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Welcome back Rocco!



By Ben Lee

Some might say: A new year, a new beginning! Not in this house. Here we say: A new year, a new dog! Because just when life feels like it's calming down and hitting an easy rhythm, why not introduce a 100+ pound German Shepherd/Doberman/Great Dane mix to the mix? Some families thrive on quiet stability while others gravitate more towards chaotic upheaval. I think you can imagine into which camp we fall.

Allow me to back up a bit and make the formal introductions. If you live in Cheviot Hills or frequent Rancho Park, you may have met our big boy Rocco once or twice before. He is not new to the neighborhood. My brother is Rocco's previous owner and he used to live with his husband, Brady, their Rat-Terrier dog Eddie, my mother and her two dogs, Summer and Lucky on



Earlmar Avenue. Prior to that, Josh and Brady had been living in the wilderness (Topanga) and had gotten Rocco for the sole purpose of protecting small Eddie should coyotes or other predators come on to the property. However, that plan was short lived because once they began renovating their Topanga home, they moved to Cheviot Hills and in with my mother and now four dogs. Some might balk at such a crowded and rambunctious household but not my mother. She was thrilled with her new roommates, both two-legged and four-legged alike. But as much fun as she was having with so many boys in her house, the new additions didn't come without a fair share of drama. If you've ever spent any time on the Nextdoor website, you may remember a frantic 'LOST DOG' posting back in 2016. One would think that in a modest 3-bedroom/2-bathroom, roughly 1800 square foot single story house, it wouldn't be easy to lose an enormous dog but sure enough, that's what happened. My brother-in-law called us, understandably upset, claiming to have lost Rocco. He was gone. Vanished. No where to be found. We spread out, on foot and in our cars, casing the neighborhood; asking gardeners, security patrollers, even a film crew if they had seen this enormous dog lumbering through the neighborhood. I went on Nextdoor, the trusty neighborhood information website pleading with residents to be on the look-out and to help in the search. Not ten minutes after posting pictures and

a description on line did the phone ring and I braced for the worst. Sure enough it was my mother, laughing so hard she could barely get the words out. "Well, we found Rocco!" she announced. "He was in the bathroom!" Why they didn't bother checking within the entire house is still a mystery to me, but it speaks volume towards this animal's gentle nature and sweet "I don't want to be a bother," disposition.

So, fast forward a few months, my brother gets a job offer from the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and he opts to move across the country with his family including, of course, their two dogs. We were all so sad to see them go. Not only would we miss living only a few blocks from the humans (especially our baby nephew), but Rocco had been playing with our dog Yoda for almost a year and they were as close as dog cousins could possibly be, despite their massive differences in size and personality. None of us wanted to say goodbye but when the opera world beckons, one must answer the call so off to New York they went. At first, everything was going very smoothly for Rocco in the Big Apple. But as the weather started to turn colder and their living conditions got a bit smaller, suddenly it became rather crowded for a Dobermanish giant of an animal to share such a tight space with two men, another excitable dog, an energetic toddler and yes, another baby on the way.

We got the call a month ago from my brother, asking if we would be open

to welcoming Rocco back to sunny Southern California. Would we?!? The answer was an immediate and enthusiastic, 'YES!' Our whole family eagerly awaited the big boy's arrival with excited anticipation. We went to the cargo hold of the airport to greet the massive crate as it came through the terminal. Each of us was giddy to bring this enormous dog home and to show Yoda that his one-time best buddy was coming back to stay.

I'm pleased to report that the guys have gotten along splendidly. Rocco can spread out as far and wide as he'd like and doesn't have to worry about getting in anybody's way or accidentally causing a baby to trip over his giant, mammoth-sized paws. He no longer has to battle the big city's arctic temperatures and can instead lounge in the year-round California sunshine. And, yes, adding yet another male to an already testosterone-heavy household has tested the patience of my wife, our lone female—although she will be the first to admit that this is a particularly sweet and gentle young man who's already improved the manners of all the other young men with whom he now shares a residence.

Rocco is a welcome addition to the family and as long as we check the bathrooms before declaring him missing, we should hopefully have smooth sailing from here on out. Because as the saying goes: good things come in extremely large packages. I hope you get the chance to meet our newest, extremely large boy very soon.

My featured listings

BEN LEE - ESTATES SALES

Pacific Palisades - ACTIVE!
5 Beds / 4 Bath 4,100 Sq. Ft., 8,276 Sq. Ft. Lot



515 Muskingum Ave – \$3,350,000

Newer Mediterranean set on a quiet loop street with unobstructed ocean, canyon & mountain views. Bright & dramatic entry leads to wide open living & family rooms with bar/lounge area. Step down to the spacious dining off center-island kitchen – all opening up to huge entertaining deck & views. Five large bedrooms, 4 baths + several balconies, view decks & covered patios. Lower level storage area, etc. (additional 1,200 sq. ft.) with 12-ft. ceiling opens to patio & view.

Cheviot Hills - ACTIVE!
5 Bed / 6.5 Bath



2715 Forrester Dr – \$5,595,000

Luxurious Hamptons retreat on the most coveted street in Cheviot Hills, impeccably designed and newly constructed estate by Diamond West Distinctive Homes. Artfully detailed wainscoting and intricate custom built-ins set the tone throughout this amazing home. Greeted by a formal living room with fireplace and bay window, pass the formal dining room with butler's pantry to enter the gorgeous gourmet kitchen. This dazzling property, unmatched in location is truly an opportunity that cannot be missed.

Miracle Mile - SOLD
Duplex with 2 bed / 1.5 bath + Studio



1262 S Burnside Ave – \$1,549,000

An enchanting duplex in the heart of Mid-City, this two-unit, stunning property has been meticulously designed and updated to offer the best of Los Angeles living. Set behind a security gate and privatized by mature landscaping: open and airy spaces, formal living room with fireplace, hardwood flooring, original charming details that include Spanish tiles and crystal doorknobs. Boasting balconies off the bedrooms, views of the city, washer/dryer facilities, and newly updated central heat/air, plumbing and electrical infrastructure... this spacious yet intimate duplex is as welcoming as it is practical. A must see.

West LA - SOLD
3 Bed / 2.5 Bath



1530 S. Centinela Ave PH4 – \$999,000

Bright, warm and welcoming, this very spacious 3 bedroom/2.5 bath penthouse condominium on a centrally located street in the heart of West Los Angeles is tailor made for stylish, grown up living. Hardwood floors, large open kitchen with stainless appliances, granite counters and breakfast nook; formal dining room with fireplace; expansive living room that leads to a balcony which provides far-reaching city lights and mountain views. Two tandem parking spots in the secured downstairs garage, and a stone's throw to all the fun shops and restaurants in Santa Monica. A peaceful oasis in the heart of the city.

Cheviot Hills - SOLD
4 Bed / 4 Bath 3,359 Sq.Ft., 8,707 Sq.Ft. Lot



10377 Monte Mar – \$2,950,000

With a beautiful view of the golf course beyond, this modern and minimalist 3 bedroom/3 bath home in Cheviot Hills embraces its inhabitants with both peace and tranquility. Custom wood cabinetry, midnight black granite countertops, oversized island and window wrapped breakfast nook with banquette seating will make preparing and enjoying meals a welcome respite from restaurant dining. With a strong emphasis on style as much as function, this simply glorious home in the award winning Overland School District is precisely what you've been looking for!

Rancho Park - SOLD
5 Bed / 5.5 Bath



10646 Esther Ave – \$3,595,000

Welcome to your American dream home! Traditional style new construction by Diamond West Distinctive Homes, this impeccably crafted 5 bed/6 bath, 4378 sq ft home charmingly set on a flat, wide-frontage 9267 sq ft lot is a wonder in design and detail. Bright, open and well-appointed, this home is truly ideal for modern family living. From the lovely front porch, enter the fabulous formal living and dining rooms with exquisite custom millwork and wainscoting. Enormous great room with impressive eat-in kitchen boasts stainless Thermador appliance package with pot filler, walk-in pantry with beverage center, butler's pantry with sink and wine storage, and convenient access to laundry room and guest bedroom/office. Atop the stairs, a generous central landing with custom built-ins adjoins to an upstairs family room with balcony, perfect for studying, lounging or sharing a fun family game night. Four spacious bedrooms, all with en suite baths, complete this level. Fantastic Westside location—walk to shopping, dining, cinema, light rail and highly coveted Overland Elementary School.

Los Angeles - LEASED
3 Bed / 3 Bath



3100 Castle Heights – \$7,500/mo

This spacious, meticulously designed and remodeled home in Castle Heights offers all the amenities a family could want. Three bathrooms and three comfortable bedrooms including a master bedroom with romantic fireplace, exposed beams in the pitched ceiling and access to outside. Additional features include rich, honey-hued hardwood floors throughout and a vast, open-floor plan in which the kitchen, dining room and living room are all open to each another. The kitchen has an oversized island with designer pendants, beautiful backsplash, stainless appliances and wine refrigerator. Outside you'll find an ideal entertaining space complete with fire pit, refreshing swimming pool and landscaping that will remind you of a private, tropical paradise. Close proximity to the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School and Cheviot Hills Shopping Center, this home is as conveniently located as it is exquisite. Come see for yourself.

Westwood - SOLD
5 Bed / 4 Bath



846 Warner Ave – \$4,495,000

Stunning Spanish hacienda in Little Holmby Hills. Dramatic 2-story entry. Living room with stained glass windows, exposed beams, dark hard wood floors and oversized fireplace. Generous formal dining room with an abundance of light. The kitchen is a true showstopper with Subzero stainless refrigerator, La Cornue range, brick backsplash, colorful tiled floor framing the island and a large breakfast nook with a wall of windows and overlooks the great room complete with built-ins. Guest room and private office downstairs. Beautiful backyard with mature landscaping, covered patio as well as the swimming pool/spa. An outdoor fireplace and separate entertaining space with built in bar-b-que makes this yard ideal for parties. Up the Spanish tiled staircase with wrought iron banister is an enormous master bedroom suite with dressing room, walk-in closet and gorgeous, marble/Spanish tiled bathroom. Two additional bedrooms are on this level. 10 out of 10 rated Warner Avenue Elementary.

Hollywood Hills - LEASED
3 Bed / 2 Bath



1217 N. Clark Street – \$7,950/mo

Beautifully restored and updated 3 bedroom/2 new bath single level Spanish revival style home with separate new studio/guest apartment conveniently located just above Sunset Blvd in prime Hollywood Hills. Private yard plus shared additional yard, pool, spa and billiard room. It has recently undergone a total renovation featuring, newly refinished hardwood floors, new fireplace, new central A/C and heat with Nest thermostat, lush landscaping, fantastic city views, three garage spaces + two off street parking spaces, new washer/dryer, new refrigerator, new dishwasher, new gas range, new above-range microwave, video intercom and security systems. Lease also includes a new studio guest apartment with kitchen, bath & washer/dryer on lower level. Great for office or guest.

Beverlywood happenings

Westside Places

By Michael Harris

Rae's Restaurant at 2901 Pico is close by and an authentic old style diner. If one is looking for a not fancy place to eat plain comfort food this may be the ticket. It is blessed with a retro atmosphere with limited space but the biscuits and gravy or the corned beef hash may remind you of the fare at a Harvey House but without the railroad or the uniforms for the waitresses. Not

far along Pico just a block East is the show room for Morgans West where the most retro of British sports cars of the iconic Morgan marque are being displayed and sold. That will be a most worthwhile stroll along Pico for a most rewarding window shopping experience. Rae's for its rather limited space has nevertheless been the location for many movies which would include Bowfinger, Lords of Dogtown, and True Romance.



Rae's Restaurant

It's time for Cheviot Baseball!

By Ben Lee

If you have a baseball-loving son or daughter born between September 1, 2003 and August 31, 2012, now is the time to register for the greatest league in the nation! Conveniently located at Rancho Park, boys and girls will have the chance to learn and practice the fundamentals of baseball and enjoy the camaraderie that comes from being part of a team. Sign up at: <http://chpba.org>. Evaluations will take place the weekend of January 20th but don't worry if your son or daughter has zero experience. Everyone makes a well balanced team.

Rather be a spectator? Join your friends and neighbors in the bleachers and cheer on the players. Opening Day ceremonies complete with food, fun and patriotic merriment will be on February 24th with games beginning that day. Play ball!



Camping Out

By Ben Lee

Believe it or not, the first few months of the year is the right time to select a summer overnight camp or program for your child or teen! But don't be alarmed because Cheviot resident Jill Levin of Tips on Trips and Camps is here to save the day! Jill helps parents navigate hundreds of different camps and programs from all across the country and abroad and assists in narrowing them down and selecting the best ones according to a child's

individual interests and needs. You are welcome to contact Jill with any questions you may have either by email: Jill@TipsonTripsandCamps.com or telephone: 310-202-8448. Also, save the date for Jill's annual informational camp and program fair from 11am to 2 pm. Representatives from several different camps and programs for ages 7 - 18+ will be in attendance and you will have the chance to see what each of these camps have to offer. If you would like to attend this free event, please RSVP to: TipsonTripsandCamps.com/LA

Community Circle

By Ben Lee

For the past 45 years, the Maple Counseling Center's Community Circle volunteers have been visiting local Los Angeles Elementary schools, providing lessons and support for students. Clara May Carter-Klauschie, a 4th grader at Castle Heights Elementary, wrote the following essay last year through Community Circle's Writing from the Heart program to describe what she has learned through this unique and special program. We are printing Clara's beautiful essay here for your enjoyment. If you are interested in becoming involved with Community Circle, contact LuNel LeMieux: lunellemieux@gmail.com.

Over the past few weeks I have been participating in Community Circle, led by Miss Diana. She is a kind, loving and overall awesome person. She fills all my Wednesdays with joy and happiness. She teaches us how to follow in her footsteps in our own special way. I know I can always trust her because of her kind actions toward others.

One Wednesday, she read us "The Giving Tree," a book that explains that giving to others makes you feel happy about yourself, just as the tree felt she gave something to the growing boy. It also shows

you should be grateful for what you have. I felt that the boy took too much from the tree and never thought about giving back. I know that sometimes I should try to do things by myself before I ask others, like a good, independent person.

On another day, we learned to stand up for ourselves and our friends in need through three apples. The first was small and being bullied about his bruises and different colors. The next apple stood up for the little one and taught her how to stand up for herself. The biggest was a perfect looking green granny smith apple who bullied the smallest apple. This situation could happen in the same way for people and it helps to remind you to stop yourself from bullying people because of their looks because you realize how hurtful it can be to other people. Just like dominos your attitude can cause a chain reaction of good or bad influences. You might not know it but by saying one mean thing to one person, it could darken everyone's day around you.

Through Community Circle I have learned how to be truthful, respectful and a kind person. I look out on the world with an open mind now that i have experienced your wonderful program. I am now a more patient and calm person. My lessons with Ms. Diana in Community Circle have shaped me into an overall kinder and more thoughtful person!!!

If there is a community event with which you are involved and would like a notification about it in this newsletter, please feel free to let me know. We need the information about a month in advance so

if something is happening in January that you would like mentioned in this publication, feel free to reach out:

ben@benleproperties.com or (310) 858-5489. Thank you!