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Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world



PHOTO CREDIT: JAMES GILBERT



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We'll Get Through This Together

By Ben Lee

Hearthbreak. Devastation. Surreal. Unbelievable. The fires that broke out last month that destroyed Pacific Palisades and Alta Dena were unlike anything we've ever seen and those who lived through it suffered varying levels of trauma. It hit each one of us differently. I own a home in the Palisades and am in the process of building one in Santa Monica Canyon. I am one of the few fortunate ones that didn't witness my home burn down to the ground. It's uninhabitable and the renters have moved out but that stress is nothing compared to those who lost their family homes. The families whose kids went to school that morning having no idea they wouldn't have a home to return to that afternoon. It's nothing compared to the panic that those who evacuated must've felt having mere moments to decide what items to throw in the car before making an escape through congested streets filled with flames and smoke.

My family and I are among the lucky ones for not being directly affected by this once-in-a-lifetime catastrophe. But the emotional shrapnel resulting from the fire is real. And being a real estate agent during this time felt somewhat like what Emergency Room doctors must go through after a mass casualty event. Those first few days, I was in triage mode. My phone started ringing and it didn't stop for at least a week. Sometimes I'd have my cell phone against one ear and my home phone against the other, juggling calls and hearing the same gut-wrenching story over and over again: "I just lost my home. I've lost everything. Please help me." I did the best I could to try and help everyone who called, dropping everything that was on my plate prior to the fires in order to focus solely on rehoming these families who lost it all.

But focusing on quickly stitching up the open wounds meant needing to suppress the grief and agony I was feeling on the inside. As a self-preservation tactic, it was almost



necessary to think only about the cataclysmic events in the Palisades because that community is a second home to me. Alta Dena felt more like a far-off land from which I was rather removed. Our friends' son's elementary school burned down (and 22 families who are part of that small school community lost their homes) but it still managed to feel tangential because it wasn't the Palisades, it wasn't home.

The fabric of the Palisades is in large part the tapestry of my childhood. I attended Palisades Village School in the early 1980s and some of my closest friends and family members attended Pali High. While I never lived in the 90272 zip code, I entered it every day and my after-school activities took place at the park, the Temescal pool and the library. I'd have snacks at 31 Flavors or Mort's Deli across the street. We'd often stop for dinner at the House of Lee before going home and joke that maybe somewhere far up on the family tree, maybe we were related to the owners.

My wife graduated from Pali in 1992, my cousin Chris (Dr. Lee to those who know) graduated in 1991 and after college taught there before working in the administration department for over two decades. We are so enmeshed in the Palisades that watching it burn was like losing an extended member of the family. And though certainly well meaning, those who quickly tell friends who lost a home that they can rebuild,

or a house is just a 'thing' and therefore not as tragic as the alternative, doesn't quite fathom the enormity of loss that comes from a home going up in flames, let alone an entire community. In fact, losing a house mimics the five stages of grief: denial/numbness/shock, bargaining, depression, anger, acceptance. Add to that all the headaches that come from dealing with insurance claims, temporary places to live, eventual rebuilding, finding a new school for your kids... the list goes on and on and the pain and hurt associated with this catastrophic event will likely last for a long time to come.

But in tough times such as these, as Mr. Rogers always said, "Look for the helpers." Our home in Cheviot Hills became a waystation for evacuees, temporarily displaced from their homes. Our friends and their dog from Santa Monica, my sister, mother and father-in-law from Brentwood (and though technically not in a mandatory evacuation zone, when the smoke ventured east of the 405, we had a handful of UCLA ZBT fraternity boys who came to seek refuge, too). A robust WhatsApp group of Cheviot residents was quickly formed to stay in contact and look out for one another. Homeowners Association secretary and volunteer safety expert/liaison Cindy Kane proved instrumental in gathering and dispensing crucial information to keep our community safe and informed.

Realizing that our neighborhood was deficient in enough overnight security to provide piece of mind, Josh and Ida Gad quickly organized a fundraiser among neighbors and overnight raised almost \$25,000 to hire private security to patrol the streets of Cheviot, making sure would-be criminals didn't take advantage of the unprecedented winds and dry foliage in the area. Dan Fishbach created a dedicated website and helped navigate various patrol services so we as a community could come to a cohesive decision about protection moving forward.

Our city owes an enormous debt of gratitude to our local fire departments who put their lives on the line to battle the flames and did everything in their power to fight a seemingly unwinnable battle. I never realized how much these brave men and women must pay for things out of their own pockets until I toured our local station last year. If you feel compelled to say thank you, donations are always needed and appreciated and you can contribute any amount here: (supportLAFD.org). Other organizations that also deserve a mention: Much Love Animal Rescue worked around the clock to save dogs, cats, even goats who were abandoned in the fires (muchlove.org). And another company that offers an invaluable gift at a time like this: Budsies.com employs artisans to re-create your child's stuffed animals to an exact likeness. They're offering their services for free to children who lost their special lovelies/stuffies in the fire.

This has been a tumultuous time in our city, no doubt about it. Words really can't express the enormity of loss we have suffered and pain that's been endured. But in times of great heartbreak and tragedy, it's comforting to know that we live amongst other people who work so hard to help and who care about each other so deeply. Please know my heart and support go out to everyone affected by the fires and I'm here to offer anything I can to make the road ahead a little easier. We'll get through this together.

My featured listings

Santa Monica – NEW LISTING!



740 24th St. - \$3,995,000
4 Beds / 3 Bath, 2079 Sq. Ft., 8710 Sq. Ft. Lot

Prestigious North of Montana Location. Built 1924, original Spanish charm.

Cheviot Hills – NEW LISTING!



2990 Club Dr. - \$2,995,000
4 Beds / 3 Bath, 2625 Sq. Ft.

One step into this extraordinary house and you are no longer in a city but rather transported to the center of a magical forest. Oversized windows from floor to ceiling allows for the most incredible view to be visible from almost every room of this midcentury architectural triumph. The spacious bedrooms are also surrounded by lush natural beauty, the Master Bedroom leads out to a rustic deck nestled within the trees. The Master also has a huge walk-in closet, separate vanity/make up area and a glass enclosed, wholly private bathroom. Located a short distance to the shops and restaurants of Cheviot Hills, the Expo line and the award-winning Castle Heights Elementary school, this is a sophisticated and extremely special home. There is nothing like it in the neighborhood!

Cheviot Hills – FOR SALE!



3211 Castle Heights Ave. - \$3,095,000
5 Beds / 4 Bath, 2971 Sq. Ft., 8750 Sq. Ft. Lot

Effortless, elegant, exquisite. This home has been created with the needs of today's family in mind. With no design detail spared, an open floor plan with lightly hued hardwood floors creates an easy, breezy flow from the foyer to living room to kitchen. The front two bedrooms provide lovely, far reaching views and the Master Bedroom suite includes a large walk-in closet and a beautiful bathroom with a tub from which one can enjoy a lovely treetop view. Additional amenities include: upstairs laundry room, attached two car garage, a plethora of closet and storage space and is located walking distance to the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School. If you've been hoping to find a beautiful, newly constructed home in a fabulous neighborhood then congratulations- your search is over. Welcome home!

Culver City – FOR SALE!



10760 Lawler Street #4 - \$749,000
2 Beds / 2.5 Bath, 1179 Sq. Ft.

Located on a quiet, leafy street and just a quick stroll to the Expo line, shops and restaurants in Palms - this townhouse in a secure building on Lawler is city living at its finest. Come see this beautiful townhome today!

Cheviot Hills – COMING SOON!



2856 Forrester Dr. - \$8,495,000

UNDER CONSTRUCTION
Disclaimer: image is used for illustrative purposes only and may not be exact representation of the final product.

Santa Monica – COMING SOON!



664 Kingman Ave. - \$9,995,000

UNDER CONSTRUCTION
Disclaimer: image is used for illustrative purposes only and may not be exact representation of the final product.

Cheviot Hills – LEASED!



2855 Club Dr. - \$22,500 p/mo.
5 Beds / 4.5 Bath

Culver City – SOLD!



2852 Motor Ave. - \$2,995,000
4 Beds / 2.5 Bath, 3255 Sq. Ft., 7308 Sq. Ft. Lot

Culver City – SOLD!



5025 Westwood Blvd. - \$2,295,000
4 Beds / 3 Bath 2115 Sq. Ft., 5005 Sq. Ft. Lot

Mandeville Canyon – SOLD!



3380 Mandeville Canyon - \$2,449,000
3 Beds / 2 Bath, 2112 Sq. Ft., 7840 Sq. Ft. Lot

Cheviot Hills happenings

LOS ANGELES GIVING CIRCLE

By Ben Lee

Cheviot Hills resident Helen MacKinnon began the Los Angeles Giving Circle 16 years ago with the intention of giving back to those who needed a little extra help. What started as a modest charity grew into a multi-million dollar philanthropy, with money raised and grants given to organizations focused on the needs of women and girls. The LAGC is having a fun-filled fundraiser on February 12 at Hamburger Mary's in West Hollywood. For only \$20 a card, you can play some drag-queen bingo, eat dinner, meet



other LAGC members all while raising money for this wonderful, worthwhile organization. To purchase tickets, learn more about the LAGC and see how you can get involved, go to the website: Losangelesgivingcircle.org

RAFFLE

By Ben Lee

Thank you to everyone who entered the raffle to win a \$50 dollar gift certificate to Vicini! Chef Lucio Bedon has offered to award an additional winner a \$50 gift certificate so this month we have not one but TWO winners: Melissa Myers and Curtis Peele.

Congratulations! And if that wasn't exciting enough, here's a gift for EVERYONE: if you go to Vicini and mention Ben Lee during the month of February, you will receive a FREE appetizer with the purchase of any entrée. I hope you'll go to Vicini and enjoy all the delicious food this lovely neighborhood restaurant has to offer. Enjoy!

SINGLES UPDATE!

By Lilli Lee

We've gotten a great response to our idea to help singles meet one another! Many of you have reached out and it's been fun connecting people with like interests. Please contact me if you would like to be added to the list! We could use a few more Pickleball players, movie-goers,

restaurant-enjoyers and just every day brave, enthusiastic singles to reach out in order to make more matches happen. Full disclosure: this is a non-professional endeavor and just an attempt to bring neighbors together! Let me know if you're interested in meeting new people and I'll include you in the next round of match-ups: lillijlee@yahoo.com

MOVING WITH KIDS

By Ben Lee

Beverlywood resident Sari Goodman, a Certified Parent Educator and Coach runs the Parental Edge and offers comprehensive guides and coaching to parents (which, as we can all agree, is the most difficult job in the world). Sari has provided me with five helpful tips how to move homes with children.

Obviously, these were devised in a time pre-evacuations/unexpected fires but as the world returns to normal, these tips will come in handy when you move with children under more common circumstances. I hope you find these tips valuable and should you have any questions or parenting needs, contact Sari via her website: www.Theparentaledge.com.

5 TIPS FOR MOVING WITH KIDS

- 1. Make Photo Albums**
Make a photo album with captions of both houses-the old and the new. Preserve memories and get excited for the future.
- 2. Get to know the new area**
Drive around & do things in the area or look on Google Street maps if you aren't there, yet.
- 3. Pack All Their Stuff**
This is not the time to purge and add more stress to moving. Let them keep their stuff. Purge later.
- 4. Their Room 1st**
Focus on arranging the kids' new room 1st. Let them decorate it & choose the paint color. It speeds up the adjustment.
- 5. Keep in Touch**
Arrange playdates with old friends (or Zoom meet ups if you are far). This offers familiarity when the everything else new.

Get more parenting tips from Sari Goodman at www.theparentaledge.com [instagram.com/theparentaledge/](https://www.instagram.com/theparentaledge/)

NEXT WINE NIGHT

By Lilli Lee

...and not only is Sari an expert in parenting, she is also a fabulous hostess and has offered to host the next Ladies' Wine Night on February 27! These

are very fun and casual parties for neighborhood women to get together. Please reach out to lilli via email or text/phone: lillijlee@yahoo.com or 310-650-7735 to be added to the evite and get all the details. Hope to see you there!