

Cheviot Hills

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*****ECRWSS*****

LOCAL
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The Lees take Alaska



By BEN LEE

‘What did you do on your summer vacation?’

Isn't that always the first thing teachers and friends ask when kids go back to school? I think our sons will have plenty to share on this topic as we just returned from a family cruise through the interior of Alaska. Talk about a change of scenery from West Los Angeles! The sights alone would have made the trip an undeniable success. Jaw-dropping views of glaciers, majestic bald eagles in flight; there were so many whales swimming alongside our boat, it felt like they were our own personal tour guides. All of these vistas would have made the trip an experience of a lifetime. But what made our journey so

much richer was the fact we were with my father-in-law Michael, his wife Jeanne, her sister Louise and this was a week of uninterrupted bonding time between the generations.

I know cruising is not for everyone (I am usually the first person in our family to nix it when discussing possible vacations) but I may now be a cruise ship convert. Being on a boat meant we were really together. Even though we all live in Los Angeles and see each other more often than most relatives, this trip really kept us all contained in a gently rocking bubble for seven days straight. When the boat docked in the various Alaskan towns, excursions were negotiated with three young boys in mind. That meant long-winded tours were passed over in favor of panning for gold, spotting sea otters from a catamaran and finding the biggest crab legs any given port had to offer. It was so exciting to discover bears and raptors and even salmon swimming in their natural habitat. All of these images will

be forever ingrained in our minds but I'm wondering if my sons will savor other memories more? When my son Spencer grows up and thinks back to the first time he played Checkers with his Poppa Michael, and how shocked he was to actually beat him, he'll think about this trip. I hope the boys will remember how much we all laughed upon realizing that the strange trick my father-in-law can do with his ears must be genetic after our son Vincent showed he could do it, too. I hope they will remember how their grandparents cheered the loudest after Mason partially botched his talent show card trick. Or the next day when Mason shared a seat on the tour bus with his Poppa Michael and they were just talking man-to-man. I overheard Michael ask Mason what his plans were for the future. Not an easy question to answer for a ten-year-old (let alone one who had just suffered his very first bee sting). But Mason didn't hesitate in

formulating his response; an answer that couldn't have pleased his grandfather more. "I think I'd like," said Mason, "to go to Hamilton High." You could practically see the Yankee pride in my father in law's heart swell upon hearing that out of all the goals in the world, his grandson wanted to attend his beloved alma mater. He was cool about it, though. Just nodded his head in quiet approval. But something had happened. Like magic, a new bond had been formed, one that didn't exist prior to the trip. That alone made the entire journey worthwhile.

So, no matter where your family is traveling this summer, I hope you can bring a grandma or grandpa along. The memories created will last much longer than the actual sights and you never know how or when those special bonds will form between the generations. Whether it's on a cruise, tour bus or simply in a backyard tent, to witness those connections in person is the greatest trip of all.

My featured listings

BEN LEE - ESTATES SALES



Beverlywood — ACTIVE!

A spectacular home in Beverlywood, this 5 bedroom/3.5 bathroom, recently remodeled, two-story traditional is a sight to behold. Originally built in 1941, but fully updated just a few years ago, this home offers sumptuous details such as: all hardwood floors, crowned moldings, large and spacious bedrooms, sweeping views, Bay windows, formal wainscoting, and so much more. The chef's kitchen has stainless steel appliances, granite countertops with designer backsplash, a convenient breakfast bar and an attached formal dining room. The spacious family room is sunny and bright with built-in cabinetry and ample space for family entertainment. There is a picture-perfect fireplace that anchors the formal living room, along with a built-in wine-bar with stainless steel wine and beverage refrigerators. Up the dramatic staircase, one will find the master bedroom suite complete with high peaked ceilings and master bathroom with dual sinks in the marble topped vanity and a sunken spa tub. There is a whimsical children's wing with a Jack-and-Jill bathroom and every inch of this home had a designer's eye in mind. This philosophy extends to the outdoors where you'll experience a highly stylish outdoor black and white covered patio in addition to a lovely stretch of grass for kids to use and enjoy. The patio, which connects through the kitchen and through the family room, provides for great indoor/outdoor living and entertaining. Located in the Canfield school district, this home just may be your next dream come true.

9500 Sawyer St

— Offered at \$2,499,000

Cheviot Hills — POCKET LISTING



A beguiling home on Butterfield in Cheviot Hills, this two-story, 5 bedroom/3 bath home with back guest house is worth your immediate attention. Upon entering the home, you'll find easy flow between the family's main living spaces: the living room, kitchen and dining room. Floor to ceiling windows allow for plenty of light to stream in and gives everything a spacious feel. The exquisite kitchen offers plenty of storage and prep space as well as stainless steel appliances, Carrara marble countertops and a breakfast nook. French doors leading out to the solar-heated pool offers a breathtaking view of the entire backyard space. This handsome home located in the Overland Avenue School District will not be on the market for long!

10581 Butterfield Rd —

Offered at \$2,095,000

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 square foot, 6 bedroom/7 bathroom home will stun you from the onset. Featuring a formal living room, formal dining room, family room and entertainment loft, the soaring, vaulted entryway will bask the entire two-story home in light. 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 sit 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. The master suite has a fireplace, access to the upstairs balcony, his and her walk in closets, dual vanities, a free standing tub and a spacious shower. Located on a corner lot adjacent to Rancho Park Golf Course with city skyline views.

10452 Lorenzo Pl —

Offered at \$4,500,000

Castle Heights — ACTIVE!



A family friendly, picket fenced home located on a super sized, over 6,000 square foot lot on a quiet cul-de-sac in Castle Heights, this home on Kramerwood is as delightful as it is functional. Originally built in 1947 but fully renovated only two years ago, this 3 bedroom/2 bath home offers an abundance of features and upgrades: designer custom kitchen with stainless, top-of-the-line appliances, slow close maple wood drawers/cabinetry, hand selected granite countertops and copper farm sink. Located near the award winning Castle Heights Elementary school, this home is a must see!

9415 Kramerwood Pl —

Offered at \$969,000

Westside — ACTIVE!



Charming and updated Westside home that offers an open and modern floorplan. This light and bright three bedroom, three bathroom home sits on a comfortable lot. Bathed in light, you'll be enchanted from the moment you cross the covered porch and enter the bright and open living room that's complemented by a gorgeous decorative fireplace. The living room also opens up to the dining area and kitchen, making it a great home to entertain guests. With convenient access to public transport and Freeways, commuting around LA is never an issue.

2514 S Bundy Dr —

Offered at \$799,000

Beverlywood — ACTIVE!



A delightful and bright, traditional style family home on an approx. 7500 lot in the Beverlywood HOA, this 3 bedroom, 2.75 bathroom house offers plenty of fine features! This home has a picturesque view, 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. There is a unique sunroom/conservatory with a staircase and one floor down you will find a spacious in-laws' suite. The bathrooms and kitchen could withstand some upgrading to create your absolute dream home in a fantastic, family friendly neighborhood.

1565 Reeves Street —

Offered at \$1,799,000

Westwood — ACTIVE!



A pristine and bright condominium located in a lovely building and situated on a quiet street central to Westwood and Century City, this nearly 1700 square ft., two bedroom, 1 1/2 bath unit has an abundance of attractive features. The kitchen offers plenty of cabinet space, granite counter tops, new appliances and a convenient breakfast bar. There is also an outdoor patio, a perfect spot to BBQ should the party move outdoors. With two gated parking spaces and located just a short distance to nearby shops and schools, this condominium holds the key to smart city living.

1740 Malcolm Ave #103 —

Offered at \$750,000

Cheviot Hills happenings

Community Property 101

By Michael Harris

The income of a husband and wife belongs to both of them in California as their community property. However, some financial benefits remain separate property despite their marriage. Items owned prior to marriage, or obtained after marriage by inheritance, or gifts, and receipts from a personal injury claim are separate property and need not be shared with a spouse. However, if these separate items are commingled with other assets which are owned jointly then the separate property will lose its status as separate and may be

considered community. Even a house owned prior to marriage in one spouse's name alone, may be deemed at least in part a community asset if the owning spouse uses community funds for maintenance, insurance or mortgage payments. The purpose of a prenuptial agreement is to spell out the intentions of the persons about to be married so that arguments later may be minimized. While such agreements are perhaps more prevalent among persons who have had prior marriages and children they may wish to protect, they may also be appropriate under some circumstances for first time couples.

School Daze

By BEN LEE

Wasn't it just the last day of school? It feels like summer has just begun yet here we are already counting down to the first day of school. It's not easy to shift gears for kids let alone for parents. Just when one routine begins, it's time to ditch that for a different one altogether. The key is organization and we've compiled some tips for both parents and their children to help ease everyone back to school mode.

1. Create a family calendar and keep it in a central location: It's important for kids to feel connected to their routine and sometimes that means seeing their activities and commitments in print. Of course, parents need a calendar to determine who is doing what where and when. A family calendar helps put the schedules of busy people all on the same proverbial page.

2. Reestablish the homework spot: Wherever in your home that spot may be, it's important for children to associate a specific location with getting their homework done. Provide the necessary materials they'll need nearby so they don't waste time hunting down the pencils, sharpener, papers, etc. This cuts down on the anxiety level for parents, too. In our home, we know that if they're sitting in the homework area, they're getting their work done and not leaving it until the last minute.

3. Lay out clothes and make lunches the night before: If yours is anything like our family, the mornings are utter chaos. No matter how hard we try to stay calm and get everything done, prepping three young boys for school



every day takes work. Anything you can get out of the way the night before (such as selecting the next day's outfit, knowing where the shoes are, putting homework in the backpacks, making lunches, etc.) will help make the next morning more manageable.

4. Bedtime: No matter how you slice it, school-aged children need their sleep. It's easy to let appropriate bedtimes slide a bit in summer, (especially when it's so light outside), but try to get them back on track by using the last few nights of summer to get them back to the routine of getting to sleep at a decent hour.

5. Treat yourself right: Those pesky doctors' check-ups and dentist appointments should be scheduled, ideally before they return to school. And once you make the necessary appointments for your children, make them for yourself, too. As parents, we always seem to put our own needs behind the needs of our children; so now that they're going back to school, go ahead and schedule that physical and dental cleaning you may have been putting off. Keeping ourselves healthy and strong is important, too!

I hope these tips help provide a smooth reentry to the new school year for both you and your children. But don't get too comfy; planning for summer camps will be here before you know it!

This Month's Raffle Winner



By BEN LEE

I hope you are all still enjoying your Ben Lee Properties Frisbee. It was a lot of fun seeing your photo entries TRYING to win our \$100 Amazon gift card give away. Alas, there can only be one winner and I think you'll agree, while it was certainly a close competition, the Galperson Family posing on camels at The Treasury in Petra, Jordan was the clear champion. Hard to beat a Ben Lee Properties Frisbee at one of the new Seven Wonders of the World! Congratulations to the Galpersons and I hope you enjoy your Amazon gift card.

You don't have to travel all the way to Jordan to seek the thrill of winning a raffle. This month, we're keeping the action closer to home and giving away a \$50 gift certificate to a really fun restaurant we recently discovered on Motor called The Garage. Yes, it's primarily known for being a bar, but the food menu is extremely appealing for kids of all ages. I took my family there recently during Happy Hour and

we all had plenty of delicious food at a fraction of the cost of most other restaurants around town. It also boasts a pretty terrific atmosphere (a bit on the loud side so if your kids act up, nobody seems to notice or care!). If you haven't yet been to the Garage, now's your chance to try it thanks to the \$50 gift certificate you're about to win! Just send me an email: ben@benleeproperties.com and write 'GARAGE' in the subject line. In your email, please provide your name and best way to reach you. We will pick a name at random at the end of the month. That's it!! Good luck and happy eating.

