

Cheviot Hills

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December does it again

By BEN LEE

How is it possible that 2015 is already drawing to a close? Why does time feel like it's flying by faster than ever before? It seems like only yesterday that we were staring at the holidays face to face and now here we are, twelve short months later, once again looking into the eye of the holiday tornado. For my family and probably for many of you, December is a whirlwind of activity. Luckily business slows down a bit so I have more time to concentrate on what my wife and boys are busy doing. That usually entails attending extra classroom potluck parties, watching holiday singing concerts from school auditorium seats, contemplating gift wish lists, mailing out holiday cards, planning and strategizing the best mall parking spots, chaperoning extra shopping trips, going to the market more and basically being the co-captain to a lot of over-scheduling and under-savoring. Every year we attempt to do less and enjoy more but time and time again we seem to get caught up in the panic of December and the energetic challenges it brings. Last year around this time we actually experienced the best of both worlds. We enjoyed all the activity surrounding the holidays but as soon as that last gift was ripped open, we all piled into the car and got the heck out of Dodge.

There's nothing as liberating as hitting the open road, especially when most of Los Angeles is out of town. The freeways were wide open and we



were able to zip along with the windows down to get in as much fresh air as possible, all the way up to San Francisco. Up north, we experienced a welcome chill in the air and all the natural beauty and culture we were able to absorb in just a few short days. We hiked all the way to the top of Muir Woods- an incredible sight to say the least. Once we got to the top, our five year old pitched an enormous fit when he learned we'd have to hike all the way back down. We actually tried to Uber our way back because nothing is as unpleasant as sharing a life-affirming

hike with a tired, whining child. But, alas, a true natural surrounding doesn't lend itself to strong cell reception. John Muir would be pleased to know we all hiked back down his beautiful mountain and all it took was the promise of a cold Snapple to keep Vinnie's complaints to a minimum.

Once we got back to San Francisco we were recharged and excited to show the boys all the touristy treasures that makes the city so grand: Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz, Chinatown and Ghiradelli's Square. When it was time to pack up and make one last trip over

the Golden Gate Bridge towards Los Angeles, we decided to take the coast route home in order to appreciate how lucky we are to live adjacent to such a glorious coastline. For the record, that's a really long and winding route home. It is not for those who are anxious to get anywhere quickly or for those prone to carsickness. It had been a long time since I had taken that road and had forgotten about some of those tight, mountaintop turns. But it sure was beautiful and deciding to spontaneously stop along the way to try to pet the enormous elephant seals (again, not the smartest choice given how huge, fast and dangerous these creatures are) was a memory that will last my family and me a lifetime.

So, from one busy parent to another, I know life can get hectic and crazy this time of year. It's so easy to get swept up in all the details, drama and daily aggravations of the holiday season. My advice would be just to try and take a well deserved breather along the way. If you can't get out of town, then maybe head to the beach for a few hours and breathe in the crisp ocean air or go for a local hike. You want to cheat half way down the mountain and take an Uber home? That's OK, too. The trick is to take some time out to relax and refocus on the portion of your holiday season that makes it memorable and meaningful for you. And while you're trying to relax, don't forget to recharge. Because the 2016 holiday season will be here before you know it.

From our family to yours, hang in there... and have a happy and healthy holiday season!



My featured listings

BEN LEE - ESTATES SALES

Cheviot Hills – ACTIVE!



Located on a serenely quiet street on Burgen Ave, Cheviot Hills, so pleasing to its residents that a home hasn't changed ownership in almost a decade, this recently remodeled, Spanish style, nearly 4,000 square foot home with breathtaking views of the entire city is as picturesque as it is practical. There are five bedrooms and four and a half baths, each meticulously remodeled with an eye on style: Carrara marble in the bathrooms, generously-sized closets in the bedrooms and views that must be seen to be believed. Situated on a nearly 9800 square foot lot and just a stone's throw from the award-winning Castle Heights elementary school, I invite you to visit this lovely home today.

9826 Burgen Ave – Offered at \$2,529,000

Cheviot Hills – ACTIVE!



An impeccably designed home in the heart of Cheviot Hills, this beautiful property is magazine photo shoot ready. Step into the decorative tiled foyer and you will then see the exquisite living room which offers hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings, exposed beams, fireplace and tranquil view. Each of the bathrooms in this three large bedroom/two bathroom, over 2,400 square foot home were meticulously remodeled as were the master bedroom closets, as well. Step outside and you'll find a generous side patio, perfect for sports and/or entertaining. The patio wraps around to a nice sized grassy area, too. Located in the award winning Overland School district, this impeccable home on Manning Ave, Cheviot Hills deserves your immediate attention.

2750 Manning Ave – Offered at \$1,699,000

Beverlywood – IN ESCROW



A classic, California craftsman on Oakhurst Ave, Beverlywood, this picturesque home has all the features to allow for both character and function. The living room is anchored by a cozy wood-burning/gas log fireplace and punctuated by an abundance of light through Andersen double-hung windows. Andersen French doors lead out from the master bedroom to the rustic backyard that includes a grassy area, as well as patio and covered hammock area/pergola, both perfect for playtime as well as entertaining. This wholly unique home in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary school is most deserving of your immediate attention.

3047 Oakhurst Ave – Offered at \$865,000

West LA – ACTIVE!



This is a stunning, two-story, 1600+ square foot West Los Angeles penthouse. Giant windows in the living room allow for the entire penthouse to be basked in light and the aforementioned ceilings give the home an inspiring reach and create a feeling of spaciousness, unparalleled in city living. This condominium offers two gas fireplaces, a private outdoor balcony, extremely generous closets, hardwood floors and an upstairs loft. Close proximity to the best of Brentwood's shops and restaurants, this penthouse is indeed a sight to behold!

12222 Wilshire Blvd PH# 5
– Offered at \$969,000

Cheviot Hills – NEW CONSTRUCTION



Imagine an idyllic oasis in the heart of Cheviot Hills. Featuring brand new, top-of-the-line construction that is setting the standard of excellence for homes in our area. This work of art (in progress) from Diamond West Distinctive Homes promises to be nothing short of exquisite. A grander expression of the Traditional style and set back but flush with the street allowing for access with ease, the beauty of this nearly 5700 Sq Ft, 6 Bedroom / 7 Bath home will stun you from the onset. This property will be nothing short of an architectural triumph that will make any family proud to call home.

2921 Cavendish Dr
– Offered at \$5,250,000

Cheviot Hills – NEW CONSTRUCTION



This brand new 4,449 sq ft home in the Cheviot Hills area sits on a 7,567 sq. ft. lot. This two story home is designed with a Cape Cod inspired facade featuring colonial windows with shutters and planter shelves, paneled french doors, a trellised upstairs balcony and a covered downstairs porch. Inside is an expansive and modern floor plan with central air conditioning, a study, playroom and a gourmet kitchen with island. There are four bedrooms upstairs and another bedroom downstairs. Located on a corner lot adjacent to Rancho Park Golf Course with city skyline views.

10452 Lorenzo Pl
– Offered at \$4,500,000

Beverlywood – ACTIVE!



A delightful and bright, traditional style family home with a picturesque view! Situated on an approximately 7500 sq ft lot in the Beverlywood HOA, this 3 bedroom, 2.75 bathroom house offers plenty of fine features ready for upgrades or build your dream home. Currently the home boasts supple hardwood floors, two fireplaces, a formal living room, dining room and family room. The kitchen is light and cheerful and has a connected laundry facility. This is the perfect spot to upgrade the current house or build your perfect dream home all in a fantastic, family friendly neighborhood.

1565 Reeves St
– Offered at \$1,675,000

A stunning, brand new, architectural masterpiece inspired by the great paintings of Mondrian, this 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home could be considered one of the most unique and complex properties in Rancho Park. The entire first floor is open, allowing for flow between the formal dining room, spacious kitchen and formal living room. Everything feels fresh and very open. The living room offers a unique feature: it's wired for a projector so that when its sliding glass doors completely open to expose an outside wall, this wall acts as an outdoor movie screen with its image projected from inside the living room. The kitchen has all new state-of-the-art appliances and finishes as well as a spacious island with social dining seating. Located in the award winning Overland School District, reserve a moment to visit this home and appreciate that good design is still very much alive and well on the Westside.

Rancho Park – IN ESCROW



10801 Ashby Ave – Offered at \$1,899,000

Beverlywood Adjacent – IN ESCROW



2601 S. Halm Ave – Offered at \$799,000

Quebonita! On a quiet street just east of Beverlywood sits a charming, 1928 Spanish abode on South Halm Ave, Beverlywood adjacent with all the texture and delight of a storybook cottage. Then, stepping inside the home, notice its original Spanish fixtures, archways and exposed beams. Created to encourage an environment for cozy entertaining, there is a formal living room with a decorative brick fireplace and bay window, formal dining room that allows light to stream in from the courtyard as well as a fully modern, designer kitchen and breakfast nook. There are three bedrooms, one of which is currently used as a den and the closets in this over 1100 square foot home are exceptionally large for a home of this era. With a totally private and gated back patio that leads to a separate studio space, this special home is waiting for you to move into today.

Cheviot Hills happenings

A season of giving back

By BEN LEE

The holiday season is a great time to give back to those less fortunate. There is no shortage of volunteering opportunities and there are countless people living in this city who could benefit from your altruism. The Midnight Mission, One Voice, Union Station Homeless Services, Sova, Food on Foot and the LA Regional Food Bank are just a few of the organizations that would welcome an extra set of hands during the busy holiday season. All the information you need to get started is on the website timeout.com. And don't forget about our four-legged

friends who could use your help, too. Cheviot resident Karen Clark collects all your unwanted newspapers, towels, sheets, blankets, bowls, cages, pet shampoos etc. and delivers these items to animals at shelters in the greater Los Angeles area. You can reach her at, kacinla@aol.com to arrange when/where to drop off your items. ■



A neighborhood favorite



By BEN LEE

My father-in-law mentioned Marty's Hamburger stand in his article this month and I felt compelled to expand a bit on the theme. If you're interested in reading more essays like these, they're all on my website:

www.benleeproperties.com.

Marty's offers the best hot dog in West Los Angeles and has done so for well over fifty years. Similar to its' neighbor The Apple Pan, Marty's is an institution in West Los Angeles dating back to the 1950's, famous for its walk-up ordering and pick-up windows, friendly short order grillers, and over-all terrific food. Marty's is best known for offering 'the Combo,' perfect for those of us who can't choose between a hamburger or hotdog for lunch. The Combo includes both all in the same bite! You read that right: the grilled dog is put right on top of the burger patty with a little chili and cheese shoved in there between the bun. And at a modest cost (last I checked it was around five dollars), you can't beat this kind of bargain. Made right in front of your very eyes, the chefs at Marty's never write anything down yet somehow manage to memorize every hungry customer's order, rarely if ever getting it wrong. If kids on their tippy toes still can't watch the guys make their food through the window, they can sit on a spinning stool right alongside and watch from there. Watching them cook is all part of the experience and tipping them afterwards never goes unappreciated.

In addition to burgers, dogs, sandwiches, even breakfast burritos on the menu, you really don't want to deny yourself the world famous chili cheese fries. A generous portion of shoe string French fries, hot and glistening from their bubbly oil bath, smothered with a

few ladlefuls of rich, meaty chili and topped with a thick slice of American cheese. Take note: it's big enough to share. You may take your first bite and decide to keep going all on your own but trust: your heart will thank you for not dancing this tango solo. If you have any chili leftover, it's always a solid plan to spoon some on top of your burger or dog (or both if you got the combo).

Now, keep in mind, you very well may want to savor your food and eat it slowly. This is not a good plan for one simple reason- all the seating is outdoors and you're not the only one who loves a good Marty's burger and dog- Rancho Park pigeons are great fans of them, too. These birds are bold and if you leave your tray unattended for even the length of time to run back for some ketchup, they'll typically help themselves to a few fries before effectively being shooed away. This is another good reason to dine at Marty's a deux: one person can be on pigeon patrol while the other grabs the condiments.

A few other housekeeping hints to consider before your first trip to Marty's: only cash is accepted (an ATM machine is conveniently located on the patio) and to quench your thirst, there is an Orange Bang option in addition to the usual soda fare. Go easy on those refills though, because Marty's does not have a bathroom. There is, however, a fire station right next door and in my experience, the kind firemen have never turned down a desperate looking father hoping his sons could use the bathroom in an emergency situation.

I hope you'll try Marty's the next time you're looking for a delicious post-baseball game or mid-bike ride kind of snack. It's the quintessential local kind of hamburger stand that we've been pretty proud to have in our neighborhood for well over 60 years.

Our Neighborhood through the years

By Michael Harris

Part two in an on-going series about memories of our neighborhood from the early days.

In the late 40's and early 50's there was lots to entertain in Cheviot Hills and environs. The corner of Pico and Manning (where the Pep Boys parking lot is now) there was Mom's with its prominent sign Good Home Cooking. Down the street was the donut shop a little further east, with the philosophical instruction on the wall which read: As you ramble on through life brother, whatever be your goal keep your eye upon the donut and not upon the hole. In 1946 we watched a newly returned GI personally build his little hamburger stand which still stands called Marty's and is still going strong. Another dearly departed restaurant near Pico just east of La Cienega was the Kentucky Boys where the hamburgers were greasy and terrific.

We had plenty of movie houses to tempt us with those B movies: we would choose between the Lido at Pico and La Cienega; the Picfair at Pico and Fairfax; the Stadium at Pico near Robinson (now converted into a Synagogue) where we could go on Saturdays to see the serials and scope out the girls in the mezzanine; later came the Picwood at Westwood and Pico. We could also walk from Beverly Drive and Pico to Wilshire to the more upscale Beverly Theatre built like the Taj Mahal or the theatre at Wilshire just to the east and we enjoyed the

hitching post just showing westerns on Canon near Wilshire. The movies were not memorable but the prices were right. We got to them mostly by foot power but we also had an ally in the old Number 13 Airdrome bus. It was noisy, durable, and cheap. You could board it right outside Mom's at Pico and Manning and its route ran down Manning to Motor where it turned north on Motor with stops along Motor which certainly included the street on which I lived: Glenbarr. It continued to Pico and Motor where it turned east along Pico until La Cienega where it turned south to Airdrome and continued on that route until it ended up at the old Sears store at Pico near San Vicente which was at the time the bus hub. From that hub on occasion we would take another bus downtown where we could go to the junior Philharmonic concerts at the Amy McPherson church and then back home on a bus or a red car. The other entertainments were the miniature golf course on Pico near Fairfax and any old shoe store where you could step in to see your foot bones wiggle in a flouroscope contraction which we found out produced enough self-inflicted X-rays in your body to be seen many years later. We also had for many years a bowling alley near Pico and Patricia which did not have automatic pin setters so the kids could earn pin money (hence the phrase) by putting the pins in place after a paying customer's strike.