

Cheviot Hills

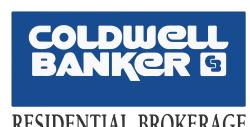
The greatest neighborhood in the world



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Housing for all

By Ben Lee

If you're reading this newsletter or have seen my signs around the neighborhood, you know I sell many houses. I have a wide range of clients all in search of the perfect living space for their families. Some want to expand, others want to downsize but everyone shares the same common goal: a new home. It's easy to get caught up in the frenzy of the details that follow once a home search is underway. Obviously it's a major, emotional purchase and with that comes a list of important needs and criteria from the buyer. Everything gets considered: bedroom count, stairs or one story, bathroom tile, pool or no pool, corner or midblock, view, privacy, grass vs. patio, newly constructed or older with an opportunity to fix up... the priority list is long, ever-changing and totally unique to who's in the market to buy. The "must have" list often varies between spouses and certainly within families. Just wait until a couple is ready to sign on the dotted line but then at the last minute decides to ask parents or in-laws to take a look at the property in question. Points of view are usually a lot stronger with each generation and a one-time dream house often gets relegated to the discard pile once a mother, father or in-law starts pointing out perceived flaws (in their humble opinions, of course!).

These thoughts were floating through my mind when I picked up a recent issue of Time magazine and read an article highlighting President Jimmy Carter's involvement with Habitat for Humanity. I was inspired to learn that at 90+ years old, he and his wife still carve out time to help build houses for those who really need them. Habitat for Humanity is an organization that was created 22 years ago in an effort to provide stable housing; whether by building a house from scratch or fixing up an existing home as well as by providing low/no interest mortgages so that the homeowner can maintain it. Part of the agreement is that the homeowner helps in its construction so that the ownership is truly earned and not simply given. Habitat for Humanity has worked in over 1400 communities throughout the United States



(including Los Angeles), and is represented in about 70 countries where housing has been provided for roughly 13 million people since its inception in 1976.

What struck me as particularly disconcerting was when I learned how many people have to make a choice between whether to have safe or affordable housing. Or how many parents have had to wonder whether or not to pay a mortgage they couldn't afford instead of their kids' health insurance policy. Or the panic so many families face at an unexpected rent increase. Habitat for Humanity's mission is to try and ease those stresses by providing stable and safe housing with a mortgage they can afford that won't suddenly jump to impossibly high rates. Individuals who had been given the chance to own a home for the first time as a result of assistance through Habitat for Humanity described having a sense of security and safety they had never experienced before. And the

recipient's participation in the transaction is important because it's not just someone asking for and expecting a handout. The sweat equity component of the exchange helps make the new homeowner an actual and valuable part of the process.

I guess reading this article resonated with me in a few different ways. First, I was impressed that a man as advanced in age as Jimmy Carter is still actively working with this organization. He could easily be spending his sunset years quietly fading away but, not only has he seemed to have beaten brain cancer, he's also opting to swing a hammer and build houses alongside men and women a third his age. Beyond that, I was reminded of what it means to be a homeowner. How the size and scope of a house matters less than just the idea itself- that owning affordable property translates to a sense of independence, safety, security, pride and strength. If

Habitat for Humanity can help make that dream a reality for more people, I felt like I wanted to become even more involved, too. I'm planning on setting aside a portion of every commission I make and donating it to this organization. Bringing a set of keys to a new homeowner is the nicest part of my job and makes every transaction worthwhile. If I can play a small part in making homeownership a possibility for even more people on a global scale, that would be an unbelievable pleasure and an honor.

Anyway, these are just thoughts I've had. Maybe it's because I recently had a birthday which usually brings about more reflection than other times during the year. But, whatever the reason, I'm feeling the need to take the opportunity give back a bit, make a difference, recognize how lucky I've been and share more with those who need it most. I mean, if Jimmy Carter can do it at 93, do I have any excuse not to pitch in, too?

My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Beverlywood - NEW LISTING!



9447 Beverlywood St – \$2,195,000 3 Bed / 3 Bath 2,400 Sq. Ft., 8,399 Sq. Ft. lot

Distinguished and traditional, this home built in 1947, is brimming with character and presents architectural and stylistic details often missing from today's newly constructed houses. Perched above the street allows for far reaching city views from the front yard. Step inside to find hardwood floors, crown moldings, a Craftsman-style stone fireplace in the living room, an enormous dining room and dozens of windows that bathe the home in natural light. Built on the street level, there are an abundance of windows so light can stream in. Located on a warm and friendly street in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School system, this inviting family home can be yours today.

Beverlywood - ACTIVE!

4 bed / 3.5 bath



9730 Lockford St – \$3,195,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

5 Bed / 7 Bath 4,449 Sq. Ft., 7567 Sq. Ft. Lot



10452 Lorenzo Place – \$4,855,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

4 Bed / 3 Bath 8375 Sq. Ft. Corner Lot



2751 Motor Ave – \$2,195,000

Cheviot Hills - ACTIVE!

5 Bed / 7 Bath



2719 Forrester Drive – \$5,199,000

Kenter Canyon - SOLD

5 Bed / 3 Bath



500 Hanley Pl – \$2,999,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

5 Bed / 5 Bath Large Corner Lot



3035 Queensbury Dr – \$2,999,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD OVER ASKING

4 Bed / 3 Bath



10523 Dunleer Dr – \$2,250,000

Rancho Park - IN ESCROW

6 Bed / 8 Bath



2463 Patricia Ave – \$3,995,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

5 Bed / 5 Bath 3,842 Sq. Ft., 7,444 Sq. Ft. Lot



2742 Forrester Dr – \$2,625,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

5 Bed / 6.5 Bath



2715 Forrester Dr – \$4,999,000

Cheviot Hills happenings

Westside Stories

By Michael Harris

Los Angeles Chinatown is now known as new Chinatown. The original was located where the Union Railroad Station was built. New Chinatown is located near Broadway and Cesar Chavez Blvd. The history of Chinatown goes back to the building of the railroads when Chinese citizens were recruited to do much of the hard work involved with laying the rail lines. They were restricted in their right to own property and they settled in a conclave where they were welcomed.

The original Chinatown had Tong Wars and opium dens until it was torn down to make way for the development of the Central Rail Station. The present Chinatown has shops, restaurants, and many residents who live in the area. It was built after the original Chinatown was destroyed, with the help of set designers in Hollywood and artifacts donated by Cecil De Mille and from the set of the motion picture The Good Earth by Pearl Buck. For good Chinese food and an interesting look at a different culture it is worth the visit.

If you enjoy reading these vignettes each month, you may want to check out my father-in-law's book, Westside Stories. It's a memoir/history of growing up on the Westside of Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s with great photos, anecdotes and stories. Perfect for the history buff/enthusiast in your family! It's available for purchase on Amazon, search Westside Stories by Michael Harris.

RAFFLE

By Ben Lee

Have you tried the Japanese BBQ place on Pico yet? Gyu Kaku has been around for a while but we recently took the boys there for dinner and it was not only absolutely delicious but it was also a lot of fun to prepare the food ourselves (just watch out if you have really little kids because the cooking part might be slightly stressful). Offering a wide array of beef, chicken, fish, vegetables (and even a happy hour!) there is definitely something yummy for everyone to



enjoy. We love this place so much, we're raffling off a \$50 gift card as this month's raffle. To enter, simply email me: ben@benleeproperties.com and write BBQ in the subject line. That's it! We'll draw a name at random at the end of the month and let you know you've won. Good luck!



Calling all Cooks

By Ben Lee

How many of us are bored with making the same thing for dinner every night? Or how many fabulous family recipes do you have that you would like to see bound in a book so future generations can benefit from a bit of your culinary history? My wife is putting together a neighborhood cookbook and would love for you to contribute your favorite recipes that are tried and true (and, needless to say, delicious). Proceeds from the sale of the eventual cookbook will go towards



a variety of community needs. For more information and to provide a recipe (or many), please send her an email: lillijlee@yahoo.com. Thanks!

So many exciting and engaging events around town this month!

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

October 7 is the annual Country Club Estates Block Party. I always enjoy sponsoring this festive afternoon. If you live in the Country Club Estates, come on out and do some crafts, meet fellow neighbors and enjoy Dandy Don's ice cream courtesy of me! For more information contact the block party chair, Candis Melamed: candismela@gmail.com

October 18 is the bimonthly Ladies' Wine Night. Enjoy light bites, wine/non-alcoholic beverages and enlightening conversation with local

ladies from around the neighborhood. As an added bonus, this wine night will also include a jewelry trunk show/sale featuring original pieces designed by Beverlywood resident Joelle Casady. For all the details, please contact my wife: lillijlee@yahoo.com If you can't make this one but would like to be included in future get-togethers, please let her know.

October 20 is the annual Ben Lee Properties party! If you are a past, present (or future!) client, you probably have already received an invitation to attend. If you have not gotten one yet (or if you would like to

join the fun), please let me know: ben@benleeproperties.com

November 1 & November 8

Beverlywood resident and safety expert Marci Sandell is offering two important workshops to help keep everyone calm and in control should an emergency take place. Both the Disaster Preparedness Workshop (11/1) and Disaster First Aid (11/8) are offered free of charge and held in the Castle Heights Elementary School Auditorium, beginning at 7pm. Knowledge is power so take advantage of these crucial programs so you know what to do in order to save yourself and loved ones should disaster strike.

