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BANKER

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\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*

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# The Power of Community

By Ben Lee

I think a lot about what makes an attractive community. Selling houses is more than just the physical structures- it's assuring buyers that investing in a house goes beyond the house itself and involves the greater outlying area. First question people usually ask is about the schools and that is generally tinged with preconceived notions as if one is going to be more desirable than the other. Truthfully, your child will learn the subjects well no matter where he/she goes. But learning is just one component. You won't know if that school becomes a cherished building block in your community until you enroll. Our three boys went to Castle Heights and I can say without hesitation that the school became our treasured village. We made friends that we still hold dear today. Teachers who never even had our kids as students were invested in their wellbeing and success.

Kids and parents we met there became extended members of our own family and even if we no longer see them every day, I can say with one hundred percent certainty that they'd be there for us if we needed them and vice versa.

To me, this is the essence of what makes a strong community. Part of it is physical structures and businesses: do we have great shops, restaurants and markets nearby? (We have some, yes, but could definitely use more!). But stores come and go. The best and purest essence of community is its people.

A few weeks ago, Castle Heights resident Sandy Giffis thought it would be a good idea to arm neighbors with information regarding how to handle an emergency or natural disaster. She remembered attending such a meeting a while back led by another Beverlywood resident (and safety expert) Marci Sandell. She wanted to contact Marci to lead another talk in this post-Covid world but had a hard time tracking her down. Sandy persisted and finally found her through Nextdoor to ask if she would conduct another of these talks. Marci told Sandy she would be happy to do it if Marci could find a location and at least 10 people to attend. So, faced with this challenge, Sandy thought to call me. She knew I was the friendly neighborhood realtor who might be willing to lend a hand. Given my wife's love of community and entertaining, I knew she would be on board; so when Sandy asked me if I knew where a location where she and Marci could hold the event, I said, "Yes! Use our house!"

We put an article in this newsletter to help get the word out, and the next thing we knew 87 neighbors signed up to attend. The event was a great success. Marci shared many helpful and useful tips how to navigate an emergency but the overarching message was: the best resource we have to get through a tough time is each other. In other words, you want to know your neighbors. You want to be able to rely on who's closest in proximity to you in the event of an emergency. Maybe the house to the right of yours has extra water and the house to the left has an extra generator? Bottom line: get to know each other now before you may need something later. Marci didn't charge for her presentation- it was all free and open to anyone who wanted to join. Sandy went door to door with flyers inviting neighbors around her house to come. These ladies are the embodiment of community. They sprang into action and donated their time with the shared goal of keeping our neighborhood and its residents safe and protected.



*Marci Sandell and Sandy Giffis*

So, when I'm selling houses and people ask me about the community, it's stories like this that I'm proud to share. When people come together whether it's in times of crisis or joy; whether visiting at block parties or school events or congregating on street corners while out walking the dog, this is what makes our community special. I feel lucky that ours is a neighborhood where everyone feels safe to live. No matter the color of your skin, your religion, who you love- you are welcomed and embraced. I mean, it's not perfect. You're loved until you toss your dog's poop in a random trash can and it's caught on camera and shared all over Nextdoor. Or you don't shut your loud party down at a decent hour. Well, these actions might find you in hot water with your neighbors. But like any family fight, hopefully the anger is short lived and you'll be back in good graces soon enough.

There will be a follow-up to the Disaster Preparedness party, again spearheaded by Sandy, taught by Marci and hosted by my wife and me on March 16th. This time we're learning the ABC's of First Aid and all are welcome to attend. It's a great opportunity to learn some life-saving techniques while meeting your neighbors. But regardless of what you learn or who you meet, you will leave the event with the same assurance that I have, a sentiment I try to impart when someone is thinking about buying in this area: ours is a community unlike any other. Petty differences aside, we are truly blessed to live here.





# My featured listings

## Cheviot Hills – JUST REDUCED! – Dream Home –

**10422 Lorenzo Pl. - \$6,995,000**

6 Beds/8 Bath 6,600 Sq. Ft., 8,100 Sq. Ft. Lot

**P**riced to sell and close before April 1st! A gorgeous new construction located in premier location of Cheviot Hills with spectacular golf course views from virtually every room. There is no other property that embodies this level of artistry, craftsmanship and scope on the market today. Sweeping, curved staircase joins the three levels of this home. Intricate crown moldings and wainscoting anchored by the hardwood floors and high, coffered ceilings gives the open floor plan grace and unique personality. Formal living room with marble fireplace and golf course view; private guest suite; formal dining room and a butler's pantry that leads to the gorgeous chef's kitchen that goes beyond what one expects in a top-tier home. Accordion doors unfold to create a seamless flow from the Great Room to the backyard. Here you'll find a resort-like pool, hot tub, patio entertaining space, side courtyard- all surrounded by tall trees to ensure private tranquility. The bedrooms are each en suite with beautiful bathrooms and spacious closets. Proximity to the award winning Overland Elementary School. A true once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be the first owners of this exceptional and unparalleled property.



## Manhattan Beach - NEW LISTING!



**3528 Walnut Ave \$3,195,000**

5 Beds/3.5 Bath - 2,790 Sq. Ft., 4,645 Sq. Ft. Lot

**M**ere moments from the shore and a stone's throw from the shops and restaurants of Manhattan Beach, this home has just completed top-to-bottom renovations. Everything from floors to finishes is brand new and particular attention has been paid to a meticulous design aesthetic that is as classic mid-century as it is fresh for today's most stylish occupants. Located in the award winning Manhattan Beach School District and nestled in a beautiful, family-friendly neighborhood, this is an opportunity not to be missed.

## Beverlywood - NEW LISTING!



**9224 Monte Mar Dr \$1,695,000**

6,525 Sq. Ft. Lot

**S**old for land value - build your dream home in this prime location!

## Beverlywood - NEW LEASE LISTING!



**1929 Hillsboro Ave \$9,000 per/mo.**

3 Beds/2 Bath - 2,303 Sq. Ft., 7,771 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Beverlywood - FOR LEASE!



**9601 Cattaraugus Ave \$7,950 per/mo.**

3 Beds/2 Bath - 1,941 Sq. Ft., 7,945 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Cheviot Hills - LEASED!



**3142 Queensbury Dr \$7,900 per/mo.**

3 Beds/3 Bath - 2,319 Sq. Ft., 9,749 Sq. Ft. Lot



# Beverlywood happenings



## Westside Stories

By Ben Lee

Before he passed away in 2021, my father-in-law banked several articles for publication in this newsletter. This is one from the vault which I hope you enjoy. Now that our eldest is a freshman at UCLA, it holds even more relevance for our family!

*The Westside has many attractions to visit but none more easily accessed than the campus of UCLA which has not less than two very worthwhile art destinations for a week-end visit.*

*The Fowler Museum is on Charles Young Drive. It has a collection which specializes in and explores the art and culture of Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. It is an extensive collection worth seeing. When you have toured that museum there is another treat not far away on campus. It is the Franklin D. Murphy sculpture garden. It is sited on 5 beautifully landscaped acres on campus and features a collection of 70 modern and contemporary works. Stroll the campus and visit and enjoy the outdoor sculptures in a wonderful installation which will inspire.*

The first two editions of Michael Harris's books: Westside Stories and Westside Stories Too are available on Amazon. You can reach out to his brother/publisher Jeffrey Harris ([hrrmg@mac.com](mailto:hrrmg@mac.com)) if you'd like to purchase his third book: More Westside Stories.

## Mark Your Calendars!

By Ben Lee

As mentioned, we will be hosting part two of the Disaster/Emergency Preparedness talk. Marci Sandell will be on hand to go over the basics of First Aid. There'll be light bites, drinks and a chance to learn this life-saving skill. Hope you'll join us on March 16 from 7-9pm. Please contact me for address: [ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com).

Looking ahead, Cheviot Hills resident Cari Usan has graciously offered to host the next Ladies' Wine Night! These are casual get-togethers and really just a fun excuse to have a glass of wine (or non-alcoholic beverage) and visit with other ladies of every generation from around the neighborhood. Cari is hosting on April 25 and if you would like to be added to the list to get the address and additional information, reach out to my wife Lilli: [lillijlee@yahoo.com](mailto:lillijlee@yahoo.com).



## RAFFLE

Thank you to everyone who entered to win the \$50 gift card to Billboard Bar and Kitchen on Pico. Congratulations to Lisa Baskin! Hope you enjoy watching all the fun March Madness games from this nice neighborhood spot. To everyone else who entered and didn't win this time, don't worry! There's always



another fun raffle around the bend. This month we are offering a \$50 gift card to Anawalt Lumber on Pico! What better way to jump start your Spring projects than going

to the store that has practically everything. From tools to plants to all the supplies to fix those nagging issues around the house, you'll find it at Anawalt. To enter, email [ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com) and write ANAWALT in the subject. That's it! We'll draw a winner at the end of the month. Good luck and congratulations again, Lisa for winning last month's raffle.