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# To the tune of June



By Ben Lee

Here we are in June. Half-way through the year and it feels like just yesterday when we were cleaning up the house from a too-wild New Year's Eve party. But June is a great month to take stock of what you've done and know you still have another six months to make good on those New Year's resolutions. I'm hoping to see an increase in activity in real estate transactions. The winter months were fairly cruel in that regard. In spring, everyone was grappling with increased interest rates and the realities of the new ULA tax going into effect. (I'm sure you know by now, but ULA is a proposition that charges sellers an additional transfer tax of 4.5% upon selling their homes valued at 5-9.99 million. The tax goes even higher, 5.5%, starting at homes sold for 10 million or more). But with ULA currently tied up in the legal system, it feels as though the ice is melting a bit and summer will bring a refresh and renewal in seeing more homes in every price point hitting the market.

I've noticed that there's also an increased feeling of optimism in June. When your Facebook or Instagram feeds are covered with photos of all the graduates with their big, happy grins accepting their diplomas- it's hard not to be swept up in the excitement of it all. The flower

leis, balloon arches, skies decorated with caps that have just been tossed high in the air, proud family members posing with their grad in the middle with everyone so happy. I can't even hear the opening notes of "Pomp and Circumstance," without getting a little choked up. But part of the outpouring of emotion isn't just recognizing a job well done, it's knowing that a transition is coming. No matter from what grade a child is graduating, the milestone signifies that a new beginning is on the horizon and changes, either subtle or major, will inevitably be made within the family. There's something very special, exciting, and bittersweet about that.

Of course, June also means Father's Day! Another special, exciting yet bittersweet occasion in most of our lives. I'm blessed to have the three most fabulous sons in the world who treat me like a king all year long (give or take a sassy day or two within the other 365). I'm also equally blessed to have my dad live close enough to see him throughout the year. Since he grew up in Rancho Park, he loves any excuse to drive 'into the city,' to meet me for lunch at John O'Groats because they don't make biscuits like that out in Agoura Hills.

Finally, June also marks the month of Gay Pride. Truthfully, we celebrate this all year long without needing a formal title to acknowledge it and it's something we

probably just take for granted given how many beloved members of our family are part of this community. There was a time when our boys were young that they had attended more same-sex weddings than straight ones! But if you are less involved or familiar with people in the LBGQT sphere, this is the month to learn more. Not only does practically every corporation wave a rainbow flag to acknowledge the gay community, but it's also when the most fabulous parade to ever hit the streets of LA comes through in a wild burst of color, over-the-top fun and also offers a joyful exuberance unlike any other. If attending the parade is a little too hot to handle, June can just be about taking a quiet moment to learn, understand and acknowledge how far these men/women/trans people have come, the human rights they've fought for and to celebrate their countless accomplishments during this month of pride and ideally all year long.

Whichever way you intend to spend the month, I hope June provides a festive entre to the rest of your summer. May the sun be shining; waves be gentle and the gods of travel grant you on-time flights and no lost luggage. Safe journeys, friends. I'll see you at the next Open House (that would be on Altman Avenue on June 4 from 2-5!) Until then, have a happy June!



# My featured listings

## First Open House!

SUNDAY, JUNE 4 FROM 2-5PM

*Gourmet Coffee Cart with Smoothies*

Nestled within the natural beauty of a rustic, quiet cul-de-sac in Cheviot Hills, this brand new construction on Altman Avenue is a hidden neighborhood gem. Five bedrooms, five and a half bathrooms and exclusive in its luxury and craftsmanship, every detail of this beautiful home has been thoughtfully considered. Personal touches that include coffered ceilings and fireplace in the formal Living Room, colorful walls and classic finishes provide personality. The butler's and walk-in pantry connect the dining room to the kitchen and here you'll find no expense was spared to create the social hub of the home. Oversized island with Farmhouse sink, both stainless and camouflaged Thermador appliances contribute to the overall design concept. The vast breakfast nook is surrounded by windows and natural light. The Great Room opens from the kitchen and employs French folding glass doors to fully open to the backyard, seamless blending the outdoor/indoor spaces. The private, grand backyard is freshly landscaped, surrounded by trees and has both patio and grass areas, perfect for parties. Upstairs are four of the five bedrooms and each are en suite with large closets and far-reaching, beautiful views. The primary bedroom offers a fireplace, picturesque balcony that overlooks the backyard and a glamorous bathroom with dual vanities, free standing tub and separate toilet room. Additional features of this 3638 sq ft home include: upstairs laundry room, landing lounge with built in desks, two-car attached garage, in-wall wine display and an abundance of smart storage solutions. Located in close proximity to the award winning Cheviot Hills Elementary School, come see this handsome home today.

## Cheviot Hills – FOR SALE!



**9825 Altman Ave -** \$3,995,000 5 Beds/5.5 Bath 3,539 Sq. Ft., 6,677 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Westchester - SOLD!



**6404 W 85th St** \$1,199,000  
2 Beds/1 Bath - 1,153 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Beverlywood - NEW LEASE LISTING!



**1153 S. Clark Drive** \$11,995.00 p/mo.  
4 Beds/4.5 Bath - 3,000 Sq. Ft., 6,249 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 - LEASED! *Dream Home*



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



# Rancho Park happenings

## Westside Stories

By Ben Lee

Before he passed away, my father-in-law Michael published two books and was working on the third all about the Westside of Los Angeles. His brother/publisher Jeff helped complete the project and More Westside Stories was printed in 2022. In the book, Michael described the origins and histories of many sites around the city. I found his entry on West Hollywood interesting and in theme with Gay Pride month. I didn't know until reading his book that West Hollywood was originally called Sherman, named after Moses Sherman, its original developer. This name stuck until his death in 1932 when it was renamed West Hollywood.

Gay individuals facing persecution from other communities flocked to this new part of the city and Russian Jews fleeing the Soviet Union moved here en masse in the 1960's. These groups of people worked together to incorporate WH as an independent city in 1984 and it's been, "...a national symbol of diversity and acceptance," ever since thanks in large part by, "appointing a majority of openly gay individuals to the initial city council." To read more about the early days of West Hollywood (or Sherman!) and other neighborhood points of interest, you can purchase a copy of More Westside Stories by reaching out to Jeff Harris who will send you a copy: [hrrmg@mac.com](mailto:hrrmg@mac.com).



## Hug It Out

By Ben Lee

Free Mom Hugs is a fantastic organization that works tirelessly on behalf of LGBTQIA+ individuals and our friend and neighbor Valencia Foster happens to be the Southern California State Chapter Leader! Valencia and her husband Rodney attend various events between Santa Barbara all the way to San Diego providing much needed hugs and acceptance to those who may not be as warmly embraced by their own families. The Fosters also volunteer to help bring attention to the group's mission: "...to empower the world, to celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community through

visibility, education and conversation." One of Free Mom Hugs' busiest weekends is June 3rd when they'll be front and center at the Gay Pride Parade in West Hollywood- chatting with folks, connecting with the community and offering important help and resources (and hugs!) to those who need it most. If that weekend doesn't work for your schedule, there will be many other events throughout the month in a variety of southern California locations such as Compton, Oceanside, Solvang and Lake Arrowhead to get involved. If you would like to learn more about this organization, please contact Valencia: [valencia.foster@ca.freemomhugs.org](mailto:valencia.foster@ca.freemomhugs.org)

## Next Neighborhood Ladies' Wine Night

By Lilli Lee

A huge thank you to Cari Usan for hosting the last Neighborhood Ladies' Wine Night! It was a huge success! Of courses that was in large part to our fabulous hostess but also because so many women came by, many of whom discovered they lived near one another but had never met. There were ladies whose children were in preschool together but haven't seen or spoken in a decade! Connections were made and new friendships were hatched, which is the whole point of the gatherings—to meet each other and make our special community feel smaller, closer, friendlier and even better. Rancho Park resident Laura Klein has stepped up to host our next gathering (thanks, Laura!) and it will be on August 2 at 7pm. So please mark your calendars and reach out to me if you

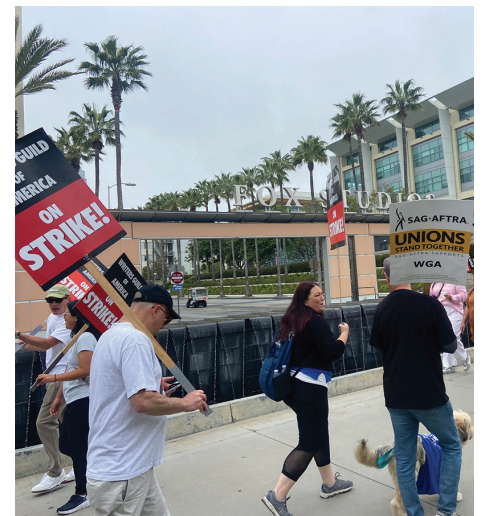


would like to be included for a fun evening of conversation, connection, light bites and wine (as well as non-alcoholic offerings): [lillijlee@yahoo.com](mailto:lillijlee@yahoo.com) or 310-650-7735. I'll send you the information and address. Hope to see you there!

## Write On!

By Ben Lee

If you live in or commute through our Neighborhood you've likely seen the daily march of picketers out in front of Fox Studios. These members of the Writers Guild are on strike and fighting to be fairly compensated for their work. Streaming programs have made it nearly impossible for the majority of writers to find consistent work on traditional television shows thereby suffering from a wage decrease that is unsustainable in this current environment. I hope the studio heads pay these writers what they deserve and more! ChatGPT will never replace the brilliant minds who have given us countless hours of fabulous television shows. We need the brains behind Succession to work on their next



project otherwise it will be nothing but reality shows next fall. I'm sure I speak for a weary nation when I say if a neighbor is in any position to get these great scribes back to work, we all will forever be grateful.

## RAFFLE

By Ben Lee

Thank you to everyone who entered to win the \$50 gift card to Gifted LA on Pico! Congratulations to Chaline Minnich. You are the lucky winner this month. To everyone else who tried to win but came up empty handed this month, don't worry as there is always another raffle around the corner. This month we are offering a \$50 gift card to Maple Block Meat Company in Culver City! Perhaps

the dad in your life doesn't want to man the grill himself this Father's Day? So now you can take him out to enjoy the newest BBQ joint to hit the neighborhood instead! To enter simply send me an email: [ben@benleproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleproperties.com) and write 'MEAT' in the subject. That's it! We'll pick a winner and let you know by the end of the month (so maybe you'll take dad in July instead!). Good luck and Happy Father's Day!