custom Gate and Fencing Echo Main Gate



Thanks to the generosity of Mt. Helix residents Wayne and Susan Ritter, owners of Progressive Steel, there is a striking new gate and fencing at the entrance to the open space land. The gate design echoes that of the main gate to the Park and will provide extra security while plans are made for the best utilization of the property.



The open space covers the entire slope down to Mt. Helix Drive to the east and around the southern side to the front gate area.

## Property Loan Paid Off, Master Plan Being Developed

The vote was unanimous. Following a financially successful 2014, the Board of Directors voted to move money from savings to pay off the loan on the open space land to the east of the Park trust property. The Foundation had purchased the land from Cox Communications and began making mortgage payments in 2006. Thanks to several generous donors, and leadership gifts from Fletcher family members Virginia Wofford and Patricia Mahoney, the loan was paid off well ahead of schedule.

Master planning is underway for the entire Park with the goal of adding parking and other improvements to the open space land. The Board of Directors, with input from key constituents, is working with San Diego-based Hubbell and Hubbell architectural firm and its student interns to formulate initial concepts for site enhancements. ■

## Native Species Sprout after Winter Rains

### *Seeds and Erosion Control Materials Blanket the Slopes*



Enormous bags of California native plant seed, lovingly spread around the Park by Mt. Helix Garden Party volunteers, are resulting in sprouting plants thanks to the help of long-awaited rainfall. The seeding was done as part of a habitat restoration effort and to help address concerns over slope erosion.

On the north face, delicate, native ferns are pushing out from under rocks all along the Yawkey Trail while nearby 20 newly planted native species continue to thrive following their fall planting. Native buckwheat, which covers the westerly slope, is “greening up.” New leaves can be seen on plants, such as the sugar bush along Mt. Helix Drive, that have appeared dead for months following one of the worst droughts on record for this region.

“Unfortunately, the rains didn’t come soon enough and we did have to remove an oak tree,” observed Executive Director Tracey Stotz sadly. “The tree had been stressed for years and between pest attack and lack of water it died.”

Wild cucumber (Marah), a vine with delicate white flowers and corkscrew shaped tendrils, has flourished all over the mountain and while some Park visitors have

expressed alarm at its aggressive growth-rate, this native plant is one of the first to disappear when the weather warms up, according to board member Caroline Harrod. Harrod, who also sits on the Mt. Helix Garden Party committee and helps to oversee plant restoration efforts, adds that the cucumber actually encourages a natural environment and is harmless if managed. Harrod is both optimistic about the recovery of the Park’s flora and keenly aware of the need for more wet weather.

“We didn’t meet the annual rainfall (goal) last year and that’s a disappointment,” she mused. “We would have had a higher percent of germination,” she adds, “but with the rain we got, and the hand watering by volunteers, it worked to improve the health and vitality of the plants in the Park, and I am very excited about that.”

Some Garden Party volunteers have taken their work home, sprouting and propagating baby California native plants for future use along the Yawkey Trail.

For more information on the Mt. Helix Garden Party’s activities, or to become involved email Office Administrator Peggy Junker at [pjunker@mthelixpark.org](mailto:pjunker@mthelixpark.org) or call the office at (619) 741-4363. ■



### Stairs Project

Project leader John Mead takes a break with members of the Armed Services YMCA who have been helping build stairs on the Yawkey Trail.



## Planned Giving Legacy For the Park

One way to make a lasting gift to the 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.”

# EIGHTH ANNUAL HEART OF MT. HELIX ~ AUGUST 15

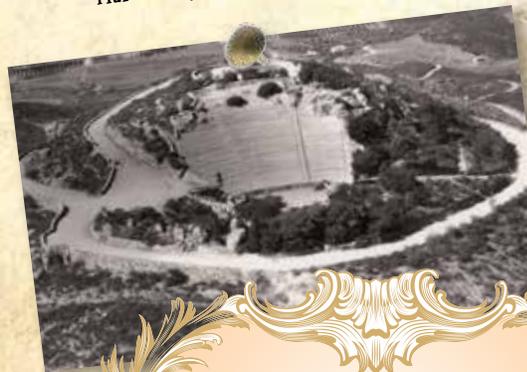
## *Volunteers Needed to Help Plan 1920s History-of-the-Park Themed Event*

“How can we top last year?” asked Susan Conklin, co-chair of the heART of Mt Helix committee. She barely had asked the question when her committee members eagerly provided answers at the recent event kick-off meeting. Conklin, co-chair Dianne McCann, founding chair Kathy White and a host of others have been brainstorming on how to make this year’s event even more fun for the expected 500 guests. In recognition of the Park’s 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, this creative group chose a 1920s historical theme. Tickets will go on sale in June but planning starts now. Currently, the committee is seeking underwriting, auction donations and additional committee members. If you are interested in being involved, contact Nicole Roberts at [nroberts.mthelixpark@gmail.com](mailto:nroberts.mthelixpark@gmail.com). ■



Colonel Ed  
and Mary  
Fletcher  
(Mt. Helix  
founders)

Mary Carpenter Yawkey (to whom the Park is dedicated) and her son Cyrus Yawkey (who with his sister, Mary Yawkey White, built the amphitheater and memorial cross.)



The History of  
**MT. HELIX**



## MT. HELIX PARK FOUNDATION

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Contact us at [pjunker@mthelixpark.org](mailto:pjunker@mthelixpark.org) if you are receiving duplicate newsletters or would like to receive email updates on Park events.

### Become a Friend of the Park

Please consider making a donation to Mt. Helix Park in the enclosed envelope. If you appreciate having this wonderful facility in San Diego, we hope you will make a tax deductible donation today. Donations of all amounts are appreciated and will support on-going operations and programs.

## SPRING / SUMMER CALENDAR

### March 30 to April 3 - Children's Art Camp

Art Smarts, Inc. is returning to Helix Park! Sign up your elementary school child (ages 5 to 12) for either a full or half-day art camp during spring break. We have the best outdoor classroom setting from which your child can draw inspiration while learning to use pastels, watercolors, colored pencils and acrylics on canvas. It's a fun way to learn in a magnificent setting.

For more information on the "Art In The Park" spring camp or to register, email [Penelope@ArtSmarts.net](mailto:Penelope@ArtSmarts.net) or call (619) 944-3323 or (619) 995-1186. To download the registration form from the Park website's home page, visit [www.mthelixpark.org](http://www.mthelixpark.org).

### April 5, 6:30 am - Easter Sunrise Services Hosted by Foothills United Methodist Church

Parking and shuttles will be available at the fire station at 10105 Vivera Drive at Mt. Helix Drive for this annual tradition. Easter Sunrise Services have been held at the Mt. Helix summit since 1917.

Photo by Dennis Mammana



### May 23, 7 pm - Star Party Astronomy Night Hosted by the San Diego Astronomy Association

Parking for this free, family event will be at the fire station (address above) with the shuttle running continuously beginning at 6:45 pm. Pack a picnic and come up to enjoy the gorgeous sunset. Night viewing will begin at roughly 8:15 pm. Armed with professional telescopes, astronomers will be available to interpret the night sky. Guests are also welcome to bring their own telescopes. Saturn is at opposition which will make for interesting viewing.

### Aug 15, 5:30 pm - 8th Annual heART of Mt. Helix

Tickets for the event of the summer at the top of the hill will go on sale in June. Be sure to mark your calendar now so you don't miss this fabulous evening. Restaurant tastings, live music, auctions and a perfect view make for a lovely night. In honor of the Park's 90th Anniversary the event will be a 1920s theme. For information on this or any other event in the Park go to [mthelixpark.org](http://mthelixpark.org).