BHCA
BELMONT HEIGHTS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

NEWS FROM THE
neighborhood
Spring 2026


PAGE 6

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Joyful, Engaging Repurposed Treasures

by Ellen Butler

Do you like whirligigs? Colorful yard art? And the opportunity to interact with it all? If yes to any of these questions, you need to stop by 4315 E. 5th, just a few houses west of Ximeno. The creator of this most amazing yard is Bob Robertson, a relatively new resident of Long Beach who was born, raised, and spent most of his life in Syracuse, NY. Basically retired when he moved here, Bob went to work at Home Depot, though COVID pretty much ended that. And so...he had time on his hands.

Joan, Bob's wife, was born in Canada but moved at a young age to North Hollywood and spent many years in the San Fernando Valley. But the first time she drove over the hill and down into Long Beach, she knew she'd found the place she wanted to live. She's been in the house on 5th Street for 30 years.

About a decade ago, Bob and Joan met via Match.com. They planned to meet at Starbucks, but of course they each showed up at a different store. Not to be deterred, Bob went to Joan's work to meet her, where he was met not only by Joan, but a passel of her staff who loved her dearly and wanted to check Bob out, and to warn him, if he wasn't good to her...(Joan had a very successful retail career managing the cosmetics department at Macy's, other companies, and was last at Saks.) That meeting led to their marriage.

The yard art began with wood from an overgrown tree that Bob trimmed. First, he made the gnome house and then added stationary toys and movement. You need to go

▶ *Continued on page 9*


Joan and Bob Robertson show off their yard art crafted from repurposed materials.


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Association News

Events Around the Neighborhood

March 7 *Coffee Club* Start your morning with a hot cup of coffee and good conversation. Coffee Club is a casual chance to share a table with friendly neighborhood early risers and catch up on what's happening in Belmont Heights.

March 22 *Belmont Heights Make a Difference Day* Belmont Heights Make a Difference Day is here, and we're ready to pull our weight. Join neighbors for a hands-on day of service that makes a real impact right here in our community. Sign up to volunteer at mybelmontheights.org/bhmadd.

April 4 *Annual BHCA Egg Hunt* The Annual BHCA Egg Hunt is back—and it's always over fast. The hunt begins at 9:00am sharp, with a dozen golden eggs and thousands of others scattered throughout the park. Separate areas will be set up for very little ones and older kids, and Belmont the Bunny will be on hand for free photos for BHCA members. Don't be late!



January Coffee Club gathering at Ma & Pa's.

March 27, April 24, May 22 *BHCA Book Club* 6:30–8:30pm at BHUMC. The BHCA Book Club is going strong and kicks off its fourth year this March. Recent reads include *It Ended Badly: Thirteen of the Worst Breakups in History* by Jennifer Wright, *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver, and *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald. The group continues to mix fiction and non-fiction to keep conversations fresh and wide-ranging. Curious? Stop by and check it out—new faces are always welcome.

Update *Pull Together Weeding Events* Our "Pull Together" weeding events are currently on hiatus while the Growing the Greenbelt Committee works to improve coordination with the City's Parks and Recreation Department. We're hopeful to bring a refreshed version of this popular program back soon—stay tuned.

▶ *Continued on page 5*

BHCA BELMONT HEIGHTS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

NEWS FROM THE *neighborhood*

NUSA Neighborhoods USA Building Stronger Communities 2024 Community Newsletter Award Winner

News From the Neighborhood is distributed quarterly, in March, June, September, and December. It is hand-delivered to over 3,300 single/duplex households and to local establishments in Belmont Heights.

Managing Editor **Claire Nelson**
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Advertising Chair **Julie Folcik**
Distribution Chair **Derrick Muska**
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Article submissions
We welcome articles, ideas, and photos pertaining to our neighborhood. We reserve the right to revise submissions.

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The Belmont Heights Community Association is a non-profit organization made up of residents who volunteer their time and energy to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

The Association works closely with residents, historic districts, local businesses, schools, community organizations within Belmont Heights, the 3rd District City Council office, City staff, and other neighborhood organizations.

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President's Message

Last time, I sent you out on a scavenger hunt around the neighborhood. This time, we're staying indoors and putting that brain of yours to work.

We've put together a small crossword puzzle filled with local pride and neighborhood lore. Whether you're a seasoned crossword pro or have never heard of the *New York Times* Sunday crossword puzzle, I hope this gives you a fun moment to pause, play, and smile.

The first person to complete the puzzle and email it (just take a photo) to president@MyBelmontHeights.org will win a $25 Breakfast Bar gift card and be featured as our BHCA puzzle guru. In my book, all good puzzle solvers deserve both bragging rights and breakfast. To be eligible, participants must be active BHCA members.

Not a member yet? Joining is easy, just visit MyBelmontHeights.org.

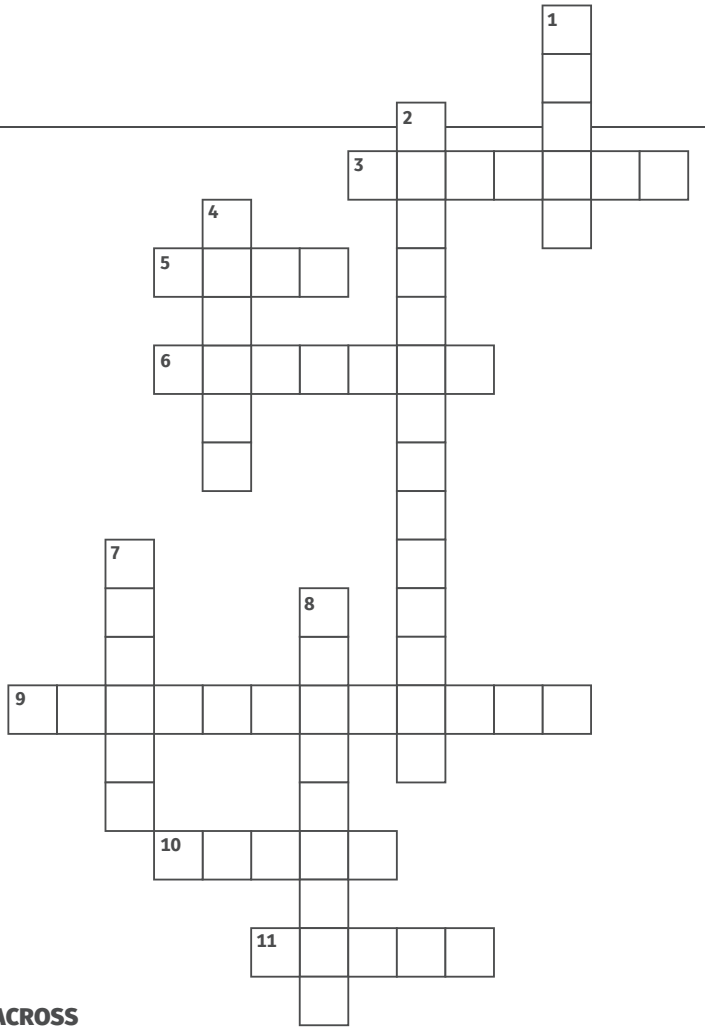
Happy solving, and as always, thank you for being part of what makes Belmont Heights such a great place to call home.

Derrick L. Muska

***Derrick Muska** is president of the Belmont Heights Community Association.*



Derrick, Diana and Bodhi Muska.



ACROSS

3. Closest pier
5. Community group behind this newsletter (abbr.)
6. Belmont Heights elementary school rebuilt after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake
9. Breakfast spot so good, the line is part of the experience
10. New minor league baseball team heading to Blair Field
11. This edition's four-legged celebrity

DOWN

1. Tiny street with postage-stamp houses, and is one of two historic areas in Belmont Heights
2. The neighborhood we're proud to call home
4. CSULB's mascot (Go, Beach!)
7. North-south street, whose pronunciation depends on who you ask (or your GPS)
8. Beloved architectural style you'll spot all over the neighborhood

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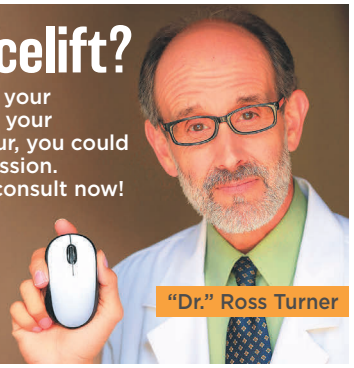
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Disclaimer: Ross Turner is a real graphic designer who sometimes portrays fake doctors on television.

From Our Councilmember

by Kristina Duggan

Public safety remains the top issue I hear from residents. People want to feel safe at home, at school, in local businesses, and in our public spaces. That includes the basics people rely on every day: quick response times, visible community-based patrols, and effective crime prevention efforts. Safe and clean neighborhoods are the foundation of a strong community.

Over the past several years, we have focused on giving our Police Department more tools to address crime, while also expanding transparency and accountability in policing. This work continues, but a major challenge we still face is staffing. Long Beach currently has an 18% vacancy rate in sworn police officer positions, and that shortage has real impacts on day-to-day public safety.

Safe and clean neighborhoods are the foundation of a strong community.

When we do not have enough police officers, specialized assignments are limited. Traffic safety enforcement, quality of life policing, and proactive community work are often reduced because patrol coverage must come first.

The City is working to address these vacancies and reverse staffing challenges that have built up over many years. To remain competitive in a challenging national hiring environment, Long Beach is offering up to $54,000 in incentives and benefits for new police cadets, and up to $78,000 for experienced officers transferring from other departments.

Since January 2023, the City has graduated four police academy classes: Class #96 with 41 recruits, Class #97 with 29 recruits, Class #98 with 29 recruits, and Class #99 with 25 recruits. The fifth academy, Class #100, started in January 2026 with 98 recruits, the largest class in Long Beach Police Department history. The City also opened a new police academy facility in January 2026, replacing the old site and improving training.



(Left to right) Police Officers Association President Rich Chambers, Councilmember Duggan, and Chief Wally Hebeish at the new police academy opening in January 2026.

The incentives we are offering are working, but it can take up to 18 months of training before a recruit is ready to patrol independently. Even as we expand hiring and training, overall staffing will only grow if officers are hired faster than retirements and departures, which requires sustained investment.

Public safety is not solved by a single policy or one department alone. It requires ongoing commitment, oversight, and collaboration with the community. Improving public safety is a priority for the City, and I continue to push this work to the forefront of every discussion. We can build new parks and libraries and expand recreational classes, but those investments only matter if people feel safe in their neighborhoods. BH



***Kristina Duggan** is the Long Beach City Councilmember for District 3 which includes the Belmont Heights neighborhood. Her office can be reached at (562) 570-6300 or district3@longbeach.gov.*

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◀ ***Association News**, continued from page 2*

Looking Ahead: Spring Programs Spotlight Local Voices and Big Ideas

The Belmont Heights Community Association is lining up a strong slate of speakers for spring, covering everything from our working waterfront to wetlands, and continuing with Neighbors Helping Neighbors: our program spotlighting the interests of our very own Belmont Heights residents. These Community Engagement Meetings will be held from 6:30-8:00 in Wesley Hall at the Belmont Heights United Methodist Church at 317 Termino Ave (entrance on Mira Mar).

March 11 *Los Cerritos Wetlands Trust — Elizabeth Lambe* The Los Cerritos Wetlands are one of our area's most important natural resources. **Elizabeth Lambe** will discuss ongoing restoration efforts, environmental benefits, and what the future holds for this vital open space just beyond our neighborhood.

April 8 *Long Beach Arts Council — Marc Davidson* From public art to local creatives, the arts help define Long Beach's identity. **Marc Davidson** will share how the Arts Council supports artists, cultural programming, and creative placemaking throughout the city.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors continues with a conversation featuring **Melissa Evans** and **Gwen Shaffer** of the *Long Beach Post*. As longtime champions of local journalism and community engagement, they'll share why neighborhood storytelling matters, how informed communities grow stronger, and what it takes to keep local voices at the center of civic life.

May 13 *Long Beach Police Department, East Division* Public safety remains a top priority for Belmont Heights residents. Representatives from LBPD's East Division will share updates on neighborhood policing, crime trends, and how residents can partner with officers to help keep our community safe.

These programs reflect what BHCA does best: bringing timely, relevant information directly to Belmont Heights residents while highlighting the people and organizations shaping our city. We hope you'll join us for one—or all—of these engaging evenings. As always, check mybelmontheights.org for the most up-to-date event listings. BH



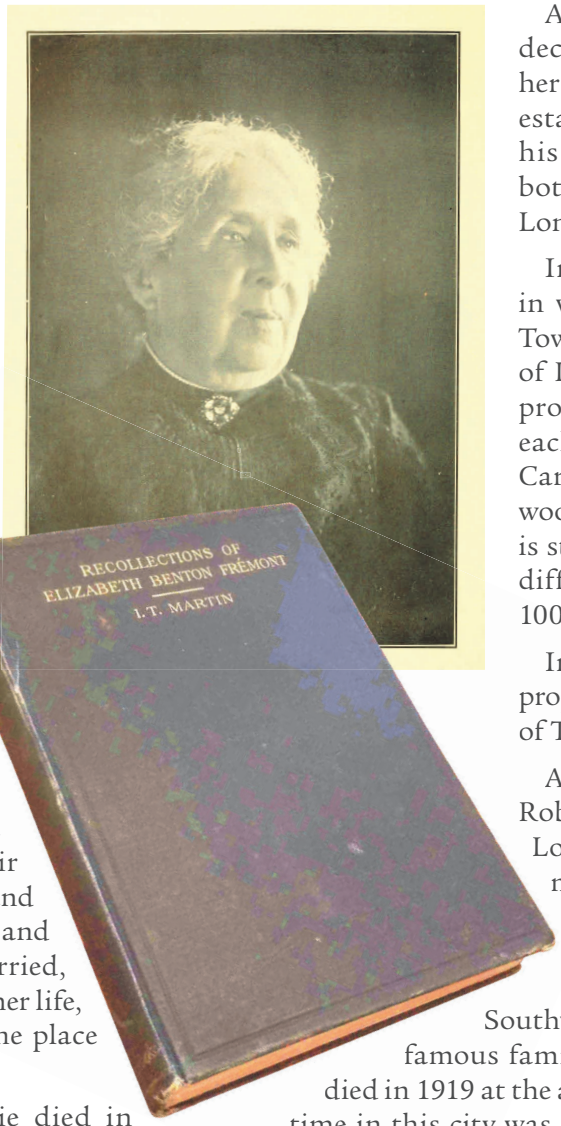


Elizabeth Benton Frémont's Long Beach

by Maureen Neeley

Time and again, Long Beach was a way station for those of certain celebrity.

H. Gaylord Wilshire (of Wilshire Boulevard) briefly lived here; one of California's most famous governors (Frank Merriam) and one of California's most famous philanthropists, Dorothy Buffum (wife of Norman Chandler of the *L.A. Times*), also lived here. Upton Sinclair authored his famous 1927 book, *Oil!*, while living at 10 58th Place. And don't forget Snoop Dogg, Nicholas Cage, Cameron Diaz and Billie Jean King in more recent years.



Native Californians might appreciate Elizabeth "Lily" Benton Frémont's brief stay in our seaside town. Born in 1842, Lily was the daughter of the (in)famous General John C. Frémont and his well-bred wife, Jessie Benton Frémont. Lily accompanied her parents on their many treks throughout United States and Europe. She was an avid horsewoman and wild-flower enthusiast. She never married, continuing to travel over the course of her life, living for a few months or years in one place before moving on.

In 1890 John Frémont died. Jessie died in 1902 in Los Angeles. At that point, Lily was fairly destitute. Her father's numerous ventures rarely resulted in stable monetary success. After a trip or two to the family gold mines in the Yosemite and Bear Valleys in 1903, Lily came to Long Beach, ostensibly for her health upon the advice of her physician.

Another reason may have aided her decision to settle here: a branch of her mother's family, the Bentons, was established here. Arthur Benton, and his better-known son, Ira Benton—both architects—lived and worked in Long Beach.

In 1905, Lily purchased two lots in what was still the Alamitos Beach Townsite, not yet annexed to the City of Long Beach. By some accounts she probably paid about $350 for them each. One was at 338 Junipero, near Carroll Park. She settled into this little wooden bungalow from 1905 to 1907. It is still there, the front porch not much different than it would have been over 100 years ago.

In 1908 she moved into her other property, located at the southeast corner of Temple and Second (now condos).

According to Long Beach historian, Roberta Nichols, Lily left her seaside Long Beach home in 1909 at age 67, moving six times throughout L.A., plus a stint in Hermosa Beach and Warm Springs, Georgia. She was part of the dedication of the Southwest Museum, donating some of her famous family's artifacts to this endeavor. She died in 1919 at the age of 77. To Long Beach's credit, her time in this city was one of the longest she spent in one place during her life. BH

Above: Photo of Elizabeth "Lily" Benton Frémont from *Recollections of Elizabeth Benton Frémont, Daughter of the Pathfinder General John C. Frémont and Jessie Benton Frémont, His Wife*, 1912 (public domain, Library of Congress).





Save Our Historic Belmont Avenue Lamp Posts

by Claire Nelson

Belmont Heights resident Nick Mulvehill, a freshman at Servite High and dedicated Boy Scout in Troop 698, has made remarkable strides with his Eagle Scout project: the repair, restoration, and lasting protection of Belmont Avenue's historic lampposts. We first spotlighted his inspiring initiative in our Fall 2025 issue.

Over the past six months, Nick has delved into the details of what this project requires and made some progress moving it forward. Working with Mark Roberts (acting director of Traffic), the City has received replacement replicas—crafted to closely match the originals—for the two lampposts that have been destroyed. These replacements are currently awaiting installation. The remaining 37 lampposts, showing signs of rust, require rust mitigation and a fresh coat of paint. The estimated cost for this restoration is $36,500. While the City is unable to fund this work, Councilmember Kristina Duggan (CD3) has graciously offered to attempt to help with the costs of funding the landmarking the lampposts application.

Nick is determined to meet this fundraising goal. With support from the BHCA, he is exploring a range of creative avenues: applying for grants (which requires landmarking the lampposts and will be pursued), organizing community fundraisers, and leveraging matching contributions.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for updates, invitations to fundraising events, and even more opportunities to get involved in supporting Nick with this historic project! BH



YOU can support this worthwhile effort now at mybelmontheights.org/post/save-our-historic-lampposts-on-belmont-ave









Belmont Heights Volunteers Honored

by Claire Nelson

At our annual holiday party, we were proud to recognize six outstanding neighbors whose dedication and generosity have made a meaningful impact on the Belmont Heights community.

BHCA President Derrick Muska had the pleasure of introducing each honoree, sharing highlights of their contributions, and presenting them with a small token of appreciation as a heartfelt thank-you for all they do:



For many years, **Craig Starnes** and **Joel Surfas** have reliably delivered our quarterly newsletter along one of the neighborhood routes. In introducing Craig and Joel, Derrick praised their dependability, clear communication, and consistent follow-through.

Heather Altman was also recognized for her long-standing service on the newsletter delivery team. Although she was unable to attend the event, Derrick proudly "introduced" Heather to the room, highlighting her years of commitment and her willingness to walk two delivery routes. A great way to get those steps in, Heather!



Bringing visual energy and polish to our newsletter, **Ross Turner** was honored for his role as our layout and design magician. A fun fact about Ross is that he lives in Belmont Shore. After attending a BHCA event and experiencing the strong sense of community firsthand, he learned we were looking for a new designer, and he generously stepped in. His design work beautifully honors our neighborhood's character and heritage, and we're grateful he chose to share his talents with Belmont Heights.



Al Holden turned a pesky problem in his own yard into a community-wide solution. Recognizing that rats were not just a personal issue but a neighborhood concern, Al took action. He developed a well-researched plan, brought it to BHCA, and simply asked for support. From there, he formed Club R.A.T., organized a group of neighbors, and even created a website to support the initiative. We thank Al for stepping up, leading with purpose, and acting for the greater good. Interested in learning more about Club R.A.T.? Email Al at clubRAT@clubsecretary.org or visit clubsecretary.org.



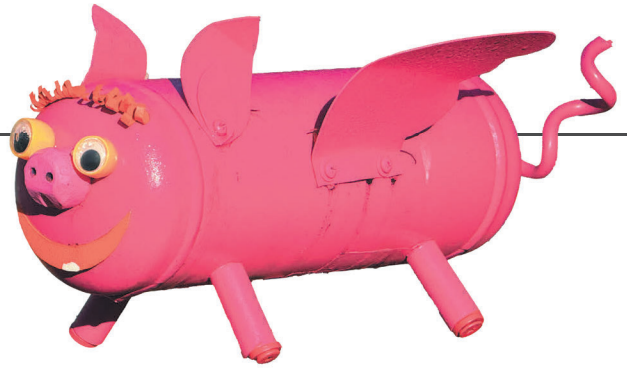
Proving that age is no barrier to being an exceptional neighbor, **Finn Cole** truly stands out. Derrick joyfully recognized Finn's enthusiastic involvement at multiple BHCA events, from the Roper Romp to the Zombie Crawl. Finn ran games with confidence, stepping up as a master of ceremonies to keep the fun rolling. Keep it up, Finn!

Each of these remarkable volunteers embodies the very best of Belmont Heights. They saw a need, recognized how they could help, and chose to give back. BH



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◂ ***Joyful, Engaging Repurposed Treasures*** *continued from page 1*

by and look at it now! Neighborhood kids drop off toys for Bob to add. As he walks his Bassett Hound, Josie, every day, Bob finds what people discard and repurposes it, adding it in the most creative ways. He'll pick up something most of us would call junk and ask himself, "What can I do with this?" He uses microwave motors to animate his marvelous creations. They are on timers and are generally "live" from 7am-5pm. He's also added spotlights for evening hours.

On the west side of the yard, just outside the fence, is a wonderful cat, originally from Neiman Marcus. It was part of an umbrella stand Joan rescued after it had been returned while she was working there. She's given it a good home for decades now. The cat's basket offers chalk for people to draw with and often includes small toys and treats for the kids who stop by.

One time Bob was in the yard when a young woman walked by and stopped to look at all the activity. They fell into conversation and the woman told Bob, "My catalytic converter was stolen this morning. But this has made me smile."

Thank you, Bob and Joan, for bringing smiles and joy to soooooo many of your neighbors. BH









Raquel's Path to Her Passion

Small Business SPOT LIGHT

by Monica Tabrizi

Growing up in Whittier and attending an all-girls school, Raquel Garcia had no idea where life would take her. Her mom pushed college, but Raquel quickly realized that was not her calling after pursuing nursing coursework. An accident forced her to question what she valued, which ultimately changed the course of her life. She remembered getting a facial at age 12 and thinking, "this woman gets paid to do this and adults can choose this as a full-time job"; even more, she remembered how it made her feel: happy, calm, and confident. Fortunately, her mom saw Raquel's passion and supported the decision; She then enrolled in esthetician school, and here she is 17 years later.



That feeling carried into the genesis of her life's work: clients coming in feeling one way and walking out better, whether it's through emotions such as crying, laughing, venting, or just being silent. With the hands-on nature of waxing, Raquel communes with a client's energy, which she likens to a form of healing. She supports them where they are and provides a safe place with no judgment. They can just be.

She practices her own self-care to ensure she is "all in" for clients: often it comes in the form of faith, gratefulness, a sense of responsibility, and work life balance, including the freedom to choose when and how often she works. Practicing beauty self-care makes her feel good and allows her the ability to see how other folks practice, which ultimately benefits her clients.

Raquel's journey to Raqstar Waxing emerged by listening to people in their time of need. Whether it was bartending or performing some beauty service, this skill became core to who she is. She approached each new change as an opportunity to listen to her gut and God. One of her first jobs was working at a high-end hotel in Newport Beach, performing facials on individuals where money was no object. But waxing was always in the back of her mind, and she longed to work at a big box waxing provider where she could hone this skill. When this opportunity brought her to Long Beach, she could practice something she loved and gain much-needed skills: rising to be awarded the 2019 #1 waxer in Southern California. With this sign to branch out on her own, she achieved a long-time goal of owning her own business: Raqstar was born.

Ninety percent of her clients followed her from previous jobs, one staying throughout her 17-year career. When asked if she missed performing other services like facials, she happily shared her creative way of keeping the skill-set alive by combining it with a bikini wax—otherwise known as "vajacial".

Love brought Raquel to Long Beach and she stays because of the diverse population, liveliness, and beauty. According to her, Long Beach was ahead of the time with what the city had to offer. "The minute you think you have Long Beach figured out, you don't, because something is coming, something great."

Here is what she wants people to know about her life's work: "If you are looking for a place that is 100% judgment free and want to walk out better than when you walked in, Raqstar Wax is your place." BH

***Raqstar Wax** is located at 3714 E. Broadway and is always accepting new clients. Follow Raqstar on Instagram: @raqstarwax*

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Shop and Sell Smart...and Stay Safe!

by Claire Nelson

Are you selling or buying items online via sites like Facebook Marketplace or NextDoor? Safety is a priority when meeting with strangers to exchange goods. Long Beach now has safe E-Commerce Exchange Zones. There are three zones and they are located in public parking areas outside of LBPD substations. These exchange areas are open 24/7 and are equipped with security cameras; however, camera feeds may not be actively monitored at all times.

The visible presence and proximity to law enforcement, combined with camera coverage, help provide a safe space for e-commerce exchanges.

These zones are intended for in-person exchanges that originate from online platforms. Typical exchanges include items such as electronics, household goods, tools, sporting equipment, and collectibles. All transactions must involve legal items only; prohibited or illegal items, including drugs, weapons, or stolen property, are not permitted.

The nearest exchange zone for Belmont Heights residents is the LBPD East Division station located at 3800 East Willow Street. BH

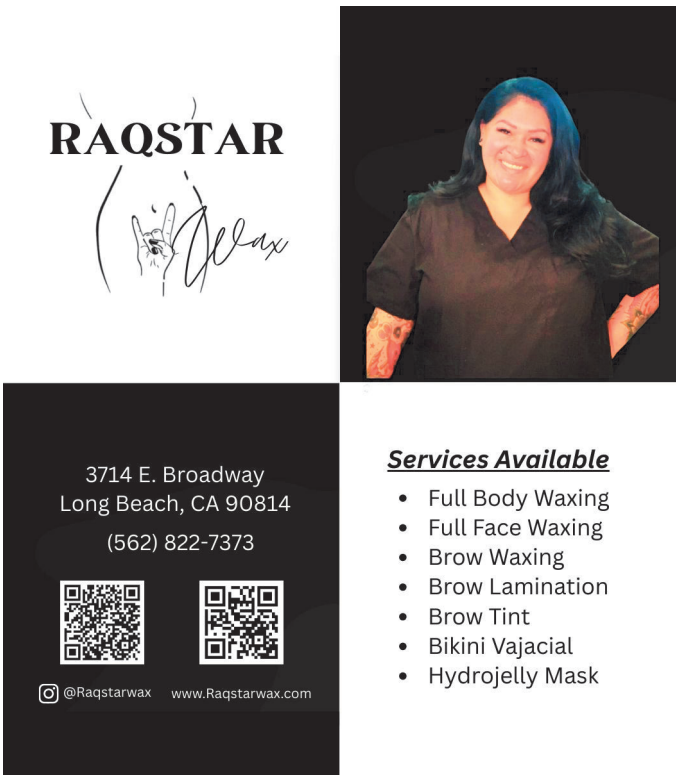
Fremont Elementary Loses Significant Staffing

by Evelyn Crofts

For the last two years, Fremont Elementary School has benefitted from qualifying for Title I funding—a federal program that allowed the school to staff a full-time counselor, nurse, multiple college aides, reading, math, and English as a Second Language specialists. With the loss of eligibility for these funds, many of these positions will be going away next year.

How did this happen? Title I is a program to help disadvantaged students meet state academic content and performance standards. The formula for determining Title I eligibility is complex and not the same every year, but Fremont is consistently near (usually just below) the cutoff for receiving these funds and missing the cutoff means getting no additional funds at all. So, despite nearly 50% of students being low-income, Fremont will experience a significant loss of funding next year.

The Fremont Elementary School PTA will attempt to make up for some of this by paying for three college aides next year. If you would like to support, please visit Fremont-pta.org for more information. BH







Marge on a recent walk.

Meet Marge

by Sparkle Jones

She also answers to, Marg-arine, Marg-arita, Marg-ina Navratilova or whatever round snack-adjacent food item you can think of. She's a one-year-old, 40-pound English bulldog with a big personality and a bigger heart.

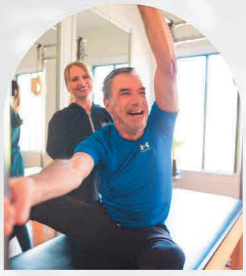
Some of her favorite things include play dates with her bestie, napping (snores included!), brunch with mom and the girls, and ignoring all her store-bought toys in favor of chasing a plastic bottle around the house.

Her absolute favorite part of any day is meeting people!

If you are lucky enough, you might find her in true bulldog fashion, stalled out on a walk, carefully inspecting the neighborhood, but paws down, her absolute favorite part of any day is meeting people, so if you see her, please say hello. Much like the beauty queen she is, she considers meeting people her civic duty and takes it very seriously. BH

Have a favorite pet you've met in your part of the Heights? *Let us know and we may profile in a forthcoming issue. Send to bhcanewseditor@gmail.com*


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Walking the Heights

by Ina and Mike Levin

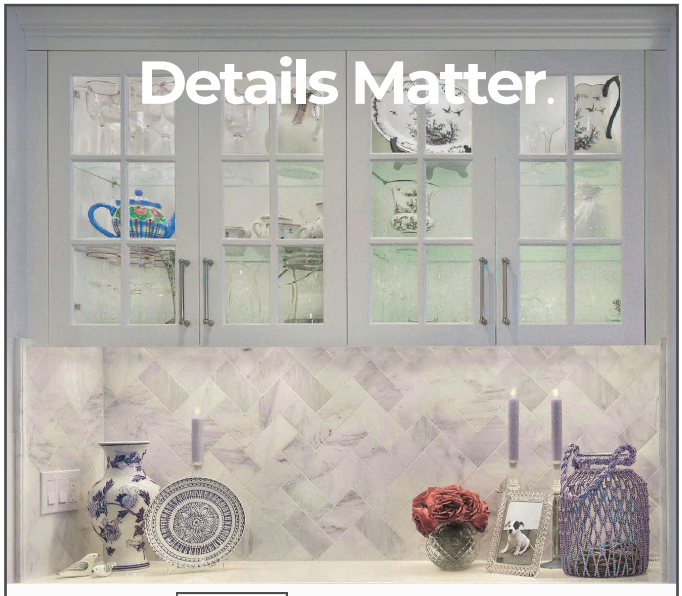
If we had to pick a favorite time of day, our answer would be a quick one. It's the Golden Hour—the time shortly before sunset. It's the time of the day when daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky. Sometimes called "the magic hour," the sun is low above the horizon, and more illumination comes from indirect light. (This magic time also occurs just after sunrise, which we admit is too early for the two of us to do anything but sometimes catch a colorful sunrise from our balcony).

We love to start our walks about an hour before sunset. Walking toward the Colorado Lagoon—have you noticed that Colorado starts with the word color?—we marvel at the magnificent light on the water. "Golden" is the perfect adjective. The bridge across the lagoon takes on a fantastical quality that is usually found only in a manipulated photo.

The streets of Belmont Heights look equally intriguing. Shadows appear on the houses from the trees and shrubs that aren't visible when the sun is high. Even the street signs look different. The blue becomes brighter, contrasting with the surrounding colors. And if it is a sunny day after a rain, the views are even more spectacular because the air is so clean. After the storms in December/January, we were struck by how the mountains stood out during the Golden Hour. Looking east toward Mount Baldy or Saddleback Mountain to the south, the view took on a magical glow.

Don't forget to take your camera on walks. You'll find the Golden Hour is the best time to take landscape photos. You can find lots of tips online to get that perfect picture. And you can find out what the "Blue Hour" is and how it differs from the Golden.

Walking the Heights an hour or less before sunset makes us grateful for the rest of the evening. BH



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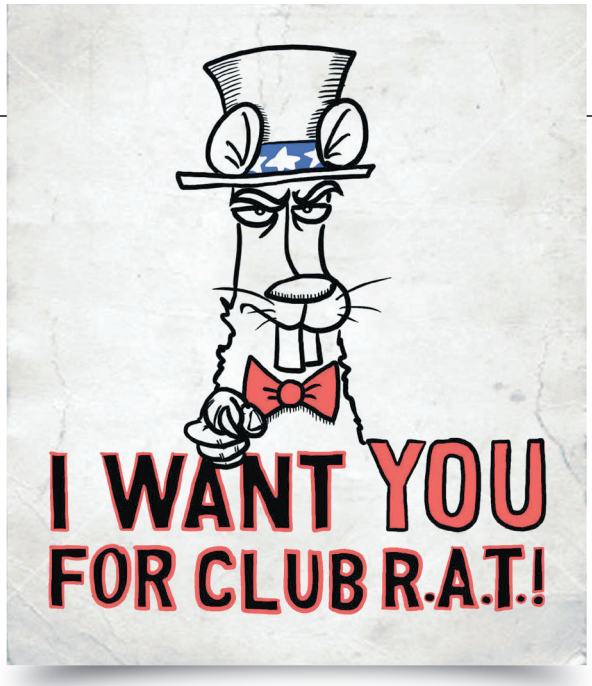
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Club R.A.T. Update

Club R.A.T. is fully operational! We've distributed hundreds of non-toxic birth control baits to dozens of member stations. Yet more are needed to help control the rat population in the Heights. We will soon be offering an "adopt a station" program for those who may want to pitch in a couple dollars a month to support restocking the bait station nearest their residence. BH

Interested in learning more? Scan the QR code, then press the "How Does It Work" button for all the details.

Or contact clubRAT@clubsecretary.org if you have specific questions.



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The Tentacles of Connection

by Amy Haeseler

On a sunny, winter morning, I sat with Belmont Heights resident, Marc Davidson, at his morning routine spot, Ubuntu, to interview him on "All Things Marc."

Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Marc was raised in a home where melody was a constant. The "creative lightning bolt" struck in 1964 while he was watching the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Captivated by the craft, it sparked a lifelong obsession with the medium of songwriting.

He began his formal education at Tulane University's School of Architecture, but it was after transferring to the University of Houston in 1972 that his personal and creative lives fused permanently. At a Halloween party, he met his wife, Patti, whose ability to harmonize was instantaneous. This was the start of a marriage and musical partnership that eventually brought them to Long Beach in 1982.

When Marc retired in 2017 after years of traveling and commuting, he sought to refocus his energy entirely on the community of Long Beach. He didn't want to just live here; he wanted to design a more vibrant, accessible artistic landscape. Marc has taken on leadership roles that have transformed the city's cultural experience.

Through his leadership at the Arts Council for Long Beach, Marc champions infrastructure and accessibility. He is a primary supporter of the Artist Registry, an interactive map and database that functions as a "Yellow Pages" for all local artists, ensuring they are connected to city opportunities. For those looking to explore, Marc recommends the Arts Council's interactive artist map to discover hidden gems tucked away in our neighborhoods. He also oversees initiatives like Artsy Van, a mobile carrier that brings arts education directly to kids in public schools.

His influence extends to the very streets of the city. As chair of Make Music Long Beach, Marc encourages live performance by bringing musicians out of concert halls and onto the streets for everyone to enjoy. Similarly, he launched Art of Song, a monthly singer-songwriter evening that creates a dedicated space for original music to be celebrated as a formal craft.

Even in "retirement," Marc's schedule remains full. As past president and current instructor at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), he leads songwriting and folk jam classes. He believes that staying active is a creative act, fostering a Club of Harps with members who find health and connection through rhythm. Marc often speaks of the tentacle of community involvement: "You find your interests, you find others who share them, and you get involved," creating support and connection. Whether he's mentoring college interns or helping a neighbor apply for an arts grant, his work is fueled by a simple love for his amazing community. He reflects, "A truly special place to land."

Come meet Marc as he chats with us about our local creative community at our April 8th BHCA Community meeting. BH



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3 Easy Ways to Join and Support BHCA

For just $35/year,* your membership supports our community activities.

1. **SCAN** the QR code
2. **VISIT** MyBelmontHeights.org and click "Join us"
3. **SEND** your check payable to "Belmont Heights Community Association" to BHCA, 375 Redondo Ave., #332, Long Beach, CA 90814
   Be sure to include your name, address and email address*

**All memberships are for one year from date of joining and are tax deductible. The BHCA sends out an email reminder when members are due to renew.*

You Can Make a Difference!

by Claire Nelson

More than 30 years ago, a group at Temple Israel met to discuss a way that they could unite their community for a day of doing good work for the greater Long Beach community, collecting food and furniture for those in need, raising money to support feeding the homeless, and contacting local organizations if there were any handiwork projects they needed people-power to complete.

This day of giving back to the community was called Mitzvah Day (in Hebrew, the word "Mitzvah" translates to "Commandment," but is more commonly translated as "Good Deed"). It became the dream of Rabbi Steven Moskowitz, to broaden the participation beyond the Temple community. He recruited the Belmont Heights United Methodist Church, the Belmont Heights Community Association, the 3rd District Councilperson's office, and The Center LB.

This like-minded group of community leaders created Belmont Heights Make A Difference Day—a day where together, as a united community, we focus our collective energy to give back and help those in our community.

Register for a volunteer project and/or donate at mybelmontheights.org/bhmadd

March 22nd is Make a Difference Day

There are numerous ways you can support this community initiative:

VOLUNTEER TO WORK ON A PROJECT that day with like-minded neighbors. Arrive at 11:30 am for check-in/celebration. The event lasts a few hours. It's remarkable how much good can be accomplished in a short time.

DONATE A NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM(S) Items will be collected that morning at Temple Israel at 3rd & Loma, and all goods will be donated to local food pantries including the Viking Vault.

CAN'T MAKE IT THAT DAY? Donate funds to support much-needed projects, including trauma kits, hygiene kits, and school supplies.

However you choose to support this initiative, you will make a difference.

BHCA Events

BHCA Book Club 6:30 – 8:30pm, Mar 27, Apr 24, and May 22 at Belmont Heights United Methodist Church

Community Engagement Meetings 6:30 – 8:00pm, Wednesdays: Mar 11, Apr 8 and May 13 at Belmont Heights United Methodist Church

Coffee Club 9:00 – 10:00am Mar 7.
Stay tuned for more announcements

Neighborhood Events

Make a Difference Day (MADD)
11:30am, Mar 22

Easter Egg Hunt
9:00am, Apr 14

We're always adding new events, so stay current at: mybelmontheights.org/events. Or follow us on Facebook and Instagram

/mybelmontheights @bhca_lb