

Summer 2006 Issue
Telephone: 562-439-BHNA (2462)

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
INC

NEW WEB SITE: bluffheights.org
E-Mail us at: bluffheights@verizon.net

4th of July Block Party on Vista ★ 1 PM

Summer has arrived. The days heat up and our mind wanders off to subjects like vacation, the beach, movies, lighter reading and the sunniest holiday of all:

The Fourth of July. If you have never been to our annual block party you are in for a big surprise. If you have attended in the past, I have a feeling we'll see you there. Vista Street gets a "make-over" a few days before the event. Red, White and Blue Bunting, flags, fans and banners festoon the charming homes between Orizaba and Obispo. Our committee has been planning the fun since early April. The center spread of our newsletter this issue is worth pulling out and putting on your refrigerator. It will give you the whole rundown.

Prior to the event we recommend taking a look at the family dog and consider the 'patriotic flair' that he or she could wear in the "Patriotic Pooch Parade."

Please participate in the neighborhood potluck picnic. Simply bring items based on the initial of your last name:

- ★ **A-G** Bring desserts
 - ★ **H-M** Bring an entree, casserole etc.
 - ★ **N-T** Bring salads
 - ★ **U-Z** Bring beverages
- Show your community spirit



and make a chili to rival the contenders of the Chili Contest! Or bake a cake for our cake walk.

Many of the events are free and some have a nominal fee will goes to the philanthropic efforts of our Neighborhood Association. Contact us: 562-439-2462 bluffheights@verizon.net.

◆-Dennis Snyder

BHNA HOME TOUR 8/6

with author, **Jane Powell**

Catherine Morley, Home Tour Planning Committee Chair

Sunday, August 6th is the date for our Home Tour, celebrating our designation on becoming the newest Long Beach Neighborhood to become an historic district. Six homes representing some of the best examples of early 20th century architecture in Bluff Heights



will be open for viewing. This will be a self-guided walking tour with docents stationed

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Diary of a Mad Home Remodeling "Expert"

PART 2 – Finding contractors and sanity.
Suzanne Ridley

In our last issue, we discussed the early stages of doing a remodeling project. Now comes the crucial part: planning the execution of the job, picking people to do the work, and getting them started. Since your home is probably one of your biggest investments – both in terms of finances and lifestyle – you want to be sure that the job is done well, in a timely manner, and within your budget. It is important to consider ahead of time all of the issues surrounding the project, such as its impact on your current living space, and long term infrastructure needs.

Consider your current plumbing, electrical, and heating systems. Are they adequate? Will you want to upgrade them in the future? Is this the time to upgrade while you have walls, ceilings, and foundations open? Will the remodel cause you to lose access to systems you might want to change? Is it more efficient to make those changes now and bite the financial bullet, or can/should those changes wait? For instance, we had one drain that kept clogging up, so – while the walls and ceilings were open, we had the drain re-piped. The cost was minimal, as everything was exposed already. We also had an old floor furnace that needed to be evicted before it burned down our house and a wall heater upstairs that didn't make a dent in heating the front bedroom. So – figuring out where to put a furnace was an important issue.

Being without a kitchen or a much-used bathroom can be very disruptive (not to mention those restaurant bills!). Make sure that you figure out a way to work around lack of kitchen. We did our job in the summer when outdoor grilling was attractive; we had a temporary free-standing sink hooked up on what was essentially a back porch (you can get a great unit at Ikea that includes counter space and storage), and we set up the dining room as a makeshift kitchen – with the water coming from the refrigerator via a plastic tube snaked under the house and run through a hole in the temporary plywood door! We also ended up installing a temporary in/out door that locked with a padlock to close off the front of the house from the rear that was open to the outside world. That \$20 door is now in use as a temporary work bench in our garage.

Finding a good contractor is critical. In our case, we hired a contractor to take the project through the technical part of

the job – that is foundation and framing – and then took over finishing the job ourselves via various tradesmen. We saved a lot of money doing that, however it took a full time supervisor/scheduler/organizer to handle it. Since I was newly retired, that was my job, with my husband as Inspector General in the evening. (More on that issue later.) There are three must-follow rules on finding a contractor. #1 – Look at jobs around the neighborhood that you admire and talk to the owners for their recommendation/complaints, or ask friends who know people who have had the type of work done that you plan to do. #2 – Get lots of references! It helps to contact your City Building and Planning Department and speak with the local inspector who may give you some feedback. We found a terrific heating contractor through our city inspector after the job was under way. #3 – Start early!!! You cannot expect to just call up a contractor and have the job started right away. A good contractor generally has jobs backed up. If your job is relatively small and can be fit in between some larger jobs, you might get lucky, but you will find there is generally a wait of three to as much as nine months.

This means that it is a good idea to start looking for a contractor before you get too far along with your plans. You can even get some general feedback about your ideas and how feasible they are to implement (lavish applications of dollar bills can accomplish many things – but not everything – and you want to be sure that you are not throwing dollars at some feature that you could live without). We would have liked to had a deck on top of our two-story addition, but the cost would have been excessive. We instead settled for one on top of our new garage, which is much more accessible, larger, and very cost effective. Expect to pay the contractor some good faith deposit money ahead of time. That is why references are so important.

tant. The contractor needs to know that you are serious about doing the job, and money shows that you are serious! Finally, let's talk about your relationship with your spouse/partner. One of the biggest complaints I've heard from contractor friends through the years is that they've seen way too many marriages break up over a remodeling job. My husband and I made a pact at the very beginning that we were NOT going to let the remodel break up our marriage. We treated the job as a job, and even though we would get frustrated with the job and each other from time to time, we dealt with the issues as people in a workplace, then went "home" to our half-house/dining-room-turned-kitchen and enjoyed our evenings and weekends together. It is extremely important not to personalize your differences of opinion. Our homes are very important to us and we each have different things that are "must haves". Sometimes these are in conflict. Make an agreement with your partner that you will behave like professionals at a workplace, not throw out personal insults, and strive to reach consensus on difficult issues. Then be sure to go "home" at the end of the day and leave the workplace behind. Make the most of the home you have remaining while in turmoil and try to have at least one room that is clean, quiet, and comfortable to get away to. For us, it was (temporarily) our living room – with only one wall torn out and replaced by plywood. Later, when the living room was torn apart, it was our bedroom. Every other room was a mess! But we made extra effort to keep the bedroom clean and orderly so that we would have a refuge when we went "home" at the end of the day. Then – start each day with a hug and a smile and go off to work again anew.

Next issue: Dealing with inspectors, contractors, and decisions – plus other resources

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BHNA PRESIDENTS SUMMER LETTER

Dale Maul & John Thomas
We are honored by this opportunity to serve Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association, its teammates, and its members. We are a close-knit group at the BHNA and there is a great wealth of good people and capabilities in the our organization. We have worked hard to discover opportunities to bring these to benefit our members. We maintain a focus on excellence and addressing your needs.

Moving forward, we are getting tech savvy. We are introducing a new web-site for members to get more information about the BHNA, view our newsletter on line, check out upcoming events, and access links to local government and business offices. Officers and committee members will have email addresses posted so our members can contact directly with their questions and concerns.

You have a new way to pay for their annual membership using PayPal while viewing the web-site or you can simply send a check via USPS. The web site is www.bluffheights.org

With a lot of negotiation and planning, the new Historic District Street signs will be installed soon. Watch for the crews to be working on your street. Many signs will be available for purchase through another silent auction. This August, we are sponsoring our first Historic Home Tour. Please contact Catherine Morely if you feel your home or a neighbors home, would be appropriate for this fund raising event.

More, for the fun side, we will be sponsoring another 4th of July Block party for our neighbors, friends and family to spend some time with each other, meet new people and make new friends. Special

thanks to Dennis Snyder who is the chairperson for this committee and all his volunteers assisting him. So, come one, come all to the big event and join us for some good pot luck eats and many fun events for this great day. We hope to have another record year of participants and we look forward to seeing you there for this community building event. -John & Dale

A SIGN OF THE TIMES!

John Thomas
At long last...our street signs soon will be installed! Efforts working with the City of Long Beach streets department are paying off. The City was able to include the BHNA in a grant offered by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The logistical responsibilities for producing the signs, working with the sign installers and final quality control process is now headed up by the City. This process will allow the City to play a lead role with the sign contractor and head off any issues that may arise ensuring a smooth installation.



For those who have purchased our existing street signs, we will be contacting you to arrange picking up your signs soon.

The Formal dedication ceremony will be at the July 4th Block Party event on Vista. We look forward to seeing you all there to celebrate this major historical achievement for the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association!

HOME TOUR

Continued from the first page
with docents stationed at each home. In addition we have a special guest lecturer, author Jane Powell, who will speak on interior restoration and decoration. Ms. Powell is a nationally recognized Arts & Crafts restoration expert and is the author of "Bungalow Kitchens," "Bungalow Bathrooms," "Linoleum, Bungalow Details (Exterior & Interior)" and her new book, "Bungalow: The Ultimate Arts and Crafts Home." We are very excited and delighted to have her as part of our event.

How can you be a part of this history-making event? Purchase a ticket (see enclosed form). Remember that ticket sales will be limited and access to Ms. Powell's lecture will be on a first come basis. We entreat you to join our committee to help us plan the details of the event. We can use your help. Become a docent, no experience necessary, we will train. Advertise your business in our tour book and/or exhibit your home improvement-related business at the home tour. You can contact Catherine at the Bluff Heights number (562.439.BHNA) for more details.

As always is when we are expecting guests, we spruce up our house and complete projects we have been putting off. Let's pull those weeds, plant flowers and complete that painting job. We want to put forth our best efforts to show off how great it is to live in Bluff Heights!

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TUESDAY, JULY 4th From 1-6:30 PM

Bring your family & friends to the **4th of July Block Party on Vista**



12:30 PM
Opening Ceremonies *free*
 The kick off of the block party features the raising of the flag that flew over the State Capitol after 9/11. Plus a colorful finale.



1:00 PM
Patriotic Pooch Parade *free*
 Uncle Sam leads the neighbors and their canine "owners." Dress up your pets. Receive a treat for your dog. Ribbon Awarded.



12:30-5 PM
Neighborhood Potluck Picnic
Free
 Please participate by bringing items based on the initial of your last name:
 ★ **A-G** Bring desserts
 ★ **H-M** Bring an entree, casserole etc.
 ★ **N-T** Bring salads
 ★ **U-Z** Bring beverages

1-6 PM
Music & Dancing *free*
 Our D.J., Mike Miller will be spinning your favorite music throughout the day. Plus enjoy these popular dance lessons:
 ★ 2:30 - **SALSA**
 ★ 3:30 - **COUNTRY-WESTERN**



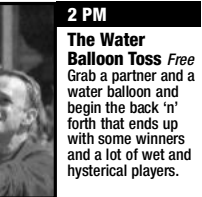
1:30-5 PM
The Dunk Tank
\$1 for 3 balls
 Step right up and try your hand at pitching your neighbors into the drink. As they plunge, you have the satisfaction of benefiting the BHNA!



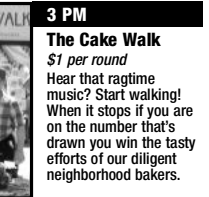
2:30 PM
Bubble-Gum Blowing Contest
NEW! -free
 Here's a competition where you get to chew someone else out! The contestant blowing the biggest bubble wins. Pop! Goes the loser...



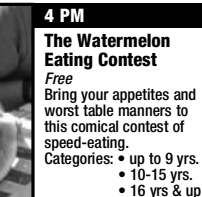
2 PM
The Water Balloon Toss *Free*
 Grab a partner and a water balloon and begin the back 'n' forth that ends up with some winners and a lot of wet and hysterical players.



3 PM
The Cake Walk
\$1 per round
 Hear that ragtime music? Start walking! When it stops if you are on the number that's drawn you win the tasty efforts of our diligent neighborhood bakers.



4 PM
The Watermelon Eating Contest
Free
 Bring your appetites and worst table manners to this comical contest of speed-eating.
 Categories:
 • up to 9 yrs.
 • 10-15 yrs.
 • 16 yrs & up



2-4 PM
Princess Laff-a-lot Face Painting *Free*
 Princess Laff-a-lot isn't clowning around when she offers to transform your face into an whimsical statement of pure happiness.



1:30-5:15 PM
The Chili Contest *Free*
 The gauntlet's down and the stakes are high. Whose chili will reign supreme? Bring your chili in an electrical crock pot by 1:15 PM. Winners will be announced at 5:30 PM.



Noon- 5:45 PM
Opportunity Drawing/Silent Auction *\$ 1 a chance*
 Enter or bid an auction sheet to win an large & amazing array of prizes at the BHNA booth. *Drawings begin at 6 PM.* Winner doesn't have to be present to win.



Noon - 6 PM
The Bluff Heights Booth
 Join the neighborhood association, buy tickets for block party events or bid on a classic Bluff Heights street sign at the silent auction.



5 PM
The Limbo Contest
\$1 entrant fee
LIMBO! Limber up and test your skill at avoiding that ever-descending limbo pole.
 Categories:
 • under 4 feet tall
 • over 4 feet tall



Noon-6 PM
Patriotic Pools *Free*
 Between children and pets in the neighborhood the 3 wading pools are sure to please. Not to mention cooling off Mom and Dad's sizzling feet.



Timing: TBD
Long Beach Fire Dept. Demonstration *free*
 The Long Beach fire fighters are very busy on 7/4. However, they have found time (most years) to stop by and show off the truck to the delight of local kids ...of all ages.



RESTORATION

PRESERVATION

95 NIGHTS

By Kevin Doherty

Don't you just love those expansive porches found on Craftsman and Spanish style bungalows? I carry fond memories of our old Spanish home located on a quiet street in West Hollywood where I grew up. It had one of those big characteristic front porches with half walls on all sides and a tile roof overhead. We'd spend hours playing in the yard and then take shelter under the shade of the porch on balmy summer afternoons.

Summer nights in Southern California are magically warm! No wonder we so dearly cherish the porches of our historic homes. With school in recess, I'd often sleep over night on the porch during much of the summer as if I were on an extended camp out. These days I spend time each morning out on our front porch sipping my favorite Darjeeling tea while enjoying the rhythms of life in our neighborhood. Once my garden project is finished I might sleep outside now that summer is at hand. Perhaps you too have fond memories of porch life during your early years and wish to bring that element back into your summer lives. If so, consider embarking on a project to design and build an enclosed patio or sleeping porch for your home!

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

Sleeping porches have long been part of bungalow architectural vernacular. The origin of the California Bungalow has its roots in far away India where the native dwelling was called a Bengala. Like the bungalows familiar to us, the Bengala was aptly designed with expansive porches and numerous windows to cope with the hot Indian summers. The American bungalow's immense popularity in Southern California was due in part to the relatively warm climate we share with India combined with the open air architectural design



including porches on which to sit and sleep. Proponents of the Naturalist Movement in Southern California during the late 19th and early 20th century extolled the virtues of outdoor living including the health benefits of sleeping outdoors. A "get back to nature" craze became highly fashionable and soon mountain retreats were built throughout the wilds of the San Gabriel Mountains frequented by scores of hikers seeking the elixir of life. Their zeal carried over to their home lives down in the flatlands of Los Angeles where they made the most of their outdoor porches affectionately called "outdoor living rooms" by savvy home speculators. For those who could not afford a bonified sleeping porch, a hilarious "window tent" became readily available. This contraption was fitted directly onto the open window and then ones bed was positioned onto it so that the sleepers head and upper body became exposed to the open air!

GETTING STARTED

There are many ways to arrive at a suitable outdoor sleeping room for your home. Begin by assessing the porch areas you already have. The simplest solution would be to place a daybed or a couple of folding cots outfitted with mosquito netting on the porch or deck area of your home. A more substantial approach might entail the design of a screened in porch area that ties in architecturally with your home. If you own a two story bungalow consider the upper story as the ideal place to build the addition. Always augment your plans with ample study prior to construction in order to fine tune your design vision and your ability to communicate effectively with your designer, architect and builder. Visit Hennessy and Engles Bookstore in Santa Monica for the best selection of books you'll need for the project. Also, tour The Gamble House in

Pasadena as it has a wonderful upper story sleeping porch!

PROCESS & PRODUCT

As a designer I know all too well the potential pitfalls that accompany room addition projects. To insure a good start gather a team of professionals that are bungalow savvy and have experience dealing with historic homes. Visit the Long Beach Building and Planning Department to learn about building code guidelines and then begin discussions with your designer sharing your needs, your budget and pictures of porches you enjoy. Once the drawings are made you can assess them, revise as needed, and then gather accurate bids for the work. Remember, it always costs more and takes more time to build than you may imagine, so be patient and enjoy the process all along the way. Remember that good design, quality materials and skillful craftsmanship are well worth the expense in the long run.

FURNISHINGS

A vast array of choices lay before you. I'd suggest Adirondack style, Dutch Colonial or Wicker furniture as main items. Augment floors with natural fiber rugs and then opt for low wattage electrical lighting. Complement your lighting scheme with candle lanterns. They set just the right ambiance on warm summer nights! Consider adding some lush and fragrant plants to the immediate area and then humanize your garden with a low key water element and delicate wind chimes for the soothing effect they bring.

ENJOY!

Once all the work is complete on your porch project you'll be ready to entertain. Invite a few neighbors over for good wine and food. Celebrate the fruits of your efforts and share tales of process, product and the old Naturalist Movement in Southern California. When all the guests have gone pretend you're a kid again and get back to nature. Unfold your sleeping bag, get into your jammies, light a few candles and lull yourself to sleep singing old camp songs! ♦



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- Your dues go to neighborhood beautification and improvements
- Access to resources and educational opportunities
- Your voice is heard by the BHNA
- Involvement in your community through volunteer and leadership opportunities
- Supporting local businesses through your involvement
- Voting rights in BHNA Elections

**JOIN OR RENEW BEFORE JULY 1ST
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(AFTER JUNE 30TH DUES INCREASE TO \$25 PER INDIVIDUAL OR HOUSEHOLD)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ RENEWAL or NEW MEMBER

The most efficient way to get information to you is through e-mail.

Please provide your current e-mail address:

E-mail: _____

Please check the committee(s) you would be interested in joining

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership and Recruitment. | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/Web Production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nominations Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Horace Mann School Projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Tour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Rummage Sale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic/Streets/Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4th of July Block Party | |

Can we give you a call or e-mail if we need volunteer help? Yes No

Please send a check for \$20.00 made payable to the
BLUFF HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
TO: CHRISTINE VOTAVA (562) 439-3189
2846 Vista, LB CA 90803

4TH OF JULY
BLOCK PARTY
ON VISTA

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This form requests repairs of pot holes, broken sprinklers, & signals, downed, broken or missing signs, litter, graffiti, landscaping, reflective markers, highway lighting, sign visibility, rough and broken roads. ♦



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Board Member.....Catherine Morely
Board Member.....Emily Rader
Board Member.....Suzanne Ridley
Board Member.....Dennis Snyder

The above board stands through 1-4-07

Next Three Board Meetings:

- June 1, 2006
- July 6, 2006
- August 3, 2006

To attend a Board Meeting call or email us at:

562-439-BHNA OR

bluffheights@verizon.net

Visit us at bluffheights.org

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Important Phone Numbers

Emergency.....	911
Police Non-Emergency.....	435-6711
Airport Noise Abatement.....	570-2678
Animal Control.....	570-PETS
Apartment Watch.....	570-7160
Business Watch.....	570-7274
BHNA.....	439-BHNA
City of L.B. Info.....	570-6555
City Council (District 3).....	570-6310
Code Enforcement.....	570-CODE
Fire Prevention.....	570-2560
Gang Hotline.....	(866)426-4847
Gas Emergency.....	570-2140
Graffiti Hot Line.....	570-2773
Health Department.....	570-4000
Housing Rehabilitation Loans.....	570-6808
Narcotics Tip Line.....	570-7125
Neighborhood Watch.....	570-7229
Noise Abatement.....	570-4126
Sidewalk Hotline.....	570-6264
Shopping cart Hotline.....	(800)252-4613
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Street Potholes Hotline.....	570-3259
Street Sweeping.....	570-2890
Tree Trimming.....	570-2700
Water Emergency.....	570-2300
Community Hospital.....	498-1000

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