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The Duke and Duchess of Cheviot

By Ben Lee

There's been so much talk in the news lately about the shake up facing the Royal Family now that Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have decided to stop working for the Crown and move out of town. They're attempting to step out of the glare of the public spotlight and live a quieter life, free from the (sometimes) nasty headlines of the British tabloids and relentless persistence of the paparazzi. They allegedly still wish to do charitable work but no longer want to accept paychecks courtesy of hardworking British taxpayers. So, the question looms: where shall art thou now live, Duke and Duchess? The couple indicated that they would split time between England and North America and they're embracing the commoners' life by flying commercial and renting temporary housing on Vancouver Island, Canada. When it comes time to select a more permanent residence, though, let me be the first to make a pitch for hanging a shingle in Cheviot Hills.

There are many reasons why the Sussexes would feel comfortable living here. First of all, the look of our neighborhood is based on the mountainous range between England and Scotland called (take a guess) Cheviot Hills! So right off the bat, living here will look very similar to what they once knew in the United Kingdom. Architecturally speaking they will feel right at home, however, they may be confused at first by the decidedly different weather. That's called "blue sky" and "sunshine," your Royal Highnesses. You'll get used to it!

Next, West Los Angeles is around the block from where Meghan grew up and where her mother allegedly still lives today so it's fair to assume Archie gets a free and enthusiastic babysitter when Harry and Meghan just need a well deserved date night! It's also nearby to Meghan's former High School (Immaculate Heart) and first job (Humphrey Yogart Café) so if she ever decides to attend a reunion or jump back behind the counter, she could do so with ease.

There are already plenty of celebrities who live in Cheviot Hills, not to mention countless movie and television production shoots that use Cheviot as a backlot. Neighbors are rather unfazed by this and therefore will give the royals the privacy they



crave. Sure, if we see them walking Meghan's rescue dogs around the block, we'll likely say hi and exchange pleasantries. But then it's back to minding our own business and letting them mind theirs. Just imagine if they joined Next Door and commented on trashcan etiquette or restaurant recommendations? I'm sure everyone would be super supportive if their Amazon packages were accidentally delivered to the wrong house. In short: we make excellent neighbors and would make our new transplants feel welcome.

As far as houses befitting ex-royalty goes, inventory is minimal in Cheviot Hills (because no one likes to leave), lot sizes range from cottage to palatial and while sale prices are still going up, they'd pay less per square footage here than they would in Brentwood, Beverly Hills, Little Holmby or the Palisades. And that is a real and practical benefit for a couple intent on earning money on their own instead of relying on the family business. So it makes economic sense to live here but it's also extremely

convenient given its close proximity to everywhere else. Harry could pop over to Will Rogers State Park if he longs for a polo match and not spend endless hours stuck in traffic. But driving at all may be a moot point, especially if operating a car on the opposite side of the road has them a little nervous. Luckily for the Duke and Duchess, there are a handful of Expo stops nearby. They could hop on a train in Cheviot Hills and easily zip on over to Santa Monica where they could visit Ye Olde King's Head and enjoy an authentic British meal that would probably remind them of Sunday dinners at Grandmother's house (aka Buckingham Palace).

Additionally, Cheviot Hills is nestled in between two movie studios: Fox/Disney and Sony. It's been reported that Meghan will be doing voice-overs now for Disney so if she ever has to show up for work bright and early, all she'd have to do is take a brisk walk up Motor and voila! Time card punched. So, living in Cheviot provides yet another checkmark

in the relocation "plus column." A zero exhaust commute is good for the environment, one of the couple's favorite pet projects.

Finally, living in our charming neighborhood makes sense for their son Archie and his future siblings. He could attend any one of our fine elementary schools (Castle Heights, Westwood Charter and Overland are all award winning). And then after school he could ride his bike over to Cheviot Park. Between baseball, lacrosse, basketball, flag football, summer camps (even archery and Petanque!) or golf lessons at the Rancho Golf Course, the Sussex children would certainly never lack for extracurricular activities.

So, there you have it Meghan and Harry. All the reasons why I think a home in Cheviot Hills is the right choice for this, the next chapter in your unconventional and exciting lives. In fact, I even know a great real estate agent to help get you started in your search!

Remembering Kobe

By Josh Berman

We were all shocked by the sudden death of Los Angeles Lakers legend Kobe Bryant last week. The following is a piece written by Beverlywood resident and University of Wisconsin sophomore Josh Berman who was deeply affected by the loss of such a beloved icon.

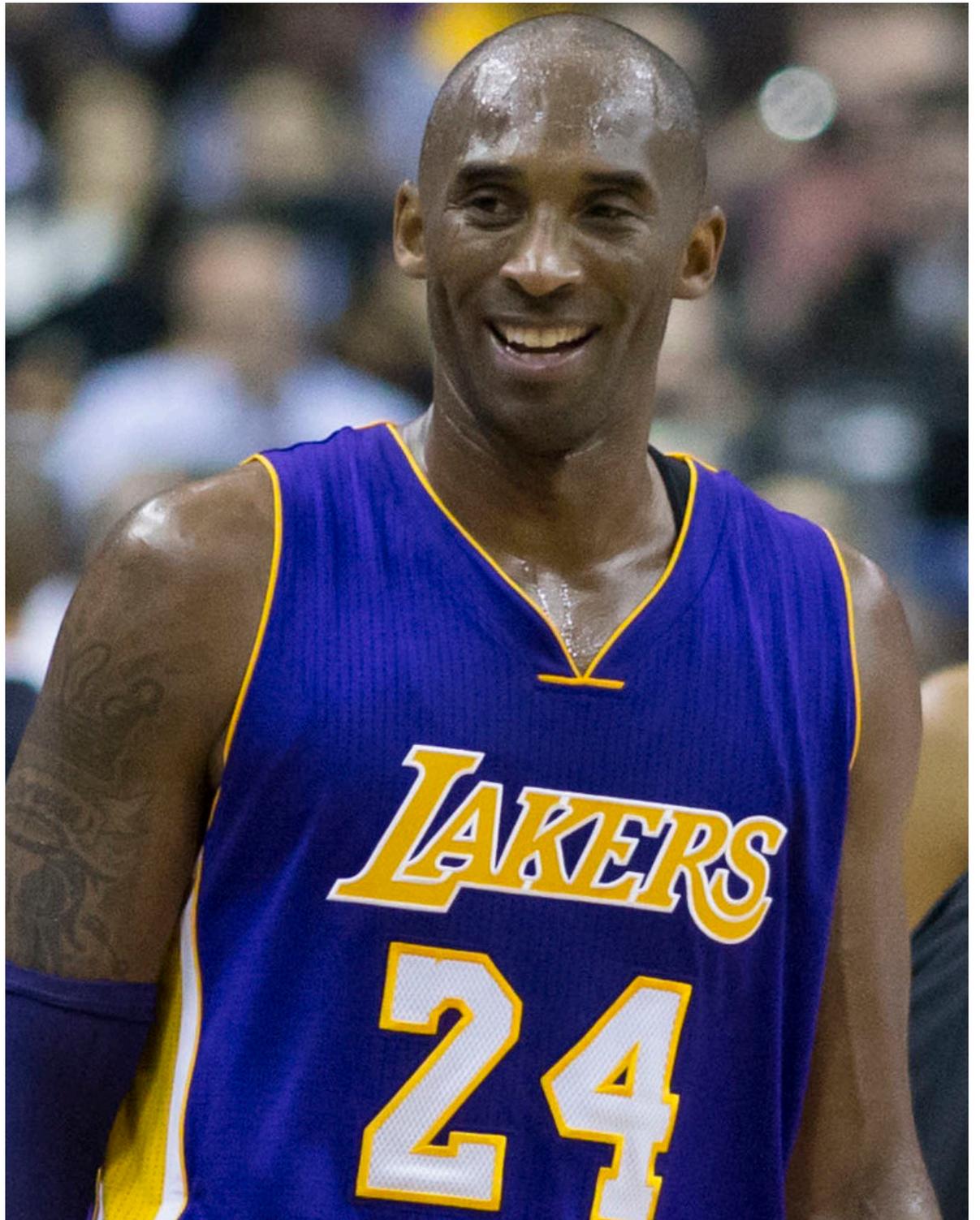
Yesterday, we lost 9 lives. Four families were ripped apart, an icon was lost, and a future icon was left without the opportunity to carry on an unimaginably large legacy. Kobe Bean Bryant will never shoot again, never compete again, never speak again, and perhaps worst of all, he will never be a father again.

As we all still struggle to come to terms with this unimaginable tragedy; it struck me just how many people he impacted in a wide variety of ways. We saw former and present basketball players talking about how much he helped their game and how much they were inspired by him. We had coaches and analysts crying on air talking about how watching him work was a revelatory experience. Fans are tweeting about how much he inspired, how Kobe got them through a tough time, how Kobe was the singular joy of watching basketball. It is staggering the number of people Kobe inspired to go outside and shoot hoops. They always yelled his name and truly believed that even just invoking this legends name would increase the likelihood of the shot falling. His impact is singular in that Kobe Bryant affected everything and everyone around him.

My experience with Kobe is from afar. I never met him but I have been a Lakers fan my whole life and watching him play towards the end of his prime into his last few seasons were a treat. However, I was born in 1999 and didn't really get a chance to live in the full Kobe experience. My real Kobe connection comes through my Grandpa. He was the biggest Lakers fan I knew. He would watch every game in the same spot on the couch with a beer in his hand. It was like clockwork, the pregame would start at 7 pm for most games. He would grab his beer and sometimes some snacks and go watch the game. He saw a lot of ups and downs. He saw the battles with the Celtics in the 70s and the dominance in the 80s. He saw the relative decline in the 90s followed by a draft day trade for a 17 year old from Philadelphia.

I didn't get to form all the memories I wish I could have with my grandpa. When I was 16, he was afflicted with dementia and went through a rapid decline, eventually passing away peacefully a few months later. The memories that I do have are vivid. From walking to Baskin Robbins to get ice cream, to watching model planes fly, everything I remember about him before he got sick was that he was a loving, funny, intelligent, basketball obsessed, perfect, grandpa. Nothing will ever change that.

When Kobe debuted in 1996, you can bet that my grandpa was on that couch. When Kobe went off for 81 points against the Raptors, you can bet my grandpa was on that couch. When the Lakers won their third championship in three years in 2002, you can bet my grandpa was on that couch (well probably standing next to it cheering). When Kobe tore his



Achilles, you can bet my grandpa was in shock praying it wasn't as bad as it looked. He was there for every moment until he got sick and he enjoyed watching Kobe every second he got to.

When I saw on Twitter that Kobe had been killed, my initial reaction was complete devastation. My heart sank for his family, his former teammates, his fans, and for his daughter Gianna who was destined to be a star in her own right. Then, my grandma called me to see how I was feeling. I turned over my phone when I heard it ringing, saw the name and my stomach churned, my head went light, and I could no longer move. I didn't pick up her call right away because immediately every memory of my grandpa came flooding back. I pictured him in his lakers hat driving me to Souplantation or walking me through the mall.

I remembered him grabbing my knee trying to get me to laugh. I remembered him telling me stories of him growing up. But most of all I pictured him with his beer sitting on the same spot on the couch.

When I finally gathered up the courage to call my grandma back, I knew that we were both thinking about him even if neither of us mentioned it. She is so courageous and an incredible woman and I know she was staying strong for my benefit.

So when that helicopter came down and Kobe Bean Bryant was suddenly taken from this world, I was heartbroken for everyone affected, but a part of me experienced a tiny, fleeting, silver lining knowing that my grandpa didn't have to see this day, because it would have crushed him to his core. I hope more than anything Kobe gets to meet his biggest fan, finally.

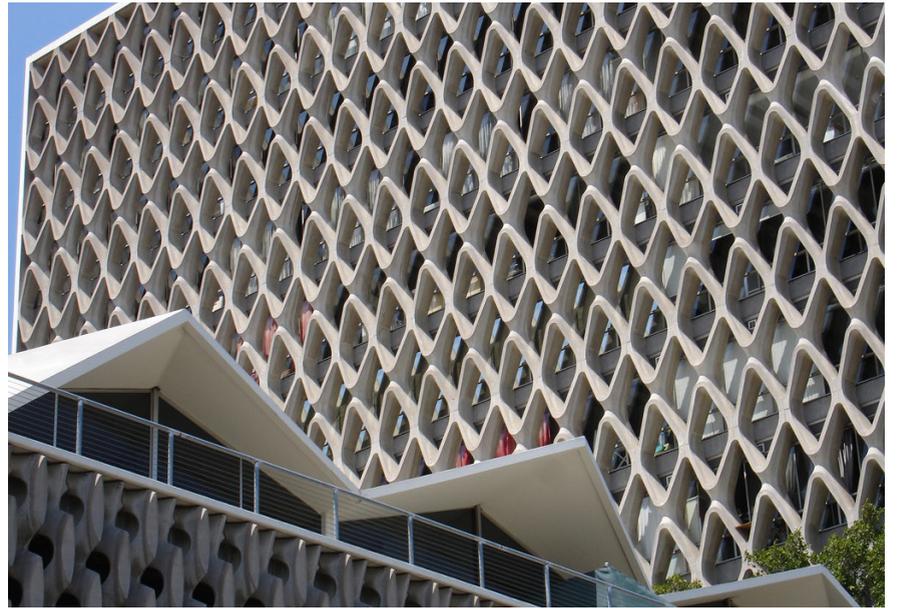
Cheviot Hills happenings

Westside Stories

By Michael Harris

Brutalism is a style of exposed concrete architecture that did not particularly take hold in Los Angeles. There are three good examples in town however that are worth a viewing. The first is the American Cement Building which was developed by Arthur Gilbert of Los Angeles and London. This building originally for offices of the Cement Company is now used as residential lofts. It is 13 stories high built in a cast-in-concrete style to show the potential of reinforced concrete

as a building material. It is located at 2404 Wilshire Blvd. in the Westlake area. Next is the St. Basil's Cathedral towers in Korea town that celebrates the use of concrete for the glory of all things spiritual. 3611 Wilshire Blvd. Finally, and closer to home is the concrete building originally home for Liberty Savings and Loan on Pico Blvd. at Beverly Drive. All three of these have stood the test of time in Los Angeles where unlike in European Cities, brutalism in architecture did not thrive.



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, just search for Westside Stories by Michael Harris.

Castle Heights Spring Auction

By Ben Lee

So, a nice thing happened last week that deserves repeating if only to remind us that there are still very kind people in the world. A neighbor and reader of this newsletter reached out to purchase two of my father-in-law's books, Westside Stories. The books cost \$20 each and my wife brought him the two copies he had requested. So, he paid her \$40 for the books and then, in an unexpected and generous gesture, he presented her with an additional \$20 with a directive to donate it to a worthy cause of her choosing. Lilli opted to give the money to one of our

family's favorite teachers at Castle Heights Elementary so she could purchase supplies for her classroom. It felt good to pay it forward and know that the donation would be used and enjoyed immediately. Everyone knows how underfunded our local public schools are and even though we no longer have students enrolled, we know how crucial donations are to keep the standards of education so high. With that in mind, perhaps you would be interested in attending Castle Heights' upcoming Spring Auction? It's the number one fundraiser of the year and open to the public (with paid admission). Perhaps you own or know



of a local business and could provide a gift certificate or discount that the Castle Heights community could bid on? The event will be held at the Mark on Pico on April 25 and an admission ticket includes food, drinks, a live/silent auction and the opportunity to chat with parents and teachers.

There will also be an on-line auction that opens to the public on April 17. Please contact one of this year's Spring Auction co-chairs Kristi Litton at kristilitton1@gmail.com if you're interested in donating, attending or learning more about this worthwhile event!

For the love of raffle

By Ben Lee

Thank you to all those who entered the raffle to win the \$50 gift card to Zooies Cookies! Judy Castro, you are the lucky winner this month. Congratulations! To all who entered but didn't win, don't fret—there is always another fun raffle around the corner! This month

we are trying something different! In honor of Valentine's Day, I have a riddle for you to solve. Email me your best guess and win a prize! That's right, everyone who enters wins something this month! Here's the riddle: A doctor and trucker are both in love with the same beautiful woman named Annabelle. The trucker has to go on a long drive

that will take him out of town for a whole week. Before he drives away, despondent over missing Valentine's Day, he gives his love Annabelle seven red apples. Why???

OK, there you have it! Email me your answer: ben@benleeproperties.com. All guesses get a gift!

