



# THE HEIGHTS

NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

January/February 2024 | Vol.29, Issue 4

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

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## Cal Heights Home Tour – Save the Date!

by Christa Stelmuller

After more than four years away, the California Heights Neighborhood Association (CHNA) Home Tour is returning on May 19, 2024. The last time we held this event was in October of 2019. This is our second attempt to bring the home tour back. We previously encountered some unforeseen challenges that led to a decision to postpone. Those challenges are now resolved and we're able to bring this important community event and fundraiser back in 2024!

I know many of you are used to Home Tour occurring in October. Last year, we decided that after some very hot home tours, we would switch to a late spring event to allow for milder but reliably good weather for everyone to enjoy. We have some amazing homes included this year and we cannot wait to share their unique stories with you.

So please save the date and come spend that day with us! Not only will you be learning about our history and the careful restoration of four great homes in the neighborhood, you'll be supporting 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.

See you all on May 19, 2024!



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## President's Message

The dawn of a new year is upon us! We hope that you and your loved ones had a wonderful holiday season and New Year's celebration.

Did you enjoy Cal Heights' first Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony back on November 30<sup>th</sup>? It was a wonderful event that brought the neighborhood together. A special thank you to f/8 Studios for leading the way, Cal Heights Market, Cal Heights Business District, and Councilwoman Megan Kerr for sponsoring the event. There's already talk about how to improve and grow in 2024!

This year will be a memorable one for Cal Heights as we will be celebrating our neighborhood's 100-year anniversary and bringing back the beloved Cal Heights Home Tour. We are 'kicking around' some ideas about how to celebrate our centennial, feel free to email us your ideas.

Let's experience this new year with curiosity, kindness, and gratitude. Gratitude for the (unpaid!) volunteers/neighbors who will put together the Home Tour, the community events, the newsletters, the clean streets and alleys, and advocacy for our wonderful neighborhood.

Do you have a desire to make your neighborhood a better place? Consider sharing your talent by volunteering with Cal Heights! You could be an architect, an arts-and-crafts weekend warrior, in IT, or customer service, whatever that may be, bring your heart and special talents to Cal Heights. You are what makes our neighborhood great.

To learn more about volunteering for the Home Tour and with Cal Heights, please reach out to us at [info@calheights.org](mailto:info@calheights.org).

See ya in the neighborhood,

Manuel "Manny" Valenzuela

### Interested in volunteering? We are looking for:

- **Webmaster**
- **Home Tour Coordinator**
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- **Board Member**

**If you are looking to help the neighborhood, reach out at [info@calheights.org](mailto:info@calheights.org)!**

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### Cal Heights Looking Back

by Frances Stoner


Some say it takes a village to make wonderful things happen, but maybe it just takes some great neighbors with a huge assist from the local Boy Scouts. Adriana and Alfredo Luquin noticed that an elderly neighbor on their street needed some help to trim back her garden. Since their sons were active in the Boy Scouts, they thought it would be a great activity to have the scouts help out with some gardening. Troop 613 has been in the Bixby Knolls area since the 1980's and currently has both boys and girls as members. Over the course of two days, supervised by Adriana and Alfredo, the scouts helped clear over 20 bags and a few trash cans full of clippings, working hard to get the yard ship shape!

Scouting in America was modeled after The Boy Scouts Association created in England by Robert Baden-Powell in 1908. Its purpose was to teach patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred values to young men. Most people are familiar with the Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared," but it is more than that. The pillars of scouting stress being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent – not just while in scouting, but choosing to live that way every day. Long Beach has a long history of scouting, beginning in 1912 with Troop 1 and now serving over 3,000 boys and girls in various troops and packs. Scouting today has several different programs, all seeking to provide opportunities for youth to develop life skills and provide service to others.

So, a big shout out to Eduardo, Vanessa, Adrian, and Santos for providing a great service to our neighbor, Joan. Thanks to parents like Adriana and Alfredo for supervising and working so hard. Also, a special thanks to Joan, who thanked us all by sharing her delicious oranges. Just one more wonderful thing that happened in our little village of Cal Heights! 🍊



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## From the 5th District



Hello Cal Heights Neighbors,

Happy New Year! I had an incredible first year in office, and it has been an honor to represent Cal Heights. I look forward to the rest of this year, as we continue to learn, grow, and work to improve our city together.

In December, we were able to hear from the Airport and other City staff as they shared their presentation regarding general aviation at LGB. As we enter this new year, we are poised and ready to continue the important conversations around taking action to mitigate concerns of noise and air pollution from general aviation aircraft. My office and I will keep you informed of new updates and developments as they come to light.

As residents of the historic Cal Heights, you may be eligible for the Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program! Now through March 1, 2024, the Long Beach Community Development Department has opened the application cycle for the Mills Act program, an economic incentive program for designated historic properties in the city. Historic district property owners, owners of individual properties outside of the districts that have been designated as historic landmarks, and those who believe their property could be historic and are willing to landmark the property, are all encouraged to learn more about eligibility and potential property tax savings. Those who wish to apply to be considered for the 2024 Mills Act incentive must attend the virtual application workshop on Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 10:00am. Please note that RSVP is required to attend. The Mills Act application and guide are available to the public at [longbeach.gov/lbcd/preservation/mills-act/](http://longbeach.gov/lbcd/preservation/mills-act/). For any questions about this program, please call (562) 570 6194 or email [MillsAct@longbeach.gov](mailto:MillsAct@longbeach.gov).

If finding new activities is part of your New Year's resolution, I encourage you to join in LBCC's free weekly yoga sessions. Every Wednesday at 12:00pm, stop by the Liberal Arts Campus Front Lawn (on Carson Street) for an hour of yoga, free to all students, faculty, and community members!

As always, I appreciate your continued engagement. Please continue to share any questions, concerns, and ideas with me by calling (562) 570 5555 or emailing [district5@longbeach.gov](mailto:district5@longbeach.gov). I look forward to hearing from you in the new year!

Warmly,  
Councilwoman Megan Kerr



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### Cal Heights Couple Celebrates Home's 100th

by Marion Saffery

When Cal Heights residents, Jess and Micah Mumper, moved into their 1924 Craftsman-style home five years ago, they started thinking about how to celebrate its centennial year. So what did they do? They threw it a birthday party, of course!

For the event, the two adorned the home, inside and out, with lights and silver streamers. A huge Art Deco wood sculpture of a paper moon welcomed guests from the front yard. Even the dog, Ringo Starr, wore a handsome bow-tie for the occasion. We caught up with Jess and Micah a couple of weeks later.

*When did you purchase your 1924 house?*

We came from New York five years ago, and this was the first place we rented. We fell in love with the neighborhood and bought the house in July 2020. The previous owners decided to sell, and gave us the first offer.

*What gave you the idea of a birthday party for your house?*

It's been in the works for awhile. As soon as we moved in, we thought when 2024 comes around, we're going to throw a party for the house and celebrate its 100th year.

*Did you purposely seek out an old home?*

We needed something dog-friendly and we really wanted a good neighborhood. When I came here to do the interview with the landlord, I saw all of the coffee shops and just walked around the neighborhood and I knew this was a great place.

*What else do you love about living in Cal Heights?*

Halloween! We were so unprepared the first year for how many trick-or-treaters come through. There's a block party every year. They do a "Mommy Mummy" where the kids take toilet paper and wrap their moms up; there's a chili cook-off. We know most of our neighbors and they're super-friendly. There's an amazing sense of community here.

If you live in a Cal Heights home dated 1924 or earlier, and you'd like to be featured in an issue of "In the Heights," please drop us a line at [info@calheights.org](mailto:info@calheights.org).

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## California Heights Turns 100!

by John Moreland

This year, 2024 is the centennial for the California Heights neighborhood! Technically speaking, our neighborhood was inhabited for about 7,000 years before the first homes were constructed in the area and just prior to being homes, our neighborhood was a bean farm. However, the discovery of oil in Signal Hill on June 23, 1921 changed the destiny of our neighborhood. Before this, there was already speculation that oil could be located under California Heights. In fact, the first tract of our neighborhood, which was between California and Atlantic Avenues, was subdivided on June 18, 1920. Like gold mining claims in Northern California, these lots were originally intended to be sold to speculators in search of "black gold". However, oil was not as prevalent under our neighborhood and in November 1923, water, gas, and telephone services were brought into the neighborhood. Homes started being built in 1924. Later subdivisions of our neighborhood continued eastwards to Cherry Avenue.

Here's some interesting information: did you know that 37th Street was originally named "Hathaway Avenue" and Olive Avenue was originally named "Jessie Avenue"? Were they a good friend of someone at the Jotham Bixby Company?



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### Cal Heights in Pictures



1. Craftsman home originally constructed in 1914 and moved to the California Heights neighborhood.
2. Jess and Micah Mumper, with their dog Ringo Starr, on the porch of their 100-year-old home.
3. Homes in California Heights.





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5. Vendors in the Bixby Allery (at the Burlinghall Drive signal) during First Fridays.
6. Music at Wilmore Wine Bar, located at 3848 Atlantic Avenue.

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

by Blair Cohn, Executive Director BKBIA

This is my annual article about inner turmoil and conflict. Another year has passed (check the lines on my face) and a new year and a blank slate is beginning. I search for inspiration to see what new things we can create and add to our mix. What else can we do to keep our business district afloat and vibrant? How else can we engage the neighborhood to connect us all and make our hamlet thrive? It's back to the bookshelves and music collections to ignite the spark. I pulled out everything from *The Twilight Zone Companion Book* to the *Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter*. I've watched Fellini movies and episodes of *Fuller House*. My music diet ranged from Burt Bacharach and Peter Gabriel's soundtrack from *Birdy* to Chopin and the greats of Doo Wop. I now may have enough material floating through my head to begin the creative process.

Just so you know, I spent much of my time over the holidays meditating about our neighborhood and all its unique characteristics. Our business district is surrounded by the bedroom community, and we really have something extra special here when "all become all," and when everything is connected. It is a true melting pot. Don't believe me? Where else will you find a gothic DJ playing reggae music to families on Sundays for Kidical Mass bike rides? Or where else do you see neighbors dancing in a parking lot at a Monday night concert? We have a 50s diner and eateries to please even the most stubborn of palettes. Look around and see the Orthodox Jews walking to services, the monks stopping at The Merchant for coffee. We have the African American Cultural Center, KUBO (Filipino cultural center), the Historical Society of Long Beach, Rancho Los Cerritos, a beloved toy store, and a national park. There's a walking club, running club, book club, music club, bike rides, trivia nights, karaoke, dance lessons, music lessons, music Mondays, and on every first Friday of the month, an entertaining showcase in the pedestrian zone.

Speaking of: Did you know that First Fridays turns 17 years old this year? All grown up now. Councilman Al Austin told me one night, "The kids that come to First Fridays now will one day talk about it like those that used to go to The Pike back in the day." Profound. Never really thought about that. I hope we have created some fun and memorable times for everyone. It's such an important night for our businesses.

Years ago at First Fridays, I stood in front of our former office space while a band played Crosby, Stills, and Nash. Two Vietnam Vets watched on with tears in their eyes and just over their shoulder I saw kids learning how to Double Dutch jump rope. Just over their shoulder and inside of one of the galleries at the Expo Arts Center, was Toaster Music in their radiation suits and gas masks while interpretive dancers did their moves to the electronic music. Meanwhile, people of all ages walked up and down the sidewalk enjoying the scene. That was very satisfying. The weird and wonderful all mashed up and providing positive vibes for all.

We know we have plenty of challenges city-wide that spill into our hamlet, but the trick is to not let it get us down. Some days it's like using a broom to push back the tide but we must always stay positive. If you read between the lines, you will see that the BKBIA will always sprinkle some hope and joy with a dash of sarcasm into everything we do – and you have our secret recipe.

I do know that we will remain consistent, persistent, and optimistic in 2024. Planning is underway for our annual Black History Month celebration in February. March will bring us Women's History Month and our "Women of Bixby Knolls" tribute to our women-owned businesses. Our Knights of the Round Turn (Table) will be diving even deeper into great records and artists. We also reach some milestones: Strollers and Literary Society turn 16 years old! And it's never too early to think about our concert series.

There are new things on the horizon, but I don't dare mention them just yet. I don't want to jinx anything. Please sign up for our newsletters – you will find the link on our website. You'll stay "in the Know'lls" that way.

Shout out to all of the many, many, many generous donors/donations that came in from the community. Our Clean & Safe programs remain at high levels because of all of you.

Happy New Year! May all your storms be weathered, and all that's good get better,

George Bailey (aka Blair)

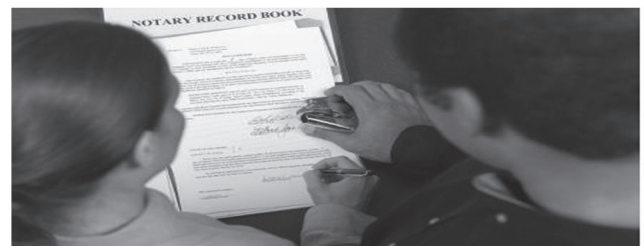
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**First Friday of each Month:** First Fridays in Bixby Knolls.  
firstfridayslongbeach.com

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