

The HEIGHTS

your neighborhood newsletter



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Photo Tom Underhill.

The Disaster Preparedness Plan in Cal Heights

By Hugh Little

Last year KPCC produced and released a podcast named *The Big One*. It was engaging and informative – and it presented the concept of disaster preparedness in a ‘you are there’ style that walked you through what you would need to know by having you imagine yourself facing the challenges that would develop after ‘The Big One’ hits California. Much of it was specific to the aftermath of a major earthquake, but much of it was more general. It even dug into the difficult psychology of preparing for (potential) future events.

The podcast left enough of an impression on me that I decided to take concrete steps to increase my family's readiness for that kind of a crisis. Go bags for the cars were purchased and a first aid kit that seemed more like an Urgent Care Clinic in a back-pack now lives in the house. This issue even followed me to a California Heights Neighborhood Association meeting when we began to discuss preparedness as it applies to a group or entire neighborhood. Ideas came and went. Some were good, some even practical but nothing really grabbed us as a viable project for the CHNA to undertake. Our first or second meeting of this year, though, was different. Board Member, Karen Highberger shared material that she remembered from a recent Long Beach City government presentation. At its essence, the City's guidance on disaster preparedness was really similar to the old Neighborhood Watch system that many of us may remember. Individual family units organize at the block level, with each block having one or more captains to organize locally, as well as to provide connection points to the other blocks or streets nearby.

That sounded like something we could do, and we reached out to folks at the City, hoping that we could arrange for a presentation or training session in our neighborhood. I kid you not, this was at most a couple of days before California announced the Safer at Home order. For me, that stay at home order was galvanizing. Mark, Kurt, and I were in good shape, and in a very good situation. (cont'd on page 3)

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(cont'd from front page) Even with that I was confused and worried, and occasionally fully scared. I knew we were not going to have much luck waiting on guidance from the City, now, as it was pretty obvious that City was going to have its hands full for the foreseeable future.

As soon as the stay-at-home order was announced, I decided that, ready or not, it was time to get something set up in our neighborhood. I was not the only person, and the CHNA was not the only group in the city with something like that in mind, and after some discussions with several of them, I decided to press forward in the way that felt natural and seemed to be the best suited to our neighborhood.

Thus was born the CHNA Emergency Preparedness Program. Our goal is to try to identify two captains for every block in California Heights. This means that each captain would be coordinating with fifteen to twenty neighbors – something on the order of one side of the street of each block. That's the end point we're working towards. For starters, one person per block or even per few blocks is better than no people per block. I would guess we're at about 75% coverage of the neighborhood overall, with only a few streets on the east side completely without coordination at this point, and several streets throughout with partial or minimal coverage.

I wanted to share a bit of the history of this effort if only to explain why we started it, and how we got to where we are today. I've been amazed and touched by the responses we have received so far – even with somewhat fuzzy goals. Right now, my only real goal is to grow this to the point where anyone who may be having any kind of trouble can be seen, and heard, and put in touch with neighbors who are willing to help. Social distancing does not have to mean social isolation. If we come out of the current crisis knowing each other better, and better able to rely on each other for help and support, then something demonstrably good will have come out of this. And if that mutual support leads to a more tightly knit community, working together to be even better prepared for whatever comes in the future, then all the better. 🐾

New Advertising Year

Every May, CHNA reaches out to local businesses to secure advertising partnerships. Support from advertisers enables us to create and print this newsletter six times per year. We are living in such unusual times and we realize many of our local businesses are struggling. We will be reaching out to all our advertisers to figure out the best way to continue supporting each other. Questions? email info@calheights.org.

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Cal Heights Looking Back

By Frances Stoner

This is not a story about Covid-19. It is not a story about loss, although the world has endured unfathomable losses. Instead, call it a story of everyday people who are on a journey of discovery.

Maybe you discovered those sewing skills you learned back in Home Economics class finally paid off and sewing face masks was actually fun. Perhaps after a couple of weeks your BBQing skills now rival that of Guy Fieri, and having the family sit down and eat together is better than any restaurant.

I'll bet you never imagined taking your young children on a bear hunt and then how fun it is to see them discover dozens of bears peeking out of windows all over the neighborhood. Or while on the bear hunt you discovered when you look down at the sidewalk you would see beautiful art, workout instructions (how many jumping jacks?) and riddles to test your intellect. "Why shouldn't you play poker on safari.....too many cheetahs!" or "What is the best way to tickle an octopusten tickles!"

We discovered how to use our streets as our gym, be a local news source for each, and have fun in sharing books, puzzles, and much-needed items. The local pop-up library on Olive also included canned goods and the most precious of commodities, toilet paper.

Maybe you discovered you really do like classical music after hearing neighbors play the piano as you walked by or listened to the impromptu violin concerts given by Jordan Busa. Maybe you even thought about secretly throwing out your child's Sing Along Player after hearing "The Wheels on the Bus" for the one zillionth time. Not all discoveries are joyous.

Many of us discovered the joy of Zooming with family and friends as a new way to communicate and see each other. And many of us discovered our best camera angle.

Not since childhood did you ever get so excited to see a parade. And when the good folks at Longfellow elementary drove through the neighborhood spreading good cheer, honking, waving, and telling us to stay safe, you might have discovered it brought a tear to your eye.

And in the end maybe we all discovered what we knew all along that the things that really matter to us, community, friends, family, and love will endure. 🍷

California Heights Clean Streets Receives Volunteer of The Year Award

By Tom Underhill

The California Heights Clean Streets Team recently received a Volunteer of the Year award from CalTrans for its work as part of Adopt-A-Highway. Under normal circumstances, this award would be presented at a dinner celebrating California's volunteers, but due to Covid-19, we were informed via email. The team covers the stretch of the 405 North that runs through our area. Clean Streets' Adopt-A-Highway duties consist of picking up trash from the on- and off-ramps on Atlantic Ave. and Long Beach Blvd., as well as on the feeder lane embankments connecting those two ramps. The team trains with CalTrans to do this work, and is one of the few groups in the state that actually clean the road themselves.

Our volunteers meet every Thursday morning, though our work has been suspended by the State of California due to the pandemic. Clean Streets recruits from our neighborhood, but also welcomes those who live outside of California Heights looking for an active way to serve the community and environment. Roberto Uranga's 7th District Council Office offers hands-on support, with staff members helping out and with addressing larger issues identified during regular cleanups. Clean Streets also coordinates with other teams, like Wrigley Clean Team and Bixby Knolls/Los Cerritos Clean Streets to keep the 7th sparkling.

This is the first time in our ten year history we've gone this long without a cleanup. As we continue to suspend our activities, we can see the impact; it does not take long for areas to become overrun with fast food trash, cigarette butts, and now discarded PPE. We look forward to restarting our program as soon as we get the "all clear" from local and state agencies, and hope you'll join us then to continue our Clean Streets tradition. 🐾



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Free COVID-19 Testing

By Stacey Morrison

Diagnostic testing in Long Beach is available for anyone with symptoms of COVID-19. Certain locations are also testing essential workers who may have been exposed but are not showing symptoms.

Same or next day appointments can be made online and are prioritized for those 65 years or older; individuals with underlying chronic health conditions; and first responders, critical government workers, grocery workers, and health care professionals. Most test results will be processed in 7-10 days.

Testing locations are:

Long Beach City College - Pacific Coast Campus

1305 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., 90806

7 days a week, 10-am-1pm

Jordan Plus High School

171 W. Bort St., 90805

Monday through Friday, 7am-7pm

Call 888.634.1123 or schedule online

Long Beach City College - Veterans' Stadium

5000 E. Lew Davis Dr., 90808

7 days a week, 3pm-6pm

Do not eat or drink 20 minutes before appointment.

Enter on Conant.

Jordan High School

6500 Atlantic Ave., 90805

7 days a week, 10am-1pm

Do not eat or drink 20 minutes before appointment. No drive-through service available.

Cabrillo High School

2001 Santa Fe Ave., 90810

7 days a week, 10am-1pm

Do not eat or drink 20 minutes before appointment.

St. Mary Medical Center

1050 Linden Ave., 90813

Monday through Friday, 8am-12pm, 1pm-4pm

The City of Long Beach, Health and Human Services offers comprehensive information about the COVID-19 pandemic at www.longbeach.gov/health/diseases-and-condition/information-on/coronavirus. 📄



From the 7th

By Roberto Uranga

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for your commitment to our Long Beach. As a City, we have made significant steps to protect ourselves during the COVID-19 pandemic. On April 28th, Governor Newsom outlined four stages for reopening our economy. Long Beach has been in the first stage for the last few weeks. During this stage, we have seen our hospitalization and ICU trends stabilize, increased hospital surge capacity, increased our supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and increased our testing capacity to meet demand by setting up six testing locations. In partnership with hospitals and private labs, 12,500 tests have been completed.

This work has enabled us to track below Los Angeles County for both positive cases and deaths per capita. We have made steps to flatten the curve and we are seeing a decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases per day. We have met the benchmarks in Stage 1 and are now ready to transition to Stage 2. Please know that we are listening to scientists and closely monitoring the data to guide our decisions throughout this process.

As of Friday, May 8th, the City of Long Beach is now allowing retail businesses to reopen for curbside pickup and delivery services only. In addition, trails and their associated parking lots will reopen, golf courses may reopen, and car dealership showrooms may reopen. In all cases, the City's safety requirements, including social distancing and proper sanitization, must be adhered to.

While we continue to combat this pandemic, I want to urge Seventh District residents to continue to obey the "Safer at Home" health order and practice social distancing. When you are at home, practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

As a reminder, the District 7 office is practicing social distancing. Please continue to reach out to my office by calling 562-570-7777 or emailing district7@longbeach.gov. Please stay healthy and help each other when you can. We are all in this together.

Warm regards,
Roberto Uranga

Councilmember, Seventh District



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Cal Heights In Pictures

By Tom Underhill

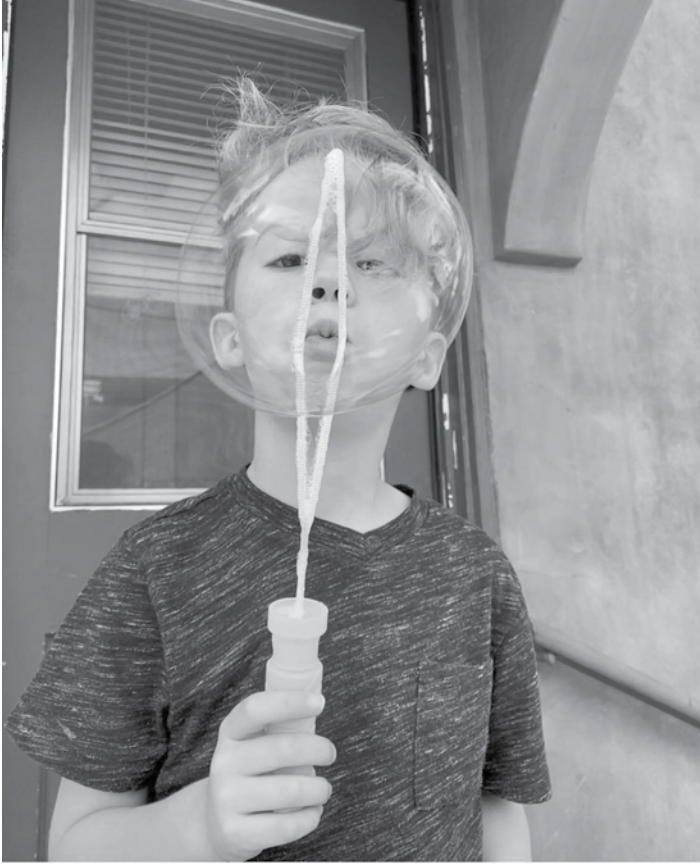
I put out a Facebook notice asking people how they were sheltering in place and then grabbed a long social distancing lens. Thanks to everyone who participated.



The Weavers - Things have been different since the stay at home order, no ballet, baseball, attending an actual school or going into work. The kids still have daily school online and homework. And thankfully physical therapy is still happening a couple times a week. But the extra time has been filled with baking, eating dinner as a family, playing board games and building jigsaw puzzles. The guitar has been dusted off and learning how to use power tools is happening.



Art and Melissa Gonzalez with Alexander and Arian. Our days consist of daily walks, zoom calls with TK teacher, school assignments. Mom is a hospice social worker for Haven Health who is providing telehealth to patients from home. Dad is a train engineer for Union Pacific. At the end of the day, we are enjoying dinner together as a family outside in the backyard and making s'mores on our fire pit. Taking one day at a time, trying to enjoy this quality time together and keeping things as normal and positive as possible.



7 year old, Leo says, "I like to take breaks from schoolwork and video games to play in the sun. I'm trying to make the biggest bubble ever! I also like to make pizza with my dad."



The Morrisons - Sheltering in place has meant doing most of the same things but in different places; we now work from home, running and riding our bikes around Los Cerritos park is our new gym, and grocery shopping is done on our computers. There is a lot of coffee drinking and guitar playing and our three dogs are very happy.



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- 6/21 - Necktie Ride
- 7/19 - 8th Anniv. Ride
- 8/16 - Iron Kid Awards
- 9/20 - School Spirit Ride
- 10/18 - Zombie Ride
- 11/15 - Canned Rood Ride
- 12/20 - Ugly Sweater Ride

**IN THE KNOW'LLS****What's New? What's Happening?**

by Blair Cohn, Executive Director BKBIA

Where to start? What a strange trip this COVID-19 journey has been. I am writing this in real time with two months of the stay-at-home order in effect. With the slow reopening of the city I can see and feel the changes. There are more cars out on the road (and at excessive speeds, have you noticed?) and more people are out and about with their masks on. It is a surreal image to see and a surreal time in our history - I could never imagine friends and neighbors trying to avoid each other due to the threat of an illness.

As the world turns, the BKBIA remains busy with a number of things - we keep 5 plates spinning all at once. First, it is important that we keep in constant contact with our business members to check in and see how they are doing and what they may need. We send out emails daily with news and resources for businesses to pursue. Some have found success with the loans and grants that were made available. The Flash Events that we host have given the locations a boost for sure. Most importantly, the businesses that have been able to pivot and be creative with their operations have made it through this far. Online markets and heavy social media presence have been a life saver.

I have been so happy to see the support and acts of kindness happening all over the neighborhood. People helping each other, people helping out the businesses with take-out orders and large tips for staff, people placing orders online for gifts, toys, masks, and more. I hope you get to look into the eyes of the business owners to see the sincere gratitude. I applaud you all for stepping up big time.

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While all of this is going on, and the business environment has been challenging, there are still new businesses building out their spaces, such as Wood & Salt Tavern, Cassidy's Corner, BurgerIm, and Meemaw's. And other businesses have taken this time to clean, remodel, or refurbish their spaces for when they can open and get back to "normal."

We are hoping that restaurants will soon be allowed to have sidewalk or parking lot dining spaces to get back into operation but also keep all patrons safe. I am also hoping we can host a parking lot concert or a drive-in movie. Stay tuned for those details.

I may have mentioned this before; we have formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called the Bixby Knolls Community Foundation so you can now donate to us and get a tax deduction. Your financial support is especially important as we will soon stop receiving much of our funding from the City of Long Beach. If you like the tireless work we do in support of local business and its profound impact on our neighborhood, please consider making an online gift in any amount to the Foundation. It's easy to do! Donations can be made to: Bixby Knolls Community Foundation, and mailed to 4321 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807 or online at www.bixbyknollsinfo.com. Thank you to those that have already contributed.

I hope you caught a glimpse of our First Fridays trolley parade through the district? We were fortunate that Mickey and Minnie were available and wanted to say hi to all Cal Heights and Bixby Knolls residents. They were trying to spread a little happiness and keep up the First Fridays spirit. Keep your ears and eyes open on Friday, June 5. Hint, hint.

Finally, I want to say a thank you on behalf of the BKBIA, and the Cohn family, for all the teddy bears in your windows, chalk messages, doorstep deliveries, drive-by birthday parades, musical serenades, sharing and collaborating, and being the truly connected "community" that has become a model for other parts of the city. Kudos to you all.

Please continue to support the local businesses, stay safe, stay healthy, and wave at your neighbors.

Hope to see you all soon!

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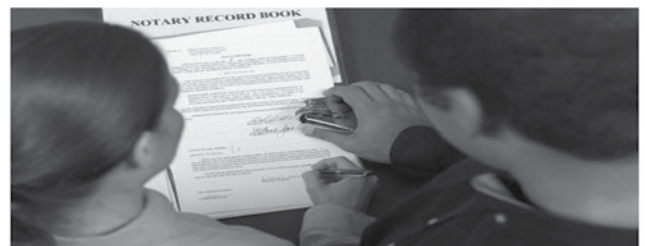

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Every Second Saturday: Hazardous Waste Collection at EDCO,
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