



Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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We Can Do Better

By Ben Lee

It's interesting how 2020 will not be known for just one global pandemic, but two. What started as an awareness, fear, prevention and treatment of a novel virus- something that affected just about every living person in the world- has now morphed into a new, secondary global phenomenon. The original virus is still with us and this new sickness isn't really new at all yet it's prompting awareness, fear, prevention, treatment and affecting everyone in the world, too.

I will be the first person to admit I know little about how to solve racism in this country. There are thousands of scholars and activists who have devoted lifetimes to bringing awareness and passion to this crucial issue. I will tell you that I am a living example of white privilege. That's not to say I haven't worked hard- I have. But I recognize my whiteness has opened doors that may have remained closed to people who don't look like me. When you really pause to reflect on how my skin color has contributed to my success, it probably started in preschool and continued from there. I have no doubt that bias exists whether or not we want to see it. When my parents didn't like the fast crowd I started hanging out with in my Malibu elementary school, they opted to move to Santa Monica. When I didn't like my private middle school, I chose to attend the giant public high school instead. Did my parents fight with counselors to make sure I was put in classes full of college-minded students? Yes. Did their legacies at my law school likely help get me admitted? 100%. These are all aspects of my life I never really questioned or thought about too much. My first job in real estate came to me because my friend's father owned the company. The first investment property I purchased only happened after my father and father-in-law both offered help and advice, basically telling me how to do it. After becoming a broker, I worked under the tutelage of a well-established agent, who also happened to be a friend's mother. In other words, I benefited from a lifetime of support, access and professional boosts. Is skin color akin to nepotism? Does the fact I was born white mean my parents and grandparents had better access to better education and

friends in powerful positions who could give each generation a leg up on the competition? Can the opposite scenario be said for generations of most American blacks in this country?

Here's another confession that comes as no surprise- I've never experienced overt or subtle racism. I don't know how demeaning it must be to walk down the street and witness strangers quickly dart out of the way to avoid eye contact or confrontation. I've never noticed drivers quickly locking their doors if I'm in the crosswalk too close to their cars. Or how terrible it must feel to witness women clutch their purses a little closer if I am walking nearby. I've never experienced these things first hand but I imagine if I had to endure even a fraction of these encounters over the course of a lifetime, I'd feel pretty terrible. Constantly being put down and kept down day after day, year after year until I wouldn't feel as valued or respected as my colleagues, friends or even an everyday criminal or feral dog would undoubtedly wear me down to a place of worthlessness and despair. It's demoralizing just thinking about it.

But there are of course a multitude of ways in which actions based on skin color are not just a contrast in subtle societal norms and actions. As we saw with the death of George Floyd, they can be fatal. I was shocked and horrified witnessing the brutal murder of this man. I think it's fair to say most people who saw it were equally horrified, too. But shocked? That's probably one area in which populations differed by color lines. To be blunt, most white people were shocked and black people were not. Generally speaking, I (naively?) thought since the Rodney King riots in 1992 that relations between black people and police officers had gotten better. Turns out the only thing that has gotten better in 30 years is the availability of cell phone cameras. Honestly, I can't begin to understand what it's like to be a police officer nor do I profess to know what it feels like to be afraid of them instead of truly grateful for their service. The one thing I do know, though, is that in the thirty years since the Rodney King verdicts and ensuing riots, an energized generation of every color has grown up to know that what happened in '92 was wrong and they're not going to idly stand by and accept the abuse any



longer.

There is now a whole new, multi-racial population of people in the world who want to stand alongside their black brothers and sisters in solidarity against what is evil. Every state in the country and almost every democratic country in the world has seen thousands of marchers of every color take a stand against what happened to George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and Trayvon Martin and so many countless other individuals who were unfairly gunned down. Even Cheviot Hills held a spirited rally. Families donned masks and lined Motor Avenue, holding signs, cheering with cars driving past and shouting support for Black Lives Matter.

A few weeks ago my 15 year old son was leaving home to walk to the market. Because of Covid, he had on a mask and threw on a hoodie that covered most of his face. As he was jogging out the front door dressed exactly like Trayvon Martin, for the first time in my life I had the most horrible thought: That he was lucky he wasn't black. Parents of black teens say they worry about this every time their kids leave the house. As a society, we

need to do better.

So, hopefully we can start to heal from not just one but two pandemics happening simultaneously. We can try to focus on what's positive: the power to move forward with a better acceptance of the disparities between us and how to narrow the gap so life can be more equitable for all. We can get police the help they need to handle certain situations with less force. We can wear masks and fight for what we believe in. We can invest in black businesses, focus on inner city education and not only hire more black people but elevate them into positions of power. We can better research the local politicians and judges who'll be up for elections. We can talk to one another, be kind to our neighbors and maybe give an extra boost to those who need it most. These big issues aren't solved overnight but I have faith in us. Let's do what we can to make life better so that no parent has to wonder if his/her child will make it home after taking a jog down to the market. We can do better and I believe that we will!

My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Beverlywood - NEW LISTING!



9044 Gibson St \$1,549,000

3 Bed / 2 Bath + Guest House 1,428 Sq. Ft., 5,004 Sq. Ft. Lot

A charming Spanish style on one of the friendliest streets in Beverlywood, this home exudes warmth and style at every turn. An impeccably landscaped front yard with a walkway of Spanish tile paves the way toward the house and from the first step over the threshold, you feel transported to old Mexico. A stone fireplace anchors the formal living room that is punctuated by thick adobe walls, coved ceiling and intricate archways. French doors lead to the front patio courtyard which allows the living room to be basked in natural light. With richly hued hardwood floors throughout, there is an easy flow between living room to formal dining room to the bright and spacious kitchen. Step outside and feel like you are on the private deck of a fancy hotel, with cushy outdoor seating and bistro patio lights dangling above to complete the mood. And Castle Heights Elementary School is a stone's throw from the fun shops and restaurants of South Robertson. Come see it for yourself!

Beverlywood - NEW LISTING!



2349 Castle Heights \$1,500,000

2 Bed / 2 Bath / Den 1,334 Sq. Ft., 5,279 Sq. Ft. Lot

A classic and elegant home on a highly desirable tree-lined street in Beverlywood, exudes grace, style and sophistication. Mature landscaping and brick walkway in the front yard adds to the home's enviable curb appeal. Inside you'll find hardwood flooring in warm hues, a formal living room with romantic fireplace and front windows that let in an abundance of natural light. There is an artful bay window in the formal dining room that leads to the remodeled kitchen. Sparkling clean and an efficient use of space, the kitchen offers granite countertops, stainless high-end appliances, convenient center island and a dazzling array of storage. Each bedroom is quite large with ample closets and the bathrooms are clean and updated with modern fixtures and finishes. Located in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary school district and surrounded by warm and friendly neighbors, this is one house you definitely need to see!

Beverlywood - GREAT NEW PRICE!



3043 Oakhurst Ave \$1,799,000

4 Bed / 2.5 Bath 2,163 Sq. Ft., 5,000 Sq. Ft. Lot

Inspired by the lush tapestry of Tuscany's countryside, step into this home and experience a bit of Italy in Beverlywood. From the Batchelder tiled fireplace and paned, arched bay windows in the living room to the richly landscaped backyard, every detail in this newly painted, two story, hardwood floored home exudes romance. Built in 1928 and remodeled to create more space, features include: an enormous master suite with walk-in closet, master bath with steam shower plus an adjacent, sun-filled room that could double as a conservatory, nursery, gym or office. The private backyard is an idyllic paradise with mature fruit trees, new garden deck, cascading Bougainvillea and a storybook walkway that leads to the converted garage/artist's studio, nestled within a canopy of greenery and foliage. Located on a quiet, friendly street in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School district, this home is a true neighborhood gem that deserves your immediate attention.

Santa Monica - IN ESCROW!



929 16th St \$2,495,000

5 Bed / 4 Bath 2,601 Sq. Ft., 7,405 Sq. Ft. Lot

Seller may finance!!!! Live just moments from the beach and feel the cool ocean breezes from either unit of this pristine Santa Monica duplex. Each offers hard wood floors, comfortably sized rooms, closets and living spaces, immaculate kitchens with stainless appliances and oversized windows that let natural light stream into each home. Each unit also offers a wholly private and beautifully landscaped backyard, perfect for summer barbeques or evening cocktail parties. Located in one of the most enviable sections of Santa Monica: nestled an arm's reach between the chic shops and restaurants of Wilshire and Montana Avenue, this unbelievable opportunity is not to be missed. Both units delivered vacant at the close.

Beverlywood - SOLD!



9112 Gibson St \$1,290,000

3 Bed / 2 Bath 1,264 Sq. Ft., 5,001 Sq. Ft. Lot

A delightful Spanish style home on one of the friendliest streets in Beverlywood. The front door, a magical patchwork of color, sets the tone for what exists beyond: a picturesque and private front courtyard that leads to the main property. Inside you'll find all the special characteristics that give this architectural style such unique charm: thick adobe walls, curved archways, coved ceilings, hardwood floors and crystal doorknobs. Located in the award winning Castle Heights school district and a short stroll from the fun shops and restaurants of South Robertson, this house will not be on the market for long so make a point to see it today.

Cheviot Hills - SOLD!



3009 Castle Heights Ave \$1,399,000

3 Bed / 2 Bath 1,546 Sq. Ft., 5,022 Sq. Ft. Lot

A cheerful, traditional style home with exquisite landscaping on a large corner lot ideal for raising a family. Design details include intricate crown moldings, hardwood floors, Bay window with Plantation shutters and stately fireplace in the formal living room. The three bedrooms are large and comfortable- a Murphy bed allows flexibility to easily convert one bedroom into an office. A short stroll to sweet neighborhood park and situated in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School district, this attractive home will make its next inhabitants happy for years to come.

Cheviot Hills happenings

– Westside Stories –



By Michael Harris

The Dunbar Hotel was built in 1928 and was the center of a vibrant Central Avenue Los Angeles African American community in the 1930's and 40's. Guests through the years included W.E.B. DuBois and Thurgood

Marshall. The hotel deteriorated with integration in the 1950's. The neighborhood which was once central to the African-American community is now predominantly Hispanic. The hotel has been converted for use as apartments and remains in its original location.

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.

– RAFFLE –

By Ben Lee

Thank you for entering the raffle to win \$50 to Robertson's fabulous Miss Donuts! Congratulations to Pam Morrow, you are the lucky winner this month. We hope you enjoy all the delicious donuts soon to be coming your way. To all those who entered and didn't win, no problem as there is always another raffle around the corner. This month we thought it would be nice to highlight some of the minority owned businesses in our neighborhood. Unfortunately, there aren't too many. But a short drive to adjacent areas (or quick search on Postmates) will take you to really delicious establishments, all of which could use your business right now. Café Fresco (6524 Wilshire Blvd.) is open for breakfast and lunch and is absolutely delicious. Neighbors on Nextdoor weighed in to add Bayou Grille, the Jerk Spot, Honey's Kettle, Sky's Tacos, My 2 Cents and Stevie's Creole are also among the best places around. The website: eatblackowned.com is an excellent source for additional places to try and a comprehensive, previously published list of black-owned L.A. restaurants is above. But because it

SOME BLACK-OWNED L.A. RESTAURANTS YOU CAN SUPPORT		
INGLEWOOD Banadi Somali Restaurant Bayou Grille Blessed Tropical Comfort LA Dulan's Soul Food Kitchen Fish Bone Seafood Harriet's Cheesecake Hilltop Coffee + Kitchen Lavender Blue Lee's Caribbean Little Belize Ms. B's M&M Soul Food Orleans & York Red's Flavor Table Roscoe's Chicken & Waffles Rusty Pot Cafe Sip & Sonder Stuff I Eat Sweet Red Peach The Serving Spoon Veronica's Kitchen	MID-WILSHIRE My Two Cents Tacos Negros Stevie's Creole Cafe Flavors From A Far Roscoe's Chicken & Waffles Sky's Gourmet Tacos LEIMERT PARK Akeke Bamboo Aza Vegan Dulan's Earle's Hotville Chicken Hot & Cool Cafe Swift Cafe WATTS Hawkin's House of Burgers Watts Coffee House COMPTON Trap Kitchen Happy Ice Fish Bone Seafood Cliff's Texas Style Burritos CRENSHAW Me's Fish Shack Orleans & York Who's Hungry Caribbean	DOWNTOWN A Beautiful Life Big Man Bakes Comfort LA - 7th St Dvine Dips Orleans & York Poppy+Rose Vurger Guzz ECHO PARK Bloom & Plume VanillaBlack Coffee SAWTELLE Compton Vegan Jackfruit Cafe T&T Lifestyle BALDWIN HILLS Harun Coffee Post & Beam Yordano's Ethiopian CULVER CITY Delinger Crisissant Honey's Kettle Janga by Demick's JR's Barbecue Milk and Brookies The Jerk Spot

was left off the list, we'd like to bring attention to and offer a gift certificate for the Undergrind Café on Robertson. Through this tasty and family friendly establishment, the owners of Undergrind help make SORO a better neighborhood for all. To win the \$50 gift card, please send an email to: ben@benleerealestate.com and write "Undergrind" in the subject. That's it! We'll contact the winner at the end of the month. Until then, good luck and happy eating!

Ice Cream Party for All



By Ben Lee

My family and I were so happy to host an ice cream party for the neighborhood last month. It was really nice to see so many of you enjoying a delicious summer treat and it was fun for us to provide this unofficial kick off to summer event. King Kone has long been a favorite vendor and we've used

them many times before but never for something as sweet as this. I think it's fair to say we all were due a little break from the norm and nothing soothes the soul better than a delicious ice cream cone! If you missed the party, no worries- we'll likely do another one in a few months. Until then, here are a few pictures from a really fun day!