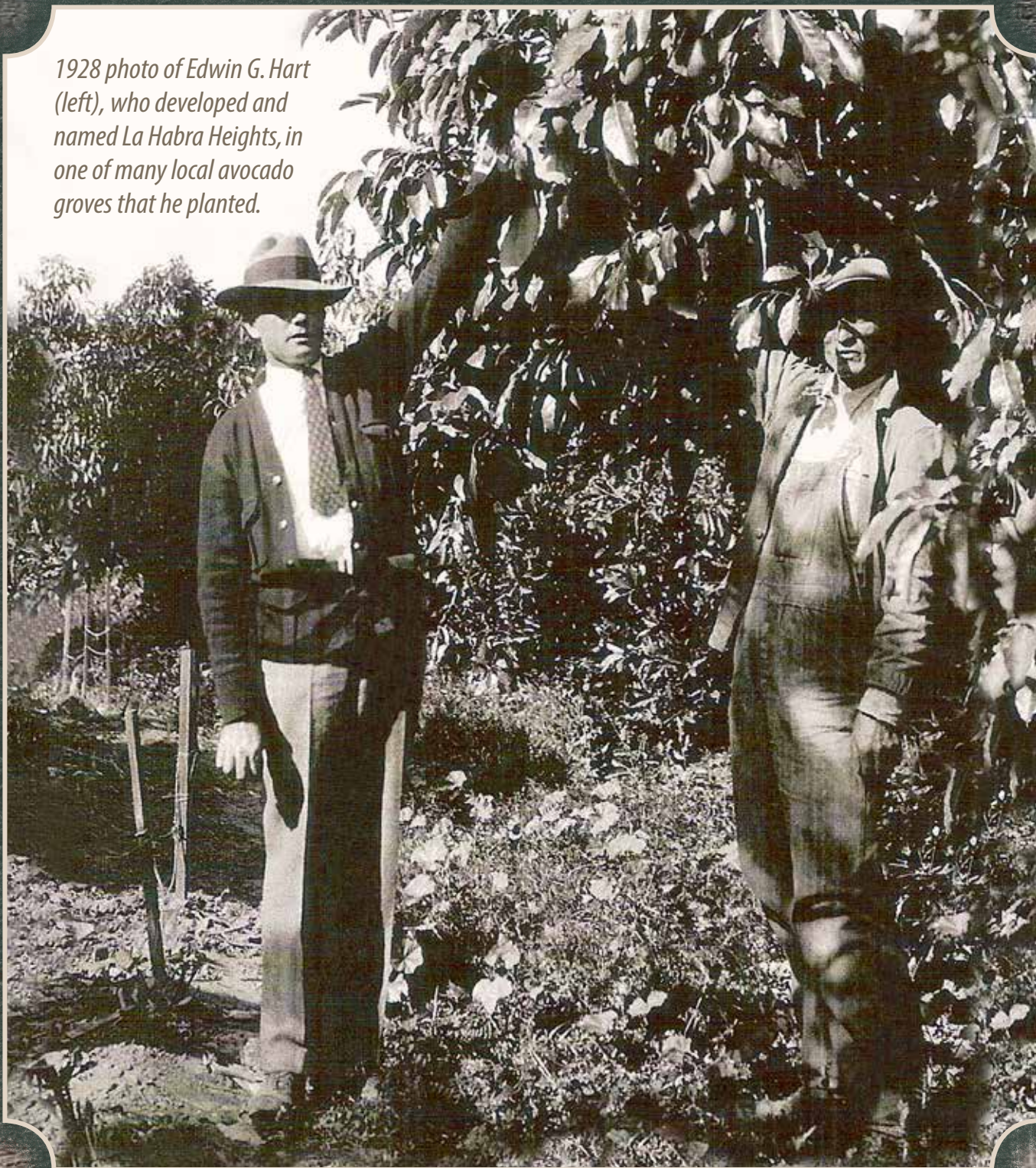


Heights Life

A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE
La Habra Heights Improvement Association
Volume 73 • Issue Number 2 • March 2021

A History of the Heights continued (see page 10)

1928 photo of Edwin G. Hart (left), who developed and named La Habra Heights, in one of many local avocado groves that he planted.





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Image for illustrative purposes only. Not representative of the actual property.

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I'm finding that events are available to the mayor that are both unexpected and more interesting than they seem on the surface. Two weeks ago I participated in an orientation provided by the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts. Mayors of all cities in the county serve on the LACSD board of directors. While I certainly recognize the importance of sanitation for our community, I can't say that I have ever been excited about it. The orientation changed my feelings. It's impressive how the Sanitation District is changing with the times and developing new ways of dealing with various kinds of waste. I found it surprising that so many high-tech measures are being used to process refuse.

Water reclamation has also become a major task. Without going into detail, I'll offer this illustrative statistic: nearly half of all water used in the county is treated and reused by the Sanitation District. I look forward to learning more as time goes on.

City staff outreach to residents during the pandemic

It has been mentioned in the past that our city staff has been reaching out to residents of the Heights with various kinds of assistance during the pandemic. Prior to March 2020, no one on the staff had such responsibilities—but as the situation worsened and needs of residents surfaced along the way, staff members rose to the occasion and found themselves dealing with new requirements. Here are some numbers (thus far) for you:

- Senior outreach calls: 828
- Senior outreach deliveries: 527
- Masks distributed to residents: 363

The staff has taken on these and other tasks and assisted so many in our community. Their caring outreach has made a positive impact in the Heights at a time of incredible need.

My thanks—and I'm sure the thanks of the La Habra Heights community—go to all our staff members who have gone "above and beyond" during these difficult times.

Important LHHFD role in regional mutual aid

Last month I mentioned how the La Habra Heights Fire Department has been such an integral part of mutual aid among fire departments in the county. This month I'll offer a couple of specific examples regarding LHHFD service to the broader community. There have been eight occasions when members and equipment from the department have gone to fight fires in other areas of Los Angeles County. While responding to needs and calls of other agencies, they have not altered their ongoing protection for the Heights. In addition, there have been five occasions when elements of LHHFD have been pre-deployed to protect communities when Santa Ana winds were blowing or predicted. Again, this has always been done while guaranteeing continued

protection for our own community. I can't help but think of this phrase to describe our department: *small but mighty*.

Heli-hydrant may help with firefighting

Finally, regarding the topic of fire service, there is a good possibility that a heli-hydrant will be located nearby to serve the needs of La Habra Heights and surrounding communities. Such a hydrant would enable a firefighting helicopter to fly in, hover and take on a tankful of water to fight a fire. When such a hydrant is located locally, it will cut down on the time it takes for helicopters to refill and drop water. The heli-hydrant requires approximately seven acres of land that is accessible to a helicopter. More information will be forthcoming on this potentially crucial firefighting apparatus for La Habra Heights.

—Dennis Laherty



A heli-hydrant will speed refills and water dumps on local fires.

Photo: Heights resident Don Phillips



P R E S I D E N T ' S P E N



Because of ongoing Los Angeles County restrictions related to the pandemic, we regret that we've had to cancel our annual LHHIA Easter Egg Hunt. However, we wish you and your families a happy Easter season, and we look forward to resuming the hunt next year. Watch *Heights Life* and our website (lhhia.com) for updates about our future events, including Music in The Park.

Please see page 4 for details about our annual LHHIA Photo Contest. The deadline for submitting entries is April 30. We really look forward to seeing your images of the Heights.

Scam warning—Some of you may have received a poorly written email that supposedly came from me and LHHIA that solicited gift cards for veterans with Covid-19. I did *not* write the email, and LHHIA is not involved in such activities. In other words, it's an email scam—one of many related to the ongoing public health crisis. For more information, visit adminit.ucdavis.edu/tech-tips/beware-phony-gift-card-email-scams.

—Pam McVicar

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Cover photo: La Habra Heights Historical Committee



The City of La Habra Heights, in cooperation with the City of Whittier, has been proud for years to offer low-cost transportation for Heights residents who are enrolled members in our Dial-A-Ride program. In response to the pandemic, **all rides are currently free** to enrolled members, and this free service will be in effect until the summer of 2021.

You can go anywhere within La Habra Heights city limits, La Habra city limits and up to a quarter mile from Whittier Blvd. in Whittier as far west as Colima Road (which includes Whittwood Mall).

To enroll in the Dial-A-Ride program, please call Nicholle Hornsby at La Habra Heights City Hall at **562-694-6302** or Whittier Uptown Senior Center at **562-567-9430**.

Annual LHHIA Photo Contest

Deadline for entries:

April 30, 2021

- To enter, you must be a member of La Habra Heights Improvement Association.
- Enter up to three photos as either high-resolution digital files or prints.
- Email high-resolution digital entries to lhhiaphotocontest@gmail.com.
- Mail prints up to 8.5 x 11 inches to LHHIA, P.O. Box 241, La Habra, CA 90631.

Save the date!

First prize: \$100

Second prize: \$50

Third prize: \$25

- By entering, you agree to allow your images to be published or displayed, without any fee or other form of compensation, in *Heights Life*, on the LHHIA website and at La Habra Heights public events. Published photographs will include a photo credit.
- See *Official Rules* at lhhia.com. By entering, you agree to abide by these rules.

Garden Plot

By Beverley Lepak
Horticulturalist &
Landscape Consultant

Hibiscus flowers were favorites of Edwin G. Hart, who planted numerous varieties here when he was developing the Heights in the 1920s. See the related story on page 10.

The Vernal Equinox (the first day of spring) will occur in La Habra Heights at 2:37 a.m. on Saturday, March 20. Longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures will give us more time for gardening. Our rainfall may be below average this year, so a good deep watering of large trees and shrubs will help them along during their growing season. Our hills should be all “greened up” for St. Patrick’s Day on March 17, and Easter is just around the corner.

Even if we’re still keeping Easter family gatherings to our own households because of the pandemic, we can still make things festive and fun for the kids. Start by making a flower Easter basket. Have the kids pick out their own small potted flowers at a local garden center. Line a basket to the top with thick plastic, place flower pots in the basket and cover the top with Easter basket filler (plastic shreds) or sphagnum moss. Add some colorful Easter eggs!

Spring flowers—Plant pretty pastel colors—light pink, lavender, yellow and light blue—for the arrival of spring. Easy-to-grow early spring annuals should be filling up local garden centers: calendula, carnations, cosmos, cornflowers, larkspur, marigolds, pansies, snapdragons and stock, just to mention a few. There are so many lovely, beneficial, insect-attracting flowers to plant now!

It’s also a good time to plant perennial flowering plants: alstroemeria, columbine, coral bells, delphinium, penstemon and flowering sage.

If you’re looking for a tropical effect as the weather warms up, most hibiscus species do well in the Heights if you plant them in a warm sunny area and keep the soil uniformly moist. A large group of showy and hardy varieties is available—yellow, red, orange and pink, as well as combinations of two or more colors. Many grow well in containers if potted with a rich, moisture-holding soil mixture. Most hibiscus aren’t frost hardy, so in the unlikely event of a March drop in temperature, they might need to be covered.

Spring vegetables & herbs—Now is a good time to remove old and dead plants from your vegetable garden and to rejuvenate the soil. Add some chicken wire fencing to keep bunnies and other critters from devouring your plants. Put bird netting over the top of the fence to keep out squirrels (at least for a while). Mix in a good layer of compost or amendment and plant arugula, beans, beets, broccoli, carrots, celery, collards, corn (at the end of March), cucumber, endive, kale, mustard greens, lettuce, onions, parsnips, peas, potatoes, spinach and Swiss chard.

Plant or sow seeds of flavorful herbs. Sow seeds of basil, borage, cilantro, chives, dill, German chamomile, fennel and lovage (in part-shade) and parsley. Transplant lavender, lemongrass, oregano, mint (keep mint in containers to prevent rapid root spread), rosemary, sage, thyme, salad burnet and sorrel.

Spring tasks—Fertilize your landscape and fruit trees along with roses and other blooming perennial shrubs. Clear out drainage areas and keep up brush clearance—that’s especially important with the La Habra Heights Fire Department’s May 1 inspection deadline approaching (see the related story on page 6). *Happy springtime!*



Spring into wildfire defense!

The state of California designates La Habra Heights as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), which means that active, continual fire prevention is critical here all year long.

According to La Habra Heights Fire Chief Doug Graft, the most important way to protect our rural community from wildfires is to comply with the city's comprehensive brush clearance requirement that *all properties must remain 100 percent clear at all times of all weeds, rubbish, refuse and other combustible materials that could fuel fires.*

Property inspections start May 1

Annual property inspections by the La Habra Heights Fire Department will begin on May 1. LHHFD will inspect every parcel (improved and vacant) to ensure that all properties are cleared of fire hazards. Properties not compliant with the LHH brush clearance program are subject to multiple inspections, fees and abatements throughout the year.

Properties found to be compliant with the city's fire-safety requirements will not be assessed fees. However, non-compliant properties can be assessed a first inspection fee of \$225 and a second inspection fee of \$175. If a property owner fails to bring property into compliance, the city can hire a contractor to conduct an abatement—and if that happens, actual abatement costs, an administrative fee of \$1,275, a lien fee of \$1,695 and a lien-release fee of \$1,695 can all be assessed on the property.

Residents are encouraged to report fire hazards to La Habra Heights Fire

Department by calling **562-694-8283**, which can prompt an investigation by Fire Marshal Robert Montaghami.

For more information, consult the 2021 *La Habra Heights Annual Brush Clearance Guide* available for download on the city website (lhhcity.org).

Create defensible space

March is the time for planting and pruning as part of the spring growth cycle. As you think about what to trim and what to plant, focus on creating a defensible space that will greatly improve chances of your home surviving a wildfire. It's the buffer you create between a building on your property and surrounding grass, trees, shrubs and wildland areas. Defensible space slows or stops the spread of wildfire, and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from direct-flame contact or radiant heat. Defensible

space is also important for the protection of firefighters defending your home.

When you're determining which plants to add or remove from your landscape this planting season, make sure you read and carefully follow the City of La Habra Heights *Fuel Modification Guideline (FMG)* available at lhhcity.org.

The *FMG* contains detailed lists of approved plants, as well as undesirable, fire-prone plants (see photos on the next page). Be sure that you consult the *FMG* before you plant.

The *FMG* identifies two critical fuel-modification zones (see illustration below) that will create 100 feet of defensible space around your buildings. If you strictly comply with these zones when planting and doing landscape maintenance, you'll help safeguard your home if a wildfire hits the Heights.



ZONE 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from chimneys.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and any items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

ZONE 2 extends 100 feet out from your buildings, other structures, decks, etc.

- Cut or mow grass down to a maximum height of 3 inches.
- Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees (for detailed spacing requirements, consult the FMG at lhcity.org).
- Create vertical space between grass, shrubs and trees (for detailed spacing requirements, consult the FMG at lhcity.org).
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones and small branches.



Above: Non-compliant property that does not meet LHHFD brush-clearance requirements.

Below: Compliant property with good brush clearance and sufficient defensible space.



Combustible vegetation hazards



(Continued on page 8)

Self-inspection fire-prevention checklist

Before La Habra Heights Fire Department inspectors arrive to examine your property, there's plenty you can do to ensure that you're in compliance with the city's fire-prevention requirements. Inspections begin on May 1, and every parcel in the Heights, whether improved or vacant, will be thoroughly inspected—*no exceptions!* Use the checklist below to make sure that your property passes inspection the *first* time, because additional inspections can involve fees.

- ☐ Entire property is free of combustible materials and fire hazards. (Freedom from fire hazards must be maintained year-round, and LHHFD inspections will be ongoing throughout the year.)
- ☐ Cut all grass and weeds down to three inches or less on 100% of your property.
- ☐ On trees 18 feet high and higher, trim lower branches to clear six feet from the ground.
- ☐ Remove all dead and dying trees, dead branches and bushes.
- ☐ Trim tree branches 10 feet away from chimneys.
- ☐ Remove dead leaves and pine needles from rooftops and gutters.
- ☐ Clear a minimum of 3 feet from the edge of roads that abut your property.
- ☐ Trim overhanging tree branches from all roadways up to a minimum of 13 feet, 6 inches above the road surface to allow access for emergency vehicles.
- ☐ Properly dispose of all bagged and cut materials or chip and spread all materials to no higher than 3 inches in height.
- ☐ Address markers must be clearly visible on fronts of all buildings and on the street in front of the property at all hours of day and night. Address markers must be a minimum of 4 inches high with at least half-inch-high reflective numbers that contrast with the background.
- ☐ Where applicable, maintain a 3-foot clearance of all vegetation and dirt around fire hydrants adjacent to property lines.



Avoid substantial fees!



When you're trimming around roadways, be sure to provide enough room for firetrucks and other emergency vehicles. Cut any overhanging branches to allow a minimum of 13 feet, 6 inches above the road surface, and also clear vegetation at least 3 feet from the edge of the road. Maintain this clearance all year long to ensure quick vehicle access in an emergency.

If you fail to bring your property into compliance, the city can hire a contractor to conduct an abatement—in which case actual abatement costs, an administrative fee of \$1,275, a lien fee of \$1,695 and a lien-release fee of \$1,695 can all be assessed on your property.

Complete tree & landscape services



Fire danger this year is especially high! Call California Arborist for tree trimming, brush clearance and weed abatement.



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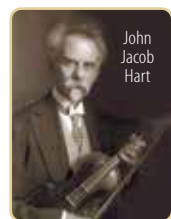
Edwin G. Hart develops the Heights

A HISTORY of the HEIGHTS (ninth in a series) by Dan Stracner

EDWIN GILES HART, a prominent developer of real estate in Southern California in the early 20th century, was the de facto founder of La Habra Heights as a community.

He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 24, 1874, the second of four sons. His father, John Jacob Hart (1843-1932), a son of German immigrants, fought in the Civil War on the Union side and helped defend Washington, D.C., from a Confederate attack in 1864. After President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, Corporal John Hart served as an escort to the president's body when the black-draped funeral train passed through Ohio in April 1865.

After his discharge from the army, John Hart went to Europe, where he studied



Sierra Madre Historical Society

music for two years at the renowned Conservatory of Leipzig in Germany. Specializing in violin and piano, he became a highly accomplished musician and teacher who later helped found the Cleveland Conservatory of Music.

Edwin's mother, Emma Giles (Corlett) Hart (1852-1894), was of British ancestry.

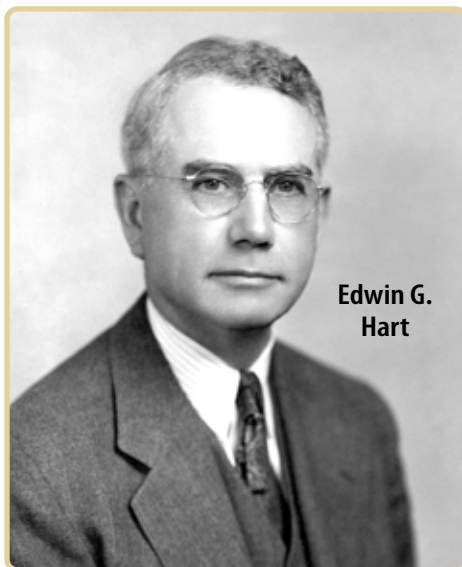
In 1875, the Hart family spent several months in the Sonoma Valley of California before returning to Cleveland, and John Hart developed an abiding love for the West.

A few years later, John was on a hunting trip in Ohio when a borrowed shotgun he was using exploded and severely injured his left hand. Unable to play his musical instruments, he suffered from deep mental distress, which was compounded by the untimely death of his young third son, Carl, in 1883.

In 1884, John and Emma Hart moved their family to California to make a fresh start. Edwin was nine years old.

Winemaking in Sierra Madre

The family bought 40 acres near the village of Sierra Madre and built a large adobe home. Grapes were the biggest crop in the area, so the Harts planted grapevines in hopes of selling their harvest to several large local wineries. However, John was dissatisfied with the meager profits he earned from his grapes, so he decided to begin making his own wine. After studying viticulture, he built a winery



and launched his "Monte Vina" brand in 1885. He also resumed giving music lessons.

Within a year, his winery was profitable, and he was operating both a wine shop in Sierra Madre and a music studio on Colorado Boulevard in nearby Pasadena.

Edwin worked at the family winery while attending Pasadena High School. After earning his diploma in 1892, he went on to graduate from the Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena (which became the California Institute of Technology in 1920).

In 1894, Emma Hart contracted a virulent strain of tuberculosis and quickly died. Her grieving husband composed several beautiful violin elegies in her memory. Ten years later, John Hart married Harriet Jane Jarvis (1858-1935), and they remained together until his death in 1932 at age 88. The former Hart home in Sierra Madre is now a senior center in that city's Memorial Park.

Sojourn in Mexico—a vision is born

Edwin Hart traveled to southern Mexico in 1898 to work on mining projects. While there, he learned a great deal about local agriculture, and he was especially interested in trees that bore odd, pear-shaped fruit called "ahuacate" by the Incas and "aguacate" in Spanish. In the United States, the rare fruit was also sometimes called "alligator pear" because of the rough texture of its thick green skin. A few years later, Hart would play a role in giving the fruit a new name: "avocado," probably derived from "avogato," a 17th-century English rendering of "aguacate."

Hart returned to Southern California in 1904 with an abiding vision: to develop orchards and grow the largely unknown fruit he had learned about in Mexico.

At the age of 29, Hart embarked on a career in real estate. Over the next decade, he was involved in numerous projects in the greater Los Angeles area, most notably in the new town of San Marino, where he built a home for his wife Mary Ann (Rhodes) Hart and their growing family, which eventually included two sons and three daughters. He is considered one of the founders of the city. The former Hart home in San Marino is now the city library.

Developing North Whittier Heights

In March 1909, Hart's real estate fortunes took a positive turn when Elias "Lucky" Baldwin died at age 80. A native of Ohio like Hart, Baldwin was a flamboyant entrepreneur, real estate speculator and builder who owned many businesses and vast tracts of land in Los Angeles County, where he was the largest employer and taxpayer in the 1880s. Numerous places and streets still bear his name (e.g., Baldwin Hills and Baldwin Park).

After Baldwin died, his estate began selling his landholdings, including a 1,844-acre tract north of Whittier purchased in 1912 by the Whittier Extension Company, which hired Hart as general sales manager to help subdivide and market the property.

About 1,200 acres were either flatland or gently rolling hills ideal for citrus and walnut orchards. The remaining 644 acres were quite hilly and considered suitable only for animal grazing or perhaps growing grain crops. But Hart envisioned another use for those hills: here was his chance to try his hand at developing land specifically for growing his favorite Mexican fruit.

Hart named the new subdivision North Whittier Heights and devised an innovative plan for terracing and irrigating the steeper slopes of the tract for avocado orchards.

He began marketing North Whittier Heights in May 1913, and he proved himself to be an excellent promoter. He invited potential buyers to a large outdoor barbecue on the property, complete with entertainment, and quickly followed up with an aggressive advertising and public relations campaign, including advertisements and stories in local newspapers, one of which noted that budded avocado trees would be planted on most lots.

A year later, sales in North Whittier Heights were going well, and Hart turned his attention southward to the other side of the Puente Hills. In 1914, he entered into negotiations with Willits J. Hole to purchase the majority of the hill property that had been part of Rancho La Habra. Hole had already sold some 400 acres of this land to several individuals, and one of them, George W. Beck, had planted an avocado grove in 1910, a fact that no doubt attracted Hart's attention. (See the August 2020 *Heights Life* for an article about Rancho La Habra and the November 2020 issue for a profile of Hole.)

In 1915, Hart was one of the founders of the California Ahuacate Growers' Association and became its first president. Thanks in part to his urging, the name of the organization was soon changed to California Avocado Association. Hart served as president several times over the years, actively promoting avocados as a highly nutritious food and a high-value cash crop. The group was renamed the California Avocado Society in 1941.

Hart also collaborated with the University of California in well-publicized experiments related to hillside terracing and irrigation.

La Habra Heights gets its name

It took nearly five years for Hart to complete his deal with Willits J. Hole, but in the August 1, 1919, issue of the *Covina Argus* newspaper, this headline appeared: "Edwin G. Hart Buys Rancho La Habra." The story reported that Hart had acquired 3,600 acres from Hole for \$450,000 and noted: "La Habra Heights, which this property will now be called, is located about 3 miles east of Whittier" and "is upon a greater elevation than either Whittier or La Habra . . . It is considered particularly adapted to tender varieties of avocados [*sic*], lemons and citron. . . Some of the property, being in rolling and hill lands, will make particularly desirable country residence sites." The story also noted that Hart's newly incorporated La Habra Heights Company would "immediately proceed to install a thoroughly up-to-date water system on the property."

In fact, on May 22, 1919—even before the land sale had been consummated—Hart had already incorporated his La Habra Heights Municipal Water Company. The promised new water system was a crucial part of his grand plan of subdividing the property into parcels of five acres or larger on which to develop beautiful country estates planted with avocados, lemons and other subtropical fruit trees. Hart anticipated that prominent people from the greater Los Angeles area (and eventually from all around the country) would

build these rural estates and plant productive orchards in La Habra Heights.

On April 11, 1920, the *Los Angeles Times* ran a story with this headline: "Babylon's 'Hanging Gardens' Brought Down to Date," likening Hart's terraced avocado groves on steep hillsides of North Whittier Heights and La Habra Heights to one of the seven ancient wonders of the world. The following month, this notice appeared in the newspaper: "Edwin G. Hart, president and sales manager of the La Habra Heights Company, reports the following sales in the La Habra Heights Tract situated in the foothills north of La Habra and east of Whittier: To R.L. Reynolds, 307.30 acres, \$134,913; to the Hacienda Country Club, 133 acres, \$64,500; to Albert H. White, 114.40 acres, \$13,728; to J.H. Walker and H.O. Price of La Habra, 25 acres, \$23,583; to Ralph C. Shook of Yorba Linda, 10.27 acres, \$9,578." Hart's development of the new community of La Habra Heights was now underway in earnest. (A future story in this series will cover the development of what is now known as Hacienda Golf Club, founded in 1920.)

The large parcel west of Hacienda Road bought by R.L. Reynolds became Sub-tropic Farms. Other early Heights property owners

included Clyde Wilcox, William Holloway, George Beck, Dr. H.B. Stonebrook, H.B. Griswold, F.D. Halm and Lou Davenport.

Hart used some of the proceeds from early sales to finance water infrastructure. In 1921, he completed his first reservoir at Hacienda Road and East Road and started laying water pipes to numerous properties. Hart and his employees then began planting trees. Hart would often contract with new Heights property owners to plant avocado trees on their lands and, in some cases, to care for their orchards.

George W. Beck, who already owned an avocado grove near what is now Cypress Street, bought land from Hart and planted additional trees. His son, Walter Beck, became a well-known global authority on avocados.

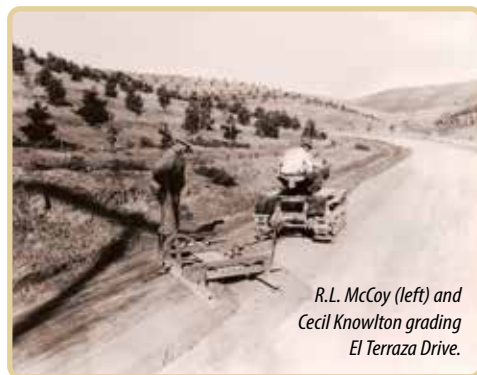
Over the years as the Heights population grew, Hart built more reservoirs, formed additional water companies and entered into various water-distribution agreements. Hart served as president of all these water enterprises for the rest of his life. In 1948, the rules were changed, and water company stock was assigned to each property so that all property owners in La Habra Heights shared ownership of the water supply.

(Continued on page 12)

Edwin G. Hart (taller figure at lower right) visits the site of a new water reservoir in La Habra Heights. Bringing water to the Heights was a major first step in Hart's wide-ranging development plans. Hart was the president of all Heights-based water companies from 1919 until his untimely death in 1939.



Harvesting avocados on Papaya Road, circa 1930 (left to right): Clyde Wilson, Majorie Wilcox and Ken Wilcox.



R.L. McCoy (left) and Cecil Knowlton grading El Terraza Drive.

Edwin G. Hart newspaper ad from January 1929.



The REAL CALIFORNIA Country Home

—On Sheltered Hills Among the Avocados, in Los Angeles' Most Beautiful Suburban Residential District—LA HABRA HEIGHTS

A wonderful location, climate, and View—exactly what every man wants

If this superb subdivision, with all its decided residential advantages, could be transferred from its present location (eleven miles east from Seventh and Broadway), into the city of Los Angeles, it is doubtful if a single parcel would remain unsold within twenty-four hours from time of removal.

And instead of the present exceptionally low prices of from \$500 to \$2000 AN ACRE, it would sell at from \$5000 to \$15,000 per lot.

Single acre estates in other L. A. suburban districts of comparable location, attractions and advantages are SELLING today at from \$10,000 to \$50,000, and even more, with building restrictions that exclude those of average means.

Because of Southern California's prodigious growth in recent years and its inevitable continued growth, we believe we can PROVE (in comparisons, and otherwise) THAT LA HABRA HEIGHTS IS THE BIGGEST SUBURBAN HOME SITE VALUE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TODAY! We take into consideration its wonderful CLIMATE, which is practically free from discomforting fogs and excessive winds; its marvelous marine, valley and mountain VIEWS, which, in addition to being second to no other, are permanently unobstructed; its LOCATION—45 minutes from the city, with wide and rapid traffic lanes which are practically free from the hazards encountered in the congested highways leading to and from the other suburban districts; and, its INCOME POSSIBILITIES!

A few acres at La Habra Heights not only affords you the delights of a suburban home amid the most desirable environment, but, if planted to the profitable Avocado or Citrus, will BRING A SUBSTANTIAL INCOME for many long years.

Summarize these advantages! Look into the future just a few years and come to your own conclusions regarding the VALUE of this suburban property, standing at once the rapid growth in recent years with excellent residential districts.

Edwin G. Hart Inc.
718 Van Ness Building Telephone 2-5441

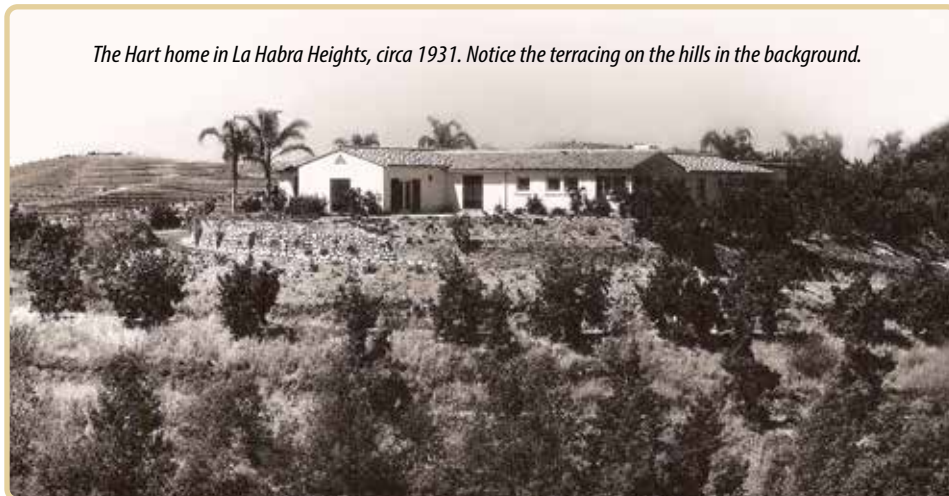
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From The Homestead Blog (see "Acknowledgements")

The Hart home in La Habra Heights, circa 1931. Notice the terracing on the hills in the background.



crews planted thousands of eucalyptus, blue gum and acacia trees all through the Heights, as well as fields of flowers. Hart was especially fond of hibiscus flowers, and he had many varieties planted. Once-bare hills were becoming tree-covered, verdant vistas.

Although avocados were the main crop, Sub-tropic Farms also raised cucumbers, rhubarb, tomatoes and string beans, and Gene Borley and Lauren Mead operated nurseries on East Road. Other growers planted oranges and lemons in the valleys. Hart opened his own citrus packing plant at East Road and Hacienda Road.

Hart and other growers experimented with different avocado varieties, which became street names in the Heights: Chota, Dorothea, Popenoe, Sharpless, Ganter, Benick, Kashlan, Mayapan, Nabal, Panchoy and Kanola.

The world's most popular and prolific avocado variety originated in La Habra Heights: the Hass (rhymes with grass). Rudolph "Rudy" Hass planted the "mother tree" as a seedling on his West Road property in 1926. The buttery, good-tasting Hass avocado is now the largest variety in the world

by far. (For the full story of the Hass avocado, see the September 2018 issue of *Heights Life*.)

"The Second Beverly Hills"

In 1927, Hart produced a brochure in which he wrote this about La Habra Heights: "The Second Beverly Hills has started—already it is dotted with numerous suburban homes of the very finest type." He touted "suburban home and income lands only 45 minutes from 7th and Broadway" in downtown Los Angeles.

In his advertising for both La Habra Heights and North Whittier Heights (renamed Hacienda Heights in 1961), Hart heavily promoted the idea of "Income Lands" and highlighted successful "estate owners" who had made good money growing and selling avocados. The headline on a 1929 Hart ad read: "\$7,212 from 3 Acres of Avocados" (in 2021 dollars, that's equivalent to about \$110,600).

Hart wasn't exaggerating when he described Heights properties as "suburban luxury." Parcels ranging from two to 20-plus acres were meticulously laid out so that each had a home site with sweeping views of city lights, hills, canyons, mountains or the ocean—some locations had views of both the mountains and the sea. Prices ranged from about \$900 to \$2,000 an acre.

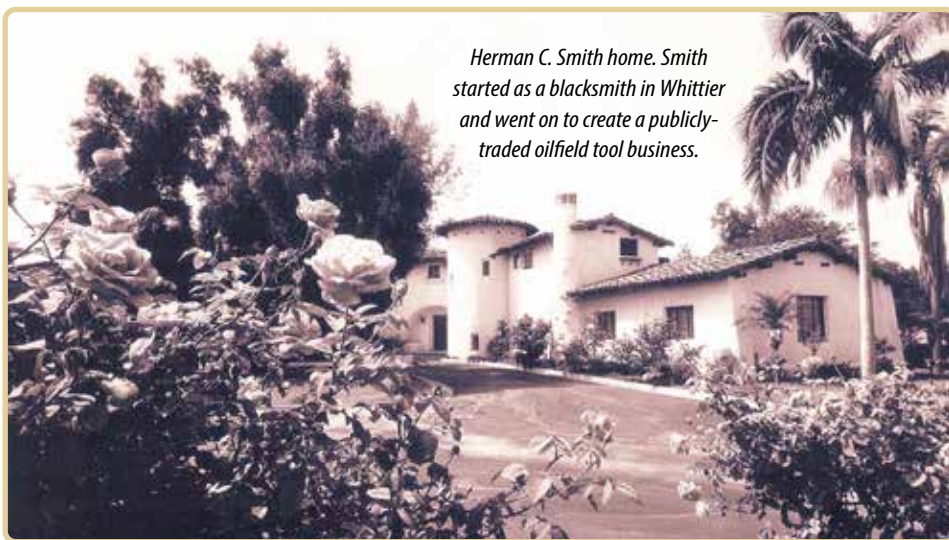
Magnificent showcase homes appeared in the Heights in those early days, many constructed in popular Spanish Colonial Revival, Monterey and Hacienda styles.

Many Heights homeowners were respected leaders in their fields. Herman C. Smith, who built an estate on La Riata Drive (see the photo at the top of the next page), founded Smith Industries International, Inc., and was a major figure in the oil and gas industry.

Dema Harshbarger was a well-known entertainment industry talent manager who worked on popular radio shows and became manager and press agent for actress

Hart's real estate office on Hacienda Road in the mid-1920s.





Herman C. Smith home. Smith started as a blacksmith in Whittier and went on to create a publicly-traded oilfield tool business.



and famous Hollywood gossip columnist Hedda Hopper, who often visited the Heights. Harshbarger (left) said that she built her Avocado Crest home after reading a *National Geographic* article that described La Habra Heights as one of the three most beautiful living spots in the world (the others were in Italy and Africa).



Laura Scudder (left), whose home was on Reposado Drive, was the first to package potato chips in sealed bags and later marketed a popular brand of peanut butter. Her nearby neighbor was Edwin Hart himself, who built his own Heights home in 1929.



Other notable property owners included silent Western film star Jack Holt (left), whose son Tim Holt also became a movie star; world champion boxer Tod Morgan; and minister and best-selling author Kirby Page.

Homes in the Heights ranged from summer cottages and modest farmhouses to mansions on sites with spectacular views. Most of them were custom-designed, and many were secluded, concealed in tree-covered terrain and accessible only by private roads.

A 1930 survey showed that La Habra Heights had 1,617 developed acres: 1,292 in avocado groves; 282 in orange, lemon and citron orchards; and 43 miscellaneous planted in persimmons, cherimoyas, passion fruit, papayas, sapotas, bulbs and flowers. At that time there were 95 homes, some costing as much as \$100,000 (equivalent to about \$1,500,000 in today's dollars). By the end of the decade, La Habra Heights had become known as an exclusive residential community. Approximately 2,000 of the original 3,600 acres

owned by Hart had been divided into groves and spacious home parcels owned by about 1,800 residents from all parts of the USA.

In 1924, Hart helped form a cooperative called California Avocado Growers Exchange. Two years later, the organization rebranded itself as "Calavo" and registered the name as a trademark that is still in use today. Calavo Growers, Inc., is now a publicly-traded,



diversified and successful global agribusiness.

In 1926, Hart began developing more "avocado subdivisions" in the town of Vista in northern San Diego County. Hart's older brother, John W. Hart, a deputy district attorney for Los Angeles County, was a partner in this venture. Hart also invested in property in nearby Fallbrook, which is now a major avocado-growing center.

The 1929 stock market crash that ushered in The Great Depression severely impacted U.S. agribusiness, including the avocado industry. Nonetheless, Hart persevered in his promotion of avocados and continued successfully selling residential property in La Habra Heights and his other subdivisions.

Founding of LHHIA

In January 1939, Hart joined a group of other La Habra Heights residents—Art Sucksdorf, Glen Annabel, Alex Morrison and H.B. Griswold—at the Dinner Bell Restaurant in Whittier for a meeting at which they founded the La Habra Heights Improvement Association "to encourage and promote the development of the Heights as a rural residential area"—a goal that hasn't changed in more than eight decades.

In the early evening of December 6, 1939, Edwin G. Hart was walking across East Olympic Boulevard in Los Angeles when he was struck by a car and killed at the age of 65. That portion of the boulevard was under construction and lacked markings, which may have contributed to the accident. The driver of the vehicle was not convicted of a crime.

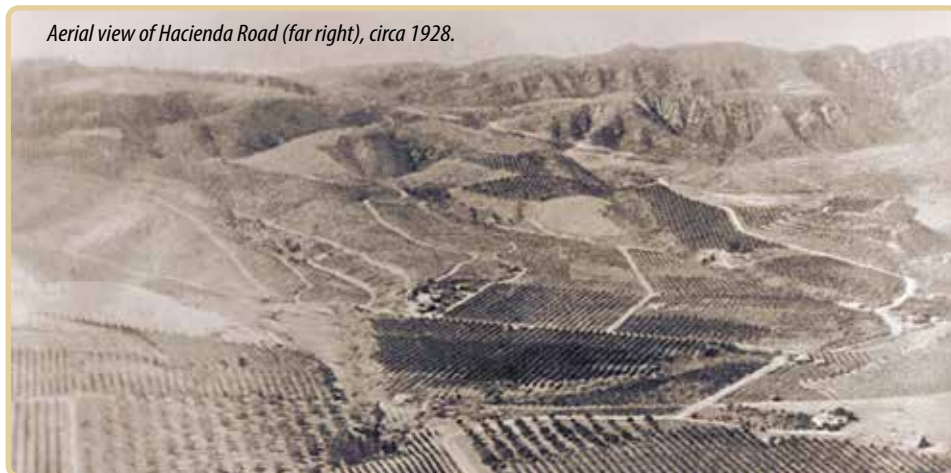
In addition to his exceptional efforts on behalf of California agribusiness, Hart also served as president of the Los Angeles Realty Board and was a leader in the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

Although Edwin G. Hart is probably best remembered today for the major role he played in introducing and promoting avocados and starting what has become a multi-billion-dollar worldwide agricultural industry, we who live in La Habra Heights also remember him as the energetic visionary who spent 20 years of his life establishing our unique community as a beautiful place with residents still dedicated to rural living.

Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise noted, photos provided by the La Habra Heights Historical Committee. Portions of this article were adapted from Leila Langston's excellent stories in *Heights Life* in 2006 and 2007. The author is also grateful for the assistance (once again) of Paul Spizzari, Director of the Homestead Museum, who gave an informative online presentation about the growth of the California avocado industry (find it at homesteadmuseum.blog for June 28, 2020, and be sure to visit this fine museum when it reopens).

Aerial view of Hacienda Road (far right), circa 1928.



A true home for our residents

Located in beautiful, rural La Habra Heights, California, **The Heights Senior Care** is a residential care home serving seniors in LA County.

The Heights offers a quieter, more laid-back atmosphere than typical group homes, so residents can take life slowly in our lovely natural surroundings. We provide:

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- Three daily, homemade, nutritious meals based on dietary needs. Food is also prepared for special occasions.
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- Daily medication assistance and management—we take this *very* seriously.
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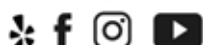


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562.266.1595

gatewaycitieskravmaga.com



LINE ADS in Heights Life are an effective,
inexpensive way to advertise your products
and services to all of La Habra Heights. See
our advertising rates on page 14 for details.

Heights Life ADVERTISING RATES

For-profit business and private-party ads

| | 6 issues | 11 issues |
|---|-------------|------------|
| 1" line ad: black & white (3.75"W x 1"H) | \$ 93.50 | \$ 165.00 |
| 1" line ad: color (3.75"W x 1"H) | \$ 100.00 | \$ 175.00 |
| 2" business card ad: black & white (3.75"W x 2"H) | \$ 396.00 | \$ 660.00 |
| 2" business card ad: color (3.75"W x 2"H) | \$ 506.00 | \$ 770.00 |
| 1/4-page ad: black & white (3.75"W x 5"H) | \$ 660.00 | \$1,100.00 |
| 1/4-page ad: color (3.75"W x 5"H) | \$ 880.00 | \$1,512.50 |
| 1/2-page ad: color (7.5"W x 5"H) | \$ 1,210.00 | \$2,200.00 |
| Full-page ad: color (bleed: 8.625"W x 11.125"H)* | \$1,760.00 | \$3,300.00 |
| Full-page ad: color (non-bleed: 7.5"W x 10"H) | \$1,760.00 | \$3,300.00 |

Paid non-profit 501(c)(3) ads (space guaranteed)

| | | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| 1/4-page ad: black & white (3.75"W x 5"H) | \$ 330.00 | \$ 550.00 |
| 1/4-page ad: color (3.75"W x 5"H) | \$ 440.00 | \$ 770.00 |
| 1/2-page ad: color (7.5"W x 5"H) | \$ 660.00 | \$1,100.00 |

Free non-profit 501(c)(3) ads

Based on space available.

One-time ad

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1/4-page ad: color (3.75"W x 5"H) | \$ 165.00 |
| 1/2-page ad: color (7.5"W x 5"H) | \$ 220.00 |

Digital ad artwork must be in JPEG, TIFF or PDF format at 300 DPI resolution or higher in actual ad size. For bleed ads, see measurements above. Do not send ad files embedded in Microsoft Word or Excel documents. *Heights Life* is not responsible for poor-quality reproduction from low-resolution or out-of-focus files or for incorrectly-sized bleed ads.*

• Although we prefer digital files, we can scan good-quality camera-ready art. All typography and line art should be clean and sharp. If the ad includes photographs or pictures of half-toned images, they should be sharply focused and properly exposed. *Heights Life* is not responsible for the quality of photographic reproduction.

• Payment for each ad or ad cancellation must be received by the deadline date for ad artwork, which is the 10th of the month prior to the issue date (e.g., ad artwork and payment for the April issue are due March 10).

* Text or photos that you do not want cut off must be within the 8.25"W x 10.75"H "live" area. For bleed ads, include at least 1/8-inch (.125-inch) bleed areas and trim marks.

ADVERTISING POLICY: La Habra Heights Improvement Association (LHHIA) reserves the right to accept or reject advertising for *Heights Life* and to delete objectionable words and phrases. Submission of an advertisement to *Heights Life* does not constitute a commitment by LHHIA to publish the advertisement. Publication of an advertisement does not constitute an agreement for continued publication. *Heights Life* and LHHIA will not be liable for failure to publish an advertisement as requested or for more than one incorrect insertion of an advertisement. *Heights Life* and LHHIA liability shall be limited to an adjustment for the cost of the space occupied by any error, with maximum liability being cancellation of the cost of the first incorrect advertisement or republication of the correct advertisement. Under no circumstances shall *Heights Life* or LHHIA be liable for consequential damage of any kind. The editors of *Heights Life* attempt to screen advertisers carefully, but we are neither responsible for nor liable for the performance or non-performance of advertisers. If you have compliments or complaints involving advertisers, please contact LHHIA. For more information, please call Monica Gunns at 714-412-2667.

Make checks payable to LHHIA and mail to: LHHIA, P.O. Box 241, La Habra, CA 90631. Advertising Co-directors: Monica Gunns and Carolyn Boehringer.



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Maclane Valentine (18) • 714-514-6973 – House-sitting and pet-sitting and general yard cleanup. Mac also is available to play bagpipes for various occasions.

Members of the La Habra Heights Improvement Association may run notices in the Youth Employment Roster for free.

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LHH Community Events



Public meetings of the La Habra Heights City Council, the Planning Commission, the Roads Advisory Committee and the Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee have been suspended until further notice due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. However, some meetings will be held remotely and may be viewed on the internet with written and phone-in comments allowed. See lhhcity.org for more information and updates to dates shown below.

MARCH 8 La Habra Heights City Council meeting: 6:30 p.m.

MARCH 17 *Happy St. Patrick's Day*

MARCH 18 Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting: 6 p.m.

MARCH 23 Planning Commission meeting: 6:30 p.m.

MARCH 24 Roads Advisory Committee meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Emergency & City Numbers

| | |
|---|--------------|
| EMERGENCY | 911 |
| CITY HALL: lhhcity.org | 562-694-6302 |
| SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT (INDUSTRY STATION)..... | 626-330-3322 |
| RANGER SERVICES..... | 562-698-1446 |
| FIRE DEPARTMENT (non-emergency)..... | 562-694-8283 |
| LA HABRA HEIGHTS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT..... | 562-697-6769 |
| LOS ANGELES COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL..... | 562-940-6898 |
| FIDO COME HOME (report lost and found pets)..... | 562-694-8090 |
| REPUBLIC WASTE SERVICES..... | 800-700-8610 |

La Habra Heights City Council

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| BRIAN BERGMAN..... | 562-690-5047..... | Briansbergman@hotmail.com |
| CAREY KLINGFUS..... | 562-697-2561..... | carey@AELInspector.com |
| DENNIS LAHERTY..... | 714-401-0873..... | Dennis.laherty@gmail.com |
| JANE WILLIAMS..... | 562-697-5473..... | jwilliams90631@gmail.com |
| NORM ZEZULA..... | 562-697-9914..... | normzezulaLhh@gmail.com |

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 BOY SCOUT TROOP 1814 • 951-538-8377 or cookmaster251@yahoo.com
 BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB • 562-694-1805 • ourchildrensfuture.org
 HABITAT AUTHORITY • habitatauthority.org/waystoHELP
 MEALS ON WHEELS • 562-383-4221 • LaHabraMealsonWheels.org
 VCC: THE GARY CENTER • 562-264-6000 • vccthegarycenter.org

= Become a member =

La Habra Heights Improvement Association is a 501(c)(3) volunteer organization (Tax ID# 95-2455456) that receives no funding from the City of La Habra Heights—so we rely on your annual dues and other donations to pay for our many community events and projects. Annual membership dues are:

- Regular: **\$35**
- Bronze: **\$75**
- Silver: **\$100**
- Gold: **\$250**
- Platinum: **\$500+**

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Catherine Richert, 'Morning With Santa' Chairperson (catherinerichert@aol.com).....562-697-0962
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Stan Carroll, Director (gw1763@gmail.com).....562-697-1187
Angela Owen, Director (arowen3@yahoo.com).....562-201-1119

Heights Life: heightslifeeditor@gmail.com

Editors: **Dan and Barbara Stracner**.....310-614-6878
 Advertising Co-chairperson: **Carolyn Boehringer**, Director.....310-849-4582
 Advertising Co-chairperson: **Monica Gunns**, Director.....714-412-2667

Welcome Wagon: welcomewagonLHHIA@gmail.com

Chairperson: **Vicki Cooke**.....562-694-4949



SHERIFF REPORT

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2020

Identity theft: 2, Vehicle & boating laws: 3, Vandalism: 1, Persons dead: 1, Persons mentally ill: 1, Federal offense involving money: 1, Miscellaneous felonies: 1, Miscellaneous misdemeanors: 1, Miscellaneous offenses: 1.

TOTAL INCIDENTS: 12



LHH Fire Report

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2020

Advanced life-support calls: 37 (23 in LHH, 14 in LA County), Basic life-support calls: 21, Public assist: 8, Fire calls: 7, Traffic collisions: 2, Automatic aid into LA County: 22.

TOTAL INCIDENTS: 97

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