



LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



May/June 2022 · Volume 44 Number 3



CBS Television Studio in 2018. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy

A Win-Win for Television City

By Adrian Scott Fine

Television City (TVC) is an iconic place in Los Angeles, both for its commanding presence and stature in the Fairfax District at the southeast corner of Beverly Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue, and for its undeniable lead role in making television history.

As a place that helps define this city, and a touchstone to our roots dating to the early '50s, TVC also illustrates just how vulnerable our heritage can be as part of the ongoing surge in growth and new development throughout L.A.

The potential for loss is the reason the Conservancy had Television City designated as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) in 2018. It is also why we have worked so hard for the past year to ensure proposed new development surrounding TVC is compatible and does not overwhelm this historic place.

In April, after nearly a year of continuously meeting and working through various aspects, the Conservancy and Hackman Capital Partners, owner of TVC, jointly announced a new, revised plan and win-win solution that provides a balance for preservation and new development at the site.

“Television City is one of the great Hollywood studio lots,” says Michael Hackman, Founder and CEO of Hackman Capital Partners. “We are committed to investing in this important historic resource while ensuring it remains a robust job creator and world-class studio for decades to come. We are pleased to have worked with the Conservancy to find a win-win solution that preserves and celebrates the historic building while putting forth a plan that enhances TVC’s production operations and expands its production capacity.”

See **CBS** page 6.

Last Remaining Seats Returns in June!

After a two year hiatus, we’re thrilled to announce the return of *Last Remaining Seats*: our signature program of classic films in historic theatres! This year’s series will feature a tribute to the late Sidney Poitier, a Charlie Chaplin double feature with live music, and plenty of Old Hollywood glam.

Join us in June for the triumphant return of *Last Remaining Seats* and get back inside L.A.’s marvelous movie palaces! Tickets on sale now at: laconservancy.org/lrs.

Saturday, June 4th - 8 p.m.

To Sir, With Love (1967)

Regency Village Theatre, Westwood

Sunday, June 12th - 1 p.m.

The Immigrant (1917)

The Kid (1921)

Orpheum Theatre, Downtown L.A.

Featuring organist Clark Wilson on the Orpheum’s Mighty Wurlitzer organ!

Sunday, June 12th - 7 p.m.

Blade Runner: The Final Cut (1982)

Orpheum Theatre, Downtown L.A.

Saturday, June 18th - 2 p.m.

The Women (1939)

Los Angeles Theatre, Downtown L.A.

Saturday, June 18th - 8 p.m.

Notorious (1946)

Los Angeles Theatre, Downtown L.A.

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LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.



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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Art Deco Virtual Tours!



Photo by John Milios

Nothing evokes Jazz Age elegance like Art Deco. Its clean lines and geometric patterns proved a perfect style for L.A. in the '20s and '30s, and an extraordinary collection of these masterpieces still stand in the heart of the city.

Get up close (virtually) to marvel at the incredible detail of these structures, with their brilliant colors and lush materials. You'll learn how Art Deco made its way to

L.A., and why it became such a defining architectural style in the city. This presentation will be conducted through Zoom. Information on how to attend will be sent following registration.

Dates: Wednesday, May 4th and 18th. Cost: \$8 Conservancy members/\$12 general public. Register at: laconservancy.org/events/virtual-art-deco.

Save the Date for "The Road to Toluca Lake!"

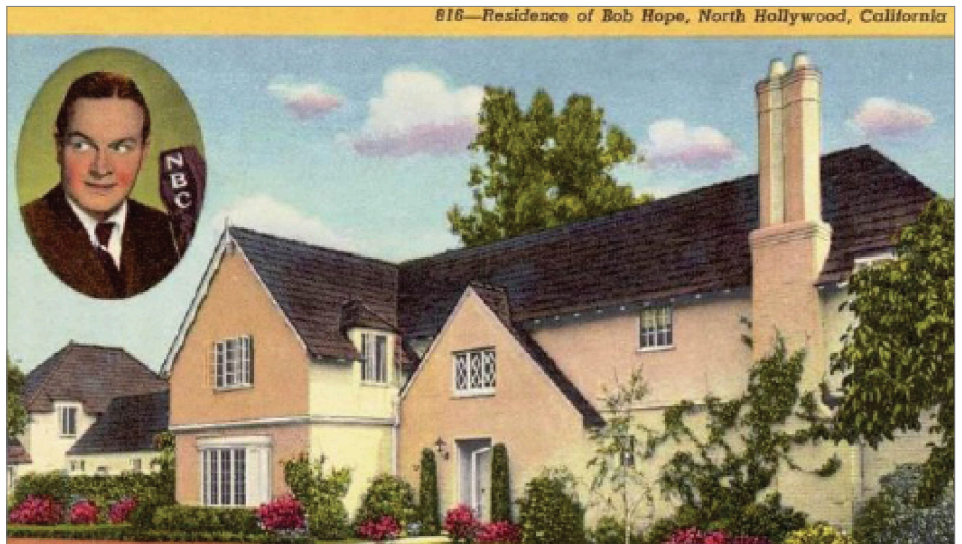


Photo courtesy Décor Art Galleries/Bison Archives

Experience the glamour of Old Hollywood royalty on Sunday, June 26, at the Los Angeles Conservancy's annual benefit, **to be held at the former family home of Bob and Dolores Hope!**

It was designed in 1939 by celebrity architect Robert Finkelhor and expanded many times, most significantly in 1960 by John Elgin Woolf. This home was threatened with demolition, and we will celebrate its rescue and restoration by Ron Burkle four years ago. The five-plus acre Toluca Lake estate was home to the Hope Family for more than seven decades. The house is close to the studios where Bob Hope shot many projects, including the seven "Road" movies that he made with his neighbor and friend Bing Crosby. You will get a special look into the home and office where the Hopes entertained for more than 50 years. Guests will enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres overlooking the expansive grounds including the Hopes' private golf hole. Tour and cocktail tickets are \$400; dinner sponsorships start at \$2,500. We're sure it will be a *memorable* evening! Tickets/Sponsorships/Details: laconservancy.org/2022Benefit.

Behind the Scenes at Last Remaining Seats!



LRS Volunteer Committee Members in 2019: Megan Moran, Celeste Hong, and Traci Lew. Photo by Mike Hume

From film selection to manning concession stands to creating photo ops (and more!) the *Last Remaining Seats* (LRS) Volunteer Committee is the backbone of LRS.

Whether they've been with us since day one, or joined during the pandemic, these volunteers are integral to all the behind-the-scenes work that makes LRS such a memorable experience that keeps folks returning year after year.

We recently asked them to share with us some of their reflections on what makes the film series special and why it's important to raise awareness about L.A.'s extraordinary historic theatres. *(These comments have been edited for brevity. Please visit our blog for more at: laconservancy.tumblr.com)*

"I love the creativity of watching the season come together, choosing films, and planning audience participation and engagement activities. It's important for people to experience the architecture of historic theaters, and also to experience what it was like to watch a film on a big screen the way films were meant to be seen." - **Celeste Hong, volunteer since 2016.**

"I love working with fellow committee members, forging friendships, working towards the common goal of structuring the best and most memorable LRS experience possible. Like many of the buildings that have been lost to history, if the public does not experi-

ence these historic buildings, they won't appreciate them, placing them in peril." - **David Nealy, volunteer since 2020.**

"I think architecture can be an underappreciated form of art, but it can be so inspiring to spend time in a beautifully crafted space. Everything seems to be quite casual these days, so it's fun to remind people that going to the movies was once a fancy and exciting outing, but you didn't have to be wealthy to enjoy it." - **Liz Highstrete, volunteer since 2016.**

"There's something magical about seeing a classic film in a historic theater. I love the sense of community I feel when I watch these films with other people that have the same appreciation for them. The ambiance is incredible and the excitement is palpable." - **Fatima Ejubovic, volunteer since 2022.**

"I joined the L.A. Conservancy just to get earlier notifications of LRS movies and then one day Bruce Scottow [former Volunteer Coordinator for the Los Angeles Conservancy] sent out an email to members asking if anybody was interested in being on the committee. Along the way I started learning about architecture and preservation [and] discovered that helping with events was much more interesting than just taking a tour." - **Paul Tolbert, volunteer since 2016.**

"I love being able to help create experiences for the audience: I'm the Photo Station lead and I love watching people have fun and enjoy what we've put together. My favorite thing during screenings is the downtime when the film is playing. I met two of my closest friends in 2019 and we really bonded during these moments. That whole season is one big happy memory because of them." - **Traci Lew, volunteer since 2019.**

"I moved to Los Angeles and joined the committee in January 2020, so I've never been to LRS! I joined the committee because I love the goal of preserving old theatres, exploring history, and I wanted to learn more about organizing a fundraiser!" - **Melanie O., volunteer since 2020.**

L.A. Moves Closer to a Legacy Business Program

On March 22, the Los Angeles City Council's Economic Development and Jobs Committee (EDJ) began consideration of a citywide legacy business pilot program that aims to bring much needed financial, technical, and marketing assistance to longtime business owners. It would provide nearly \$3.7M in funding to legacy businesses, (either \$10k or \$20k each) marketing and offer technical assistance. If recommended and approved by the City Council, Los Angeles will join San Francisco, San Antonio, Pasadena, and other cities across the country that have developed similar programs.

Legacy businesses have operated for decades across the city and are drivers of our local economy, providing needed jobs, goods, and services. While they face many of the same challenges as other small businesses, they also grapple with challenges of succession planning, as younger family members may choose other career paths.

As currently proposed, a legacy business will also be eligible to apply for inclusion in the City's Legacy Business Registry if they have been in operation for 30+ years within the same community and additionally meet at least one of the following:

- Contributes significantly to its community's history or identity; and
- Sustains and cultivates distinctive cultural traditions or practices.

The Conservancy is requesting the Committee consider lowering the longevity requirement to 20-25 years to allow greater participation from more recent immigrant business owners. The proposed citywide legacy business program will likely return to the EDJ Committee sometime in May for further discussion and a vote. We invite legacy business owners and supporters alike to join our Legacy Business Network to receive important updates about this: bit.ly/LegacyBusinessNetwork.



The Freeman House in the Hollywood Hills. Photos by Erik Van Breene and Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy

Frank Lloyd Wright's Freeman House: Easements in Action!

By Erik Van Breene

The Conservancy is excited to announce our latest conservation easement: the iconic Harriet and Samuel Freeman House!

In February 2022, the University of Southern California (USC) donated the easement to the Conservancy as part of their sale of the house to a private owner.

Perched in the Hollywood Hills, the Freeman House is the smallest of Frank Lloyd Wright's four Southern California textile block homes. Another is the Ennis House where the Conservancy also holds a conservation easement.

Shortly after the house's completion in 1925, the Freemans enlisted the influential Modernist architect and Wright protégé Rudolf Schindler to design interior alterations in an effort to make the home their own.

From the mid-1920s until his death in 1953, Schindler played an integral role in the physical evolution of the home.

Throughout the decades, Schindler formed a close personal relationship with the Freemans, designing furniture, an apartment, and downstairs' quarters for Samuel when

the couple separated. Schindler, however, wasn't the only architect who left a mark on the property. Following his death, the Freemans employed a number of influential Modernist architects including Gregory Ain, John Lautner, and Eric Lloyd Wright.

In addition to its architecture, the residence is significant for its connection to Los Angeles' avant-garde. Once a haven for the bohemian set, the Freemans hosted countless salons where Hollywood celebrities mingled with influential figures like photographer Edward Weston, architect Richard Neutra, and dancer Martha Graham. During the McCarthy Era, the residence provided refuge for those targeted by anti-communist attacks.

At the time of Harriet's passing in 1986, the home was bequeathed to USC's School of Architecture, which maintained and owned the property until its recent sale. When USC came into ownership, the home faced advanced deterioration caused by decades of water intrusion.

A bad situation became worse in 1994 when the Northridge earthquake caused additional damage to its structural systems. In response, USC secured a \$901,000 FEMA

grant and raised more than \$1,000,000 for emergency stabilization of the home. However, over time the cost of repairs became more than USC could fund which led to the decision in 2021 to sell the property to a private owner who would be better suited to rehabilitate and use the property.

The scope of the Conservancy's conservation easement on the Freeman House includes both the exterior and interior, with specific focus on character defining features. We are working closely with the new owner through design review and to ensure all work to the house meets preservation standards.



Easements Explained

Saving historic places rarely takes a one-size-fits-all approach; the Conservancy often applies a different set of tools and strategies in each case. While much of our work typically involves years of effort, nudging a project towards a preservation outcome, the best way to permanently save a historic resource is through a conservation easement.

An easement is a legal agreement recorded on the title of the property that runs in perpetuity with the deed, regardless of the owner. With an easement, the owner continues to own the property, but transfers the specific set of rights represented by the easement to the easement-holding organization. As the easement-holder, the Conservancy is responsible for monitoring the property's condition, reviewing any proposed changes to the property, and ensuring that any alterations conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

While many owners are motivated by the ability for easements to protect the property's integrity in perpetuity, there are also economic incentives. For qualified projects, an owner may be able to take a charitable contribution deduction from their federal income taxes for the value of the conservation easement, if the contribution meets Internal Revenue Service requirements. Each of the Conservancy's easement properties tells a unique story. Thanks to the protection provided by easements, these stories will continue to inspire us for years to come.

To read more about the Conservancy's easement program, visit laconservancy.org/easements.

Preservation Snapshots



Photo: Carley Michelle Hildebrand/L.A. Conservancy

Philip Ahn/Kurt Cobain House

On April 7th, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to reject the Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) nomination for the Philip Ahn/Kurt Cobain Residence in Hollywood Heights. This decision illustrates some of the challenges with building support for places with layered histories.

This property's unique background includes the early development of the High Tower area, a rare example of a hillside Craftsman-style residence with Japanese influences, and association with two notable tenants: Korean American actor Philip Ahn and grunge rock musician Kurt Cobain.

Although Ahn worked in Hollywood during a period of intense racism, his acting career spanned over forty years with more than 270 credits. In addition, his leadership in the Korean American community, success as a restaurateur, and service as an Honorary Mayor of Panorama City, show the breadth of his contributions to Los Angeles. Currently, less than 2% of listed Historic-Cultural Monuments are associated with Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage. While Cobain's tenure at the property was short, it has been documented that much of Nirvana's final album, "In Utero," was written in a second-floor closet at the residence. The album was five times platinum and sold over 5 million albums.

Though this nomination will not move forward, and the house may be demolished, we remain committed to recognizing and protecting culturally significant places. Please join our efforts to ensure our protected landmarks represent our shared communities, culture, and heritage.

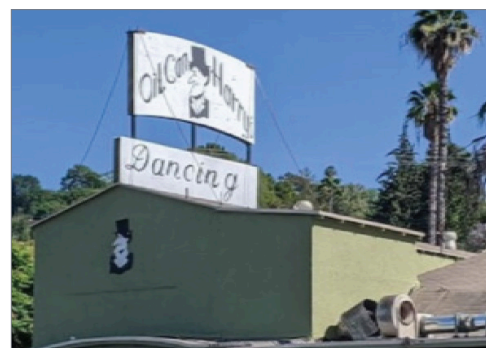


Photo: Courtesy WeHoVille

Oil Can Harry's

Great News! On April 13th, the Los Angeles City Council voted 14-0 to designate Oil Can Harry's in Studio City as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM).

Initially opened as the Zomba Room in the 1950s as a burlesque club, in 1968 the venue changed its name to Oil Can Harry's. From 1968 to 2020, Oil Can Harry's remained in continuous operation making it one of the country's longest operating LGBTQ+ bars. In 2021, City Council initiated a Historic-Cultural Monument nomination for the site after community members voiced concern about the fate of the now-shuttered club.

Throughout its history Oil Can Harry's played an important role for L.A.'s LGBTQ+ community. The bar protected its patrons during police raids by sounding a secret alarm signaling to same-sex dance partners to switch and mask as heterosexual couples. During the AIDS epidemic, Oil Can Harry's hosted countless fundraisers for AIDS awareness and relief. Drag shows, garage sales, even car washes were used to raise funds to cover medical assistance, home supplies, and more.

Sadly, Oil Can Harry's closed in early 2021 as a result of COVID-19 closures and the future of the building became uncertain. In April 2021, Councilmember Paul Krekorian introduced a motion to initiate HCM designation. This designation helps tell the fuller story of Los Angeles County and we'd like to thank all who voiced their support, and to Councilman Paul Krekorian for bringing the nomination forward and to Councilmember Nithya Raman for supporting its designation.

CBS continued from page 1

The refined plan and solution emerging from our collaboration preserves historic TVC and allows for significant new development at this legendary studio property. A comprehensive framework for a state-of-the-art modernization will preserve the historic complex and maintain the 430-foot Beverly Boulevard viewshed.

The new proposal for TVC results in the following modifications – all intended to reduce the proximity, bulk and mass of the intended new construction and impact on the historic TVC complex:

- Reduction of proposed new construction directly on top of the historic TVC, eliminating 84 percent of overall volume and 102 feet of height
- Limitation to single volume rooftop addition with a maximum height of 36 feet, and set back 55 feet from existing TVC Stage Building north facade
- Setbacks for proposed eastern (60 feet from TVS Service Building) and western (150 feet from TVC Service Building) production office buildings
- Removal of proposed Flex Pavilion in front of existing TVC Service Building, and establishment of 60 feet no-build zone

This proposed project is still in the early phases of the development and approval process. The Conservancy will remain involved and ultimately a part of the formal review process regarding the design and materiality of the proposed new construction.

The Conservancy's goal has been to preserve TVC, though not freezing it in time, but kept in a way where new development does not fundamentally harm this

iconic L.A. landmark.

Through compromise and working together with Hackman, we think this solution ensures the studio's much-needed modernization while protecting this historic building and maintaining eligibility as a City of Los Angeles HCM.

We are grateful to Hackman Capital Partners for not only listening, but also working hard with us to achieve a good balance.

After nearly a year of collaboration, the solution now moving forward significantly



CBS Television city in 1952. © CBS Television City Archives

reworks a previous design concept released publicly in March 2021, a design concept where the Conservancy had raised strong concerns. Environmental review for the Television City 2050 Specific Plan (TVC 2050) is now underway and we anticipate the release of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) soon.

A Look Back

In early 2018, the Conservancy started work to protect TVC by initiating the HCM process. This effort followed earlier news that CBS Corporation was interested in selling the twenty-five-acre property. Announcement of a potential sale raised widespread concern over the fate of the

architecturally and culturally significant campus, which was identified as National Register-eligible in Los Angeles' SurveyLA (a citywide inventory of potential historic places in L.A.).

Opened in 1952 and known as CBS Television City, it was the first large-scale facility in the United States designed specifically for television production. CBS hired the local architecture firm Pereira & Luckman.

Among the architects on the project team were acclaimed architects Gin Wong, James Langenheim, and Charles Stanton.

The campus integrated soundstages, studios, editing rooms, offices, rehearsal halls, shops, and storage, all with expandability in mind. On the interior, flexibility was key then and now: studio walls and even some exterior walls can be moved and rearranged to accommodate the needs of specific productions.

For more than six decades and counting, Television City has been the portal for some of America's most be-

loved television shows.

From within its modern and custom designed stages, television broke new ground, from variety/sketch comedy television shows like *The Carol Burnett Show* to the life of Archie Bunker and the controversial issues of the day in *All in the Family*. Today, it is home to such popular newer productions like *The James Corden Show* as well as longtime shows such as *The Price Is Right*.

For more about the history of this preservation issue, please visit our website at: laconservancy.org/cbs.

FEBRUARY 4 / MARCH 31 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Conservancy acknowledges the generous contributions of our new and upgrading Supporting members, and the new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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Membership Matters: An Interview with Helen Ramirez



Helen D. Ramirez has been the Chair of the *Last Remaining Seats* (LRS) Volunteer Committee since 2020 and a Conservancy member since 2009.

Born and raised in El Sereno, to Guatemalan parents, she says “I love being from Gua-

temala, and I love being from Los Angeles.” The Conservancy’s Development Manager, Derek Richardson, recently touched base with Helen to talk about her work with LRS.

DR: What are some of your favorite historic places in Los Angeles County?

HR: The Heritage Square Museum is at the top of my list, followed by the Fair Oaks Pharmacy in South Pasadena. I also never miss a chance to drive on the Colorado Street Bridge, especially at night.

DR: Where does your Conservancy story begin?

HR: My first LRS was in 2004. I was in an early film history class at [Pasadena City College] and I absolutely loved that class. That teacher introduced me to LRS. To be in a grand theatre watching a classic film is an immersive experience that transports you. It’s a great way to introduce a new generation to how amazing L.A. has always been. For years, I kept mentioning how much I loved it, so my brother gave me a membership to the Conservancy.

DR: What is your favorite memory from attending Last Remaining Seats over the years?

HR: Being at the Orpheum Theatre with my brother, sister, and nephew, who was 6 at the time, watching *Laurel and Hardy*. I loved being able to share this amazing piece of film history with my nephew at such a young age. He’s older now and still remembers that day, especially the pie fight scene!

DR: What is a preservation issue important to you?

HR: I would really like to talk more about the historic significance the Hispanic community has had on this city from its inception until now. My dream would be to have a historic foodie tour where we combine L.A. history with different foods from all Latin cultures to tell a story that fills your heart and stomach.

CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Walking tours are back! \$10 for Conservancy members and children seventeen and under; \$15 for general public. Reservations required: laconservancy.org/tours.

Art Deco:

Learn how Art Deco became a defining architectural style in the city. **Saturdays, 10:15 a.m.**

Broadway Historic Theatre and Commercial District:

Explore L.A.'s magnificent movie palaces and learn about the Broadway's revitalization. **Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.**

Historic Downtown:

Take a ride on Angels Flight® and step inside Grand Central Market! **Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.**

Union Station:

See the beautiful architecture of this iconic L.A. landmark up close and personal. **Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.**

Past Meets Present:

Explore how the historic sites of Los Angeles' past are shaping its future. **Every Fourth Saturday, 10:30 a.m.**

Modern Skyline:

Think skyscrapers aren't historic? See our iconic skyline in a whole new way. **Every Second Saturday at 10:30 a.m.**



Los Angeles Conservancy

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Support L.A.'s Historic Small Businesses! Now more than ever, it is crucial to protect our precious longtime businesses that help us understand, appreciate, and celebrate our county's diverse history. Is there a legacy business you'd like to see highlighted here or on social media as part of the Conservancy's #ISupportLegacyBusinesses campaign? Contact us at: info@laconservancy.org.



Photo by Lindsay Mulcahy

JOHN'S VILLAGE CLEANERS
1401 W. Jefferson Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(323) 733-0987

John's Village Cleaners has been family-owned and operated since 1987. Originally located at Jefferson and Western, it relocated due to expanding business to a larger nearby location. Today, the Ibarra family continues to proudly serve the neighborhood's laundry needs. johns-village-cleaners.business.site



Photo by Carley Hildebrand

UNITED BREAD AND PASTRY
1515 Griffith Park Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(323) 661-0037

Silver Lake's United Bread and Pastry has been serving delectable, authentic Filipino desserts, pastries, and other goods since 1984. Owned by Andrea De Guzman and her husband, Roman, this bakery brings people together as any great neighborhood institution would. united-bread-pastry.business.site



Photo courtesy Lee's Market

LEE'S MARKET
934 W. 23rd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 765-0861

Lee's Market is the kind of longtime neighborhood corner market that is increasingly harder to find. Originally established by the Lee family in the 1920s—at a time Asian Americans were not welcome in the area—Lee's Market is a place where you can grab a bottle of wine, snacks, produce, and even something from the butcher!

Correction: Our March/April newsletter incorrectly identified the owner of Needle Hearts. The business is owned by Ellen Holme.