



Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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Out with the old

By Ben Lee

It's April! And you know what that means... Either you love it or hate it but it's hard to separate April from that ever-optimistic goal of Spring Cleaning. I wasn't sure why or how "Spring Cleaning" came into existence since it almost makes more sense to tackle that overstuffed closet during the winter months when rainy weather forces you to stay inside more. Some researchers say that the origin of Spring Cleaning can be traced to ancient times, specifically the Persian New Year which falls on the first day of spring. Just before the holiday, Iranians practice *khooneh tekouni* which literally means: "shaking the house." There also could be a religious component to the ritual. Jews clean the house in spring to coincide with Passover in an attempt to eliminate all the yeast products from the home before it's time to eat only matzo for the week. Traditionally, Catholics thoroughly wash the church altar the day before Good Friday, also in spring, and then presumably want to go home and clean their houses, too. There's also a non-secular and practical explanation for this tradition: homes get dirty over the winter and in certain areas (thankfully not ours), it's virtually impossible to open windows during the snowiest and coldest months. Once springtime comes, we can suddenly open up those windows and start cleaning off the dirt and grime that had been gathering on sills and doorways all winter long.

Whichever origin story resonates with you, the one truth we can all agree on is that it feels good to shed unnecessary belongings and live in a sparkling clean home but it's often easier said than done. You've probably heard of the tidying-up guru Marie Kondo. She has turned the task of de-cluttering into a multimillion dollar, international phenomenon. Whether it's through her books, in-person consultations or now a Netflix televised series, Kondo has helped countless people learn the art of releasing themselves from the burden of belongings and basically tidying up their lives. It's a methodical, systematic approach and one I won't go into too deeply here but it's basically handling each item in your possession, thanking it for its service, determining



whether or not it "sparks joy" and then deciding to either keep it or let it go. She cautions against starting with the dreaded junk drawer we probably all have (and fear). Instead, she has a variety of categories ranging from clothes to books to mementos, etc. For example, let's say you're going to tackle clothes. Kondo would have you take every item of clothing you own and pile it into a towering mountain in your closet. Then, piece-by-piece, you would take it from the pile, thank it for what it's done for you and see if it sparks any joy. If it does, keep it. But if it doesn't, well then it's time to see if it'll spark joy for someone else, preferably out of your home.

Sounds simple enough but it can feel a little ridiculous thanking an

old hat you haven't worn in years before seeing if joy has suddenly been sparked. A little silly, maybe, but it's shocking how accomplished you feel after seeing the exercise through. In a way it speaks to where we are as a nation with regard to immediacy. Take dieting, for example. It might take weeks or months before seeing the physical results that come from changing how we eat and exercise. But shedding actual belongings is a tangible way to experience the glory of instant gratification.

But I recognize it's still easier said than done. I get very enthusiastic about decluttering and shedding items after I've seen an episode of Marie Kondo's show. I storm the garage with the intention of going to war, armed with

some trash bags and the hope that cleaning a hopelessly unruly, chaotic mess translates to a simpler, more harmonious existence. But after a few minutes of wondering how to move those huge items or trying to figure out who else might want thousands of old photos, I generally accept that sure it feels good to get rid of stuff but it also feels good to spend a quite Saturday watching TV instead. Maybe not the Marie Kondo show because that has proven to result in too much work and guilt. Perhaps an episode or two of *Hoarders* instead is just the ticket. Because Spring Cleaning is great but nothing makes me feel better about myself than seeing a show about people who have more junk priceless keepsakes than I do.

My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Beverlywood - NEW LISTING!



Imagine coming home every night to a home as luxurious and harmonious as the finest 5-star hotel. The fantasy is yours to make a reality should you inhabit this masterfully constructed modern farmhouse on Monte Mar. Intricate details abound creating a vision in tranquil, earthy tones punctuated by black, marble and brass creating a sophisticated, Mad Men-esque quality. Features include: formal dining room, living room, butler's pantry and enormous great room that is overlooked by the gorgeous kitchen. Walking distance to Pico/Robertson and containing all the characteristics of a 'smart' house, it's time you turn your fantasy into a reality and visit this listing today.

9022 Monte Mar Dr – \$4,399,000 6 Bed / 7 Bath 6,458 Sq. Ft., 7,593 Sq. Ft. Lot

Westwood - NEW LISTING!



It's no easy feat to combine chic modernity with charm and warmth, however this brand new construction in Westwood does just that. Clean lines and all hardwood floors provide the canvas for numerous artistic expressions of design and detail. The rich, formal dining room complete with fireplace and built in wine storage is reminiscent of the stately tasting rooms of Paso Robles. There is a vast, ultra-sophisticated backyard with tanning deck, cascading water feature into the sleek swimming pool and built in barbeque. Located in a quiet, friendly neighborhood in the highly desirable Warner Avenue Elementary School district, you owe it to yourself to see this stunning home today.

217 S Bentley Ave – \$4,799,000 5 Bed / 6 Bath 4,700 Sq. Ft., 8,303 Sq. Ft. Lot

Westwood - IN ESCROW



10540 Tennessee Ave – \$2,495,000 5 Bed / 4 Bath 3,033 Sq. Ft., 5,847 Sq. Ft. Lot

Immaculate and inviting, this newly remodeled, Mediterranean style home with immensely attractive curb appeal is tailor made for a family looking to expand. At just over 3,000 sq ft, there's plenty of room to spread out and no expense has been spared to insure luxurious yet comfortable living for all. Five bedrooms (two downstairs, three up) and four bathrooms surrounded by traditional communal living spaces such as formal living and dining rooms, both with picturesque views of the treetops beyond. Situated on a friendly, cheerful street in the award winning Westwood Charter School District. www.10540tennessee.com

Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!



Basked in warmth and light, this brand new construction in Cheviot Hills is akin to a relaxed day at the beach that lasts into an evening cocktail party. Light hardwood floors and scrubbed white walls set the tranquil earthy tone, a brilliant array of natural light streams in from the front windows, bathing the entire expanse of the home in quintessential California sunshine. The front rooms have such an astounding view that spans so far west, it starts by overlooking the vast grounds of the Griffin Club and continues all the way as far as Marina del Rey. Conveniently located in the heart of Cheviot Hills in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School district, this home isn't just "Smart" but pretty, too!

3118 Patricia Ave – \$3,499,000 5 Bed / 6 Bath 4,102 Sq. Ft., 7,111 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!



A much treasured, ranch-style, mid-century family home on a quiet street in Cheviot Hills. This house was built in 1952 and is still occupied by its original owner. The bright, sunshine-filled kitchen has been recently updated to reflect the needs of a modern cook. New cabinetry, counter tops, fixtures and appliances will make any at-home chef comfortable. The kitchen flows into the cozy breakfast nook that has a view and access to the beautifully landscaped backyard. Located in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School District, this home has been the backdrop to decades worth of happy, healthy memories. Perhaps you will be the next family to call this historic house a home.

9832 Vicar St – \$1,799,000 3 Bed / 2 Bath 1,612 Sq. Ft., 9,001 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW



3217 Castle Heights Ave – \$1,895,000 4 Bed / 3 Bath - 2,401 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. www.3217castleheights.com

Cheviot Hills happenings

Westside Places

Number 6!



By Michael Harris

The Los Angeles Central Library is another building worth a re-visit. It is located at Fifth and Flower with the address of 630 W. Fifth Street. The main and original building was designed by Bertram Goodhue and built in 1926. A new wing was added in 1993 and named for the prior Mayor Tom Bradley. Later both the Goodhue original building and the Bradley addition were renamed the Richard Riordan Central Library. The re-naming was a little controversial since rarely are grand civic buildings named for living persons. Mr. Riordan was and is a book collector and has

an affinity for libraries since he has purchased at least one university library for his home installation so the City Council rewarded him with his name on the institution. The design of the building is ancient Egypt in inspiration with the style known as Mediterranean Revival. The roof features a mosaic pyramid with sphinxes snakes, and sun-bursts, and the interior of the original building has murals depicting California history. The collection is rather extensive and of particular interest would be the vast photo collections and the very extensive map collection. The notable film shot there were some ghostly library stacks used in Ghostbusters.

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>



Ben at work

By Ben Lee

The international rankings were recently released and I was humbled and excited to see that I came in #6 out of over 90,000 Coldwell Banker realtors in the world. That puts me on par with Billy Joel (6th in top overall record sales), Star Wars the Last Jedi (6th highest grossing domestic movie) and Ken Griffey Jr. (6th top home run hitter of all time). Proud to be in such esteemed company and even prouder to be recognized

with this monumental honor. It's safe to say when you're considering who to use the next time you buy or sell a property, trust your sixth sense and give me a call. Until then I'll leave you with wise words from Pierce Brosnan (the 6th James Bond): "It's the ultimate goal every day you wake up to be happy. At the end of the week, you want to be happy. Happy in love, happy in work, happy in life, happy with yourself. It's pretty simple." From one agent to another, words to live by Mr. Bond.

Raffle News- how to win \$500!

By Ben Lee

We had an unprecedented number of entrants to our March raffle to win \$50 to The Apple Pan. A Hickory Burger sized congratulations to Jessica Pappas. You are the lucky winner this month. Thank you to all those who entered and sorry we didn't pick your name at this time. No worries, though, as there's always another chance to

win something fun. In fact we have something very exciting in store for our next raffle! We will be running a photo contest for the chance to win a whopping \$500 Visa Gift Card! You have from now until after Memorial Day to take a picture of yourself, your pet, your loved one, etc. holding an issue of this newsletter (either this one or a previous edition) in some exotic or fun location. Not going away for

Spring Break or Memorial Day? That's OK. Take a picture of yourself with the newsletter somewhere in town instead. We can't wait to see the fun our little newsletter will have! We will pick the most awesome and creative entry (nothing dangerous though, please!) and announce the winner of the \$500 Visa card in June. To enter, simply email me your picture and write VISA in the subject line: ben@benleeproperties.com



com Again, you have from now until after Memorial Day to submit your photo. Good luck and happy travels!