Happy Veterans Day To All Who Served

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A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE—More than 700 people, including 74 Holocaust survivors (pictured above), attended the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust “Preserve the Legacy, Shape the Future” gala at The Beverly Wilshire on Sunday. For more information on the gala, see the full story on page 10.

Holiday Lighting Celebration

The 2017 Beverly Hills Holiday Lighting Celebration is set for next Thursday on Rodeo Drive. The event, hosted by Vanessa Lachey, begins at 5 p.m. and will include the lighting celebration, fireworks, food trucks and more. The evening will be capped off with a performance from four-time Billboard Music Award winner Robin Thicke at 6:30 p.m. At the event, the Courier will distribute the Holiday 2017 edition of its lifestyle supplement, Beverly Hills Style.

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Reznik Fails To Convince Beverly Hills City Council On Lago Vista, Basement Definition

By Victoria Talbot

Land Use attorney Ben Reznik of Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP lost an appeal Tuesday of the City’s clarification of the definition of a basement, and an appeal of the Planning Commission’s decision denying a Hillside R-1 permit at 1260 Lago Vista Dr. for hauling more than 1,500 cubic yards of earth on a street that is less than 24-feet wide Tuesday.

In two decisions that were made after-hours-long hearings, the City Council voted 5-0 to uphold the definition of basement and to uphold the denial of an R-1 permit.

“Prior to Tuesday’s meeting included five volumes of material submitted the day prior to the meeting that constituted the results, said Reznik, of a California Public Information Request he made to the city council. It was raw and unfiltered. Examination revealed that much of the material was duplicated or clearly, completely unrelated to the matters before the council.

The volume of material had the appearance of subterfuge, an attempt to bulky councilmembers in a logam of paper, which was not lost on the City Council.

The Lago Vista project raised questions as to the validity of an average grade plane for determining basement areas, rather than measuring basement height at individual points, specifically when, as with this property, significant grade differences exist around the perimeter of the structure.

Thus on July 13, Assistant Director of Community Development Ryan Gehlich issued a clarification of the definition of a basement in the City’s existing ordinance which stated that, “a ‘basement’ shall mean any floor level below a story which has a finished floor level that is maximum of three feet above grade at any point along the perimeter of the building.

Kramer’s Tobacco Shop To Close After 68 Years

By Matt Lopez

Beverly Hills smokers will soon have one less resource for their tobacco needs. Kramer’s Pipe & Tobacco, one of the City’s longest-tenured businesses, will close its doors at the end of this year, shop owner Marsha Kramer confirmed to the Courier.

Kramer cited numerous issues – including increased rent as the company’s lease ends, rising state tobacco taxes and pending FDA regulations – as reasons for the closure.

California now lumped together pipe tobacco and cigars with cigarettes. Last November, voters approved boosting the cigarette tax to $2 per pack. Kramer also said proposed FDA regulations would make it “nearly impossible"

City, School District Agree On Cusp Of Reaching New JPA

By Laura Coleman

After months of delays, multiple contentious meetings and an embarrassing amount of doublespeak coming from public officials, it looks like the City of Beverly Hills and the Beverly Hills Unified School District are poised to reach consensus on a new Joint Powers Agreement (JPA).

“All issues other than the annual amount the City will pay [have been] resolved satisfactorily,” confirmed Board of Education President Mel Spitz.

“A meeting will be held to resolve that question, and I am confident that a new three-year agreement will result.

The current $9.7 million JPA contract, which is set to expire at the end of the month, governs how school facilities are made available to the City.

Following an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the school district to justify increasing the JPA to $13.5 million (an outside report asserting that the current JPA actually cost the district money that data to corroborate the assertion), it is unclear as to just how much of an increase, if any, the City will approve for the JPA.

Vice Mayor Julian Gold, who sits on the City/School District JPA liaison committee, confirmed that the JPA discussion is indeed “moving along.”

NEW FAVORITES – The Ivy’s Richard Irving has created a dreamboat passion fruit martini (with Stoli Elite vodka) and an elegant salad with Santa Barbara shrimp, cannelini beans, crispy bacon, kale and arugula dressed with quince vinaigrette. Not to be missed.

For more photos, see George Christy’s column on page 6.

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Laura Hopper Launches First Young Adult Book, I Never

Laura Hopper always wanted to be a writer and now she’s seeing that achievement come true with the release of her new Young Adult (YA) novel this week.

The 1986 BHHS grad will celebrate her book I Never with a reception, sale and signing at 2 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 11 at Children’s Book World, 10580 W. Pico Blvd.

The “sex positive” tale of young love and a high school couple’s first foray into love and romance is the result of several intertwining experiences.

As a manager for screenwriters, Hopper was always bouncing ideas off her clients. When, at her son’s Little League games she realized how titillated fellow moms were by Fifty Shades Of Grey (“It’s about an unhealthy relationship and badly-written”) she decided to write something for teens that moved her as much as Judy Blume’s Forever did when she was in eighth grade.

“I wanted to write a story that was delicious and juicy about a healthy relationship a girl would want for the first time,” Hopper says. When she showed it to an agent friend he said, “let’s take a shot at some publishing houses. Houghton Mifflin has picked up the title.

In Hopper’s book, Janey King, a junior, is asked out by Luke Hallstrom, who Hopper based on Jake Ryan from the film Sixteen Candles. “He’s the kind of guy you never thought would look at you and makes you see yourself though his eyes. There is a touch of fantasy.”

74 Holocaust Survivors Attend Event Previewing Museum’s New VR Project

CNN’s Wolf Blitzer Honored at Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust’s ‘Preserve The Legacy, Shape The Future’ Gala

Wolf Blitzer, CNN lead political anchor and host of The Situation Room was honored by Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust at its annual gala, “Preserve the Legacy, Shape the Future,” last Sunday at The Beverly Wilshire.

Blitzer was born in Germany to Holocaust survivors Cesia and David Blitzer. In 2014, when he participated in CNN’s Roots program, he learned during a visit to Yad Vashem that his paternal grandparents died in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In 2015, he hosted the CNN documentary Voices Of Auschwitz, which profiled four survivors.

Melissa Rivers, The New York Times best-selling author, award-winning producer and entertainment journalist, was the emcee.

The gala, attended by more than 700 people, including 74 Holocaust Survivors, featured a special preview of the museum’s new virtual reality project, an educational tool using cutting-edge technology to present Holocaust survivor testimonies in an engaging and interactive way for generations to come.

In addition to Blitzer and Rivers, Beverly Hills Mayor Lili Bosse spoke about her experience as the daughter of Holocaust survivors.

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust in Pan Pacific Park is the oldest museum of its kind in the U.S. Founded in 1961 by a group of local Holocaust Survivors who wanted a permanent, safe home for their Holocaust-era photos and artifacts, the museum moved to its permanent home in Pan Pacific Park in 2010.

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust provides free Holocaust education and opportunities for dialogue with Holocaust survivors to the public.

The museum is open seven days a week, and admission is always free. www.lamoth.org.