



Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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Lives well lived

By Ben Lee

My wife and I have been together for 25 years and share much in common but there is one thing in particular I find truly unique: both of our grandmothers lived in Cheviot Hills and they each lived to see past 100. My grandmother, Ellie (but we have always called her Tutu) is getting ready to celebrate her 101st birthday this month and is still living in the same home where she raised my father and uncle about a block away from the Rancho Park Golf Course. My wife's grandmother, Victoria Harris, lived on Glenbarr Avenue for over 65 years before passing away at 100 and a half about ten years ago. They got to know each other after my wife and I started dating and I think there was a mutual respect and admiration between the two of them, one that comes from age, understanding and experience. Here are two women from two different parts of the world, both ending up living about a mile apart who, on the surface, don't seem to be too similar but in actuality (or in ways that really matter most) they are. They both moved to Los Angeles in the

1940's: Victoria, her husband Alfred and their three sons emigrated from London after a brief stay in New York City. According to legend, the Harris' chose to settle in Cheviot Hills because the architecture and foliage reminded them of their English homeland. Tutu came to L.A. with her husband Milton and their two sons via Chicago. All five of these young men would eventually graduate from Hamilton High School over the course of two decades, probably knowing a few of the same teachers and definitely sharing the pride of the Yankees.

It's just rather amazing to me that both women were born before women were allowed to vote, before television was invented, before a man walked on the moon, before the Civil Rights Act, before microwaves, computers and the internet. They were both living witnesses to a century of history without even realizing it.

Victoria used to joke that the secret to her longevity was being 'lucky and lazy.' While she'd always say it with a smile, and I'm quite sure anyone who knew her would say she may have been lucky but was definitely not lazy, there's some truth to the

statement. My grandmother Ellie never articulated why she was blessed with a long life in the same way but there are parallels between the two of them. Neither had to worry where their next meal was coming from or how they'd pay the bills that month. They each enjoyed a proper 5pm cocktail or two. They had healthy husbands and sons who adored them and didn't feel the same pressure that faces most women today in terms of work/home balance that can cause so much stress. They both seemed emotionally fulfilled simply by following their bliss. Victoria enjoyed nothing more than hosting her extended family every week for Sunday teatime. She was also an avid fan of watching golf, tennis and playing Bingo. Tutu found joy teaching locals authentic Hawaiian dance, first through classes at Rancho Park and later at a community room at the Westside Pavilion. They read the newspaper every day and kept themselves informed about the world around them.

This isn't to say their lives were always blessed and without strife. It's likely impossible to live over 100 years without one's share of health

woes (luckily theirs were minor, brief and temporary). And they both lived through the Great Depression, which in many ways shaped their philosophies and actions for years after it ended. It's possible that enduring the Depression made the rest of their lives seem less arduous in comparison. In other words, not sweating the small stuff and keeping priorities in perspective in terms of what really mattered most seemed to help make their ensuing decades pretty happy and relaxed.

I like to think our three sons are blessed in that they come from hearty stock on both sides of their family tree. And in some odd, round about way, maybe living in the same neighborhood as their two great grandmothers will help shape their future longevity, too? Maybe there's something in the water or maybe it's just a safe, pleasant place to be most if not all of the time. Could the secret to a long, happy life be as simple as where we choose to live? Who knows? All I can say is: living to 100 and beyond is a monumental accomplishment and I am proud to wish my grandmother a very happy and healthy 101st this month. Happy birthday, Tutu!



Left to Right: Ellie "Tutu" Lee and Victoria Harris

My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!



3225 Club Dr – \$2,499,000 4 Bed / 3 Bath 2,940 Sq. Ft., 9,105 Sq. Ft. Lot

A classic, one-story Ranch style home on an oversized flat lot in the Country Club Estate section of Cheviot Hills is brimming with attractive features. A combination of brick, hardwood and stone floors below, exposed beams above and a multitude of built ins and living spaces in between, the home is warm, welcoming and has been updated to accommodate the needs of a modern family. Conveniently located near local shopping, markets, the Expo and award winning Castle Heights Elementary School.

Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!



3217 Castle Heights Ave – \$1,895,000 4 Bed / 3 Bath - 2,041 Sq. Ft., 6,494 Sq. Ft. Lot

A pristine, brand new construction has so much to offer. Clean lines accentuated by light hardwood floors gives the home a modern feel and the desirable open floor plan creates a sense of breadth and movement throughout the entire space. The kitchen, with its sophisticated slate grey Cesar Stone countertops, designer pendants over the island and stainless steel appliances that are fanciful as well as functional. The kitchen and great room with fireplace open up to the extraordinarily vast backyard. Kids and pets alike can run for hours on the flat expanse of grass, completely privatized by maturing foliage.

Cheviot Hills - COMING SOON!

5 Bed / 7 Bath



2719 Forrester Drive – \$5,199,000

Beverlywood - SOLD

2 Bed / 1 Bath + Guest House - 1,279 Sq. Ft., 4,998 Sq. Ft. Lot



2912 S Beverly Dr – \$1,199,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

6 Bed / 8 Bath



2463 Patricia Ave – \$3,995,000

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW

4 Bed / 4 Bath 3,660 Sq. Ft., 11,922 Sq. Ft. Lot



2880 Motor Ave – \$2,995,000

Beverlywood - SOLD

3 Bed / 3 Bath 2,400 Sq. Ft., 8,399 Sq. Ft. Lot



9447 Beverlywood St – \$1,840,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

4 Bed / 4 Bath 2,800 Sq. Ft., 8,750 Sq. Ft. Lot



3211 Castle Heights Ave – \$2,195,000

Beverly Hills - IN ESCROW

3 Bed / 3 Bath 1,330 Sq. Ft, 7,560 Sq. Ft. Lot



1578 Benedict Canyon Dr – \$1,395,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

4 Bed / 2 Bath 1,500 Sq. Ft, 6,233 Sq. Ft. Lot



10637 Northvale Rd – \$1,549,000

Cheviot Hills - SOLD

3 Bed / 2 Bath 1,795 Sq. Ft., 7,672 Sq. Ft. Lot



3216 Earlmor Dr – \$2,195,000

Cheviot Hills happenings

Westside Places

By Michael Harris

Now open to the public about two weeks of the year is the Ennis House located at 2607 Glendower Ave in the Los Feliz area near Griffith Park. It has a storied history. It was built from a Frank Lloyd Wright design in 1924 after Wright had settled in Los Angeles for a brief period. The Ennis House which was formerly known as the Ennis-Brown House was one of four built by Wright from concrete blocks which he created and designed with art motifs and with structural steel for support. He called them textile blocks but alas they have not stood the test of time. Slowly they were infiltrated with moisture and rain which caused them to weaken and deteriorate. One attempt at restoration made things worse and all through the 1990's various efforts were made to repair and renovate including the support walls but the costs were so significant that the Foundation in charge could never quite find the funds to

finish the job. Very recently the property was sold to the grocery store tycoon Ron Burkle under a condition that the house be available for public view at least 12 days per year. Most critics maintain the house has Mayan influences but I believe Wright himself denied that. The house is very much a Wright masterpiece. Its glass windows overlooking the similar Hollyhock House are perfectly mitered and the great room is a huge combination for sitting and entertaining. It is 10000 square feet with a loggia connecting the bedrooms with the public area. Entrance is through a narrow and modest opening at the driveway level and then in a Wrightian signature one is bowled over in coming to the massive great room with its fireplace and massive volume. Brown when he owned it added a swimming pool and billiard room. It has a hall closet that is floor to ceiling reaching at least two stories to house the ladder needed to do the cleaning and climbing for the maintenance. The house has been the location for many movie shoots,

including The House on Haunted Hill, The Day of the Locust, Blade Runner and Karate Kid. Wright designed all the furniture as well as the fixtures and the chauffeur's quarters above the garage which is connected to the main house by a parking lot courtyard. This is a beautiful design by a world renowned architect at the height of his powers. It is definitely worth a visit but reservations will be required.



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 at <http://www.americasgroup.com/Westside-Stories-Book.html>



Have you checked out your local elementary school lately?

By Ben Lee

All three of our boys were Castle Heights Elementary students and it might even be better now than when they were there (if that's at all possible!). Friends of Castle Heights Co-Presidents Rita Burke and Andrew Mollner want to share all the exciting changes currently underway at this local gem of a school. New programs such as:

- WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM OFFERED IN SPANISH
- HANDS-ON SCIENCE
- MUSIC INSTRUCTION
- COMPUTER LAB WITH A DESIGNATED INSTRUCTOR

- COMMUNITY CIRCLES
- ART AND THEATER INSTRUCTION
- LIBRARY AND LIBRARIAN

Rita and Andrew add: "We are a School for Advanced Studies, and all of our students benefit from instruction that develops higher level thinking. Interested in learning more? There are several opportunities! You can attend our next tour on March 26 at 8:45 am or our Open House and Art Gala on April 11 at 5 pm. Come chat with current parents and meet our new principal, Dr. Linda Beck. Also, please make sure to check out our website: www.castleheightselementary.org Hope to see you and your children soon at Castle Heights Elementary!"

This month's Raffle

By Ben Lee

Thanks to everyone who entered to win the \$50 gift card to the fabulous neighborhood store: D. L. Rhein. Congratulations to Noah Bohrer! You are the lucky winner this month and we hope you enjoy all the beautiful gifts and treasures \$50 dollars can buy. To all those who entered but didn't win this time, don't fret- there's always another fun raffle around the corner. You may have heard the news that the Apple Pan has been sold

to new owners. While they have assured everyone they're not planning on changing a thing, it's understandable for locals to feel a little nervous about what the future holds. So, just in case they mess with the Hickory Burger, why not raffle off a \$50 gift card while it all tastes just as delicious as we know it to be? To win, simply email me: Ben@benleeproperties.com and write APPLE PAN in the subject line. That's it! We'll notify a winner at the end of the month. Good luck and congratulations to Noah Bohrer, once again.

