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1772 Hacienda Rd. La Habra Heights, CA 90631

MAY@R'S CORNER

t our September City Council meeting, we celebrated a significant transition for our Fire Department when we extended heartfelt thanks to outgoing Fire Chief Mitch Brookhyser, a dedicated,

steadfast leader who guided the department through years of challenges, strengthened our volunteer program and ensured that our community remained safe. His commitment and professionalism have had lasting impact, and we wish him the very best.

Iohn Pespisa

We also proudly welcomed our new Fire Chief Edward Martin, who came to La Habra Heights as a fire captain in 2016 after 35 years of service with the Los Angeles Fire Department. Over his career, Chief Martin has been deployed to major national emergencies, including New York City after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Louisiana after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita—experiences that shaped him into an exceptional leader and mentor.

Chief Martin is deeply committed to the success of every volunteer firefighter who joins LHHFD, taking pride in seeing them grow and advance in their careers. He works tirelessly to foster a strong relationship between LHHFD and the residents it proudly serves.



Fire Department Workshop October 4 at 10 a.m. at City Hall

As part of our ongoing efforts to engage the community on critical city issues, we will hold a public workshop at City Hall on October 4 at 10 a.m. that will focus on the Fire Department. We encourage all residents to attend this important session, which will cover:

- A historical overview of changes to the Fire Department over the past decade.
- The impact of unfunded state and county mandates.
- Fire facility, equipment and gear-replacement funding.
- General Fund diversions and their impact on reserves.
- A critical review of the current Fire Assessment.

This discussion will set the stage for solutions to strengthen our Fire Department and secure long-term funding for public safety.

Upcoming Community Workshops at City Hall

- **Public Safety**—**November 8 at 10 a.m.**—Analysis of the City's longstanding relationship with LA County Sheriff's Department, cost trends and projections and exploration of alternative law enforcement options.
- **Administration**—*January 10 at 10 a.m.*—Discussion on staffing challenges, reliance on part-time employees, lack of career pathways and the need for technology modernization.
- **General Session on Revenue**—*February 7 at 10 a.m.*—A summary of fiscal challenges, projected deficits and a community conversation about revenue solutions and potential voter-supported measures.

Your voice will help shape our City's future

These public workshops are more than just informational sessions—they will help guide decisions about the City's future revenue needs and funding priorities. Your participation is critical to ensuring that La Habra Heights remains a safe, well-resourced and financially stable community. Please mark your calendars and make your voice heard.

—John Pespisa



Gil Taylor

PRESIDENT'S PEN

ur *Heights Life* editor Dan Stracner took the photo on the front cover at our annual *Halloween Haunt*. He spotted six kids sitting together on hay bales and asked them to "look scary!"—and they obliged in a most delightful way! The young man dressed as Dracula even inspired our annual Halloween feature story on page 8.

In a few days, Dan—and you—will have new photo opportunities when we once again turn the gym at
The Park into "La Haunted Heights" on
Halloween night for

our 2025 Haunt. See details on page 4.

Come join us and enjoy the handiwork of LHHIA boardmembers Lynn Kelley and Angela Owen and their talented team of volunteers. Please remember to bring one bag of individually-wrapped candy for each participating child. That candy will be handed out from our trick-or-treat houses! You'll also find lots of games, goodies and



spooky music, as well as a fun, family-friendly atmosphere.

Please note that the November issue of *Heights Life* will arrive a few days later than usual so that we can include plenty of photos from the *Haunt*.

Thanks to our Friends of Music in The Park

As I promised last month, you'll find our tribute to our much-appreciated *Friends of Music in The Park* on page 6. Many of them have been generously donating for years to help us keep the music playing and the dancers dancing each summer. We cordially invite you to join them.

Save December 6 for Morning With Santa!

Our next holiday event is our popular LHHIA *Morning With Santa*, the annual Christmas season celebration in the gym at The Park that will take place this year on Saturday, December 6. Mark your calendar and join us at 9 a.m. when the big guy in the red suit arrives at the gym in a big red Heights Fire Department truck.

—Gil Taylor

Trash clean-up on Hacienda Road: October 18

eights resident John Dominguez organized a volunteer group in July 2024 to pick up trash on Hacienda Road, and since then, volunteers have helped clean up this major Heights throughway several times.



The next clean-up gathering will occur on the morning of **Saturday**, **October 18**. If you'd like to join in, meet at 6:30 a.m. at City Hall, where you'll be issued your safety vest, gloves, pick-up stick and trash bags. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes. Work will continue until 9 a.m. Thank you in advance for helping keep Hacienda Road clean!

La Habra Heights Improvement Association's Annual

Haloxen Haloxen

October 31 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the gym at The Park



- Trick-or-treat houses!Games & prizes!
 - Photo backdrops!Halloween music!

ADMISSION:

One bag of individually-wrapped candy per child



Oct. 18 • 8 a.m. to noon at The Park

La Habra Heights residents only—bring your ID!

BRING: Electronics, recyclables, documents for shredding, bulky items (appliances, furniture, mattresses) and green waste (must be bagged or bundled and no more than 4 feet). DO NOT BRING: Hazardous materials, paint, oil, batteries and tires—these items will not be accepted.

Please be prepared to offload materials from your vehicle and to separate them by material type into the proper collection area.

Collaborated by the City of La Habra Heights and WARE Disposal

Sandbag workshop on November 2

From our LHH Emergency Preparedness Committee

Time: 9 a.m. • Place: The Park on Hacienda Road

f you think that filling and deploying sandbags requires no training, think again. When Al Villagomez, head of our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) for La Habra Heights, attended a training session led by Team Rubicon, he learned that using proper techniques makes a significant difference when you're trying to protect your property from flooding.

That's why Al is bringing Team Rubicon, a veteran-led humanitarian group that specializes in disaster prevention and relief, to our community for a hands-on workshop to teach us how to do it right on November 22 at The Park at 9 a.m.

Sandbags can provide a critical flood barrier that is stable, watertight and effective at diverting water. But many people overfill or improperly pack and place bags that don't form a tight seal, letting water seep through. You'll also learn creative ways to use other objects you may have to create water barriers.

To participate in the workshop, wear long pants and closed-toe shoes or work boots and bring gloves and eye protection.

Come a little early at 8:30 a.m. if you'd like to learn more about how our CERT volunteers receive crucial disaster-related training on fire suppression, medical operations and light search and rescue. CERT training provides residents with skills and tools necessary to take care of themselves, their families and neighbors during a disaster until emergency responders can reach them. You'll also learn how you can join the Heights CERT team and receive such training yourself.



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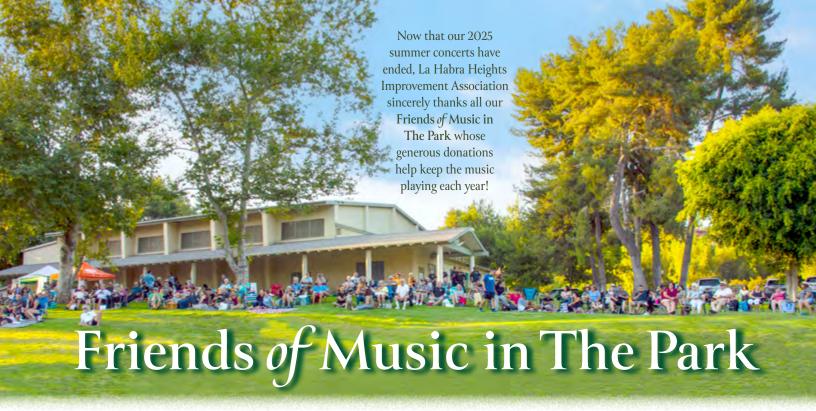
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LHHIA has been bringing you summer concerts since 1989!

Trudy Bohr



Please join us next summer for our 2026 Music in The Park!

La Habra Heights Improvement Association

By Beverley Lepak, Horticulturist

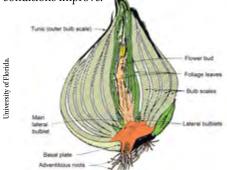
& Landscape Consultant

all is harvest season when we think about colorful leaves, corn fields with scarecrows, pumpkin patches, apple picking and, of course, Halloween. It's the time when growth of many trees and plants slows down, and some go dormant for winter. But fall is also the best time in La Habra Heights to plant spring-flowering bulbs, since the ground doesn't freeze and damaging frost is rare.

Bulbs from the Mediterranean, South Africa, the Americas, Eurasia—and even from colder regions—can thrive here. Some easyto-grow California native bulbs are Allium (onions), Bloomeria, Brodiaea, Calochortus, Dichelostemma and Triteleia. Bulbs from elsewhere that grow well here include nonnative Allium, Anemone, Crocus, Cyclamen, Daffodils, Dutch Irises, Freesia, Fritillaria, Hyacinths, Llilies, Muscari, Romulea, Scilla, Sparaxis and ever-popular Tulips.

SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

A bulb is a type of *geophyte* (Greek for "earth plant") that stores its complete life cycle in a bulbous underground structure made up of concentric layers that contain reserves of nutrients and water necessary for the plant's survival. When above-ground plant parts-foliage, flowers and stalks-die back during times unfavorable to growth, the underground bulb survives as a perennial bud that resumes growing when seasonal conditions improve.



A bulb has a basal plate from which roots grow, as well as a thick, short stem surrounded by fleshy scale leaves or tunic. These scales contain food to sustain the bulb during dormancy and early growth. Most bulbs also have a papery outer covering.

Some bulbs naturally produce offsets (also called baby bulbs, bulblets or auxiliary bulbs) that are genetically identical to the parent





bulb. Growing at the base of the parent, these may be detached and planted. When offsets remain attached, they may start growing small plants of their own called bulbils. Onion (Allium) bulbs, which may take a year to mature, produce offsets that are often detached and used as seeds.

PLANTING YOUR BULBS

You can plant most bulbs directly in the ground, and some will naturalize over time. However, here in the Heights, gophers love eating our bulbs (although they don't seem to like Daffodils). To ward them off, place a wiremesh "gopher basket" (get them at nurseries and online) in the hole, add soil and plant your bulb. A similar protective wire basket above ground helps keep out rabbits and other critters.

Or plant your bulbs in pots (see above), and when they've bloomed and dried out, simply stack the pots containing dried bulbs and soil and wait until next year.

Follow planting instructions for the depth, width and distance between bulbs. Our heavy Heights clay soil needs amendments such as sand or perlite to improve drainage. Various fertilizers are specifically formulated for bulbs, or you can use bonemeal but be careful and don't add more than

Many California native bulbs can be tricky to grow and require specific soil mixes and conditions, so please do some homework.

SOME BULBS HAVE TO 'CHILL OUT'

Some bulbs can remain in the soil all year, including Daffodils, Freesias and most California natives. But some bulbs require a chill period. Dig them up and store them in a cool, dry place until about mid-October, and then place them in the refrigerator for six to eight weeks. Crocus, Hyacinths and Tulips, among others, need to be chilled.

In addition to flowering bulbs, fall is also the time to plant your garlic and onions.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE BULBS



hen the doors to the gym at The Park open for our annual LHHIA Halloween Haunt, it's a safe bet that some local lad or dad will

show up dressed as Count Dracula, the world's most famous vampire.

In the 128 years since Irish writer Bram

Stoker's Gothic horror novel *Dracula* was published in 1897, his blood-drinking villain has steadily grown in popularity, appearing in no less than 538 movies and countless (pun intended) books, stories, television

shows and video games ranging from frightening tales to funny cartoons.

In fact, Dracula is by far the world's most popular monster character, and some statisticians claim that he has now surpassed Sherlock Holmes as the most popular fictional character based on the overall number of media appearances. That's not even counting the literally thousands of other vampire characters that might be dubbed "the spawn of Dracula."

Not the first vampire

Although Dracula is the most popular vampire character, he's not the first. Whether you call them vampires, the undead or *nosferatu* (Stoker uses all three), myths and stories about these supernatural creatures are really ancient.

Vampire legends from Eastern Europe are the ones that are generally most familiar. It has been theorized that

Stoker's inspiration was Vlad III (right), aka "Vlad the Impaler," an extraordinarily cruel 15th-century Romanian prince from the region of Wallachia who called himself Vlad Draculya, a name derived from his



father, who was known by the sobriquet Vlad Dracul—"Vlad the Dragon"—due to his fierceness in battle. In old Romanian, Dracula means "son of Dracul." In some Romanian dialects, "Dracul" also means "the devil," a fact that Stoker recorded in his research notes for his novel.

The original name that Stoker chose for his fictional vampire was Count Wampyr, who was initially portrayed as an Austrian nobleman. But while researching Eastern European folklore, Stoker came upon the name Dracula, then changed his villain's



moniker and moved his castle to the central Romanian region of Transylvania.

Except for that now-famous name, however, Stocker's character bears little resemblance to Vlad III, the notorious ruler who impaled his many victims on upright stakes. Stoker's creation is much more reminiscent of two earlier, popular fictional vampires, both of whom were depicted as European noblemen.

The first was created in 1819 by Dr. John Polidori in his story "The Vampyre," often considered the first modern

vampire tale. Polidori was personal physician to the famous British poet Lord Byron (*right*), a notorious womanizer who is widely regarded as the model for

Lord Ruthven, the handsome, seductive vampire in the story.



Another fictitious British nobleman, Lord Varney, was the monster in Varney the Vampire, a popular series of sensationalistic "penny dreadful" pamphlets written by James Malcolm Rymer from 1845 through 1847.

Stoker no doubt knew these earlier works, and some passages in *Dracula* even echo the melodramatic prose in the lurid "Varney" pamphlets.

Stoker's creation first appeared on film in German F.W. Murnau's 1922



Nosferatu—but he wasn't called Dracula.
Stoker had died in 1912, and his widow had refused to give Murnau permission to use her husband's copyrighted work. So Murnau just



changed the name of his vampire to Count Orlok and made other modifications to the plot. When the film was released, Mrs. Stoker sued—and won. In addition to monetary penalties, Murnau was ordered to retrieve and destroy all prints of his film. Fortunately, several copies survived, and Nosferatu is now considered a masterpiece of the silent movie era.

In 1924, Hamilton Deane adapted *Dracula* for the stage in England, and his play was a great success. The American version, revised by John Balderston in 1927 for Broadway (*right*), was an even bigger hit, in



part because the count was played by a charismatic, 45-year-old Hungarian actor named Bela Lugosi.

When Tod Browning made his film version in 1931 for Universal, he cast Lugosi (below) in the title role—and movie history was made. The elegantly dressed villain with the aristocratic foreign accent became the paradigm for scores of future Draculas for the next quarter-century.



iversal Pict



onster character

Then in 1958, a quite different version of the count appeared in the British Hammer Film production of *Dracula* (released in the U.S. as *Horror of Dracula*). Christopher Lee's portrayal of the bloodthirsty fiend



featured two memorable innovations: the film was shot in color (with plenty of bright red blood) and the vampires, male and female, had prominent fangs. This was the first (and arguably the best) of a series of nine Hammer films over the next 16 years featuring Dracula and his various progeny. Dracula was killed by sunlight and turned to dust in the first film, which was so successful that Hammer had to invent a way to resurrect the vampire for a sequel. This became a recurring formula in subsequent movies, with evermore fantastical deaths and rebirths, until Lee called a halt and abandoned the role.

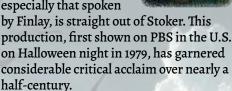
Most film adaptations of *Dracula* have strayed significantly from Stoker's original story, including the lavishly produced but utterly misnamed *Bram Stoker's Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola (1992), starring Gary Oldman as the count.

This film portrayed Dracula as a Vlad-like prince and warrior whose wife commits



suicide, causing him to blaspheme and thus become a vampire—none of that is in Stoker's novel. Although the screenwriters and director took multiple other liberties with Stoker's story, their sumptuous effort won four Oscars (for costumes, makeup, sound and design), making it the most award-winning Dracula movie to date.

The version that many critics and film historians consider closest to Stoker's original story is the 1977 BBC miniseries Count Dracula, starring Louis Jourdan as the vampire and Frank Finlay as his nemesis Professor Van Helsing. Much of the dialog, especially that spoken



Frank Langella (right) starred as Count Dracula in a well-received 1977 Broadway revival of the stage play, which was then made into a movie



in 1979 starring Langella with Sir Laurence Olivier playing Van Helsing. Langella's fangless performance was arguably the most erotic and seductive yet filmed, although critical reception for this movie adaptation was mixed.

From horror to humor

In 1948, 62-year-old Bela Lugosi again



played Dracula, this time in Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein, the first time that the character, along with

other Universal monsters, appeared in a comedy. The film was a major hit, and a series of so-called "horror-comedies" followed. From then on, iconic monsters were fair game for comedic treatments, eventually including cartoons used both for entertainment and product marketing.

A cartoon version of Lugosi as Dracula briefly appeared in a 1933 Disney short

film, Mickey's Gala Premier. Many years later, the Disney Company would turn Mickey himself into a parody of the count

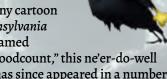


for Halloween celebrations at its theme parks and would publish a graphic novel called *Dracula* in 2019 that featured Mickey and his friends encountering a spooky character that looks much like the aged count from the Coppola film.

Al Lewis played "Grandpa Sam Dracula" in *The Munsters* CBS TV series (1964-67), and Dracula also appeared as a costumed villain in a *Scooby Doo* episode in 1967.



Not to be outdone by Disney, Warner Bros. introduced its own Dracula-like character in a 1963 Bugs Bunny cartoon titled *Transylvania* 6-5000. Named



"Count Bloodcount," this ne'er-do-well vampire has since appeared in a number of subsequent Looney Tunes shorts.



From 1970 to 1972, "Drac" appeared as a recurring, far-from-scary character on Filmation's *Groovie Goolies* on CBS, which featured a cast of hip comic monsters

who lived together in a crumbling castle.

In 1972, Sesame Street's Muppet character "Count von Count" debuted.
Speaking with a Bela Lugosi-like accent, he teaches young viewers how to count, and he's still featured on the show after 53 years.



Obviously 1972 was a banner year for Dracula projects. That same year, Marvel Comics introduced its *The Tomb of Dracula* series that reached 70 issues before ending in 1979. The series featured a

group of vampire hunters who fought Dracula and other supernatural villains.



Sony Pictures got in on the Dracula act in 2012 when it introduced the first film in its *Hotel Transylvania* franchise, which currently has four feature films, as well as TV shows

and video games. The series focuses on the adventures of various monsters who stay at the hotel to get away from scary humans.

think about the ongoing popularity of his memorable creation? Whole books have been written about that—so we've only covered some blood-curdling highlights.

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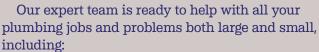


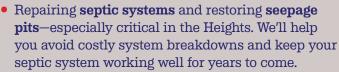


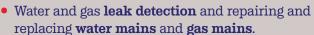




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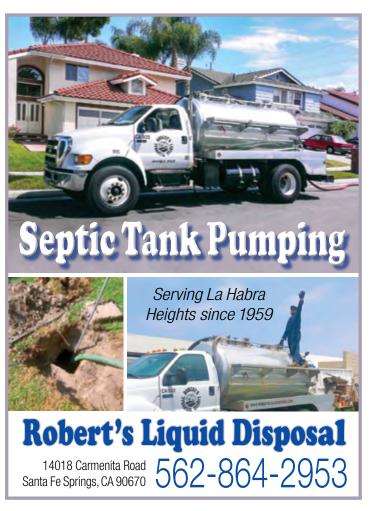


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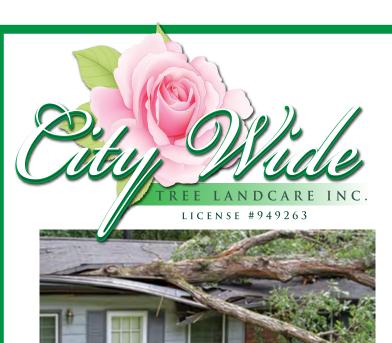
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Statistics pulled from CRMLS date range Jan 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025



Community Events

October 4 Public MEETING at City Hall concerning LHH FIRE DEPARTMENT NEEDS: 10 a.m.

October 13 City Council meeting: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

October 16 Emergency Preparedness: 6 p.m. at City Hall.

October 18 Quarterly Cleanup: 8 a.m.-noon at The Park.

October 18 Hacienda Clean-up: 6:30-9 a.m. Meet at City Hall.

October 22 Roads Advisory meeting: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. October 28 Planning Commission: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

October 31 Halloween Haunt: See page 4 for details.



P.O. Box 241 La Habra, CA 90631

Emergency & City Numbers

EMERGENCY	911
CITY HALL: lhhcity.org	562-694-6302
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT562-694-5923	or 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
Ware Disposal	877-714-9273

La Habra Heights City Council

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Greg Stefflregregstefflre@gmail.com
Norm Zezula562-697-9914normzezulaLhh@gmail.com

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BSA TROOP 1814 • 951-538-8377 or cookmaster251@yahoo.com BSA TROOP 793 (female troop) • Call Carl Diamond at 562-706-8279 or email Carl@cdiamond.org

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Boys and Girls Club • 562-694-1805 • ourchildrensfuture.org HABITAT AUTHORITY • habitatauthority.org/waystohelp Meals on Wheels • 562-451-9047 • LaHabraMealsonWheels.org VCC: The Gary Center • 562-264-6000 • vccthegarycenter.org



Advanced life-support calls: 18 (11 in LHH, 7 in LA County), Basic life-support calls: 26 (15 in LHH, 11 in LA County), Public assist: 2 (1 in LHH, 1 in LA County), Fire calls: 11 (10 in LHH,1 in LA County), Traffic collisions: 7 (5 in LHH, 2 in LA County), "LHH Island": 3, Automatic aid into LA County: 22.

Total calls: 67



AUGUST 2025

Hit & run: 2, Vandalism: 3, Grand theft: 2, Natural death: 1, Elder abuse: 2, Petty theft: 1, Embezzlement: 1, Property lost or found: 1, Vehicle impounded: 2, Misc. arrests: 2, Traffic accidents: 4.

Total incidents: 21

AHHIA La Habra Heights Improvement Association

BOARD of DIRECTORS • 1hhia.com

DOMNO Of DINLETONS • III	iia.com	
Gil Taylor, President (LHHIAPresident@gmail.com)	562-322-3453	
Lynn Kelley, Vice President, Halloween Haunt & Yard Sale Co- (lynnkelley91@gmail.com)		
Pam McVicar, Secretary & Membership Chairperson (Memberlhhia@gmail.com)	714-504-3415	
Diana Garcia Taylor, Treasurer & Morning With Santa Chairpe (Diana@myjesmar.com)		
Susan Brooks, Easter Egg Hunt Chairperson & Yard Sale Co-Cl (susanbrooks827@gmail.com)		
Angela Owen, Halloween Haunt Co-Chairperson & Yard Sale (arowen3@yahoo.com)		
Carolyn Boehringer, Advertising Co-Chairperson	310-849-4582	
Monica Gunns, Advertising Co-Chairperson	714-412-2667	
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Editors: Dan & Barbara Stracner	562-632-0691	
For information about advertising in Heights Life, visit lhhia.org or call:		
Advertising Co-Chairperson: Carolyn Boehringer	310-849-4582	

Welcome Wagon: welcomewagonLHHIA@gmail.com

Chairperson: Vicki Cooke 562-694-4949

= 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
DIAMOND	\$1,000+
SAPPHIRE	\$5,000-

Pay online at **www.lhhia.com** or mail your check (made payable to LHHIA) to: LHHIA, P.O. Box 241, La Habra, CA 90631.