



THE HEIGHTS

NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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Promoting Public Knowledge and Preservation of Historic and Architectural Resources in the California Heights Historic District

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Cal Heights Block Party – June 24th!

by Manuel Valenzuela and Hugh Little

Hey everyone! We've missed you, and we're going to try to do something about it. For the first time since COVID became a thing, we're going to be having a block party in the neighborhood. Better even than our previous block parties (back in the day), this one is going to be hosted by our friends at the Cal Heights Market. Save the date of June 24th, and get ready to BYOB and whatever shareable dish you'd like between the hours of 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM. We'll be setting up a few easy-ups and bringing a couple of grills, and we plan to provide the basics for grilling hamburgers, hot dogs, and a few vegetarian equivalents of same. Feel free to bring your own grillables, if you prefer, but the event is potluck; sides, desserts, snacks whatever you feel like sharing.

In the past, we've always had to choose a block and go through the permitting process to close it off for the parties – while that certainly has its own perks, one thing we never managed was a truly central location to try to draw in folks from the entire neighborhood. If this does well enough, I'm hopeful this could be the first of many such events to come. I'm excitedly looking forward to seeing many of you all there.



CHNA Mixer from February 2023 at f/8 Studios located at 3764 Orange Avenue. Long-time CHNA Board members Karen Highberger and Hugh Little were presented achievement awards from the City's 5th District Office.



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President's Message

The tall, slim tower first catches your eye. You are drawn to the grooves between the red clay tiles above the tower and along the building's roofline. Then, the uninhabited front porch calls for you to enter, sit, and ponder awhile. But alas, you are not invited in, and instead your eyes and mind are transported back to reality, to the cold chain link fence and worn windscreen that surrounds this diamond in the rough. I am talking about the historic fire station next to the Water Department headquarters.

Built in 1941-42, this Spanish Colonial Revival-styled building served as Fire Station No. 14 for the City of Long Beach and was designed by local architect, Jess J. Jones (1889-1973), who also designed the first buildings at Memorial Hospital. A number of years ago, Fire Station No. 14 was sold and most recently served as a medical marijuana dispensary. It has been vacant for more than ten years.

Since my wife and I moved into California Heights in 2015, we have noticed this gem, staring right back at us. It serves as a landmark, in a figurative and literal sense, not only greeting you as you enter and leave Cal Heights, but as a visual focal point as you look down from Gardenia Avenue.

I write not to express sorrow, but to plant seeds of hope and desire. This beautiful fire station served its purpose, to support Long Beach's firefighters who in turn served us and protected us. As it sits vacant, it awaits an unknown destiny. It deserves to continue its service to the community, through a sensitive, adaptive re-use. Let me know your thoughts at info@calheights.org.

Manuel "Manny" Valenzuela
President, CHNA



Long Beach Fire Station No. 14, 1944 (Courtesy of CSUDH Archives)



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Cal Heights Looking Back

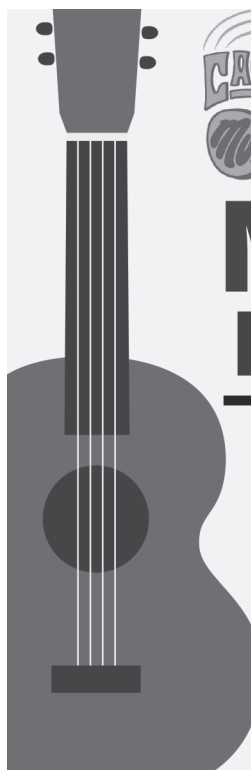
by Frances Stoner

I was feeling a bit low the other day, so I reached for a book, guaranteed to bring me joy. It's not particularly spiritual or exceptionally inspirational but it is absolutely hysterical... it's Dave Barry's 1997 "Book of Bad Songs". Written as a response to his readers who took exception to his critique of Neil Diamond's "I Am I Said" (was Neil surprised when the chair did not hear him?), he decided to conduct the bad song survey. The winner, "MacAuthur Park" by Richard Harris. I wondered if the survey needed to be updated so I asked friends, my Facebook buddies, and throwing all caution to the wind actually posted on Nextdoor, and just for good measure I asked for the most misheard lyric.

The nominees: "Honey" by Bobby Goldsboro – a song so sickly sweet it just might give you diabetes, claimed one respondent. "Young Girl" by Gary Puckett including the cringeworthy line "Young Girl get out of my mind. My love for you is way out of line." No doubt the Me Too movement would have had his head on a platter. Billy Idol's "Eyes Without a Face" – enough with the Zombie stuff. "Muskrat Love" by the Captain and Tennille, with the unforgettable line – "Muzzle to muzzle, now anything goes!" "Take a Letter Maria" by R. B. Greaves who waits about two stanzas after his wife leaves to hit on his secretary. As for "MacAuthur Park", the years have been kind with several people recalling it fondly, especially sung by Donna Summer.

The Kingsmen's "Louie Louie" reigns as the song most people misunderstand – hearing all kinds of naughty words, closely followed by CCR's "There's a Bathroom on the Right." As my friend DeWayne said while crooning to The Beatles "Ob-La-Da-Blah-Blah-Blah," just get louder and louder and your friends will stop listening anyway. So sing along with Elton John's "Hold me Closer, Tony Danza." The Who's "Magic Bus: with the magical line, "Too much, platypus!" Another friend always wondered why the Rascals' while singing, "Life would be ecstasy, you and me and Leslie" (should be "endlessly"), would include another girl while "Groov'n". One person even included a line from the hymn "Gladly, the Cross I Bear", which she reverently sang as, "Gladly, the Cross-eyed Bear".

No matter which is still your favorite song or the one that makes you put your fingers in your ears and scream, music has a way to draw us together. So neighbors, sing it loud and proud! 🎸



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From the 5th District



Hello Cal Heights Neighbors,

I hope these spring days find you and your family in good health! As your Councilwoman, it is my privilege to bring you the latest news and updates about our community. As Memorial Day approaches, let us all take a moment to honor and remember the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. May we never forget the tremendous sacrifices of our fallen heroes and may their memory inspire us to strive for a better future.

Congratulations to your new President, Manny Valenzuela. I am grateful for his ongoing engagement with my office and for his role in promoting and preserving Willow Springs Park. Manny is working to ensure that Cal Heights has a seat at the table. Most recently, he was at the Mayor’s Neighborhood Empowerment Summit. I look forward to continuing to work with him and the entire Cal Heights Neighborhood Association.

Residents with City-serviced refuse accounts across Long Beach may be experiencing service delays in their regularly scheduled refuse collection. I am aware of the most recent areas affected in Cal Heights and I have asked City Staff to mitigate that immediately. Long Beach Public Works is experiencing significant challenges due to staffing shortages, such as illness, vacancies, and injuries. If your refuse is not collected on your regularly scheduled day, leave your refuse carts/bins out and every effort will be made to collect on the following service day. If collection does not occur on the following day, please call (562) 570-2876, and a collection will be scheduled. The City is working to resolve this issue through a variety of operational and administrative adjustments, and we apologize for the inconvenience.

I want to emphasize that your engagement and active participation in our community make a tremendous difference. Stay connected to my office by subscribing to my newsletter at www.longbeach.gov/district5. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office by emailing District5@longbeach.gov or by calling 562-570-5555. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Councilwoman. Let's continue working together to build a prosperous Cal Heights!

Warmly,

Councilwoman Megan Kerr



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Free Classes, Activities and Events for Seniors: Who Knew?

by Marion Saffery

Just by registering, Long Beach seniors ages 50 and up can take part in an ongoing array of enriching classes, social activities, and informational events at six different Senior Centers citywide. The best part? It's FREE!

The City's Senior Program, brought to us by the Long Beach Parks, Recreation & Marine Department, offers classes and workshops like yoga, acrylic painting, and Tai Chi Chih; and social activities like book and walking clubs, bingo, knitting and more.

The Senior Center for our Cal Heights neighborhood is at the Expo Center in Bixby Knolls, and runs Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Seniors can join most activities on a drop-in basis, but they will be asked to register upon their first visit. Some special events do require pre-registration, due to their popularity.

A monthly activities calendar is posted online (see below), however, according to recreation assistant Araceli Oviedo, it doesn't vary much. "We try to keep it as consistent as possible for our patrons, so they know what to expect on different days," she said. Some of the center's offerings, such as the Able ARTS Workshop, are produced in collaboration with other organizations and groups. All the materials needed to take part are provided, free of charge. "Able ARTS Work is a neighboring non-profit group here at The Expo," Oviedo said. "They've been holding hour-long workshops with our seniors once a month."

On occasion, the program buses participants to excursions off-site. Some of these, like trips to the Getty Museum, are purely for pleasure; others, like a field trip to the Long Beach Transit Department, are also educational.

To view the monthly program calendar, visit www.longbeach.gov/parks, and select "Recreation Programs" on the left. From there, click the "Senior Programs" button, scroll to the bottom of the ensuing page to "Expo Center" and click "Calendar of Events". Follow the program (@longbeachparks) on social media as well.

"It's hard to cram so much fun into three days," Oviedo said. "We just look forward to continuing to add more participants, and to having a great summer here at the Senior Center." 🐾



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Long Beach Community Garden – One of My Favorite Places

by Stacey Morrison

I began gardening at the Long Beach Community Garden two years ago and I must say heading over to the garden is something I look forward to every Saturday (after picking up trash with Clean Streets!)

Located across the street from the Nature Center in El Dorado East Regional Park is an 8½-acre parcel of land with over 300 gardening plots. Each plot is 20 feet by 30 feet for Long Beach gardeners to grow all their desired summer and winter crops. Gardeners have access to water, compost, mulch, wheel barrels, shovels, an herb garden, a flower garden, and the daily pickings from the citrus and stone fruit orchard. All the produce from the orchard is placed in the Welcome Center and is always the first place I stop to get oranges, grapefruits, mandarins, avocados, loquats, or whatever else was picked that day.

The idea of a community garden originated at the Honor Farm located at Dovey Drive and Carson Street (at where the Long Beach Towne Center is currently located). That's where in 1976 the City Council approved the farm to become a community garden. It was a 6½-acre site with water access and rich sandy loam soil. In 1996, the garden was relocated to El Dorado Park East and has been thriving ever since.

To become a gardener here you must be a Long Beach resident and submit an application. It is \$160 per year and if you grow one too many zucchinis or tomatoes all extra crops can be donated and garden volunteers deliver this produce to various Long Beach food banks. For more information about the Long Beach Community Garden, visit www.lbcg.org.



Garden Plot at the Long Beach Community Garden



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Cal Heights in Pictures



1. Former Long Beach Fire Station 14, as it exists today.
2. The Senior Center located at The Expo. For program runs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
3. 5th District Council Member, Megan Kerr, and Long Beach Police Officers at the 11th year of the Kidical Mass Bike Ride.



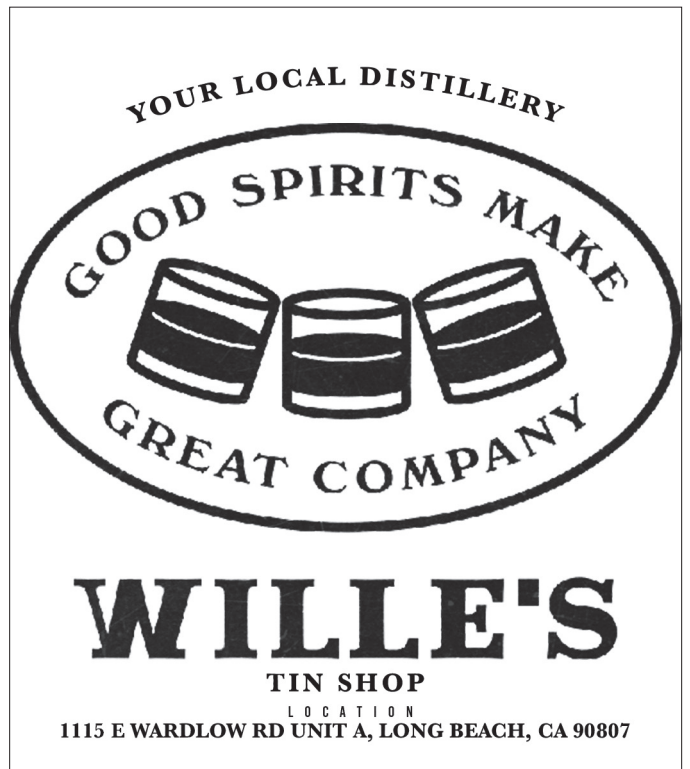
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4. BKBIA First Fridays.
5. Fresh tomatoes from the Long Beach Community Garden, which is located across from the Nature Center at El Dorado Park East.
6. Another Clean Streets clean-up in front of the new Harbor Freight Tools store at 530 E. 33rd Street. Clean Streets meets at 9 a.m. every Saturday at the corner of Lime and Wardlow.

STAY LOCAL



SEEKING YOUR SUPPORT!

Your donations to the BK Community Foundation go directly to support the BKBIA's core services that benefit the district and neighborhood: Private security patrols, litter and weed abatement, landscaping maintenance..and First Fridays!

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

by Blair Cohn, Executive Director BKBIA

"Whadaya hear? Whadaya say?" Jimmy Cagney

Hey, neighbors:

Oh, June, you teaser. The end of another school year and the joys of summer poke through the gloomy clouds you bring. The nice long days with the sun encourage me to stay even busier and fill each day to the max. And if I stop and listen very carefully, I can hear the joyous sounds of the Orange County Fair in the distance. You tease me with the solstice and days sneakily getting shorter, but I pay no mind to that. In preparation, our garden is planted with summer vegetables and Marley's Pumpkin Patch and we are loading up on sun screen, towels, and ready to hit the swimming pools with the smell of the jasmine all around us. Probably to the dismay of my wife, I have a long, long list of fun explorations to do in the City of the Angels. Did you know Amelia Earhart had a house in Toluca Lake? But I digress...

The other day I was in Bixby Joe, and someone said to me "It was June, and the world smelled of roses. The sunshine was like powdered gold over the grassy hillside." I replied, "Couldn't agree more" and paid for their latte.

Where are you all headed this summer? What are your plans? Our cruise in April converted us to become "cruise people" and we'd love to hop on the Princess Discovery up to Alaska. Or maybe a European cruise? We had been very cynical about the cruise experience but this one exceeded all expectations. Of course, I dream about getting to St. Joseph, Michigan, to escape into my time machine and visit the locations and memories of my parents and family back in the day. Walk with me on the bluff, or down State Street, and you'll get what I'm saying.

The summer concert series will start again around town. You'll get the schedule of Wednesdays for the Municipal Band Concerts in Los Cerritos Park, and we invite you to our Concerts in the Park(ing Lot) series. First up: King Salmon and the Funk Yard Horns, Monday, June 26, in the Bixby Joe Parking lot. This is a great band to kick off summer and get you dancing on a Monday night...in a parking lot. Throughout March, April and May, the BK BIA crew spent a lot of time discussing "what's next?" and "what new things can we create?" The fruit of those discussions will be rolled out over the next few months.

Monthly Business Recommendation: Deep Blue Swim School, 3640 Atlantic Avenue. "Deep Blue is passionate about the importance and value of water safety and drowning prevention education. We believe that it is important to eradicate the alarming statistic that drowning is the number one cause of accidental death in children under the age of 5. All lessons are taught by highly skilled, CPR certified instructors in our indoor, 89-degree pool with ozone-filtered water. Lessons are taught year round and families can begin their child's aquatic journey in a 30-minute Parent & Me group class. This class is led by instructors who educate and model swim techniques designed to help build life-saving skills for children ages 3 - 18 months. It is a great introduction to the water while offering a comfortable and fun bonding environment for families. We offer 1:1 private swim lessons starting at 3 months of age. In private lessons, instructors concentrate on teaching safety skills while students become confident with breath control, buoyancy, and independence to build a stronger base of swimming techniques all in a fun, safe, and trusting environment!" Personal note: My kids have taken lessons there and loved it.

That's it for right now. There IS a cure for the summertime blues (but you shouldn't have any if you live here): Get out and walk, ride, explore, listen to music, go out to breakfast, lunch or dinner, socialize, and smell the flowers all through your neighborhood. Please make a donation to the Bixby Knolls Community Foundation 501c3, either through our website at www.bixbyknollsinfo.com or directly to our office at 4321 Atlantic Avenue. We thank those who have already made generous donations to the foundation.

Remember, these ARE the good old days.

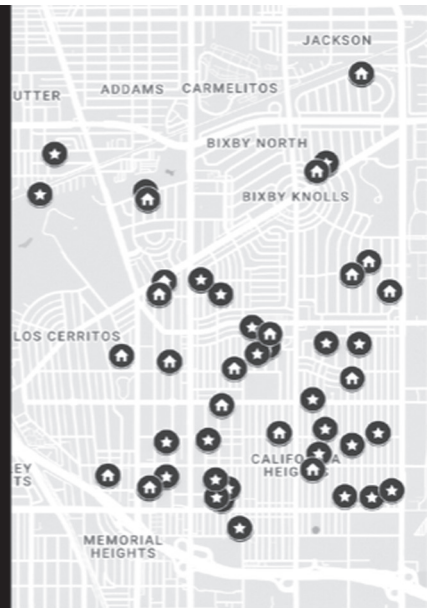
See ya kid,

Blair (and Jimmy Cagney)

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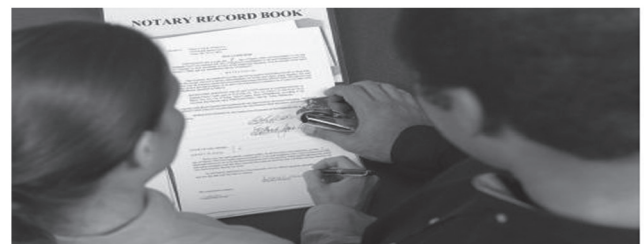

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Saturdays: Clean Streets Litter Abatement - 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 am at the corner of Lime & Wardlow. The 4th Saturday of every month Clean Streets meets at Bixby and Olive and joins the Longfellow Green Team for a cleanup around the school and neighborhood.

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!



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