

Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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BEN LEE  **COLDWELL BANKER**

BENLEEPROPERTIES.COM

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If You Try Sometimes You Just Might Find...

By Ben Lee

It doesn't seem possible that we are in September already. September holds a personal significance because it's my birthday month. And while this birthday isn't 'the big one,' it's close enough to that mid-way mark to make me look at life with a critical eye and consider where I've been and what's coming up next.

I wonder how many people do the job they dreamt about when they were younger. For me, that dream job was to be the front man of a rock band selling out stadiums across the world. Clearly, when you're 7 or 8, it's not so glamorous to envision all the rejection, the years of struggle, the small clubs with no audience, the lack of money and abundance of frustration. It's much more fun to just skip all of that negativity and catapult onto the stage, in the spotlight and surrounded by buddies, sharing a love of music with an uproarious, adoring crowd.

So, no, it was never a dream of mine to grow up and be a residential real estate agent. But did today's dentists, waiters, plumbers and/or accountants dream of those jobs when they were children either? Probably not; but what kind of world would this be without them? Society can't function with just veterinarians, teachers, police officers, firemen and movie stars running the show.

Therefore, we grow up and find work that may at times have its glamorous moments but for the most part, we're lucky if our jobs keep the lights on and the bills paid. Real estate might not provide the love and adoration of a screaming crowd but it affords the luxury of sleeping in my own bed every night and not travelling by bus from one small town to another. And what's nice about this line of work is that it happens to encompass elements from many other vocations, too. When you work in this field you also must be adept at psychology and be able to provide emotional support. You need to be familiar with architecture and have an eye for elements of design. A good agent knows quick math, the structure of a legal contract and benefits of strong



marketing. He/she probably does well at the poker table in Vegas and is likely the most outgoing guest at a party.

But maybe because you don't actually need a degree in any one of these specialties of interest (or even need to graduate from college) to be a successful real estate agent, some may assume you don't actually need a professional realtor to sell your property. I mean, it's true to a certain extent. You probably could do it on your own but you wouldn't do it as effectively or as well as a professional would. The money you'd lose by thinking you're saving by not using a broker would be significant, not to mention all the headaches and problems associated with unforeseen mishaps if you don't know how to effectively handle them. Are you familiar with the saying: "A lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client?" It's kind of like that. A hobbyist

or enthusiast is just not the same thing as doing this job day in and day out. A plumber and urologist both handle pipes but each serve a unique and distinctive purpose with different skill sets. Real estate is no different. In other words: it's smart to hire a professional and let us do what we're trained to do: navigate a client through an often difficult and thorny process.

A job this multi-faceted is fun and interesting however it isn't without its drawbacks. Without setting proper boundaries, it can verge on being an all-day/every-day 24/7 commitment. Back when I was just starting out and I didn't have the experience I have now, I remember being obsessively attached to my Blackberry, reacting to each buzz like Pavlov's Dog. It would keep me up at night and come with me to every elementary school performance, wedding and (ashamed to admit) funeral. I was chained to that thing

above all else. Since those early days, I've managed to try and achieve that elusive work/life balance to a certain extent. I've come to respect myself and my job enough to let clients know they don't own 24 hours of my day and all 7 days of my week. Of course if there's a tricky deal pending and time is of the essence, I make myself available. But if it's a question with an answer that can wait a few hours, I've learned to not let the phone control my life.

Maybe this is why I've returned to surfing after several years of being too busy to get in the water. The ocean may be the only place I can't bring my phone in with me! Sure, I love the exercise and camaraderie with fellow surfing buddies, but being forced to separate a bit from the high-stress, fast paced nature of my workday is just what my brain needs to function at peak performance level. And, come to think of it, dreaming of being a professional surfer was right up there with becoming a rock star when I was imagining what I'd do with my life as a grown up.

Now that I'm faced with an upcoming birthday, I can appreciate that while it might not have been a boyhood dream to pursue a career in real estate, I can say it's work that has served me well. It has encompassed a variety of other interests while allowing me the freedom to occasionally hop in the ocean midday or even take the stage to play harmonica and sing a song once in a while. And there's another adage which resonates with me: don't fight success. In other words, you don't always need to love what you're good at but being good at something, no matter what it is, should be celebrated. And we are all good at something no matter how large or small.

I've found it's also perfectly reasonable to shift away from the whimsical dreams of the past and focus instead on viable goals for the future. As far as my immediate future goal is concerned: that will include a big chocolate cake with an additional candle in it.

Wishing a very happy birthday to all the rest of you September babies. I hope you have a great one!

My featured listings

BEN LEE

Mar Vista - NEW LISTING!



3430 Barry Ave \$3,495,000

4 Beds/4 Bath - 3,635 Sq. Ft., 6,009 Sq. Ft. Lot

Nestled amongst the billowing trees in an enviable pocket of Mar Vista, this family home has all the traditional elements that will make your loved ones feel cozy and warm. Character details such as Wainscoting in the formal entryway, crowned moldings, and brick fireplace in the formal living room lend personality to the home. This lovely house is situated on a quiet street, a short walk from the park and in the coveted Mar Vista Elementary School District. A true jewel that would make you proud to call home.

View Park - NEW LISTING!



5571 Onacrest Dr \$1,995,000

5 Beds/5 Bath - 4,112 Sq. Ft., 11,189 Sq. Ft. Lot

A home that could be featured in Architectural Digest, the first floor of this impeccably remodeled estate in View Park is chic, sleek and embodies the essence of sophisticated warmth. With views that extend from the mountains to the ocean, this magnificent home appeals to a designer's keen eye without sacrificing the needs of a busy family. Amenities include: private office, den, paneled mudroom with convenient built-in storage and laundry room. Come see this stylish, impressive home today. Will not be on the market for long!

Cheviot Hills - GREAT NEW PRICE!



2848 Motor Ave \$3,950,000

5 Beds/4.5 Bath 4,246 Sq. Ft., 7,485 Sq. Ft. Lot

An extraordinary property in Cheviot Hills: with the glamour and design of a palatial estate without sacrificing the warmth and charm of a beloved family home, this stately Mediterranean is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and detail. Additional amenities include: Sonos central smart panels to control tv, sound system, lighting located in the family room, impossibly high ceilings, sweeping views, multiple fireplaces, front balconies and generous storage space. A truly exquisite property that will make an impression.

Cheviot Hills - GREAT NEW PRICE!



10326 Walavista Rd \$3,345,000

6 Beds/6.5 Bath 4,525 Sq. Ft., 6,362 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills - FOR SALE!



– LORENZO –

Best Location in the Neighborhood!

6 Beds/8 Bath 7,500 Sq. Ft., 8,500 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW!



10538 Bradbury Rd \$2,395,000

3 Beds/2 Bath + ADU - 1,865 + 700 Sq. Ft., 6,250 Sq. Ft. Lot

Beverlywood - IN ESCROW!



9319 Cattaraugus Ave \$1,950,000

4 Beds/3.5 Bath + ADU - 2,034 + 400 Sq. Ft., 6,175 Sq. Ft. Lot

Beverlywood - IN ESCROW!



1920 Bagley Ave \$3,299,000

5 Beds/4 Bath 3,358 Sq. Ft., 9,533 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW!



3064 Motor Ave \$1,795,000

3 Beds/2 Bath 2,600 Sq. Ft., 6,504 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills happenings

More Westside Stories



By Ben Lee

If you've been readers of this newsletter for a while, you know that my father-in-law Michael Harris wrote a monthly column highlighting the many of the people, places and things that collectively created the Westside of Los Angeles. These columns were published into two books aptly titled: Westside Stories I and Westside Stories II. My father-in-law passed away while working on the third book in the series: More Westside Stories. Even though he had lost the use of his hand and ability to physically hold a pen and/or type, he would dictate articles and his brother, Godfrey Harris, helped by writing them out for Mike to edit and have the final say. A consummate perfectionist, Mike was looking through drafts and making changes right up until the day before he died.

More Westside Stories has now been published and is chockful of stories, archival photographs and anecdotes pertaining to how the Westside was formed as a result of a variety of economic, topographical and institutional factors. There are stories about celebrities, important buildings, events and neighborhoods. It was a true labor of love of my father-in-law's and inadvertently became a book not just about the topic between the pages but the bond between brothers.

Mike would dictate a few sentences to Godfrey about a subject and those words became introductions to the ensuing articles. For example, this is the sentence Mike spoke that now precedes the article on oil tycoon and California land developer Alphonzo Bell Senior:

"I admire how he used his oil riches to develop communities such as Bell Gardens and Bel Air, rather than look for ways to increase his wealth through tax schemes or monuments to his wealth."

Of Inglewood he said:

"In the 1940s and '50s, horseracing provided the only place to gamble under the political and moral fiction that it was helping to improve the breed of thoroughbred horses."

And of the Brentwood Country Club:

"The Brentwood Country Club was developed because Barney Morris and Ed Zuckerman did not want to drive to Cheviot Hills for their golf game."

We will be publishing some of these articles in the pages of this newsletter however if you'd like a copy of the book in its entirety, feel free to reach out directly to our uncle (and publisher) Godfrey Harris: 310-476-6374 or email: hrrmg@mac.com. You can also send an email to me and I can send him your information: ben@benleeproperties.com

Feel Like a VIP at VIP Cleaners

By Ben Lee

Many components go into what ultimately creates a great community. Strong schools, safe neighborhoods, involved families, popular shops and restaurants. Sometimes it's the people who work behind-the-scenes of the services we frequent that really make us feel good about living here. I wanted to share how wonderful it was to receive our dry cleaning delivery and find not only the suit we needed cleaned, but also a hand crocheted scarf that was made by Tang's wife at VIP Cleaners (3128 S. Sepulveda Blvd.)!

When I called Tang to let him know we had a suit that needed cleaning, I mentioned that our eldest son was starting UCLA as a freshman this fall. Unbelievable that he took that information and created this keepsake gift. I later found out that Tang's wife knits these beautiful, handmade scarves for many other neighborhood

kids about to embark on their college journey, all in the colors of their selected schools. Please frequent this neighborhood gem of a dry cleaners. Business owners like Tang (and his wife) really make the community a better place. And, of course, Go Bruins!



RAFFLE

Thanks to all those who entered to win our raffle to Trader Joe's! We had so many people participate but alas, there can be just one winner and that honor goes to Phyllis Conway! Congratulations, Phyllis. You are about to embark on a Tiki inspired journey of culinary delights. To everyone who entered and didn't win this month, don't worry. There's always another chance to win around the bend. This month, in honor of kids going back to school, we wanted to try something fun. We'd like to gift your child's favorite teacher with a \$50 gift card to Amazon to purchase some items for his/her classroom. And if we draw your nominee's name, you will win a gift card, too. It's a win/win! Send me an email (ben@benleeproperties.com) and write AMAZON in the subject line. In the body of the email, let me know the teacher's name and his/her school. It doesn't have to be your child's current

teacher- even if you don't have a child in school, it can be any teacher that has affected your family in a monumental, meaningful way. I hope all teachers are enjoying their first month back into the classroom. Good luck!

