

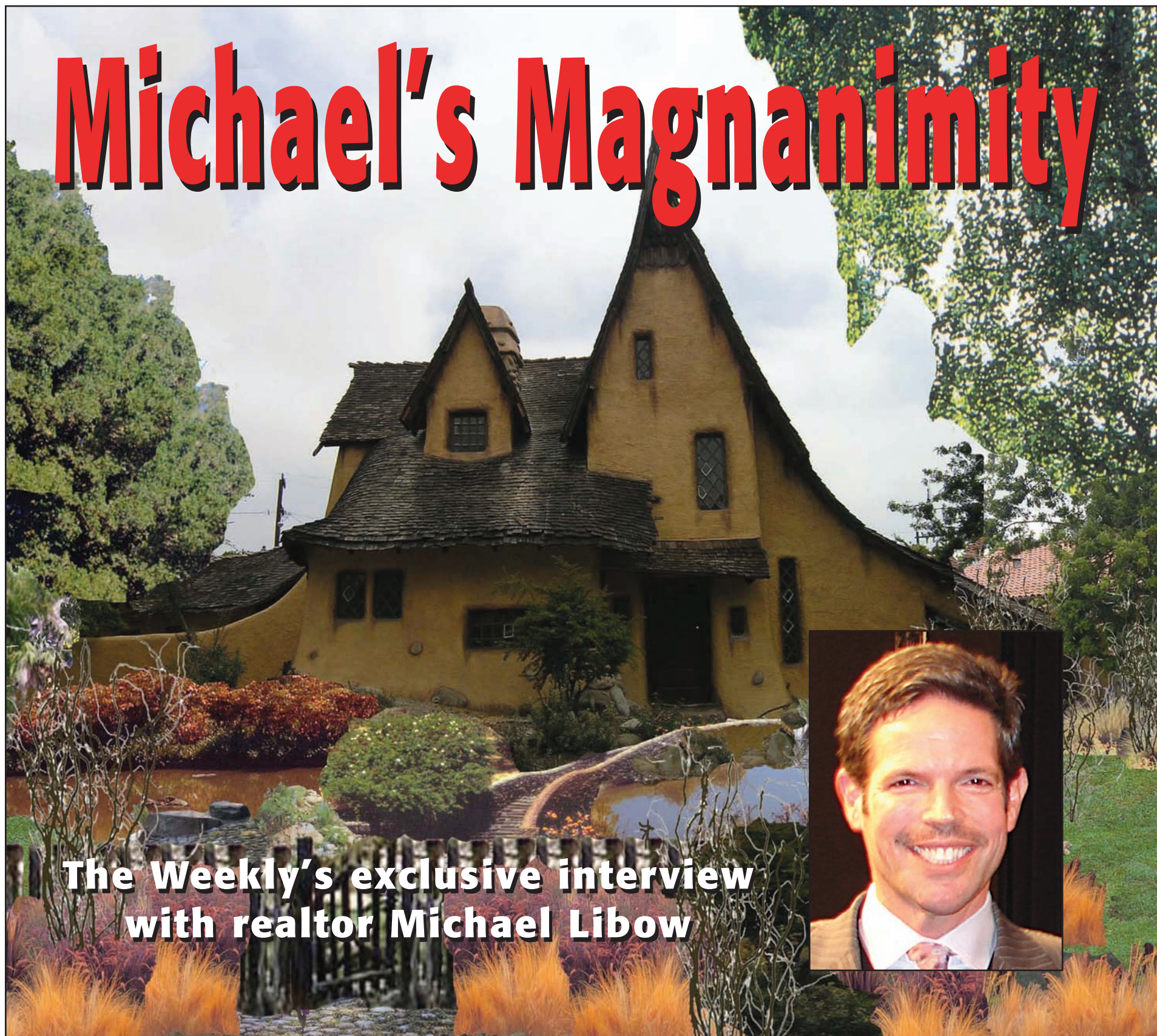
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Issue 437 • February 14 - February 20, 2008

Michael's Magnanimity



The Weekly's exclusive interview with realtor Michael Libow



Letters & email

"Adding it up" [Issue 434]

I moved to Beverly Hills in 1961 because I wanted my children in public schools (I've always felt private schools were elitist) and the Beverly Hills School District was one of the best in the country. If I had the same decision to make today, I would send my children to private schools. My children and/or grandchildren have attended Beverly Hills schools during 38 of the last 46 years, and five grandchildren still attend the High School, El Rodeo, and Beverly Vista.

The slow, but steady deterioration during the last thirty years is tragic. Our once-proud District has settled into the morass of mediocrity. The endless turnover of administrators is a testament to that or, perhaps, a cause.

I completely concur with the letters by Herb Young and Mel Spitz (former board of Education Members) with respect to the Beverly Hills Unified School District and its present dismal national and state standings. Sure, there are students at all levels who do extraordinarily well, but they tend to be the best of the brightest with significant educational support from outside the District.

The Superintendent and Board should be

focused on the decline in instruction in our District what to do about it. Instead, they fritter away endless hours educationally pointless matters like permit students, What is the appropriate percentage of allowable permittees? Eighteen percent is too much, but an acceptable percentage unstated, and there is no data of any kind to support any if the allegations being made. Over the years, permits have always been a juicy political issue arising during elections and usually disappearing when economic realities are examined, and elections are past tense.

It is obvious the District is incapable of reforming itself internationally because that would involve conceding error. It is a cardinal rule of politics that no politician every makes a mistake, or ever admits making a mistake. That is a truism from the highest office in the land to the smallest school dis-

trict. Unless the District concedes that things are going poorly and worsening, there will never be a constructive change.

A Blue Ribbon Committee consisting of top-notch teachers, concerned and knowledgeable people like Herb Young and Mel Spitz, and a professional educator from the outside could objectively analyze our District, determine why ad how we got to the place we are in, and suggest remedies. We must do something.

(A reminder: The underpinning of residential real estate values in Beverly Hills has always been the excellence of our schools.)

Richard A. Stone
Board of Education Member
1991-1999

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Beverly Hills real estate entrepreneur Michael Hakim was honored January 29 for allowing training opportunities for the Los Angeles Fire Department in one of his vacant buildings. Pictured are LAFD Captain Matthew Mcknight, Battallion Chief John Vidovich, Hakim, and Captain James Finn

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“General Plan”

At the important Joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting on the new General Plan, the Council agreed to move forward on an EIR alternative which would raise density limits throughout the City and in some areas by 250%! As just one example, on Wilshire, in the southwest part of the city which is already the most densely developed with department stores and impossible traffic, the EIR would study an increased density from 2 to 1 to 5 to 1 (a 250% increase), resulting in more traffic, more height, more congestion. And, oh yes, the most important thing to this Council, more revenue. Planning and livability are being tossed aside because of budget matters without even considering alternative solutions, such as first lowering expenses (\$40 Million for a Roxbury Park re-do that neighbors and many residents don't want), documentary transfer tax, not converting business zoning (which produces revenue) to residential zoning (which drains revenue), additional business license tax, a parcel tax, and on and on.

At The Town Hall meeting, I asked the question whether any Councilmember would actually be in favor of increasing the FAR by 250% and, if not, why they have proceeded down this path. Didn't get an answer, except one Councilmember said he wanted to “explore all the alternatives.”

There were a handful of residents at the Joint Meeting (not more than 5) and a room full of developers and their attorneys. Those are the alternatives.

Ken Goldman
Beverly Hills

“The School Sky is not Falling”

The Beverly Hills Board of Education has disclosed information detailing the number of students attending Beverly Hills schools on interdistrict permits is 927 or 18% of the total students enrolled. I contacted Palos Verdes, La Canada Flintridge and San Marino schools to determine the number of students attending these schools on interdistrict permits. I selected these schools since BHUSD often compares itself to these districts when discussing API scores and other educational issues.

The information received was obtained from oral conversations with school officials and was not obtained in writing pursuant to a formal written Freedom of Information request. Palos Verdes Peninsula Has 0% students enrolled on interdistrict permits. Children of faculty and staff are only students enrolled, if space is available. La Canada Flintridge has 140 interdistrict permit students out of approximately 4000 students. San Marino Schools have approximately 200 students enrolled under interdistrict permits.

I must ask the Board of Education the following: Why are these districts able to operate with so many fewer permits than BHUSD? These are the districts BHUSD compares itself when discussing test scores and instructional programs. Are they more efficiently managed than BHUSD?

Tom Hayostek
Beverly Hills

In Issue #436 of the Weekly, Stewart Horowitz, BHEA president 1996-2000, wrote of former superintendant Jeffrey Hubbard, “The damage done to BHUSD by Mr. Hubbard will be felt yet for many years.” In Rudy Cole's column of the same date he wrote, “Jeff Hubbard had great leadership skills, he worked well with the entire education community, was an able communicator and was there during the early stages of construction improvements.”

Mr. Cole uses his column to express his opinions on many issues concerning our community. They are just that, his opinions, not facts as he would have us believe.

Marilyn Gallup
Beverly Hills

Rudy Cole's effort to refute my letter concerning the academic decline of our schools deserves a response. He wrote that it's time for a reality check, and I couldn't agree more.

Among the facts cited in my letter that appeared in the Beverly Hills Weekly two weeks ago are the 2007 California Standard Test summary scores indicating that 44 percent of our students are below proficiency in history, 34 percent are below proficiency in math, 33 percent are below proficiency in science, and 27 percent are below proficiency in English. Rudy's response is “the school sky is not falling”. How many of our students must fall below proficiency before Rudy will acknowledge that the sky is falling?

Rudy asserts that “our schools are still among the best in the nation”. What evidence is there of that? Newsweek magazine ranks our high school as number 401. US News and World Report didn't even include Beverly High among its top 1,086 U.S. high schools. In the 2006 California Academic Performance Index, BHHS ranked a lowly 44th.

Rudy cites “cultural diversity” as a factor of “change” in our schools. Specifically, he refers to “first generation” students of Iranian descent “with very different learning needs and abilities”. How can that be a valid excuse for poor academic performance at present, when our high school students are scoring higher in English proficiency than in history, math and science?

Rudy cites restricted funding due to Serrano v Priest and Prop 13 as one of the reasons for the “change” in our school district. Listed below are the seven school districts in Los Angeles County ranked higher than ours in the latest California Academic Performance Index, and their 2005-6 gross annual revenue per student compared with BHUSD, as reported by the LA County Office of Education:

Arcadia	\$7,204
La Canada	7,796
Las Virgenes	7,489
Manhattan Beach	8,055
Palos Verdes Peninsula	7,248
San Marino	7,946
South Pasadena	7,224
Beverly Hills	9,634

Thanks to the exceptional support of our

city, our district receives about 25 percent more revenue than those seven districts that are superior academically. Eleven other California school districts outside LA County also recorded higher test scores with much lower revenue than BHUSD. Please explain, Rudy, how those districts do a better job of educating their students with so much less revenue.

Rudy also cited the computer age, lack of respect for teachers, and inadequate pay for teachers, as reasons for the “change” in BHUSD. Even if these were valid excuses, wouldn't they apply to all school districts, not just Beverly Hills?

Those seven academically superior school districts in LA County are listed below once again, with average teacher salaries and pupil-teacher ratios compared with BHUSD:

Arcadia	\$68,600	23.2
La Canada	64,574	23.9
Las Virgenes	59,889	23.2
Manhattan Beach	60,074	20.3
Palos Verdes Peninsula	60,347	22.1
San Marino	61,660	21.1
South Pasadena	66,541	23.7
Beverly Hills	67,128	19.2

Among these eight districts, Beverly Hills pays the highest teacher salaries, and has the lowest pupil-teacher ratio. Why, then, is it the lowest ranking academically? The fact is that academic achievement is not about money. It is about what, and how, students

are taught. It is about setting high academic standards and challenging students to meet them. Those are the two issues that were raised in my letter, and they alone speak to the failure of our schools.

Rudy asserts that parents in neighboring communities would like to send their kids to our schools. Of course they would. We are surrounded by schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District. That comparison is not a ringing endorsement of our schools.

Rudy Cole and the husband of Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Plotkin both urge that we refrain from criticizing, and be cheerleaders in support of the board of education and the district administrators. My response is that the time for cheerleading is long past. The current and past boards of education and administrators are responsible for the terrible academic decline. Their victims are the students who are being deprived of a first-class education. The current board majority has refused to change course. As I stated in my letter, unfortunately the worst is yet to come.

Mel Spitz
Beverly Hills

In his last column Rudy Cole attempts to answer two separate letters to the editor sent by former BHUSD Board of Education members Mel Spitz and Herb Young. Spitz and Young convincingly decried the current state of the District, urging the current Board to take steps to restore the schools' academ-

letters cont. on page 4



NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCY

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NOTICE OF COMMISSION VACANCY: SOLICITATIONS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Beverly Hills City Council is seeking qualified residents to fill one vacancy on the Solicitations Advisory Commission. The initial term of office for the position is two years. At the discretion of the City Council, the Commissioner may be reappointed to a second term of four years. The appointee will be required to file an initial and an annual “Statement of Economic Interests” financial disclosure.

In order that we may preserve the integrity of the application and interview process, please direct all inquiries to the City Clerk, City Manager or the Chief of Police. Please DO NOT contact the City Councilmembers or the members of the Solicitations Advisory Commission regarding the vacancy.

Application forms for the Solicitations Advisory Commission, along with a description of the duties of a Commissioner, and filing details are available for pickup in the City Clerk's Office, Room 190, 455 N. Rexford Drive, or call 310.285.2400 to receive an application and information by mail or by email.

The deadline for filing applications is Friday, March 28, 2008 at 5:00 p.m.

BYRON POPE, CMC
City Clerk

letters cont. from page 3

ic excellence and the District's status as a national "lighthouse" District.

Cole counters with excuses and denials. His key messages are somewhat contradictory: on the one hand, he cites specific reasons for the decline, while also suggesting that we really still are a great district, after all.

In explaining the causes for the current state of our schools Cole refers to Serrano/Priest, Prop 13, and the Iranian Revolution – as if Mel Spitz and Herb Young had been sleeping for the past 30 years and had no idea when they wrote their letters that anything has happened since they served on the Board.

In attempting to explain decreasing test scores and rankings and referring to Iranian students, Cole writes: "First generation school age children have very different learning needs and abilities." But the Iranian revolution was more than a generation ago and most of the kids with an Iranian background in the schools today are second-generation.

The funding changes that were caused by Serrano-Priest and Prop 13 also happened more than a generation ago, giving the District plenty of time to react, adjust and readjust. Other Southern California school districts such as San Marino and La Canada-Flintridge were also not immune from the changes brought about by Serrano and Prop 13, yet they have managed to maintain their superiority.

Cole's apology for the District's current state simply does not hold water, though dead politicians and revolutionaries do make

for very convenient scapegoats.

Cole's assertion that the "school sky is not falling" is, however, true in one respect. When it comes to what would befall the District if the number of out-of-district students attending the schools on a permit were capped and then gradually reduced, I completely agree that the sky wouldn't fall. Quite the opposite, the Community would start to reap the benefits of a "BH schools for BH kids" policy. At least Cole seems to realize that this should be the District's goal.

When it comes to general excellence and academic preparedness for college, it would also be fair to say that the sky is not falling on the District: it's actually been more of a gradual decline over the last 20 years or so, in which it would be more appropriate to say that the "sky is sagging severely." Better do something about it before it starts sagging even more.

And it's questionable that more teachers on special assignment (TOSA's) are the answer. In the past, there were fewer TOSA's and we performed better as a district. If resources are an issue, it would seem that significant savings could be achieved without having to lay off teachers or cut programs simply through the reduction of the number of TOSA's.

Of course, Cole points to the zeal with which permit parents go about sending their kids to the District's schools as proof of our schools' preeminence.

Not really. It's really only evidence that the schools in surrounding districts are much worse than our own. Everything is relative. Just because we're better than the lackluster LA schools hardly makes us an educational

Everest in Kansas. We're a pretty good school district in Southern California rather than one of the leading districts in the nation.

Pretty good is just not good enough for our kids.

I'm also not sure I understand where Rudy Cole's ardent admiration of Superintendent Kari McVeigh comes from. He suggests she could be the best superintendent we've ever had, including the legendary Kenneth Peters. On what basis can he make such a grandiose statement? At best, the jury is out on McVeigh's performance. Certainly, in the charisma and leadership department McVeigh has been less than stellar, and if the District wants a leader that can inspire students, teachers and parents alike, the Board could do much worse than look to someone like [former Beverly High principal] Dr. Dan Stepenosky.

Finally, pointing to Myra Lurie's re-election to the Board in November, Cole suggests that the election wasn't really indicative of a Community mandate to reduce the number of out-of-district permits. This, too, is off base. Lurie was re-elected but, because there were only four candidates, one of the two pro-permit candidates was necessarily going to be elected, no matter what. Nor did Lurie campaign on the platform that out-of-district permits are wonderful thing for the District and that we should even increase the number of permits issued. Her campaign was mainly based on what she felt were her achievements during her previous term.

Fenton and Goldberg's campaigns, however, focused on the runaway permits, and this issue clearly was a concern with the residents. Fenton won by a landslide and it is insulting to Fenton's own vision, resourcefulness and passion to simply write off his landslide victory by constantly pointing to the fact that his parents have long been involved in City politics. Steven Fenton is his own man and the victory he achieved through listening to the residents is totally and completely to his own credit.

Even if Lurie, a community insider, managed to garner more votes, further evidence of the mandate is the fact that Brian David Goldberg was elected at all. A newcomer to BH, he was up against two incumbents' well-oiled political machines, and had to endure

numerous ad hominem attacks questioning his integrity. Yes, I'd say we have enough evidence of a Community voice on the issue of runaway permits.

Rudy Cole is right about one thing, however, which is that "school unity is critical if we hope to have any chance of passing a much needed parcel tax or new bonds."

However, such unity can only be achieved when the entire Board recognizes the Community's wishes to significantly reduce the number of out-of-district students and to institute a "BH schools for BH kids" policy.

With close to 20% of the student body from outside of the Community, asking the residents to approve a bond issue or parcel tax for the schools would be akin to asking the residents to send 20 cents on every dollar raised directly to the LAUSD coffers.

That's just not going to happen. Until the numbers of permits are significantly reduced, we can forget about going to the Beverly Hills taxpayers and asking for money for schools that are catering in increasing numbers to non-BH kids.

John Mirisch
Beverly Hills

Editor's note: Mirisch's complete commentary is available on his blog: BlogBeverlyHills.com

The move to reduce the percentage of permit students in Beverly Hills schools is missing the point. From the debate I have heard, I believe the thinking is that reducing the number of permit kids will reduce the dilution of City JPA funds, which will result in more spending per student, which will result in greater achievement among Beverly Hills students. Also, according to former Board Member Mel Spitz, we will have to remove the words "student-centered learning" from our mission statement and add "academic excellence." This logic involves a lot of assumptions that are unproven and is no basis for making wholesale and irreversible changes.

Here is a real problem: what do we do about the city's declining population of school-age children? If you look at the district's enrollment figures for city residents,

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you will see that there are three times as many (!) high school seniors as Kindergarteners. Based on the demographic analysis that was just delivered to the Board, we know that Beverly Hills can expect a steep decline in the number of school-age children. Regardless of where these kids go to school—parochial schools, private schools, home school, or Beverly Hills schools—the number of children can be expected to drop to HALF the number from recent years.

This issue must be faced by a united school board. At some point it will not be feasible or desirable to fill in with kids on permit. If a bureaucrat in LAUSD decides to suspend granting permit releases in order to stop their own red ink, then we will lose control of our destiny as a district. Perhaps we need to consider the district as something other than a high school and four K-8 schools. Once school closure and mass layoffs are on the table, it is sure to create some angry and forceful discussion. If the board is divided on non-issues like establishing an arbitrary limit on permits or providing support to struggling students, then we have already lost the ability to handle real issues in a civilized and united manner. Look for a mass exodus of our best staff members as they throw up their hands in frustration at our inability to show leadership and stability when it is needed the most.

The ongoing concern of our district leadership is: what do we have to do as a district to assure the highest quality education and opportunities for our students? That was the primary focus of the board when I was a

member and a key component of our superintendent search criteria and evaluation. After all, it is the education specialists that can best propose and implement educational initiatives, not the school board. It is the responsibility of the school board—as a whole—to evaluate and authorize proposals.

Regarding the Newsweek rankings of high schools where Beverly Hills is ranked number 401—that is based primarily on the average number of AP tests taken by seniors. Did you know that BHHS limits access to AP classes? After the WASC accreditation review last year, the district received the direction to open access to AP classes. This proposal is very controversial among the high school teaching staff. Some teachers feel strongly that allowing just anyone to enroll in fast-paced, college-level classes is a recipe for failure; yet allowing seniors to graduate and not know what is expected of them in college is not doing anyone any favors. Opening up access will require a lot more advanced preparation for students beginning from the first moment they enter our system. Over the years I—and other board members—have said that providing opportunities for that broad group of students in the middle is something that must be an element in our planning. Making those preparations is something that will have a meaningful impact on the educational experience of our students.

John Millan
Board of Education member
2003-2007

briefs

Beverly Hills Voters Back Clinton, McCain, Proposition 93

Beverly Hills voters matched the choices of their statewide counterparts in both major party presidential primaries and in six of the seven ballot measures in the Feb. 5 election, according to semi-official results released by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office.

The only exception came on Proposition 93, which would have loosened term limits for state legislators. Beverly Hills voters favored the measure, 3,103-2,667 (54 percent-46 percent), while it was rejected statewide by a 54 percent-46 percent margin.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., finished first among Beverly Hills voters in the Democratic presidential primary with 2,623 votes (56 percent). Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill. was second with 1,995 votes (42 percent).

Former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, who had withdrawn before the Feb. 5 election, received 54 votes, followed by Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, with 13, Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn. with 12, Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson with nine each and former Alaska Sen. Mike Gravel with six.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., finished first among Beverly Hills voters in the

Republican presidential primary with 812 votes (57 percent). Former Mass. Gov. Mitt Romney was second with 500 votes (35 percent), Rep. Ron Paul was third with 49 votes (3 percent) while former Ark. Gov. Mike Huckabee was fourth with 39 votes (2 percent).

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who had withdrawn before the election, received 14 votes, former Ambassador Alan Keyes eight, and Sen. Sam Brownback, John H. Cox and Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Alpine, one each.

Turnout among the city's 20,775 registered voters was 6,995, 32.2 percent.

Academy Award-Nominated Shorts to be Shown Tuesday at Academy Headquarters

All 10 Academy Award-nominated films in the animated and live action short film categories films will be shown Tuesday at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences headquarters at 8949 Wilshire Blvd.

The program, which will include onstage discussions with the nominated filmmakers, begins at 7 p.m., with doors opening at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for the general public and \$3 for academy members and students with a valid identification. Tickets may be purchased online at www.oscars.org, or at the academy's box office during regular business hours.

More information on the screening is available by calling (310) 247-3600 or online at www.oscars.org/events.

-- Steven Herbert

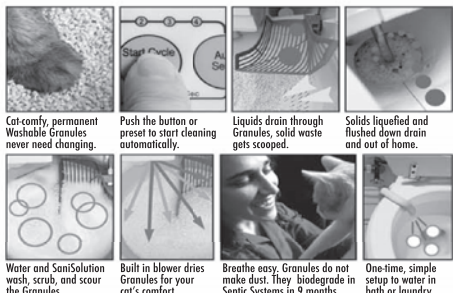
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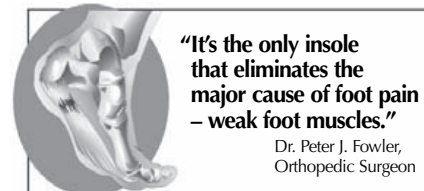
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from the hills of beverly



Size Does Matter

These are the latest developments

By Rudy Cole

You'll get a real rise out of this story, high rise that is.

Sun Cal Friday unleashed plans for a 45 story condominium project so close to our borders that it would take a very skilled surveyor to make sure we don't have custody.

This project is at the eastern most portion of Los Angeles on Little Santa Monica at Moreno, and while it is described as part of Century City, that property was never, ever part of the Century City planned community.

For history buffs, the narrow parcel was once the site of the famed Jimmy's restaurant, and later home to a cable television conglomerate. Immediately west was the home office of architect **Welton Beckett**, also long gone.

Century City had its false starts. Owned and named for Twentieth Century Fox, their plan was to create a model city with residential, retail, hotels and entertainment elements. Some of the early potential

investors included the Zeckendorf group and ALCOA.

But the real credit, or blame, would have to go to **Ed Herscherer**, an incredibly colorful visionary who was head of development for Fox and had the good sense to marry the studio owner's sister.

It was Herscherer who fought for a single developer and against a piecemeal sale of the land. Eventually, he succeeded: Century City included an anchor hotel, The Century Plaza, a first run legitimate theatre, The Shubert, and a state of the then art multi-screen motion picture theatres. At one time, the entertainment center building also housed a Playboy Club and several high end restaurants. It became the ABC Entertainment Center, but it was recently razed and reinvented.

The motion picture element could not survive the more accessible, stronger positioned for first run films AMC group that became part of the Century City mall.

Century City grew enormously through the years, with many new structures filled with major law firms, small and large banks and several hotels. At one time there was a Marriott, a Hyatt and even a St. Regis, now a condominium development. The main anchor of Century City is still the Century City Mall, now Westfield, with a recently enlarged and modernized AMC movie complex, major restaurants, a food court, Gelson's, two large department stores, and countless middle and upscale retailers including a book store.

Something we clearly don't have.

Competition for Beverly Hills? Very much so. Through the years, the mall helped deflate Robinson-May in our city and Century City attracted many of our law firms. This movement of lawyers also impacted downtown Los Angeles.

However, Century City never was able to match the prestige of Rodeo: and most of that fabled street's prestigious stores did not opt for Century City.

The high rise condos did offer alternatives, as did the west Wilshire corridor, to the empty nesters of Beverly Hills. The out of Beverly Hills condos were more spacious, had better views and more amenities than anything Beverly Hills could offer because Los Angeles had more tolerance for high rise.. Many of our former single fam-

ily homeowners in the flats moved to both venues.

Which brings us back to the Sun Cal project. This is not an easy call. The design, by famed French architect **Jean Nouvel**, is spectacular and incredibly innovative. If the plans match the completion, what you will see from the street is a vertical garden, but you will see it.

Forty Five Floors? Imagine, just a few months back we were locked in a battle over a six floor hotel! This proposed edifice is so tall it will require FAA clearance as a flight hazard. Compare the 45 floors to what the Candy's want to bring at another one of our borders on Wilshire Boulevard—Sun Cal is almost three times the height. Incidentally, had we managed to actually process that application earlier, it might have inhibited the Sun Cal project which will have far more significant impacts on our city. Remember the geography: One is inches within our borders, Sun even fewer outside the boundaries.

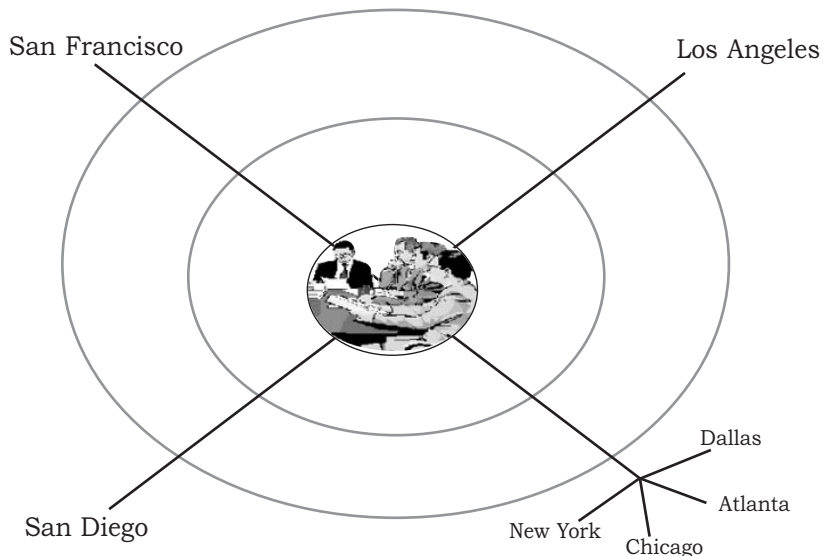
There are probably fewer sections of our city less able to handle this kind of project. The high school is next door and the school's new science building abuts the development. Student traffic on adjoining streets and the lack of school parking brings grid lock to this area.

There are also geopolitical implications, and hereto the decision making becomes locked in some classic arguments on effective planning. We are, and never have been, a pro-high rise world. Unlike our cousins in the east who boast at having structures reaching closer and closer to the stars, for

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all kinds of reasons, including our realistic fears of seismic impacts, we prefer our work and living habitats closer to earth. However, the reality of land use is that continuing horizontal instead of vertical growth has profound, dangerous impacts on the environment. We can't barricade the California borders, and our population explosion has led to the inexorable disappearance of food producing land masses. The most fertile farm lands in America, around and in the San Joaquin Valley, are being wasted by urban sprawl.

We must have places for people to live and we must, I assume, continue to feed ourselves. Horizontal development also often displaces moderate, affordable housing and small businesses and industry.

So, would I welcome the project? Probably, just not in my back yard. That does equate to a NIMBY syndrome.

Actually, there's probably an inevitability to the proposed project. It has the enthusiastic support of the mayor of Los Angeles, **Antonio Villaraigosa**, and the councilmember of the district, **Jack Weiss**.

However, if Sun Cal wants to make at least a token move toward gaining acceptance in Beverly Hills, there is one action they could take: They could offer to provide the Beverly Hills Unified School District funding and land for a parking structure that would help alleviate traffic in the area. Incidentally, thanks to the strong efforts of our school board led by Boardmember **Myra Lurie**, the city may include money for our schools in the entitlement process for two major projects now under review in

Beverly Hills. This will probably only work if the projects, the Hilton and 9900, are not forced to make more cuts in heights.

Failed planning: Some years back, the schools and the city had the opportunity to annex the area to Beverly Hills. The site would have been ideal for school expansion. One last proximity note: When Jimmy's occupied the space, his cars were parked on a lot inside our city limits.

As for architect Nouvel, his first major claim to international fame came from his spectacular, "breakthrough" design for the "Institute of the Arab World" in Paris. I leave it to my readers to suggest a name for the Beverly Hills adjacent project.

We did dodge one financial bullet: there had been considerable speculation in real estate circles that the Sun Cal property would contain a hotel element. Not only would this have increased traffic, but a competing, luxury hotel would have been very competitive with our hospitality industry, leading to losses of our best revenue source: the TOT, bed tax.

None of this is a final word, or formed opinion. The process has just begun.

Los Angeles Country Club recently invited members of our city's Planning Commission on a tour of their golf course. They had created a mock up of the supposed height of the proposed 9900 project just east of the club in Beverly Hills. Actually, it was sort of pole showing comparisons. Of course, turning west instead of east, the

9900 poles were dwarfed by Century City construction the club could actually have helped reduce.

The irony of it all was inescapable. Come and help save the club, its pristine lands never taxed at best possible use, but don't try to join a club which has had a long history of limiting or excluding religious, racial or ethnic minorities.

It was the "super Tuesday" that wasn't, and most network analysts had it all wrong. There could never have been a knock out in the Democratic contests where few states had a winner take all delegate selection process. Print media, the Los Angeles Times, days before the primary had it right.

I do like **John Mc Cain's** independent bent and his more moderate positions on immigration, and some other social issues that have infuriated the super right wing of his party. However, he is strongly anti-choice and his rhetoric in support of the Iraq war is not commendable. When he terms those who favor any kind of timetable for withdrawal as supporters of "surrender" coming close to calling them traitors, he is aiding divisions in our country.

###

The Peninsula's annual Chinese New Year party also helped introduce the hotel's new managing director, **Offer Nissenbaum**, to many business, civic and community leaders Monday night.

Nissenbaum, a veteran hotelier, has been appointed by the Zarnegin family owners to replace **Ali Kasicki** their first managing director, who is now helping prepare for the opening of the Montage Beverly Hills.

As always, the food and décor were outstanding and the guests even included a member of the Apprentice celebrity contest. It was good to see and greet a very jovial **March Schwartz**, the founder of the Beverly Hills Courier. **Clif Smith**, the paper's new publisher was there as were Josette and I, Mayor **Jimmy** and **Lonnie Delshad**, Councilmembers **Frank Fenton** and **Nancy Krasne**, with spouses; former Mayor Dr. **Charles Aronberg** and Dr. **Sandra Aronberg**, **Lya Cordova-Latta**, former Mayor **Richard Stone**, **Lee Kapelovitz**, former Mayor **Vicki Reynolds** and **Murray Pepper**, former city treasurer **Joan** and **Arnold Seidel**, former mayor **Steve** and **Bonnie Webb**, School Board member **Steven Fenton**, former school board president **Lillian** and **Stuart Raffel** and **Judy Henning**, (hubby **Richard Rosenzweig** was at a Playboy board meeting,) Police Chief **David Snowden** and many, many more.

Our cats had questions about the theme: "The Year of the Rat."

Rudy Cole served for eight years as a member and chair of the city's Recreation & Parks Commission. He was also President of the Greystone Foundation and served on three other city committees. Rudy can be reached at: Rudy@bhweekly.com.

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BHHS Boys' Soccer Team Routs Culver City

Second-place team opens playoffs Friday.

By Steven Herbert

The Beverly High boys' soccer team emphatically assured itself of a second-place finish in the Ocean League with a 9-1 victory over Culver City last Thursday at Nickoll Field, its most goals since scoring an 11-1 victory over Brentwood in 1990, coach Steve Rappaport said.

"If there's such a thing as a perfect game, we had it," Rappaport said. "Every player played to the best of their ability, and everything we did just went right. Everybody was hitting their shots, making their tackles. It was an unbelievable domination. Certainly since we tied them 2-2 [Jan. 26], it was not expected."

The Normans (10-8-4, 6-2-1 in league play) opened the scoring in the seventh minute as Jake Weissberg headed in a throw-in by Daniel Kohen. Weissberg headed in a corner kick by Kohen seven minutes later.

Beverly Hills took a 3-0 lead in the 25th minute as Monty Zimmerman scored off a

pass from Erik Munzer.

"Once we got up 3-0, Culver City didn't know what to do," Rappaport said. "They didn't quit playing. Because we had a decent crowd, our level [of play] kept rising."

Garrett Ives scored in the 37th minute off a throw-in by Kohen for his third assist. The Normans increased their lead to 5-0 in the 40th minute as Vitor Nogueira scored off a pass by Ives.

Beverly Hills continued its scoring assault in the second half, beginning with Jack Tirakyan's goal in the 53rd minute as a punt by goalkeeper Daniel Ayeroff bounced over a Centaur defender, Tirakyan took control of the ball and put it into the net.

Munzer scored in the 58th minute off Tirakyan's assist. Tirakyan scored his second goal of the half five minutes later off a pass from Parsa Peykar. Zimmerman scored in 75th minute off a pass from

Jonathan Elbaz.

Matias Henriquez scored for Culver City (13-12-1, 5-4-1) with one minute to play in the 80-minute game.

Norman goalkeeper Nathan Forrest made four saves in the first half, Ayeroff two in the opening 25 minutes of the second half and Benji Koltai one over the final 15 minutes.

Beverly Hills led in shots, 21-8.

When asked who played well for his team, Rappaport said, "To single out a guy, it's really hard."

Rappaport said he couldn't remember the last time having every player he put on the field contributing.

"Everybody was touching the ball and passing it around," said Rappaport, the Normans coach since the 1988-89 season. "It wasn't like I was trying to run up the score. It didn't matter who was in the game. It was a day where you pinch yourself [and ask] 'How did that happen?' It was probably the most focused I've had a team in a long, long time."

The Normans and Centaurs entered the game tied for second in the Ocean League with 16 points (Teams receive three points for a victory, one for a tie and none for a loss.)

The victory meant Beverly Hills would not have to play league champion Santa Monica (21-0-1, 9-0), ranked first in the Southern Section Division IV poll, in a makeup game that had been scheduled for Friday. The teams were unable to play a scheduled game at Nickoll Field Feb. 1

because of a power failure.

Inglewood 1, Beverly Hills 0

The Normans led 12-9 in shots, but the host Sentinels scored in the 34th minute of an Ocean League game Feb. 4 at Inglewood.

"The ball took a bad bounce," Rappaport said of the goal. "That was really the only good look they had at goal."

In the first half, "we didn't play particularly well," Rappaport said.

"In the second half, we played really hard, we just couldn't get anything in the back of the net," Rappaport said.

Zimmerman, who had six shots, and Munzer, who "had a really strong game defensively," both drew praise from Rappaport.

Forrest made eight saves.

Beverly Hills 2, Inglewood Morningside 0

Alex Lichtenberg scored on a 41st-minute free kick and Zimmerman in the 72nd minute off freshman midfielder Mariano Gonzalez's assist in an Ocean League game at Morningside Feb. 2.

The Normans led in shots, 26-9. Forrest made eight saves over the first 73 minutes, while Ayeroff made one during the final seven.

"Our team really did well playing a style we don't like to play," Rappaport said. "It was a real short, narrow field and you couldn't pass. The game became a 'You want it more physical game.' We

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stuck in real well. They never had a good look at our goal.”

Lichtenberg, Zimmerman, Kohen and midfielder Scott Schwartz all drew praise from Rappaport for their play.

What's Next?

The Normans are scheduled to play host to Oxnard (7-7-3), the third-place team in the Pacific View League, Friday in a Southern Section Division IV first-round game at Nickoll Field beginning at 3 p.m.

If Beverly Hills wins, it would play the winner of Saturday's Thermal Coachella Valley-Lake Elsinore Lakeside game in a second-round game Tuesday. The Normans would play at Lakeside, while the site of a Beverly Hills-Coachella Valley game would be determined by a coin toss.

Under Southern Section rules, the team with the fewer playoff games plays host to the next playoff game. If both teams have played the same number of home playoff games, the site is determined by a coin toss.

Girls' Soccer

Beverly Hills 1, Culver City 0

Jocelyn Karlan scored on a 25-yard free kick in the 63rd minute and goalkeeper Rebecca Gold made six saves for her 11th shutout of the season as the Normans assured themselves of second place in the Ocean League with the victory last Thursday at Culver City.

Beverly Hills (15-9-2, 7-2-1) had two

apparent goals nullified in the first 20 minutes, the first on a foul on a corner kick, the second on an offside call.

The Normans led in shots, 8-6.

Beverly Hills defender Tanya Djafar drew praise from coach Ryan Franks for holding Centaur junior forward Salina McLellan, the Ocean League's leading scorer with 20 goals, scoreless. Sweeper Emily Litvak also drew praise from Franks.

“Alexis Goswitz and Nicole Star played excellent in the back as well,” Franks said.

Forwards Morgan Harding and Nia Freeman drew praise from Franks for the pressure they put on the Culver City defense.

The teams entered the game tied for second place in the Ocean League with 6-2-1 records and 16 points. The loss dropped the Centaurs to 14-11-2, 6-3-1.

Beverly Hills 7, Inglewood Morningside 0

Karlan and Litvak both had two goals and two assists while Morgan Harding also scored twice for the Normans in an Ocean League game at Nickoll Field Feb. 5.

Gold made three saves for her 10th shutout of the season. Solange Levy also scored for the Normans, who led 16-3 in shots.

What's Next?

The Normans are scheduled to play host to Costa Mesa Estancia (7-7-3), the

second-place team in the Orange Coast League, in a Division III first-round game Saturday at 1 p.m. at Nickoll Field.

If Beverly Hills wins, it would play Wednesday at 3 p.m. against the winner of Saturday's game between top-seeded Mayfair and the winner of a wild card round game between Pasadena Westridge and Santa Maria Righetti. The site of a game between the Normans and Mayfair would be determined by a coin toss, while Beverly Hills would play at Righetti or Westridge.

Girls' Basketball

Inglewood 46, Beverly Hills 40

The Normans committed 21 turnovers in an Ocean League game Feb. 4 at the Swim-Gym, losing for the third time in three games to the Sentinels, ranked eighth in the final Division II-AA poll released Sunday.

Beverly Hills trailed 15-12 at the end of the first quarter, 25-23 at halftime and 36-27 entering the fourth quarter, after being outscored, 11-4, in the third quarter.

The Normans rallied to tie the score with four minutes to play, “but couldn't execute in the end to pull it off,” coach John Braddell said

“Offensively, we didn't play very well,” Braddell said. “We turned the ball over too much.”

Beverly Hills junior guard Sophie Payson scored a game-high equaling 16 points, making four 3-point baskets, including two in the fourth quarter.

Freshman forward Morgan Mason had

nine points and seven rebounds, senior guard Taylor Craig six points, seven steals and seven assists, Javonna Young five points and Jie Ren two points for the Normans.

Junior center-forward Tayler Champion had 16 points and 11 rebounds for Inglewood (16-8, 6-2).

Beverly Hills 64, Inglewood Morningside 32

Payson scored 14 points, with four 3-point baskets, and Chelsea Austin had 11 points and nine rebounds for the Normans in an Ocean League game at the Swim-Gym Feb. 5.

Beverly Hills led 14-6 at the end of the first quarter, then outscored the Monarchs 23-6 in the second quarter to lead 37-12 at halftime. The Normans outscored Morningside, 16-8, in the third quarter, increasing their lead to 53-20.

Mason had eight points and nine rebounds, Young eight points, Ren and Didi Younesi six each, Sara Jabbari five, including a 3-point basket, Lily Choi three, Craig two and Natalie Moy one.

Steven Herbert has covered Beverly High sports for the Beverly Hills Weekly since 1999. He welcomes feedback and suggestions. He can be reached by e-mail at StvHerbert@aol.com, by telephone at (310) 275-7943 or by fax at (310) 273-4519.

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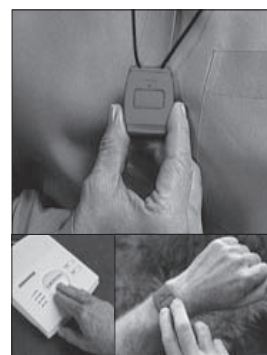
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coverstory

MICHAEL'S MAGNANIMITY

The Weekly's exclusive interview with realtor Michael Libow



The Weekly sat down recently with realtor Michael Libow to hear about his support for BHEF, the state of the real estate market, and how he ended up owning the famous

"witches house".

You recently made a generous \$30,000 donation to BHEF. Tell us about that.

I solicited the school district and suggested the donation in order to further give back to the educational system which gave so much to me. I know that my donation is a stipend compared to the school budgetary requirements; but, I sincerely hope that it will act as an inspiration to others to contribute. I also have an annual scholarship fund set up through the BHHS Alumni Association.

You grew up in Beverly Hills and later fell in to real estate. Tell us about that.

I was raised in Beverly Hills attending Beverly Vista and graduating from Hawthorne as my elementary schools. I graduated from the high school in 1981 and proceeded on to UCLA whereby I attained a BS in Mathematics. I had worked from a young age and, in my second year at UCLA, began to 'gofer' for a prominent real estate agent named Elaine Young (since deceased). It was a remarkable experience for me and I fell in love with the business at that time. I obtained a real estate license in 1984 and began to actively practice in the Beverly Hills market in 1986 with Mimi Styne and Associates. I suppose that I could have become a professor or a rocket scientist with JPL in Pasadena; but, knew in my heart that real estate transactions excited me and fed

my competitive nature.

Tell us about the Beverly Hills you grew up in. How is it different or the same as today?

Having grown up in Beverly Hills has allowed me to witness the city's transitions on a personal basis. I like what I see! The initially uneasy transition from a village atmosphere to an international destination has now manifest an amazing sense of cultural awareness and diversity. We have streets within our business district such as South Beverly Drive which rival any in the country for neighborhood appeal with an eclectic international edge. I am so impressed by what our city council, service professionals, and managers have done over the years to instill in residents and tourists alike a great sense of pride when walking/driving through Beverly Hills.

In your opinion what has made you a success in real estate?

My success in real estate stems from the fact that I take nothing for granted and respect my subservient relationship to my clientele. It probably doesn't hurt that my retention for details is phenomenal and my attitude always positive. I am the ultimate salesperson in that I never really 'sell' anything. . .only negotiate on behalf of and protect my clientele. In any business, it

comes down to treating others as you would want to be treated. The most satisfying and rewarding transactions to me are those in which either side feels that something fair has occurred. Oh...and I really do work as hard as I say I do!

Where do you think the market is headed now?

The real estate market is in a transitional phase. . .which is not a bad thing. Compared to the initial downturn in mid-1990, this market has shown amazing signs of strength in the high end. Can we be completely immune to that which is occurring nationally?. . .of course not. Still, with the influx of foreign monies, historically low interest rates, and the overwhelming fact that there is a dearth of good available product in the entire Westside marketplace, we have factors in place which have continued to buoy our market.

Tell us about how you acquired the famous witches' house on Walden?

I was seeking to purchase a home in Beverly Hills; but, found that the average house in the Flats of Beverly Hills north of Santa Monica was too large for me as a single man. The

Witches' House had been on the market for a long period of time and the owner truly wanted to sell it to someone who would respect its history and preserve it. As I had presented it to my own clientele, most wanted to demolish it and rebuild a much larger structure on the generous corner lot. One day it suddenly occurred to me that I was staring at my future home. Little did I know the magnitude of the project upon which I was to embark. The house is in the final stages of a top to bottom remodel and expansion and has been a labor of love. . .along with a lot of cash! When completed, I can definitively state that it will be the only Gaudi-influenced fairy tale cottage in the Flats of Beverly Hills. . .though I'm open to being proven wrong on that note (no disrespect to 507 N. Rodeo Drive)!

What advice do you give to young people interested in the real estate industry?

To young people intrigued by the real estate business, I suggest that you recognize the monumental commitment of time and energy that must be made before finalizing your decision to choose it as a profession. At that point, you will have the foundation for success if that is what you seek.

Of all the causes you could choose, why do you give to the schools?

The school system is one of many causes to which I contribute. It has warranted the bulk of my donations as I feel strongly that denying our youth the opportunities which I had as a young man is tantamount to attempting to undermine all that our nation holds dear.

Structured education teaches values that the street can not and provides the backbone for a healthy outlook on life in my opinion.



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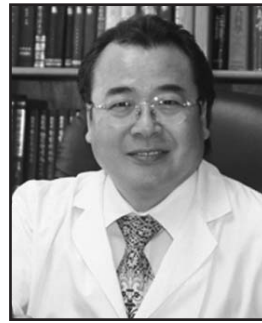
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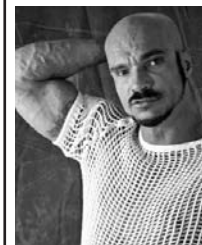
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