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# Recognition

By Ben Lee

Up until the onslaught of reality shows like *Selling Sunset* or *Million Dollar Listing*, real estate agents never achieved celebrity status beyond possibly the EXTREMELY local level. But even then, it was more like name recognition versus a face. When I was first starting out, I made the conscious decision to advertise on billboards and banners without using my image because the last thing I wanted was to drive down the streets in my neighborhood and see a graffitied moustache scribbled over my upper lip. But soon after I started working in real estate, I created this newsletter, plastering photos of me and my family throughout its pages month after month. Doing so ensures any moustache art is done in private but it also means that sometimes my family members get recognized around town. No one ever asks for a selfie or autograph but it's still kind of fun pretending to be famous for a minute or two.

My wife Lilli was at the local nail salon on National (Pink Nails) last week and a woman was chatting with her asking if there was a special occasion for the nail care or was it just a regular Saturday. She told her that the manicure was in honor of a special event later that night, "My husband is actually being honored at a gala!"

The woman replied, "Oh, wow! That's so cool. What does he do?" My wife said, "He's a real estate agent." That elicited a lean-in and closer look before the woman asked, "Wait, is your husband Ben Lee?"

After she answered in the affirmative, a few other ladies in the salon drifted their attention toward their conversation, saying they knew who I was and recognized my wife from the newsletter. Apparently, that led to an enthusiastic chat about new houses popping up in the area, how much money they're going for and how Hamilton High has ridden many waves of popularity (and lack thereof) over the decades but that it's nice to know the school is back on top again. It was a spontaneous and pleasant chat in the local nail salon that makes our community feel small and friendly.

Honestly, it's pretty fun being recognized especially when those who identify us have nice things to say. It's not as glorious when there's a grievance to share. However, that's a rarity and for the most part, being recognized is one of the best perks of the job.

Speaking of being recognized, my wife and I did attend the annual Coldwell Banker Gala held at the legendary La Costa resort in Carlsbad where I was recognized for my strong achievements from the past year. Out of the thousands of real estate agents working from south of San Diego all the way to north Santa Barbara County, I had the distinct honor of being ranked #2. On the national scale I am ranked 8th out of the hundreds of thousands of all Coldwell Banker agents in America. It was nice to be acknowledged in front of my wife, peers and colleagues. I got to spend the evening with other agents I don't often have time to visit with because we're always too busy working to make the effort to socialize. I met agents from Pasadena, Los Feliz and Montecito-individuals I had only spoken with over the phone but finally got to meet in real life.

One of the greatest things about being an agent under the shingle of Coldwell Banker is the incomparable network of professionals that span the globe. No matter where I travel whether locally or internationally, I usually see a CB office on the journey. It's the oldest, most established international real estate franchise in the

world, and in a way really feels like an extended family that makes the world feel a lot smaller.

Technically speaking, I am actually a real estate broker (versus an agent) which means I have the education and license that allows me to own and operate my own firm instead of working under the umbrella of another (like Coldwell Banker). I made the decision to not open my own brokerage firm because CB could provide all the infrastructure, guidance, and legal protection an agent needs when first starting out. It had the far reach of international and domestic contacts, an unparalleled marketing arm with the ability to help get my listings seen by the most eyes and it was the most trusted real estate brand in the country and world. Even though our Beverly Hills office is the busiest, most prolific in the country, I know the management will make time for me day or night and they are the first people I seek out for advice and council when I'm emmeshed in a complicated deal. Even on a Saturday, on our way to Carlsbad for the big Gala, I had to call our title rep to help me out with something and he took care of the issue immediately. Being in a big company is the opposite of working in a vacuum and the personal interaction works best for me.

So, I like being part of Coldwell Banker. It offers me a comfortable home base and lends me the support I need to broker enough transactions to be the second highest ranked agent in the southern half of the state. And it knows how to throw a great party. But while it's certainly nice to be recognized for my achievements at a big, fancy gala, I much prefer to be recognized locally. Running into neighbors while I'm out walking the dog; hearing that you like the holiday gifts like whisks and ice cream scoops; answering your questions about why one property sells quickly while the other one doesn't;

chatting about our experiences in the local schools or how our kids are doing. We might not get all gussied up in our dresses and suits (and manicures) for a walk around the block but there's something even sweeter about the recognition received.





# My featured listings

Cheviot Hills – FOR LEASE!



**9825 Altman Ave** - \$15,000 per/mo. 4 Beds/4.5 Bath 3,539 Sq. Ft., 6,677 Sq. Ft. Lot

Beverlywood - SOLD OVER ASKING!



**9224 Monte Mar Dr** \$1,695,000 - List Price  
6,525 Sq. Ft. Lot

Manhattan Beach - SOLD!



**3528 Walnut Ave** \$3,195,000 - List Price  
5 Beds/3.5 Bath - 2,790 Sq. Ft., 4,645 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills - FOR LEASE! *Dream Home*



**10422 Lorenzo Pl** \$25,000 per/mo.  
6 Beds/6 Bath - 6,600 Sq. Ft., 8,100 Sq. Ft. Lot

Santa Monica - FOR LEASE!



**141 Hollister Ave** for lease at \$25,000 per/mo.  
5 Beds/6 Baths 5,000 Sq. Ft.



# Cheviot Hills happenings

## Neighborhood Wine Night!



By Ben Lee

Cheviot Hills resident Cari Usan has graciously offered to host the next Ladies' Neighborhood Wine Night! It will be held on April 25 from 7-9. There will be light bites, wine and non-alcoholic beverages. These are very casual get togethers at different hosts'

houses- parties held throughout the year that provide a nice excuse to meet some new neighbors while perhaps visiting with familiar faces. If you would like to be added to the evite, please let my wife know: [lillijlee@yahoo.com](mailto:lillijlee@yahoo.com) or 310-650-7735 and she will add you to the list which will have all the pertinent details. Hope you can join!



## SAFETY PREPAREDNESS PARTY, PART 2

By Ben Lee

The second safety preparedness party was a success. Thanks so much to the efforts of Sandy and Norty Giffis for orchestrating and Marci Sandell for leading the workshop, my wife and I were happy to host dozens of neighbors and friends at the house a few weeks ago for the safety seminar focusing this time on First Aid. Marci taught us about chest compressions that can make the difference between life and death; proper bandaging techniques as well as key tips about what to do if someone is choking. We were happy to host this important event and look forward to the next time we can come together and learn something useful.

## Tips on Trips

By Ben Lee

If you haven't finalized plans yet for your children this summer, don't fret. There are still a variety of spaces left in several camps, opportunities and experiences. To help navigate the often rocky path of cultivating summertime plans, look no further than neighbor Jill Levin

with Tips on Trips and Camps. Jill has helped our family numerous times over the years and she is a vital resource in figuring out how your child should best spend his/her summer vacation. At no charge to you, she will guide you toward different camps and experiences based on your child's specific needs and interests. She guided our boys



toward classes and camps we never would've known about on our own. To find out how Jill could potentially help your family, give her a call: 310-202-8448 or an email: [Jill@TipsonTripsandCamps.com](mailto:Jill@TipsonTripsandCamps.com)

## RAFFLE

Thank you to all those who entered to win the \$50 gift card to Anawalt Lumber. Congratulations to Richard Walch, you are the lucky winner this month! Hope you can tackle many spring projects using the gift card! To everyone who entered and didn't win this time, don't worry as there is always another fun raffle around the corner. This month we

are raffling off a \$50 gift card to FLOWERTRUCK LA. If you're in the market to buy flowers for the mother(s) in your life, you need to check out this fabulous organization. A truck-full of fresh, beautiful flowers unloads its inventory on the front lawn of a different house in a different neighborhood on a different day of the week. Fridays the truck comes to a home in West LA (on Midvale/Westwood) but other days it goes to Brentwood,

Sherman Oaks, the Palisades and more. It's as though the best of the downtown Flower Mart comes right to your front door. You need to see to believe! To enter, simply send me an email: [ben@benleproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleproperties.com) and write FLOWERS in the subject line. That's it! We'll draw a name at the end of the month and notify the winner in plenty of time to shop before Mother's Day. Good luck!

