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Cal Heights Home Tour is Back!

by Christa Stelzmuller

After more than three years away, the California Heights Neighborhood Association (CHNA) Home and Garden Tour is returning on Sunday, May 14, 2023. The last time we held this event was in October of 2019. We unfortunately had to skip the planned 2021 home tour due to the pandemic, but are now thrilled to be able to bring this important community event and fundraiser back in 2023.

The home tour planning team has taken the opportunity to make a few changes this year. You'll notice the event is taking place on Mother's Day in May instead of a weekend in October. After some very hot home tours, the team decided to switch to a late spring event to allow for milder and more reliably good weather for everyone to enjoy while also creating a great option for those looking for something special to do on Mother's Day. To add even more fun, food and a beer garden are in the works!

Please save the date and come spend Mother's Day with us to learn about the history and careful restoration of five great homes in the neighborhood, enjoy food from our local restaurants, and to support our local volunteers who regularly donate their time to Clean Streets, Lamppost Restoration, Murals, Releaf, and so much more! The price of the tour will be \$35 per person for early purchase and \$40 per person for tickets purchased the day of the event. Details on early purchase will be made available as we get closer to the event.

If you are interested in volunteering as a docent on the tour, please reach out to info@ calheights.org to let us know. Each tour volunteer receives a free ticket to the tour. Local restaurants interested in joining the food and drink portion of the event should also reach out to info@calheights.org to let us know. See you all on May 14, 2023! &

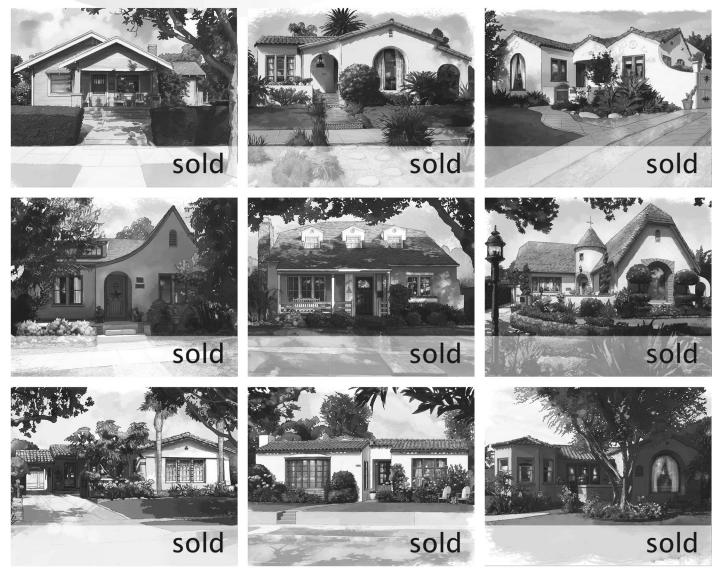


Thank You, Karen Highberger!

At the end of 2022, our long-time Board Member, Karen Highberger retired from the CHNA Board. Karen led the lamppost restoration project and has been involved in every Home Tour, including the inaugural Home Tour in 1997. Cal Heights would be much different without her. We thank her for all of her contributions over the past 15+ years!



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artwork by Ellen Kirk

HousePortraitByEllen.com

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562.858.0607 lewisebersole@gmail.com





President's Message

It is an honor to be writing to you as the new President of the California Heights Neighborhood Association!

Give our newly 'retired' President Hugh Little a smile and a thank you when you see him in the neighborhood, or for that matter, all of the Board Members who have served – past and present.

Hugh and the CHNA Board, as well as our volunteers, were instrumental in holding down the fort during the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this devastating time, CHNA was able to donate funds to local organizations that were providing food and basic needs to community members, advocated to protect Cal Height's charm and quality of our homes, all while cleaning miles of streets and our freeway on/off-ramps, producing informative newsletters, and much more. Thank you all for your service.

If we have not met yet, let me introduce myself. My name is Manuel, and I am a Southern California native. I moved to Cal Heights with my wife in 2015 and reside in a charming 1938 Minimal Traditional home. I joined the Board in 2018, seeking to help protect and enhance our wonderful neighborhood, with hopes that my experience in local government could be beneficial to the Board.

I believe my 'trial by fire' moment in Cal Heights occurred in 2021, during Long Beach's redistricting process. Outside interest groups were producing maps that would have split California Heights into multiple City Council districts, despite the City's insistence that neighborhoods be kept whole. Our neighborhood has been fortunate over the years to have dedicated city staff, as well as advocates on City Council, that allowed for the creation and expansion of our historic district – could that support be diluted, could our collective neighborhood voice as residents of Cal Heights be diluted, if the neighborhood was split up into two or three Council districts?

Over the course of a few months, including 'surviving' a meeting in Council chambers past 2 a.m., with fogged glasses and a thick mask, I spoke up. We spoke up. In the end, we were fortunate to have our whole historic district remain in one Council district, but it reminded us all that the best things in life aren't free. Our charming homes, majestic trees, and sense of community all rely on our collective effort; otherwise, like an untended house plant, they wither.

Let's continue to build on our sense of community, and let's all meet each other at CHNA-f/8 Studio's mixer on February 12. The work continues...for the battle of Cal Heights!

Manuel "Manny" Valenzuela President, CHNA





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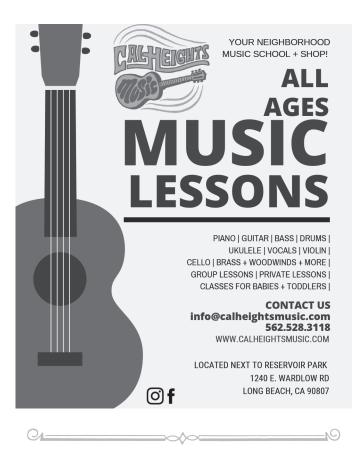






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Cal Heights Looking Back

by Frances Stoner

Did you have a holly, jolly Christmas? Maybe you were dreaming of a white Christmas or searching the house for the elusive elf who often sits on shelves. No matter if you gorged on figgy pudding or donned your gay apparel, you probably received a Christmas Card. Perhaps it was a greeting from family or friends or at least the local realtor, but did it contain "The Christmas Letter"?

In 1611, King James of England may have received the first Christmas card, sent by admirers hoping to curry favor from the King. But before the 19th century the low levels of literacy and lack of a dependable post made sending letters or cards almost an impossible task. Not untill 1843 when Charles Dickens published "A Christmas Carol" did the idea of giving gifts, feasting and charity become a widespread practice. We can thank Queen Victoria and her Germanborn Prince Albert for giving us Christmas trees, caroling, and furthering the idea of sending greetings to family and friends.

Louis Prang is considered the father of the American Christmas card. He published his first commercially available card in 1875 and by 1881 he was printing over five million cards a year and employing 5,000 people in the industry. His low-cost cards included lithographs of nature, traditional Christmas imaging, and fancy cards with fringe and tassels. Today, Americans send over 1.5 billion Christmas cards with some carrying on the tradition of including a newsy letter, updating the recipient of all the events of the past year.

We have carried on my husband's family tradition of sending a letter for over 45 years. Having no children to brag about, we instead fill the letter with news about our activities and especially about our vacations. To further torment those still working, we wax eloquently about our retired life and the joys of pickleball, writing a column in the local newsletter, and "not working." We occasionally throw in a carefully curated photo of us generally enjoying life.

Despite reading that "The Christmas Letter" outranks fruitcake as the most obnoxious gift you can receive, I simply cannot stop. Like some ancient curse passed down from generation to generation, I worry I may simply cease to exist if I don't write it down. Reading past letters is like having a mini-biography of your life and maybe someday be the only record of what we experienced in our lives together. So for now, Happy New Year and just wait for next year's edition!

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From the 5th



Thank you to the CHNA leadership for including me in this newsletter and for the ongoing communication and partnership with the District 5 council office. As a lifelong Long Beach resident, I understand and appreciate the unique character of Cal Heights and know you have some of the most dedicated resident volunteers in the city. I feel tremendous pride in knowing I represent the city's largest historic district.

I am happy to share that the city has reinstated the Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program, an economic incentive program for properties in designated historic districts. We have welcomed many new neighbors to Cal Heights since Long Beach paused this program in 2020. The Mills Act is especially beneficial for recent buyers of historic sites or owners who may have recently had a property transfer or tax re-assessment. I encourage you to attend these public workshops to learn about Mills Act eligibility and requirements.

Application Workshop

Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, 10 a.m. to noon Long Beach Energy Resources Department (Auditorium), 2400 E. Spring St.

For questions about the Mills Act, contact Alejandro Plascencia, Planner, at 562.570.6437 or Alejandro.Plascencia@ longbeach.gov.

The District 5 Field Office will remain at Wardlow Park, though hours may vary as we continue to bring on new staff members. Please send questions, concerns, and comments to District5@ longbeach.gov or call us at 562-570-5555.

I am honored to serve as your Councilwoman and look forward to seeing you around the district soon. If you see me, please say hello and introduce yourself!

Warmly,

Councilwoman Megan Kerr

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History and Vision: The African American **Cultural Center of Long Beach**

by Marion Saffery

The African American Cultural Center of Long Beach (AACCLB) has found a temporary home inside the Expo Arts Center in Bixby Knolls. Since April of last year, the AACCLB has served as a learning and support resource for the local African community, and plans to expand its offerings in the coming years. The Heights paid a visit to the AACCLB to speak with its Managing Director, Chatiera Ray.

How do you see the AACCLB expanding going forward?

The City and the Expo Arts Center have been so gracious to allow us to be here, but our goal is to eventually get our own space. We see ourselves growing-not just in the size of our exhibits-but also to become a hub for those in the black diaspora to come for resources, such as housing assistance, or for help with legal work.

We also want the Center to become an event space. We hope someday to host the African Dance and Drum Conference, so a space of that size and capacity is a dream for us. We're actually working on creating a plan for that now.

What's the most important message you want to get out to the Cal Heights community?

That we're here, and to come visit us! We're currently working in partnership with Forgotten Images, a traveling exhibition group based in Long Beach that has an extensive collection of artifacts dating back to the 1600s. Forgotten Images comes to the Expo about once a month to host an exhibit like the one you see here. We also want our community to know they can come here to take part in our classes, like our Drum and Dance classes and our African Study group.

On First Fridays, people can come to the center to mingle and to meet our board members, to learn about what we're doing, and to let us know what they want to see in a center like this one, and how we can help.

What does the Center have planned for February?

We're kicking off Black History Month on First Friday. We're working in partnership with The Six LB, Forgotten Images, Elite Skills Development, Infinity Enrichment and Bixby Knolls to put together the first African Marketplace.

History and Vision: The African American Cultural Center of Long Beach, *cont*.

And then on Feb. 25, we actually have a partnership with PBS! We're working with PBS to put on a reenactment of a Rent Party, to expand on the history of Rent Parties within the black community. Basically what that is, is when someone in the community couldn't pay their rent, everyone around within that community would get together, throw a party, and collect money to help that family pay their rent.

Is there anything on your wish list?

Right now, our biggest need is for volunteers. We're looking for someone who could volunteer to fill our receptionist area, and we're looking for volunteers who can help with events, especially with set-up and break-down.

To learn more about the AACCLB, or to inquire about becoming a volunteer, visit the website at aacclb.org, or send an email to admin@aacclb.org. Image: The send an email to admin@aacclb.org. The send an





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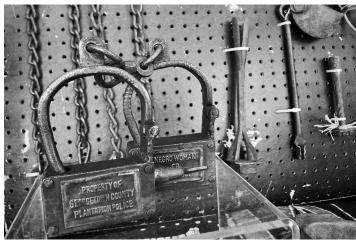




Cal Heights in Pictures







- 1. African American Cultural Center of Long Beach's (AACCLB) Managing Director, Chatiera Ray
- 2. Artifacts from the AACCLB. Located inside the Expo. Hours vary - call (562) 426-2670 or email admin@aacclb.org for information.
- 3. Artifacts from AACCLB's The Roots of Slavery exhibit.

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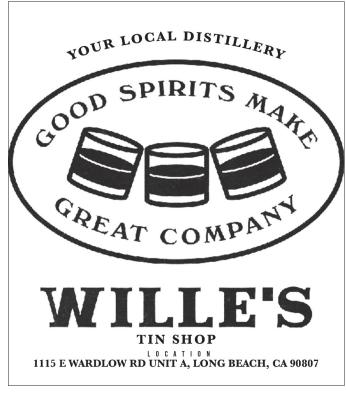
- 4. Recent storms providing much needed rain to the area and great views.
- 5. The Expo Art Center Senior Program This program meets every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9am to 1pm.
- 6. 6. Volunteer clean-up at Willow Springs Park.



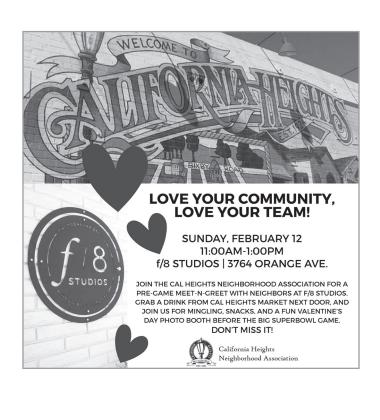
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"Simply being loved is more than enough."

Hey, Neighbors:

February, the month for love (and Alissa Cohn's birthday). In the 12th-century, European troubadours spread their songs of longing, an early indication that pleasure and pain are natural bedfellows in a love song. It has been estimated that more than 100 million love songs have been recorded, and the variety is staggering. Did you know there are 1,187 songs with the word LOVE in its title? A study on the "psychology of music" determined about 67 percent of lyrics in every song, every decade since the '60s, were somehow about love.

When I was really young, I was in the backseat of the car listening to the radio with my mom while out doing errands. I asked her, "Why are there so many songs about love?" She said, "Because love makes the world go round."

The point is? Let love rule this month and do not forget your sweethearts on **Valentine's Day**! You have plenty of options in the business district for dining, fun gifts, and flowers (Melinda McCoy's Flowers, And Then Boutique, Rooted, The Better Half, Twig & Willow, About U Boutique, Long Beach Clothing Co., The Vintage LBC, Urban Sugar Salon, Eclipsed Emporium, AndyLiz, Gems and Jewels, Lucy's Boudoir, Semilitas, The Merchant, Alsace Lorraine Bakery, Nonna Mercato, Stateside Crafts, Corked, Liquorland, and MANY other great options). You can also buy gift cards from just about any business around to share with your loved one.

So, what's the BKBIA buzz right now?

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We have our Black History Month Celebration at First Fridays; planning Women's History Month in March, and our favorite Long Beach County Fair at First Fridays in April. We will soon be planning our summer concert series. Be on the lookout for more flash events. Our annual "State of the Business District" meeting is set for later this month where we speak specifically about what we did in 2022, what we plan to do in 2023.

I am very happy to brag that the Bixby Knolls Strollers just turned 15 and have walked roughly 2,964 miles together, which is just about from Long Beach to New Hampshire! The Bixby Knolls Literary Society turns 15 this month. Our Knights of the Round (Turn)Table are diving into the greatest records ever made. We have maintained our core services of our Clean Team (litter and weed abatement) and CSI Patrol Service continues its security patrols around our district (actually increasing the patrols thanks to the donations to our Foundation). Consistency is key.

Business Shout-Outs: Popcorn World, 3916 Atlantic Avenue, is a small family-owned business specializing in gourmet popcorn with 99 different flavors to choose from. Only using the highest quality ingredients, their popcorn is made fresh daily. They offer various packaging options, from small bags to large tins, so that you can find the perfect gift for any occasion. You will definitely find new favorites with each visit.

And have you all been to Ding Tea, Eclipsed Emporium, Nonna Mercato, or Chicken University? What are you waiting for? Insider tip: Soon Bixby Knolls will be known as much as Cold Brew-ery Knolls (coffee) as it is Brewery Knolls (beer). More on that soon.

Again, we highly recommend you sign up for our newsletters. Please go to <u>www.bixbyknollsinfo.com</u> and do so. You will be fully "in the Know'lls" with what's happening around the district.

Happy Birthday Alissa Cohn.

Love is all, love is real,

Blair

(Some quotes and stats "borrowed" as necessary) 🛹



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JOIN US - ALL ARE INVITED!

Saturdays: Clean Streets Litter Abatement - 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 am at the corner of Lime & Wardlow. The 4th Saturday of every month Clean Streets meets at Bixby and Olive and joins the Hughes Clean Team for a campus cleanup.

First Friday of each Month: firstfridayslongbeach.com **Every Second and Fourth Saturday:** Hazardous Waste Collection at EDCO, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. longbeachrecycles.org



Thank you to all the volunteers who make Cal Heights the best in the west!



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Megan Kerr, 5th District Council 562-570-5555 email: district5@longbeach.gov

Rex Richardson, Mayor 562-570-6801

Josh Lowenthal, 69th Assembly District 562-429-0470

Lena Gonzalez, State Senate 33rd District 562-256-7921

Gavin Newsom, Governor 916-445-2841

Nanette Diaz Barragán, 44th House District 310-831-1799

Alex Padilla, Senator 916-448-2787

Diane Feinstein, Senator 310-914-7300

Animal Control 562-570-PETS (7387)

Airport Noise 562-570-2665 / 570-2600

Building Department 562-570-6651

Code Enforcement Monday thru Friday: 562-570-2633 Saturday: 562-570-0000 www.lbcode.org

Community Watch North Division 562-570-9825 or 562-570-9827

Dana Branch Library 562-570-1042

Fire Department 562-570-2500

Garage Sale Hotline 562-570-YARD (9273)

Neighborhood Preservation Information 562-570-6194

Parkway Tree Trimming 562-570-2700

Police Department Dispatch 562-435-6711 or Emergency 911

Senior Check-In 562-570-7212

Special Garbage Pickup (2 free per year) 562-570-2876

Street Potholes 562-570-3259