

Heights Life

A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

La Habra Heights Improvement Association

Serving the Heights since 1939 • November 2025

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Dedication ceremony for our new fire engine at The Park on November 8 from 1 to 3 p.m.



The official dedication ceremony for the La Habra Heights Fire Department's new Type 1 fire engine will be held on Saturday, November 8, at The Park from 1 to 3 p.m. Residents and guests are encouraged to join in the festivities.

This major addition to the city's firefighting fleet was made possible by a generous \$1 million grant secured by State Senator Bob Archuleta.

A Type 1 fire engine is a heavy-duty firefighting apparatus used in urban, rural and suburban areas to fight fires in homes, businesses, buildings and landscapes. Featuring a powerful pump with a high gallon-per-minute output, large water and hose capacities and long, expandable ladders, the truck is built primarily for operation on paved surfaces.

In addition to the dedication ceremony, guests can get a close look not only at the new engine, but also a showcase of other equipment—and they can meet firefighters and paramedics who protect the Heights. The LHHFD crew will put on live demonstrations, including a vehicle-extrication exercise.

Fun activities for kids and family photo opportunities will also be available. LHHFD merchandise will be for sale, with proceeds directly contributing to the purchase of essential fire department gear and safety equipment.

Councilmember donates funds to purchase badges for La Habra Heights firefighters

La Habra Heights City Councilmember Greg Steffre has generously donated \$5,000 for purchasing badges for La Habra Heights volunteer firefighters.



Due to ongoing budget constraints, some of our firefighters have been sharing badges with their team members.

Much more than uniform accessories for firefighters, badges are a traditional and visible symbol of their commitment to safeguarding our community and a ceremonial emblem of their dedication and honor.



Gil Taylor



PRESIDENT'S PEN

As I mentioned last month, this issue of *Heights Life* is arriving a little later than usual so that we can share photos from our annual LHHIA *Halloween Haunt*, a Heights tradition for 45 years! See pages 8 and 9 for all the spooky (but happy!) faces and creative costumes.

This year's *Haunt* was the handiwork of LHHIA boardmembers Lynn Kelley and Angela Owen and their talented team of volunteers. We're grateful to everyone who helped turn the gym at The Park into "La Haunted Heights" and to the many families who spent Halloween with us.

Save December 6 for *Morning With Santa!*

Our next holiday event is our popular *Morning With Santa*, the annual LHHIA 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 Santa shows up at the gym in a big red Heights Fire Department truck, and then spend the next couple of hours having plenty of yuletide family fun. (See page 6.) Our December *Heights Life* will include photos.

Volunteers are always welcome!



All our LHHIA events are community affairs, and we always need volunteers from the community to help make them successful. Please get involved by contacting any LHHIA board member—you can find our contact information on page 16.

—Gil Taylor



Cover photo: "Sunset Before the Storm" by Dan Stracner

MAYOR'S CORNER



John Pespisa



AS WE MOVE THROUGH FALL, I'm encouraged by the steady progress we continue to make together as a community—from long-planned infrastructure improvements to meaningful public conversations about our City's future.

New traffic signal at Hacienda Road and Avocado Crest

After years of planning and coordination, the traffic signal at Hacienda Road and Avocado Crest is now fully operational. This improvement addresses a long-standing safety concern at an intersection challenged by limited visibility and high traffic volumes.

Residents and commuters will notice new signal timing, protected left-turns, and other enhancements. Please use extra caution during this transition period—slow down, watch for signal changes, and stay alert to pedestrians and cyclists. Together, we can ensure this project fulfills its goal of safer travel through our community.



Community Workshops: *Planning our future together*

The City's Strategic Planning Community Workshop Series continues to engage residents in meaningful discussions about La Habra Heights' priorities. These workshops provide transparency, gather public input, and help City leaders make informed decisions about infrastructure, public safety, staffing, and fiscal sustainability.

I want to thank all residents who participated in the recent Fire Department workshop. Your thoughtful questions, suggestions, and feedback were invaluable in shaping our understanding of community priorities for fire safety, brush clearance, and emergency preparedness. For those who were unable to attend, the full recap and key takeaways are available in the latest issue of *GuacTalk*, the City's online resident newsletter.

Here's a look at our upcoming workshops at City Hall:

PUBLIC SAFETY—Saturday, November 8 at 10 a.m.

- Analysis of the City's long-standing relationship with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.
- Cost trends compared with inflation and projections for the next decade.
- Preliminary assessment of alternative law enforcement providers, including insights from the Whittier Police Department.
- Clarification for residents on regional limitations in law enforcement contracting.



ADMINISTRATION—Saturday, January 10, 2026, at 10 a.m.

- Staffing challenges, including reliance on part-time and temporary employees.
- Lack of internal career pathways contributing to high turnover and loss of institutional knowledge.
- Technological modernization needs, particularly in Community Development.
- Risks associated with declining federal and state support, including outstanding FEMA reimbursements for flood/mudslide recovery.
- Broader implications of reduced intergovernmental aid on City operations.

REVENUE (General Session)—Saturday, February 7 at 10 a.m.

- Compilation of fiscal challenges and structural deficits highlighted in prior workshops.
- Projected increase in deficits and the City's deteriorating financial position if no action is taken.
- Preliminary discussion on revenue generation options, including a revised city tax to replace existing Roads and Fire Assessments.
- Solicitation of public input on long-term funding solutions and potential voter-supported revenue measures.

All workshops are held at City Hall, 1245 N. Hacienda Road, and are open to the public. Attending any session gives residents the opportunity to shape the City's planning, funding, and service decisions for the next decade. Materials and recordings from our prior public workshop sessions are available on the City website (lhcacity.org) for those who cannot attend in person.

Ongoing fire preparedness

In mid-October the City experienced several small fires along Harbor Blvd. Thanks to the swift action of Los Angeles County Fire the fire was contained rapidly, preventing serious damage. These fires highlighted how quickly fire conditions can escalate in our community, even after recent rains.



Because of that rainfall, new vegetation growth can become hazardous as it dries. Please continue to maintain defensible space and adhere to brush clearance requirements. Every properly maintained property contributes to the safety of the entire City.

La Habra Heights moves forward through smart investments, resident engagement, and our shared dedication to safety and sustainability. Thank you for staying involved and helping shape the future of our community.

—**John Pespisa**



SALUTING OUR VETERANS

Major General Thomas Taverney's name inscribed on Wall of Honor of U.S. Space Systems Command



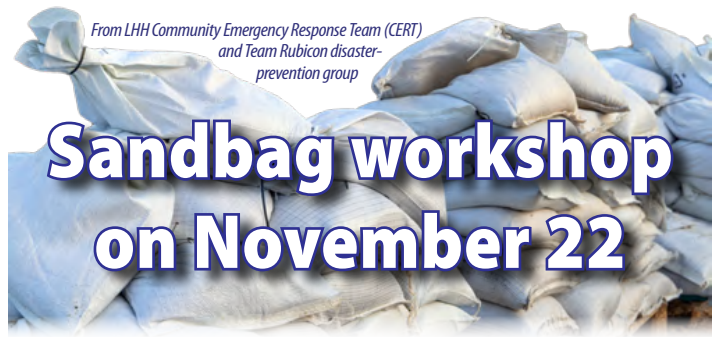
Thomas "Tav" Taverney, retired U.S. Air Force Major General and former Vice Commander of U.S. Air Force Space Command, was added to the Wall of Honor at Los Angeles Air Force Base in recognition of his many contributions to the U.S. space program. He is shown in the photo above (*in center, fourth from the left*) at the unveiling ceremony on September 4.

Tav and his wife Kathi have been residents of La Habra Heights for more than two decades.

This latest honor is one of many that Tav has received over the years, most recently the 2024 Thomas D. White Space Award, named in honor of the former USAF Chief of Staff. This annual award recognizes "outstanding contributions to aerospace progress." Tav's other awards include the Air Force Space and Missile Pioneers Award, Air Force Scientific Achievement Award for his design of an anti-satellite missile system, Werner Von Braun Program Management Award, Stellar Achievement Award and the General Bernard Schriever Lifetime Achievement Award.

During his military career, Tav served in numerous space-related positions, including those involving launch and in-orbit operations. He was heavily involved in the development of complex space systems, operational support software, the expendable launch vehicle program, space payload systems and missile-tracking systems. Tav has also served in many high-level positions in the civilian aerospace industry.

A native of New Jersey and a 1968 graduate of the Air Force Academy, Tav also earned a Master of Science degree from USC. He has published widely in aerospace journals and magazines, and he continues to be an advocate for the U.S. Space Force, founded as a new, separate branch of service in December 2019.



From LHH Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Team Rubicon disaster-prevention group

Sandbag workshop on November 22

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

If 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 Saturday, 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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LHH license plate frames on sale at City Hall for \$10 each

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MORNING WITH SANTA

Saturday, December 6

9 to 11 a.m. at The Park in La Habra Heights

Santa will arrive at the gym in a La Habra Heights Fire Truck!

Bring your cameras and take photos with Santa!

Games and prizes, treats, face-painting and holiday crafts.

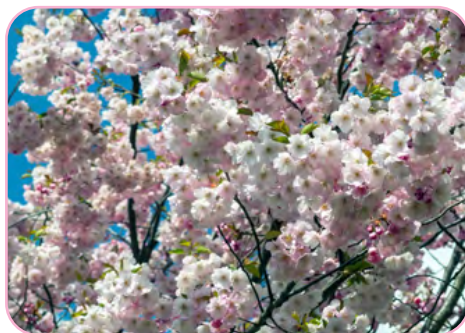
MORNING WITH SANTA is presented *free of charge* by La Habra Heights Improvement Association for all Heights residents and their families.

Please join us for a special morning of holiday family fun!

It's time to order bare root Cherry Trees

By DAVID NOLTE

Cherries not only taste great and look beautiful, they provide significant health benefits. The vibrant red fruit gets its familiar color from anthocyanin, an antioxidant that has strong anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial qualities. Cherries are also packed with other antioxidants, including Vitamin C, that help the body prevent or repair damage caused by free radicals.



A cherry tree in full bloom is a lovely sight. Up close, each blossom is a delicate, intricate flower, and when many flowers form dense, fragrant clusters, they resemble soft pink and white clouds floating in the landscape. Blossoms remain beautiful when they fall and carpet the ground, float in water or swirl in the wind.

Although cherry season in La Habra Heights won't arrive until late spring, now is the time to mail order your cherry trees as economical bare root plants that will be delivered during their December and January dormancy period.

Make sure that the trees you order are compatible with the "chill hours" that our climate receives each winter—that is, the cumulative number of winter hours a fruit tree's dormant buds are exposed to temperatures below 45 degrees F.

A tree's survival is directly related to getting the necessary number of chill hours, and that number varies greatly among different cherry varieties. If a tree flowers too early relative to coming cold weather, its flowers will be damaged and the tree will be unable to reproduce. Conversely, if a tree thinks that more winter weather is coming, it either won't



Royal Crimson cherries, one of three varieties that grow well in the Heights.

flower or will flower much later than it should—which means little or no fruit. If the tree doesn't get its proper chill hours over multiple years, it will weaken and likely die. Even if the struggling tree lives, its flowers and fruit will be reduced.

Because La Habra Heights averages only about 200 to 300 chill hours during our very mild winter, there are currently only three varieties of cherry trees that will grow well here: **Minnie Royal**, **Royal Lee** and **Royal Crimson**. You're probably more familiar with retail cherry favorites like Bing, Ranier, Lapins, Montmorency and Chelan, all of which require 800 to 1,000 chill hours—which means they wouldn't grow well here in the Heights.

When your bare root trees arrive, plant them promptly. To ensure proper pollination, plant each tree no more than 50 feet away from another tree of the same type that flowers at the same time; the line of sight between them should be uninterrupted. This close proximity makes it easy for bees and other pollinators to visit both trees on the same collecting trip and to transport pollen from one tree's male flowers to the other tree's female flowers. This "it takes two" rule applies to each type of cherry tree that you plant. *Minnie Royal* and *Royal Lee* are cross-pollinators that may be planted as a pair. If you only have room for a single cherry tree, plant a *Royal Crimson*, which is self-pollinating; however, even this variety

produces more and better-quality fruit if paired with another tree of the same type.

Cherry trees aren't particularly fussy about their soil, but they don't like being waterlogged, so make sure that you have good drainage. Your planting spot needs to receive at least six to eight hours of direct sunlight each day.

Although a bare root tree won't include soil, you'll be able to see where the tree's soil and root line was when the tree was harvested. When you plant, it's important to maintain this original soil line on the trunk, so dig a hole to match that depth. Planting too deep is a common cause of failure, so use a straight board as a guide to maintain the proper depth (*above*). Dig your hole twice as wide as the roots. Since cherry trees are fairly heavy feeders, use compost or other plant food. Spread the roots, bury and backfill them, and then water them well.

Add mulch—but not directly on the tree trunk—to help retain soil moisture, reduce soil temperature fluctuations, suppress weeds and provide organic material to the soil as the mulch decomposes.

I haven't had many insect or disease problems with my cherry trees, and I've been pleasantly surprised that I've lost so few cherry crops to birds. But if birds become a problem for you, bird netting is the best solution.



Minnie Royal (left) and Royal Lee (below left and above).



30-year Heights residents David and Kathryn Nolte grow 150 different organic fruit trees and bushes on their property. David is a lifelong member of the California Rare Fruit Growers organization.

Halloween



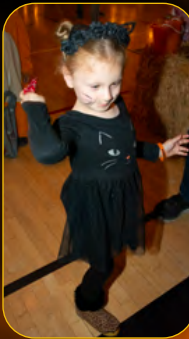
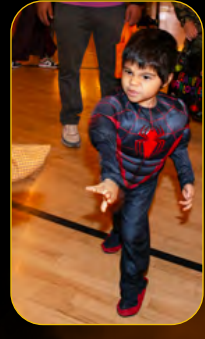
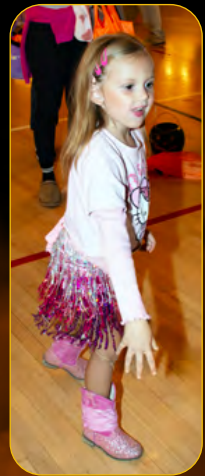
LHHIA has been transforming the gym into “La Haunted Heights” since 1980, and multiple generations have enjoyed this annual holiday event! We were especially delighted this year to see so many large family groups—many in clever costumes.



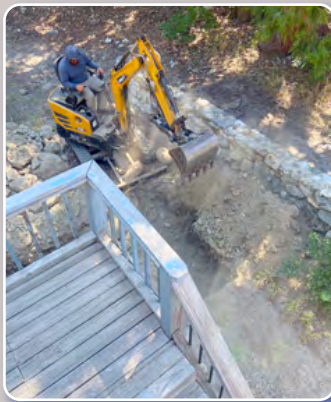
Haunt 2025



We're very grateful to all our hard-working LHHIA volunteers who help us set up and decorate the gym and clean up when the party's over. Special thanks go to Jan Fiore, Realtor, who sponsored this year's "Haunt" (please see the photo below).



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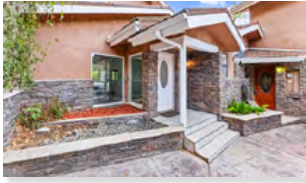


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\$1,420,000



927 E. Avocado Crest Road
La Habra Heights
\$2,888,888



2034 Virazon Drive
La Habra Heights
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TESTIMONIALS



We just had Jan represent us for the sale and purchase of a home, and we are so glad we chose her. Her expertise and knowledge were invaluable as we navigated some pretty "interesting" situations. She has all sorts of contacts and resources available to help, which made a big difference when preparing to sell and when moving. She is always encouraging and positive, and it was a delight to work with her.

- Noel H.

It's not a rumor, the talk is all true, Jan Fiore is the absolute "Go-To Gal" for real estate in La Habra Heights and all the surrounding areas. To put it bluntly, the area is very special, a real emerging Real Estate GEM, that is unlike anything else in LA or the OC. Jan is one of those realtors who truly is an expert in "her" area. She knows its history, its appeal, its value as well as its unforeseeable pitfalls too. In other words, she "gets it"... full stop.

- Michelle H.

THANK YOU

During this season of gratitude, I would like to express my sincere thanks for your trust and support. Wishing you a warm and joyful Thanksgiving!



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Community Events

- November 8 PUBLIC MEETING ON PUBLIC SAFETY:**
City Hall at 10 a.m. (See page 3)
- November 10** City Council meeting: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- November 11 VETERANS DAY.** City Hall closed.
- November 20** Emergency Preparedness: 6 p.m. at City Hall.
- November 25** Planning Commission: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- November 26** Roads Advisory meeting: 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- November 27 *Happy Thanksgiving!*** City Hall closed.



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Emergency & City Numbers

EMERGENCY	911
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SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.....	562-694-5923 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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Community Service Opportunities

- 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
- CUB SCOUT PACK 817 • 562-267-9022 • lahabrapack817@gmail.com
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- HABITAT AUTHORITY • habitatauthority.org/waystohelp
- MEALS ON WHEELS • 562-451-9047 • LaHabraMealsonWheels.org
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LHH Fire Report

SEPTEMBER 2025

Advanced life-support calls: 11 (7 in LHH, 4 in LA County), Basic life-support calls: 20 (6 in LHH, 14 in LA County), Public assist: 5 (4 in LHH, 1 in LA County), Fire calls: 14 (12 in LHH, 2 in LA County), Traffic collisions: 5 (2 in LHH, 3 in LA County), "LHH Island": 1, Automatic aid into LA County: 24.

Total calls: 56



Sheriff's Report

SEPTEMBER 2025

Aggravated assault: 1, Hit & run: 1, Trespassing: 1, Elder abuse: 2, Vehicle recovered: 1, Vehicle repossessed: 1, Child abuse: 1, Traffic accidents: 2.

Total incidents: 10



La Habra Heights Improvement Association

BOARD of DIRECTORS • lhhia.com

Gil Taylor, President (LHHIAPresident@gmail.com).....	562-322-3453
Lynn Kelley, Vice President, <i>Halloween Haunt & Yard Sale</i> Co-Chairperson (lynnkelley91@gmail.com).....	562-371-4603
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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.