

Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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BEN LEE  COLDWELL
BANKER

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Time to Shine

By Ben Lee

We were given the date for our 3rd son's bar mitzvah two years ago. We were told back in thick of Covid that two years later, September 10, 2022 to be exact, would be when our littlest kid would enter into manhood. Never in a million years did we think back then that Covid would still be around two years later! We figured without a doubt we would be able to have all our friends and family back indoors to celebrate and party like we did in the before-times. Well, fast forward to last month, the week of his bar mitzvah had finally arrived and remarkably Covid was still very much a part of the conversation. The rules were still changing, depending on the current conditions. The summertime surge of cases caused our neighborhood temple (Temple Isaiah) to adjust accordingly: indoor services would now require full vaccinations, masks and a PCR test taken within two days for anyone who got near the clergy. Outdoor services meant a lot less rules and regulations, however that option came with its own set of issues: noise from Pico Boulevard, possible leaf blowers from gardeners around the corner, sirens from the nearby fire station, dogs barking, the crushing heat, etc. There is also the fact that if you're anything like us and not a particularly religious family yet still going through the rites and rituals of a major religious event, you are kind of looking for the full "pomp and circumstance" experience. If you're already going out of your comfort zone to do it, you really want to DO it. In other words, watching Vinnie going through the ceremony outside on the preschool's playground just didn't hold the same cache as inside the big, formal sanctuary. But the decision was made that despite the less-than-ideal backdrop, holding the service on the blacktop outweighed the Covid headaches that came with holding it inside.

A few days beforehand we were sweltering in the impossible heat at the Dodgers game and happened to glance at the 10-day weather report, looking to see how oppressive it would be in our suits and ties at the service later that week. Excuse me? I'm sorry, what?? There was a picture icon that hadn't been seen on a Los Angeles weather report in what felt like years. Rain?? On Saturday the 10th?? That was one element we just didn't



see coming. Not only was the service outdoors but the party was slated to be al fresco, too. The Griffin Club's terrace did not have awnings that would extend all the way over the tables. Corraling all those kids into indoor spaces would not only be an effort in absolute futility but would also likely become the first real Super-Spreader event of the school year. Basically, there was no Plan-B in place and rain, while no doubt sorely needed in Los Angeles, was definitely not on the guest-list.

As Vinnie's big day neared, the dreaded rain turned into more of a potential hurricane with windy conditions threatening to wreak more havoc than just a mere downfall. Then, in the midst of all the weather woes and last minute Covid-related party cancellations, news broke to announce the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. It was like a perfect storm (pun intended) of too much happening all at once.

I'm not sure who's the party organizer in your household, but in ours it is my wife and she usually embraces the last-minute whimsical changes and chaotic spontaneity of planning events with aplomb. Not this time. Our captain had lost her will to steer the ship safely

into its port. She had navigated this bar mitzvah party path twice before for our other two sons but this was the last one and in her mind, it had to be the greatest event yet: her swan song until their weddings. Go big or go home. But the elements at play were out of our control. Even the guy scheduled to do her hair had been exposed to Covid the night before. No matter how thoroughly you can try addressing every imaginable detail, sometimes you just can't do or plan it all.

With our boy's earnest, off-pitch chanting of Torah in the background, our home in those early days of September was, suffice it to say, tense. Although looking back on it now, it's easy to see that the reason for all that extra anxiety wasn't just the need to give our child a flawless party under less-than-desirable circumstances. Vinnie was going to turn 13 and get through his bar mitzvah regardless. But while our youngest was busy becoming a man, our oldest was busy becoming a college freshman—packing himself up to move on out. It wasn't the rain or the Queen dying or anything else affecting the delicate balance of our family structure— it was the literal imbalance that was unfolding in real time. We couldn't really prepare for a table

for four when we've been used to being five. This wasn't a two-week sleepaway camp. Our first-born boy was moving out a mere four days after our youngest was embarking on a major milestone. It was emotional, wonderful, exciting, exhausting and really, incredibly hard.

The bottom line is: transitions happen whether we are ready for them or not. The weather may not cooperate, Covid may inconvenience the proceedings, there may be a million issues to threaten those best laid plans but, in the end, life (and all its messiness) goes on. And, as it turns out, the weather for the bar mitzvah ended up being beautiful. Vinnie was a champ and got through his Torah portion like he had been studying all his life. The party at the Griffin Club came off without a hitch and everyone had a great time on the terrace, our beautiful neighborhood in the background.

And our baby Mason left the nest and flew all the way to Westwood with only minimal tears shed from his parents who already miss him like crazy. And who also recognize how lucky we are that even though it feels as if he's a million miles away, he's still so close that he can practically see our house from his dorm room.

My featured listings

BEN LEE

Mar Vista - GREAT NEW PRICE!



3430 Barry Ave \$2,998,000

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 Wainscotting 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.

Cheviot Hills - FOR SALE!



- LORENZO -

Best Location in the Neighborhood!

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

Beverlywood - FOR LEASE!



2411 Castle Heights Ave \$6,500/month

3 Beds/2 Bath 1,432 Sq. Ft., 5,382 Sq. Ft. Lot

Spanish-influenced home in the quiet and desirable HOA neighborhood. Prime Westside location. Open floor plan with hardwood throughout. Enter into a vaulted great room with exposed wood beams bringing together the living, dining and kitchen areas. The living room contains an integrated stereo system with zone play to each bedroom and surround sound in the living room. French doors in the kitchen (or a door from the master bedroom) open to a sunny patio with a large beam pergola, succulent beds, charming fountain, and fruit and olive trees.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW!



10326 Walavista Rd \$3,345,000

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

View Park - IN ESCROW!



5571 Onacrest Dr \$1,995,000

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

Cheviot Hills - SOLD!



10538 Bradbury Rd \$2,395,000

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

Beverlywood - SOLD!



9319 Cattaraugus Ave \$1,950,000

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

Beverlywood - SOLD!



1920 Bagley Ave \$3,299,000

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

Cheviot Hills - SOLD!



3064 Motor Ave \$1,795,000

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

Cheviot Hills happenings

CARUSO vs. BASS

By Ben Lee

With the Los Angeles Mayoral race heating up, I decided to read both Karen Bass and Rick Caruso's policies regarding how they each plan on tackling our city's unrelenting homeless problem. The amount of unhoused individuals 'living' under freeway overpasses and on sidewalks is a huge issue and it's no longer safe for our residents and especially children to walk past without subjecting themselves to a potentially negative interaction. Nor is it humane to ignore our fellow citizens who are living in these conditions. We'd treat stray dogs better than these human beings who are not able to shower, use the toilet or take care of basic needs. Reading how each of these candidates plan on tackling the problem doesn't yet sway my vote in one direction vs. the other. It feels like they both have goals to address but how to execute them remains to be seen. In simplistic terms, Caruso seems to focus on new construction for housing while Bass prefers to work with what programs have already been established yet under-utilized. Both want to delve deeper into the underlying conditions that may have brought them to their current situation: mental health intervention, drug rehab, etc. They also both want to use money



PHOTO COURTESY LA TIMES

from ballot measures already approved by voters several years ago. Until I do more independent research, I can't be sure who will get my vote. I do like that Karen Bass is a Hamilton High Graduate, former physician's assistant and has decades of government experience. I also like that Rick Caruso is an accomplished builder and his father had been a Farmer's Market janitor before starting the enormously successful Dollar Rent-a-Car. Before Caruso announced his candidacy, my father-in-law, Michael Harris, wrote about him in his posthumously published book: *More Westside Stories*. He wrote the following introduction, and the rest of his article can be found in *More Westside Stories*, currently being sold directly through his publisher and brother Jeffrey Harris: (contact via email: HRMG@mac.com)

Rick Caruso represents the best of those who make great contributions to their communities. He has not only built some of the most popular shopping centers in Los Angeles, but he has served the broader community by getting deeply involved in public policy as well as in the governance of USC.

RAFFLE

Thank you to all those who entered the raffle, sharing who your favorite teachers are. This month's winner is Beverlywood resident Cathy Glueck! Cathy reads stories each week to the students of two fabulous Castle Heights Elementary School teachers: Lisa Yamaguchi and Sara LaBelle. Cathy will get a gift card for herself and share two more Amazon gift cards with these wonderful teachers so they can each buy supplies for their classrooms! Congratulations to all three of you! Here's what we've got cooking up for October: in honor of Halloween, we are giving away \$50 worth of candy so you will be ready



for all those trick-or-treaters on 10/31! To enter, simply send me an email: ben@benleeproperties.com and write 'CANDY' in the subject line. That's it! We'll draw a winner at the end of the month (but in advance of Halloween) and deliver the candy to the winner's door. Good luck and Happy Halloween!

Spooky Walk for a Cause!



By Ben Lee

Get your Halloween costume ready and show some spirit for the 25th Annual LA Cancer Challenge 5K Walk/Run to benefit the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research! The event will take place on Sunday, October 23, 2022 at Wilson Plaza, UCLA from 7:30-12pm. Cheviot Hills resident Lisa Manheim is the Executive Director of the Hirshberg Foundation and since its inception, the organization has raised over 9.6 million dollars for Pancreatic Cancer research. A fun "Fit Family Expo"

will get the festivities started where kids of all ages can participate in Halloween themed activities, enjoy live music, face painting, crafts and more. There's even a giant Donut Wall for all those who complete the 5K course and need a sweet treat at the end. It's fun for the whole family while making a difference in the lives of those afflicted with this deadly disease. To register to participate and learn how you can get involved, visit: www.lacancerchallenge.com or call: 310-473-5121. (Costumes not required but encouraged!)

Hamilton High School Happenings

By Ben Lee

The adage that says: "A good local school is great for all of us!" really does make sense. Whether or not you have a child enrolled in any of our wonderful, local neighborhood public schools- our property values increase when our local schools are sought after. Hamilton High has been a neighborhood institution for decades and its top-rated magnet programs attract students from all over the city. The One Hami Family Booster Club joins all the different programs within the school and raises funds that benefit ALL! If you are an alumni, current parent or just a neighbor with a desire to give back, perhaps you'd like to make a monetary gift to the Booster Club? No amount is too small and every dollar is appreciated! Funds raised will:

- SUPPORT STUDENTS' NEEDS
- TEACHER AND STAFF • APPRECIATION
- COLLEGE ESSAY MENTORING
- CAMPUS GREENING

Booster Club's goal is to raise 5,000 dollars and all donations make a difference. To contribute, please visit their website:

<https://sites.google.com/hamiltonboosterclub.org/hamiltonboosterclub/home>

Or scan the code pictured on your cell phone.

