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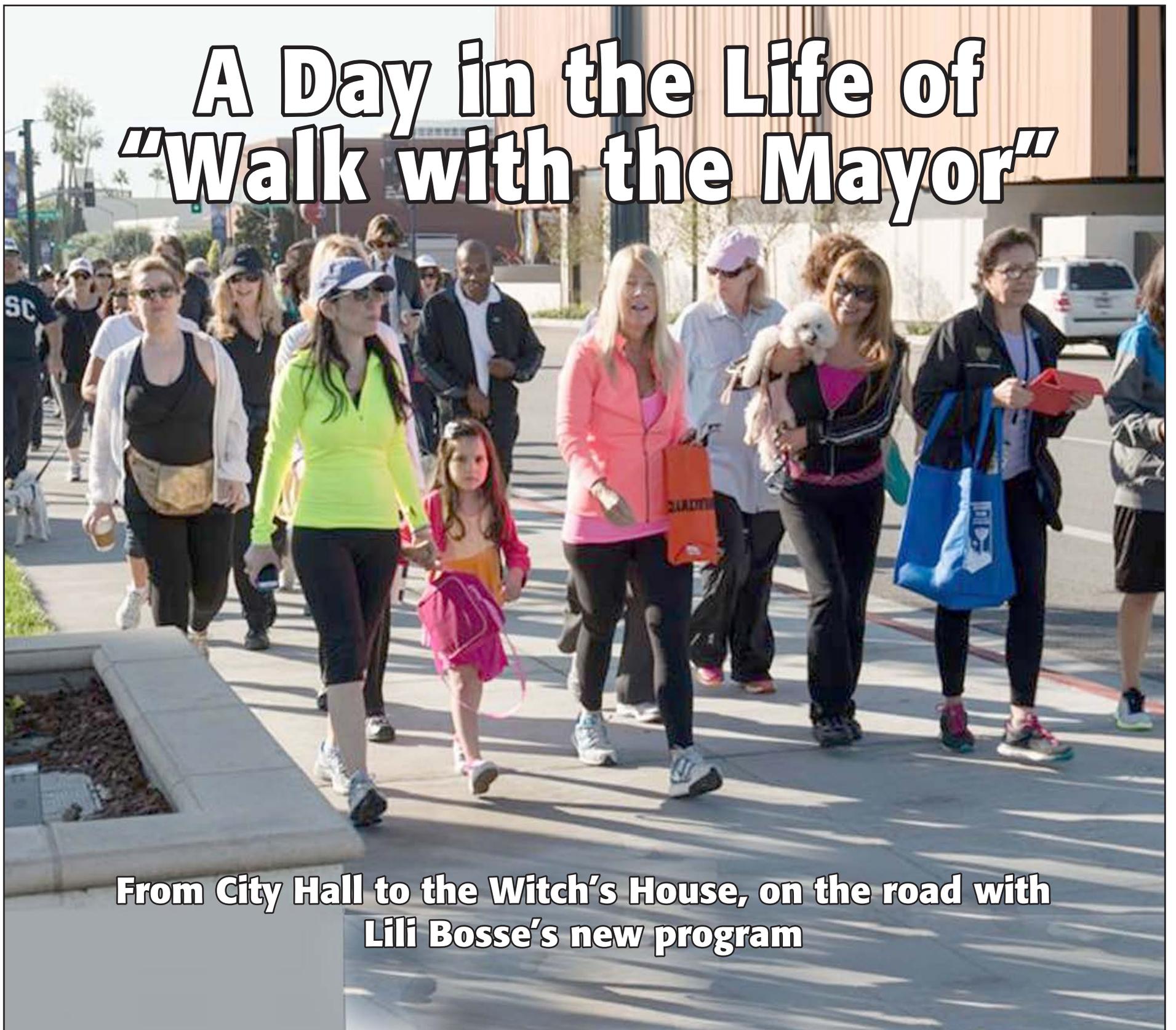
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## A Day in the Life of "Walk with the Mayor"



From City Hall to the Witch's House, on the road with  
Lili Bosse's new program

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# coverstory

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF "WALK WITH THE MAYOR"

From City Hall to the Witch's House, on the road with Lili Bosse's new program

By Nancy Yeang

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014

**8:25 a.m.** I park my car in the City library parking lot on the second level. I was out of my normal business work wear and traded in my black heels and dress pants with shorts and Nike running shoes. I spot another resident tying up her sneakers and stretching as I rush out the parking structure to make sure I catch the group.

**8:35 a.m.** I arrive in front of City Hall on Crescent Drive and see a crowd of people already waiting to begin the walk. I had on a blue and grey windbreaker but realize I misjudged the weather. The temperature was rising and I wanted to put on sunblock as I see people wearing sunglasses and hats.

Three dogs are leashed and ready to go as they panted and walk back and forth while their owners are among the 40 people chatting, waiting to begin the trek.

Newly-installed Mayor Lili Bosse is vibrant with her neon orange jacket and a hot pink shirt underneath and back pants. Other members for the Beverly Hills Healthy City Committee were also wearing Bosse's favorite color; bright orange shirts with "#BHHealthyCity" printed on the front.

"We're going to walk through our history!" Bosse said, revving everyone up for the day's walk that would lead us through the residential areas between Sunset Boulevard and South Santa Monica Boulevard.

"Let's go!" she announces and pumps her fists in the air, and the group starts the walk on Crescent. I'm already sweating.

**8:36 a.m.** While we wait at the crosswalk on North Santa Monica and Crescent, two more people wave from across the street and waits for the group to cross to join the walk.

Although the traffic lights turned green, the walking sign didn't light up with the green "Go" hand sign and we all pause, even though it was our right of way. No one had pressed the crosswalk button. We wait at the crosswalk as cars nervously drive through slowly, eyeing us from both the curiosity of why we weren't crossing the street and also why there is a large crowd of people in workout gear. We wait another turn after Bosse pressed the button.

**8:42 a.m.** "Lili should pick up the pace if we want a workout," I overhear a few ladies behind me gossip on schools and community events, while we are crammed on the sidewalk.

We stroll through the neighborhood, and people walk in pairs, or rows of three. A few walk along the parking lanes along Crescent to get some more elbowroom.

This is my first time walking through the neighborhood. I'm usually driving my beige hand-me-down Toyota Camry on the streets below Santa Monica Boulevard, and I'm busy paying attention to traffic. Right when we crossed the streets, we switch from the bustle of City Hall and the Business Triangle to tree-lined streets and manicured lawns.

**8:44 a.m.** Community members outside of Beverly Hills also joined the walk. Samuel works on Wilshire as a life insurance representative, and stops by to talk with me. I was walking on the grass area to have some space to walk and talk.

"Watch it!" he says and he grabs me towards to sidewalk so that I would avoid stepping on what seemed like dog doo. He apologizes for grabbing me suddenly, and I tell him, "It's okay," as I move to walk on the street to avoid any unfortunate mishaps.

**8:52 a.m.** A van driving down Crescent honks at us. The driver was in a Recreation and Parks van and slows down to wave at everyone.

**8:53 a.m.** We cross Lomitas and Crescent, and head to Will Rogers Park. The crowd was over 50 at this point and I spot a few more dogs in the group. I was surprised at the large

group of community members taking over the sidewalks.

**8:56 a.m.** We stop at a house that was built in 1908. Phil Savenick, who is documenting Beverly Hills' history in "100 Years 100 Stories," holds up a black and white image showing a "Before" photo of the lone house with the Beverly Hills Hotel on barren, dirt land, prior to all the development and landscaping that exists today.

The tail end of the group stops to admire the contrast from the empty lots to landscaped residential developments right in front of us.

**9:00 a.m.** I meet Hawthorne's retired teacher Rachelle Marcus at this point. She tells me that since she retired, she has been doing some substitute work at Hawthorne, picked up some needle pointing and does volunteer work at Cedars-Sinai. She joined the first Walk with the Mayor the previous week as well. She mentions how the days are passing by quickly and tells me how the Weekly interviewed her when she retired.

**9:02 a.m.** We stopped at the Will Rogers Memorial Park fountain and Marcus explained how the ducks used to pick at the fish in the fountain and points at some coins at the bottom of the fountain.

"So here's some money, if we need some money," Marcus points as she takes a seat by the fountain and another person laughed who overheard the comment.

Bosse gathers everyone in front of the fountain to introduce Beverly Hills Heritage President Kimberly Reiss and Savenick who stood on a bench.

They explain how the park, originally named Sunset Municipal Park, opened in 1915 and was the first park in Beverly Hills. The name was changed to Will Rogers Memorial Park in the 1950s.

Savenick points out how the five-cornered intersection behind us "proves the civility of Beverly Hills," since no accidents have occurred on that intersection.

The bench Savenick is standing on was the same bench Charlie Chaplin sat on in "The Idle Class." Though the bench was moved from its original spot, Phil said that this was the park Chaplin ran through as he was being chased in the movie.

**9:10 a.m.** We get a sneak peak at the Centennial rose, with the bushes resting in fresh soil donning pink buds, almost in full bloom. Centennial Tree Planting and Commemorative Rose Bush Co-Chair Ray Flade was in the dirt, with a yellow shovel and grayed gardening gloves, preparing to plant more roses. A resident walks up to the rose and cups it with one hand as he stoops over to smell it.

**9:16 a.m.** We walk along Sunset and made a left on North Rodeo Drive to view more historic sites. I compliment a woman with a simple, black shoulder bag with bright fabric and patterns that seemed like it was from Southeast Asia or India. She tells me how she bought it at a shop that was in Beverly Hills but it moved to a different location. She is a not-quite resident who lived on Burton Way between Beverly Hills and Los Angeles and tells me she heard about the walk through word of mouth and thought it was a good activity to do once a week.

**9:28 a.m.** We make a right on Elevado Avenue. The temperature was either rising or I was walking quicker, but I roll up the sleeves on my windbreaker. Luckily, a food truck was



Victoria Gordon, Lori Greene Gordon, Marc Saleh, Annette Saleh, and Lucky



Ray Flade

parked on the street, and a few individuals stop to get some refreshments.

**9:30 a.m.** We make a left on Walden and arrive at the Witch's house, which, according Reiss, is one of the best examples of a storybook house. The roof's steep slopes and the windows' irregular patchwork patterns with a front fence that looked like it was from Disneyland definitely made it look like someone grabbed the image from a bedtime story.



*The Witch's House at 516 Walden Drive*

Savenick explains to me that the house was moved in from Culver City in 1929 where "it's been scaring children ever since." Jack Haley, who played the Tin Man in the "Wizard of Oz," lived across the street and in Beverly Hills, the Tin Man lived near the Witch. Savenick mentions how Haley's son, Jack Haley, Jr. married Judy Garland's daughter, Liza Minnelli.

Savenick points out that Howard Hughes crashed a plane at 805 North Linden in 1949 [see related story on pg. 2). The 50,000 spectators who came by to look at the crash were the biggest problem during the event.

**9:42 a.m.** Two residents and a dog walk away from the group and continue to their homes. There is a break in the group, with the tail end a bit further behind the head.

**9:44 a.m.** We make a right on Roxbury Drive, and then a left on South Santa Monica Boulevard where we stopped by The Nosh, a restaurant that opened in 1975 and known for their bagels. A box of Arrowhead water bottles was waiting for us inside and the group took a mini-break.

I wait outside and meet former Recreation and Parks commissioner Marty Geimer. I ask him where the Locke House was, and he tells me that I missed it on the beginning of the walk. We pass a few people walking in front of us as we try to catch up to the head of the

group well ahead of us.

**10:00 a.m.** We arrive at City Hall's entrance, as everyone prepares to get a group shot. "Are we the healthy city?" Bosse yelled out and everyone responds, "Yah!" and cheers. The bright orange shirts with "#BHHHealthyCity" on the front were passed out, along with pedometers and Centennial pins. Everyone gathers to talk to Bosse and the crowd disperses as they went on about their day.

"It doesn't even feel like a Monday!" a resident says before she leaves.



*Walk with the Mayor group photo in front of City Hall at the end of the walk*



*Garden Founder Barbara Linder, Councilmember Willie Brien, Vice Mayor Julian Gold, Mayor Lili Bosse, Beverly Hills Whole Foods Market Store Manager Eliberto Gamino, and Whole Foods Market Marketing Supervisor Ellen Prager*

**Ribbon cutting at Greystone Demonstration Garden dedication**

The City of Beverly Hills and Mayor Lili Bosse hosted a ribbon cutting event for Greystone Demonstration Garden's grand opening on Sunday.

"The Greystone Demonstration Garden is an important part of our Healthy City initiative," Mayor Lili Bosse said. "I hope that everyone will take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy gardening in a community setting and learn about the benefits of locally grown, organic food."

Attendees participated in a free herb and vegetable class by Armstrong Garden Centers, promotional giveaways, and healthy snacks provided by Whole Foods Market.

Armstrong Garden Centers hosted a plant sale during the dedication ceremony where 20% of sales went towards Greystone Mansion. The funds will develop the garden, seating and accommodations, planting supplies and materials, and free classes.

Garden Founder Barbara Linder was presented a check for \$4,856.11 from the project's sponsor, Whole Foods, who held a "Five Percent Day" where five percent of a day's net sales went towards the Greystone Demonstration Gardne.

The Greystone Demonstration Garden is sponsored by the City of Beverly Hills, Armstrong Garden Centers, and Whole Foods Market. It is a public outdoor venue for visitors to develop a green thumb by learning how to plant flowers and grow herbs and organic vegetables.



*Chamber of Commerce President John Bendheim, Mayor Lili Bosse, Rachel Zoe, Justin Mateen, Larry King, Haim Saban, Noel Bairey Merz, and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Alex Stettinski*

**BHCOC and King hosts Beverly Hills Tomorrow**

Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce and Larry King hosted the second annual "Beverly Hills Tomorrow: A Vision for the Future" symposium on April 8 at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

King led discussions with Saban Capital Group Chair and CEO and Univision Communications Inc. Chair Haim Sabam, Tinder Co-founder and CMO Justin Mateen, Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Center and the Linda Joy Pollin Women's Heart Health Program at Cedars-Sinai Institute Director Noel Bairey Merz, and Rachel Zoe Inc CEO Rachel Zoe on the role innovation has and will play in defining local businesses and residents.