



THE HEIGHTS

NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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I ♥ Cal Heights Campaign SPOTLIGHT: Andrea Testa What do you love about Cal Heights?

By Manny Valenzuela



Why is California Heights special? Certainly, there are other neighborhoods, perhaps trendier and larger. We do often hear that our homes are charming, but local resident and realtor Andrea Testa said it best, California Heights is special because of "the charm and the friendliness of the people."

We had the pleasure of speaking with Andrea as part of the California Heights fundraising campaign through Long Beach Gives. In fact, she made the first and largest donation to CHNA and inspired others to make donations of their own. These donations have been critical in sustaining our efforts to beautify Cal Heights, as the

pandemic deprived us of our largest fundraiser, the Home and Garden Tour.

Andrea was introduced to the neighborhood after opening Free Spirit Yoga Studio on Atlantic Avenue in Bixby Knolls in 2002. Wanting to live closer to work, she started exploring Cal Heights and loved it, and found a Minimal Traditional fixer-upper in 2003. She cites the charm of the homes, as well as the affordability (at the time!) as some of the reasons she chose Cal Heights.

But, what keeps her here? "I love our neighbors and the sense of community. We all take care of each other, including taking care of each other's pets," Andrea says with a big smile. "We help each other."

Andrea is very generous with her time, serving as a community volunteer in Bixby Knolls and California Heights. She spends time packing food boxes with Food Finders and the Orange County Food Bank, gives blood at the American Red Cross, and you may see her delivering the Cal Heights newsletter to your doorstep.

Andrea also organizes an annual shredding event. On April 9th, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., you can bring by your old, outdated, and confidential documents that need shredding to 2883 E. Spring Street at Temple Avenue. You will see the truck in the parking lot at the Keller Williams Pacific Estates building where Andrea works as a Realtor. Your documents can be brought in boxes or bags; magazines and newspapers will not be accepted. Andrea and team will help you get your boxes or bags out of your car. You can stay and watch the shredding if so inclined.

Follow Andrea at facebook.com/AndreaTestaRealtor and say hello and let's continue to keep Cal Heights the best (and friendliest) of the west!

Cal Heights plans to participate in LB Gives again this September, stay tuned! ➡

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President's Message

Happy March or April everyone, depending on when you see this. The transition is official and complete; we are all now residents of the 5th Council District of Long Beach. Our council person is now Stacy Mungo. Anything you'd have been reaching out to Roberto's office for, you'll now want to reach out to Stacy's. And speaking of city government, the CHNA is partnering with the Los Cerritos and Bixby Knolls neighborhood associations to host a mayoral candidate forum at the Masonic Lodge on April 27th, and another forum for the 5th District council race, City Attorney, City Prosecutor and City Auditor's races at the Expo on April 25th. Be on the lookout for more details as we have them.

I'm starting to venture back out into the world a little more often than I have for the last couple of years, and it's nice. We seem to have a steady crop of new restaurants and businesses opening up in the neighborhood, and it's nice seeing folks I've not seen for a while. Hope things are going well for you and yours too – keep in touch.

Take care.

Thanks,



Hugh Little
President, CHNA

One of the business I mentioned above, is Too Factor Athletics. Pictured here is Chuck Seang, owner/operator. Read more about Too Factor in Marion Saffery's article on page 6.



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Cal Heights Looking Back

by Frances Stoner

If music hath charms to soothe the savage beast, what would painting do for just a regular person like me? Oh sure, I have created a painting during one of those 'booze and brush' nights and I admit my creation looked better through a Chardonnay haze than the object now relegated to the wall in the garage. A chance visit to StudioPick on Atlantic got me wondering, can I paint?

The great artist Salvador Dali said "A true artist is not one who is inspired but one who inspires others." This quote seems to sum up Greg Pickens, the owner of StudioPick. I met Greg when passing the studio with a friend. I was intrigued by the many imaginative paintings covering the walls. The tables were filled with jars of paint, colorful baubles and blank canvases all ready for a creative mind to assemble and create a masterpiece.

Greg began his life's journey in Texas, earning a degree in Fine Arts in college. He was eventually drawn to Long Beach where he and his wife now live. While he has always created his own art, he also had a passion for education and helped in the development of several art-based projects - Artists Reaching Kids, an afterschool program in downtown Long Beach in the 1990's; The Art Exchange, a co-op for encouraging art education; and the development of art curriculum for school districts, as well as teaching art in the classroom. Unlike my wine-infused efforts to copy stroke-by-stroke and follow the instructions of my teacher to the letter, Greg prefers to allow your creative thoughts to flourish. "I don't teach people to copy, but help them create their own version of what they feel." Greg then teaches you the elements of "how to." A statement on his webpage www.studiopick.net says "We nurture a joyful, non-judgmental environment for great ideas and inspiration to ignite!" He helps achieve that goal by several methods including workshops, art kits, lessons, classroom instruction and yes, even 'sip and savor' wine parties - but instead of everyone copying him you create your vision.

While Greg and I were talking two young children came in to paint. I watched the boy intent on creating a huge black spider with colorful swirls all around it on a T-shirt and I asked him what he liked about being in the studio. "You can create everything from anything." So, in the end, we all have the ability to paint - just take anything and create something beautiful. 🎨



From the 5th

Happy Women's History Month! As we are well in to the month of March, I encourage you to take the time to reflect on the many contributions of the women around you. District 5 is full of inspiring women who are champions for their neighborhoods, business owners, community advocates, experts in their field, classroom

volunteers, active military, hospitality workers, CEO's, coaches, scout leaders, police officers, refuse workers, educators, and healthcare professionals. Their achievements make Long Beach stronger, and I encourage you to take the opportunity this month to recognize and celebrate them.

In other news, the City of Long Beach is experiencing a stable economic recovery, and there are plans of heading in to the next fiscal year with no service reductions! While this such welcomed news, I am still pushing for the evaluation of all programs that are being offered so that we may be certain the most possible funding is being allocated for things such as street repair, sidewalk repair, public safety and homelessness encampment clean ups.

My office continues to receive calls and emails regarding the condition of the Cal Heights Neighborhood and know that I take these communications to heart. My team and I are committed to finding solutions for your request and getting you in contact with the right people as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In the meantime, I want to let everyone know that I enjoy hearing your thoughts and more importantly, I am here to make your government work for you. My team and I are here to listen and if you have any immediate concerns, please contact us at (562) 570-5555 or email us at district5@longbeach.gov. To keep up to date on all the latest information regarding the 5th District as well as city happenings, please sign up for our Neighborly News email newsletter by scanning the QR Code! Be healthy and stay safe.

Sincerely,
Councilwoman
Stacy Mungo



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Cal Heights Welcomes Too Factor Athletics

By Marion Saffery

One of the many things to love about California Heights is its walkability, especially with so many really great small businesses right here in the neighborhood.

In the last issue of In the Heights, we introduced readers to Meat & Vino Market, at the corner of Myrtle on Wardlow. This time we're moving just a couple of doors over to a unique small martial arts and fitness center called Too Factor Athletics.

Too Factor opened in February of last year and is owned and operated by Chuck Seang, who, along with two other coaches, teaches martial arts and fitness classes and provides personal, one-on-one training.

"We pretty much hit the whole spectrum," Seang said. "Myself, I'm an MMA fighter. [The coaches here] fight in all categories—MMA, Muay Thai, Jiu-Jitsu."

Along with martial arts, Too Factor Athletics offers fitness classes, but with a twist. Unlike typical gyms that rely on weight machines and squat racks, Seang and his coaches use unconventional equipment to get their clients in shape.

"We work with free weights, like kettlebells, and unconventional fitness equipment like steel maces and Bulgarian Bags," Seang said. For those uninitiated, Bulgarian Bags are crescent-shaped leather or canvas bags, weighted with sand, and worn around the neck. The bags have flexible handles for upper- and lower-body training and for building grip-strength.

Where in an average gym, machines take up the majority of the floor space, Too Factor Athletics has an open floor with a matted surface and room to move around. Plants fill the entryway, rows of colorful kettlebells line one side of the room, and bags of various sizes and colors hang from the open-beamed ceiling.

Classes are for men, women, and kids, and include Unconventional HIIT (high-intensity interval training), Kickboxing Conditioning, Kettlebell Strong and Fight Team.

Too Factor Athletics is located at 903 East Wardlow Road, right here in Cal Heights. Call (562) 337-8311 or visit toofactorathletics.com for more information or to see the class schedule. 🐾

Upcoming Candidate Forums

The deadlines have passed for individuals to declare their candidacy for the June 2022 primary election in various city races.

CHNA is partnering with the Los Cerritos and Bixby Knolls neighborhood associations to host a mayoral candidate forum at the Masonic Lodge on April 27th at 6:30 pm, and another forum for the 5th District council race, City Attorney, City Prosecutor and City Auditor's races at the Expo on April 25th at 6:30 pm.

Here is the list of a candidates:

Mayor

Deb Mozer
Raul Cedillo
Franklin I. Sims
Joshua Rodriguez
Rex Richardson
Suzie Price

City Attorney

Dawn McIntosh
Gerrie Schipske

City Auditor

Laura Doud
Daniel Miles

City Prosecutor

Doug Haubert
George Moyer
Nick Liddi III

5th District

Megan Kerr
Ian Patton
Jeannine Bedard
Linda Valdez

For more details, visit CHNA at facebook.com/calheights.



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Cal Heights In Pictures - Shop Local!

By Tom Underhill



Top two images: Long Beach Organic planting day at Grand and 10th as part of the National Philanthropy Day project





Andrea Testa volunteering packing food



Sal's Gumbo Shack - 4470 California Place
Sally Bevans & Ty Holmes



Tony's Kitchen - 4280 Atlantic Avenue

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

by Blair Cohn, Executive Director BKBIA

There certainly have been some days! Some days have been challenging with lots of questioning. There have been days overcommitted and busy from dawn to dusk. Days of flux, days of routine. Days of rushing from place to place. Days of catching up. But Spring!...these are better days. Let us now shake off our winter coats.

The exciting news is that at the time of this writing we are working on the "Long Beach County Fair" at First Fridays April 1. That's not an April Fool's joke. It's our own version of what you just might see over the summer at other fairs. Inside the Expo Arts Center we host a "Best of Produce" contest with all the local urban farmers showing their crops. We invite all local growers, harvesters, crafters, cottage kitchen folks, and "green" organizations to participate. And you never know what other surprises may be out there. There definitely should be some tasty fair food, music, and....maybe furry, fluffy, and feathered things to pet.

And the days continue working on our mission to keep our district "Clean and Safe" – our Clean Team is out picking up trash and removing any dumped items, our landscaper is keeping things nice and manicured, and CSI Patrol Service keeps a watchful eye on the streets, alleys, and parking lots of the district

Bixby Knolls C.I.A. Not the BK "BIA" (business improvement association), but the BK CIA-Centre for Innovation and Arts. Take a church, give it a new name, bring in some artists, and you have a new space. Think Willy Wonka Bixby Knolls. Hidden in plain sight at 345 Carson Street you can now find our friends and

chocolatier Romeo Chocolates offering his "Reserves Collection" of treats. Go to www.romeochocolates.com or check out their Instagram profile @romeochocolates for all the secret sauce.

Here's a friendly reminder of our current monthly programming: Come walk with us every Saturday with the Bixby Knolls Strollers. We meet at 7:15am at Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and start the walk promptly at 7:30am. Walks take about an hour and are typically 3.8-miles and routes change each week. Come expand your literary knowledge each month at the Literary Society. We have discussed the greatest literature of the 20th and 21st century, now up 167 books. Meetings are second Wednesdays of the month. And for music lovers, dive into the best albums of all time with our Knights of the Round (Turn)Table, every fourth Thursday of the month, 6:30pm at The Pan restaurant.

Business Recommendation: Sushi Nikkei, 3819 Atlantic Avenue. All reviews have been overwhelmingly positive. **Background:** The word "Nikkei" is a Japanese term for the Japanese diaspora, it means "Japanese outside of Japan," but only later did the term come to include the cuisine. It's estimated that between the late 19th and mid-20th century two major waves of Asian migrants—many Chinese and Japanese—emigrated to Peru as its new labor work force. Seeking a taste of home, Japanese workers embarked on recreating their cuisine, making do with abundant local ingredients such as tropical fish, quinoa, and aji amarillo peppers—all characteristic ingredients in Nikkei today.

Nikkei has also made a lasting impact on Peruvian's approach to food. Modern application to the country's national dish, ceviche, point to Nikkei influence. Previously the raw fish would be marinated for hours, before Japanese immigrants taught Peruvians to handle the fish more simply and lightly cook it before adding the desired sauce or seasoning—and to great effect. Why wait? Make your reservations now!

That's a wrap for this month... and there were days. "And there were days between, polished like a golden bowl, the finest ever seen."

See you in this beautiful neighborhood of ours,

Blair 🐾

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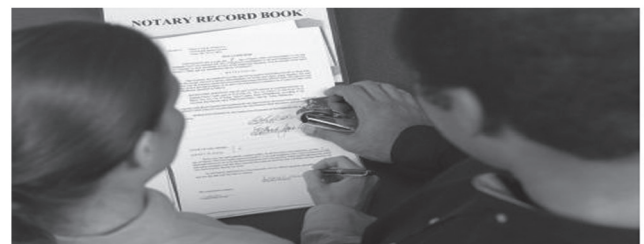

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Saturdays: Strollers Walking Group - still informally on - walk at your own pace and time. There will be no group gathering in the morning.

First Friday of each Month: firstfridayslongbeach.com

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