

40 Years
of the
Free Venice
Beachhead

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SINCE 1968

BEACHHEAD



August
2008

#322

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VENICE CAR WASH WORKERS TAKE ACTION TO WIN MONTHS OF BACK PAY



By Jim Smith

After six months of having their paychecks bounce, workers at a Venice car wash had had enough.

On July 24, the 40 workers staged a walkout and picket line in front of the misnamed Marina Car Wash (it's in Venice, not the Marina, at Venice Blvd. and Lincoln Blvd.

A short time later, the owners coughed up the back pay. In the mean time, they had been living on tips and occasional payments out of petty cash.

It was unclear at press time if all of the workers had been paid in full, or if some would be paid next Aug. 4. Other questions remain about the payment of social security and federal taxes. The car wash management refused to offer proof to the Beachhead to substantiate its claim that the workers had been fully paid.

The workers estimate they wash 500 cars a day for a minimum of \$10 each. Why weren't the workers paid? The answer to that question is likely known only to Monowara Sikder, whose Sikder Holdings, Inc. is the legal owner of the facility.

The workers are being supported by Clergy and Laity Concerned, the United Steelworkers Union and the Community-Labor-Environmental-Action Network (CLEAN) Carwash Campaign, a Los Angeles organization. As word of the bouncing checks got out, a number of Venetians called the car wash to express their concern.

At the picket line, workers showed a Beachhead reporter their paychecks, stamped "Returned: Not Sufficient Funds." In addition, one worker showed a handmade lottery ticket, explaining that the workers had been given a number that week. The winning number entitled that worker to have his check cashed by the car wash's cashier.

The Clean Carwash Campaign has uncovered numerous violations of labor law at area carwashes. Primary violations are payment of less than the minimum wage, no lunch breaks, no drinking water and exposure to dangerous chemicals.

The car wash in Venice appears to be the first one where workers were not being paid at all.



It's Spy Cameras vs. Street Dealers in Oakwood

By Ingrid Boon

I was recently at a private event where I heard that someone had donated a large amount of money to a certain area of Venice – Oakwood to be specific – to install cameras in strategic places in order to be able to identify sellers and buyers of drugs. I believe they may already have been installed.

It seems that London was used as an example and that many cameras have already been installed in selected areas. The cameras are allegedly equipped with infrared in order to photograph during those busy morning hours and are placed in unobtrusive places. In time, with the help of the LAPD Pacific Division, the sellers, many of whom live in the neighborhood, will be arrested and jailed and the license plate numbers of the buyers will be recorded and they will eventually be arrested as well. In essence it is like the prostitution stings that many cities have employed, busting the prostitutes and the "Johns."

The following are some webcam samples from London. Most are geared towards tourism but the actual reason, so I have been told by some of my English friends, is to circumvent terrorism and to be able to see what folks are really up to. Looks to me like we have it "going on" in an attempt to eradicate

Small, high-resolution web cameras are now available to anyone who wants to spy on a drug deal going down outside, or a foxy neighbor. To see what the camera sees, you need to know the internet address, and password, if any.



the sellers of drugs in Oakwood.
www.explore-london.co.uk/webcams.html
www.w-l-c.co.uk/student_life/london_webcam.php
www.goandroam.com/webcams/uk/london ✱

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30,435 U.S. Wounded
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BEACHHEAD COLLECTIVE:
Karl Abrams, Carol Fondiller, Della Franco,
Don Geagan, Jim Smith, Erica Snowlake, Alice Stek

The FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD is published monthly by the Beachhead Collective as a vehicle for the people of Venice to communicate their ideas and opinions to the community at large.

The Beachhead encourages anyone to submit news stories, articles, letters, photos, poetry or graphics of interest to the Venice community. The staff reserves the right to make all decisions collectively on material published. There is no editor on the Beachhead. The printing is financed by ads, sustainers and donations. The articles, poetry and art work express the opinions of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Beachhead Collective.

To submit material, include your name and telephone number. Anonymous material will not be printed, but your name will be withheld on request. No payment is made for material used.

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Big Daddy

Dear Beachhead,

We would like to become sustainers to the Beachhead in the name of Big Daddy's & Sons. We operate our local business at Ocean Front Walk and Market St. We're also involved in the community, especially in supporting activities at Venice High.

As a service to the community, we accept EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) at Big Daddy's. EBTs are debit cards for food stamps and cash benefits.

My wife Debbie and I love your paper. We think you represent Venice well. The longer we are in Venice the more appreciation I have for everything about it.

Please let your readers know that they can pick up the latest Beachhead at Big Daddy's.

Larry Parker

RVs – A Sad Story

I've lived in Venice since 1992. An article in the L.A. Times "Mellow coastal enclave fed up with RV glut" made me very uneasy. I lived most of my life in The Netherlands. People and governments in Europe are more people oriented than in the USA. People in Europe have also a memory and a history. I learned as a child that the gypsies were people that did not belong anywhere. They were chased away from every place in every country on the continent. They did not pay taxes and they lived on the streets and the lands paid by the citizens. Therefore they had no rights. In World War II they mostly ended up in concentration camps.

I think that the L.A. Times article brought up these stories from my youth. Today was the day that I read the story of the American gypsies: the homeless (who soil OUR streets and pay NO TAXES). I heard the sentiment: "Let them go to the next town." And the next town and the next town. Is that a solution? Also familiar to the gypsy stories were the blaming of the homeless for filth and noise. Blaming all homeless for the behavior of some is per definition DISCRIMINATION. Not all homeless are loud and filthy, as not all women are emotional unstable and weak (I am a woman). Shameful that LA article.

I do not want to go into the politics of a capitalistic country where dollars count more than people. We in Venice are better than that. We should be different and behave better than the rest. If it is bothersome that people live on the street why not take all our energy (like the energy of writing an article in the L.A. Times) for trying to find a solution. A solution unique for our community This is what I heard: in Playa del Rey is a motor home campground – Dockweiler – where people can stay for less than \$30 per night.

We can build a camp for the homeless (and for our own happiness). If Playa del Rey can do it for those with the money, maybe we can do it for the poor. This way "not in my backyard" is replaced by responsible citizenship where we adopt the homeless as equal citizens and people like we are. Thank you for listening. My question: What can I do? Where can I go?

Ita Krefl

The Anti-War Report

Good morning Venice, there's something to report.

Following last June's National Assembly to End the Iraq War and Occupation in Cleveland, Ohio, a meeting of over 400 national organizers, a plan for steps forward has been approved for national protests. These will be organized through the fall and winter of this year, as a springboard for massive bi-coastal demonstrations in the spring of 2009. For the full report see:

www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/34608

This good news comes on the heels of the third presentation by Congressman Dennis Kucinich, also of Cleveland, of articles of impeachment. This latter, of one article against President Bush, for misleading Congress into war, forced Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to finally put impeachment back on the table. At the writing of this report a preliminary hearing is scheduled for July 25 before the Judiciary Committee, where a public case for impeachment will be presented.

Ladies and gentlemen, we as a nation have turned a page and it is only fitting that we take a moment to recognize it.

The days of this war and this president are numbered. We are on the road to peace - now it is inevitable. We as a nation owe a debt of gratitude to this humble man from Ohio, for his dedication and perseverance in upholding the constitution of these United States, in the face of extreme opposition from all the powers that be. Thank you Dennis. For the full article by David Swanson, see: www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/34689

To do its part, I now call upon the Venice Town Council and the Venice Neighborhood Council to declare Venice a "war free zone," following the example of Berkeley and hundreds of other communities around the country; to pass a resolution not to allow any business or operation within the borders of the city that contributes to the cost of war and to further disallow any tactic devised and implemented in the time of war to be applied within our boundaries. it is time for Venice to walk the talk.

I further call upon the councils to form anti-war/peace committees to search for ways Venice and Los Angeles as a whole can contribute to aiding the anti-war/impeachment movement. A quite reasonable request, considering that the city council has already passed a resolution opposing the war.

To get involved with local organizing, please contact me at: escalatepeace@yahoo.com.

Mark Lipman

Venice Town Council Report

By Karl Abrams

The Venice Town Council convened its third monthly meeting, July 11, at the United Methodist Church auditorium. Since there were not enough people needed for the quorum required to pass resolutions, the meeting became more of an open and lively semi-structured discussion to prepare for the next monthly meeting, which is held on the second Friday of each month (the next meeting is Aug. 8).

The meeting discussed these agenda items:

1. We unanimously agreed that the time allotted for discussing future resolutions needs to be increased so that all persons present can better understand the meaning and purpose of each resolution.

2. One participant proposed creating an anti-war committee to work on long-term ways Venice can help to end the war (including short term of organizing an anti-war/9-11 event).

3. Another participant informed the Council about a new French invention: the "Self-cleaning Bathroom." We agreed that such bathrooms are needed in various locations throughout Venice, especially on Lincoln Blvd. The self-locking, self-cleaning devices (about 20 x 7 feet) are already in use throughout Europe. An amazing video demonstration of this pioneering contraption may be found on YouTube by searching "auto toilet" at www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYgzZJpIKwA&NR=1

4. The topic of low income and affordable housing was brought up. We agreed that property developers in Venice must be watched carefully and continually pressured to include affordable housing as part of all future housing development proposals.

5. Many town council participants felt having recycling bins on the boardwalk was too expensive.

6. A letter opposing OPDs will be part of next month's agenda.

7. One participant expressed her frustration with the police knocking on her motor home at 2 a.m. A discussion of police tactics agreed that there must be a way to stop this unfair harassment. If the police think that you have an animal inside your RV, they can actually break into your vehicle.

9. The last item on the agenda was the Ocean Front Walk. Many participants in the Town Council felt that "factory" jewelry is destroying the artistic spirit of the boardwalk and that police were harassing the crafts people of Venice. *

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Pay Stations coming to Venice

Thirty shiny new parking pay stations will be unveiled around Venice sometime this month, according to Dan Mitchell, a Senior Transportation Engineer with the city.

Parking rates will be doubling shortly, but not because of the pay stations. The L.A. City Council recently doubled parking meter rates city wide. As a result, less people will buy gasoline to drive to a parking meter that will take more of their remaining cash. The air will become cleaner, there will be less carbon released into the atmosphere, and, oh yes, the city budget deficit will be defrayed by those diehard drivers who persist in trying to park.

Rates near the beach will be:

May 1 - Sept. 30 - \$2 per hour.

Oct. 1 - April 30 - \$1 per hour.

At other locations around Venice, the rate will be \$1 year round, for now. With pay stations, someone downtown could flip a switch and increase parking rates throughout Venice, or even Los Angeles. Mitchell says that will not happen because the posted signs must state the cost of parking, and at present they are not electronic.

According to Mitchell, there will be no expansion in pay parking in Venice because of the pay stations. However, Abbot Kinney Blvd., Lincoln Blvd., Rose Avenue, and the lots behind Abbot Kinney must be tempting targets to city officials looking for ways to balance the budget.

The L.A. City Council, by a unanimous vote on July 15, once again raised parking fines by \$5 a ticket to help balance its budget. The increase is expected to bring in an addition \$6.6 million to city coffers this year. The Council had originally wanted to raise the fines by \$10 - \$15 but was told that such a high increase could create voter anger and possible violence against parking officers.

With pay stations, it will be almost impossible to fight a parking ticket. No receipts are issued and the last word is the electronic data in the pay station. In addition, there will be no more alibis that the meter was broken. If a pay station is not working, you must pay at another one even if it's on another block.

The new pay stations will accept coins, credit or debit cards, but no bills. You can also pay with your mobile phone if you register with a company called Mpark <mpark.com>. More information about pay stations can be found at: <http://ladot.lacity.org/pdf/PDF1.pdf>

Where will riders lock their bikes once the city converts to one pay station per block? Fear not, the city is thinking about you. Not all parking meters will be removed. Some will be converted to bike parking racks with a different cap on top. Currently, it is technically illegal to attach anything to a parking meter, including a bicycle. But with the old meters decommissioned, you'll be able to lock your bike to one with a clear conscience. And with increased parking fees and fines, bike riding will be more attractive than ever. *



Melvyn Hayward, Senior
Jan. 16, 1949 – June 29, 2008

Melvyn Hayward was a role model and a powerful force for good in the Oakwood community for more than 30 years.

He worked with the Venice Drug Coalition, Didi Hirsch Mental Health, the NAACP, Oakwood United and was most recently the director of the Vera Davis McClendon Center.

In addition, he was an actor in Hollywood films and at the Pearl White Theater.

Two Views on Homelessness and Criminalization

Town Hall Hears from the Experts

By Karl Abrams

A Venice Town Hall meeting was held on July 9th at the Venice United Methodist Church. The well-attended meeting consisted of a variety of in-depth presentations by expert speakers on "Homelessness and Criminalization" followed by a film and Councilperson Bill Rosendahl fielding questions about what the community can do to help.

Two of the speakers were attorneys (Gary Blasi and Carol Sobel); two were Venice community activists (Calvin Moss and Steve Clare). All spoke eloquently and in detail about the complex causes and effects of homelessness. All speakers were introduced by the moderator, Rhonda Meister, the former Executive Director of St. Joseph's Center.

Blasi, a UCLA law professor, emphasized that the strong arm of law enforcement and the criminalization of the homeless is not the right approach.

According to Blasi, the costs associated with criminalizing the homeless are two to three times the cost of providing permanent housing.

Blasi expressed his frustrations. "I'm both embarrassed and ashamed to be a resident of the city of L.A. and to see how little the city has done." Blasi continued, "Venice, of all places, should be able to do better."

Moss, a longtime Venice activist and co-director of Food Not Bombs, lived in several skid rows in cities across the U.S. during his life. He has seen how homeless locals are mistreated and how the "gypsy culture [in Venice] is under assault" by neo-liberal (right wing) politics. Moss pointed out that "people don't understand [the importance of] alternate counter-cultures."

Carol Sobel, a former American Civil Liberties Union attorney specializing in First Amendment issues, spoke about how some of the aged homeless belong in nursing homes and that "criminalizing everything is not going to resolve problems." Sobel had a "victory" to share at the Town Hall also. A recent coalition of lawyers "won a 2.5 million dollar settlement for people who have had their belongings (ID, medications, personal affects) confiscated." She said that the mayor himself "was chastised in court for opposing [the settlement]."

All of the town hall speakers agreed that we must urgently provide the homeless of Venice with permanent affordable housing, jobs and health-care services.

To do this, of course, requires the immediate help of an informed Venice community that can work with our elected officials to implement a list of viable solutions.

The good news is that this list of solutions already exists. Steve Clare (Director of the Venice Community Housing Corporation), Bill Rosendahl and others who took part in the "Venice Task Force on Homelessness" have put together a list of 38 suggestions (see page 10) which must now be presented to our elected officials, L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors.

The bad news is that this task force was eliminated at an "administrative meeting" of the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) by people who have little concern for the homeless of Venice. A new committee was formed with two co-chairs (one of whom was recently seen on Fox news in a very one-sided interview unfavorable to the homeless). As a result, these 38 suggestions were not actually presented to the public by VNC, but instead were presented to the public during this Town Hall.

The next speaker, Bob Erlenbusch, provided listeners with specifics about what we can do on the national, state and local levels to bring about meaningful and urgent change. Erlenbusch is presently the Executive Director of the LA Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness and, at the same time, President of the National Coalition for the Homeless.

"Of the more than 12,000 units that were built by the city of L.A.," Erlenbusch explained. "...Over 90 percent went to incomes of people who earn over \$135,000 or more."

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Homeless No More

By Janet C. Phelan

It is a rainy day in Santa Monica. About dozen homeless people have gathered under the overhang at the Ocean Park Community Access Center on Olympic Boulevard, which is the hub for homeless services in Santa Monica. While the rain pours down, the homeless huddle, share cigarettes and joke wryly about available "shelter."

Santa Monica developed a reputation as a "homeless friendly" community back in the eighties, when the city of Santa Monica opened its doors to the poorest of the poor, setting up an extensive network of homeless services and even sanctioning a "tent city" on the lawn of city hall. Drawn by this reputation as well as by the warm weather, the homeless began to stream in to Santa Monica. Along the way, the politics of this beautiful, wealthy city by the sea changed, but the reputation remained.

The current leadership of the city of Santa Monica is, in fact, engaged in legal warfare against this population. Under the tutelage of the misnamed "Homeless Liaison Office," the city has drafted and passed legislation criminalizing behavior that simply bespeaks poverty. A major proponent of these new laws is Councilman Bobby Shriver, brother to Maria Shriver, who is the wife of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. It was Shriver whom I first heard drop the phrase, "quality of life crimes."

For example, it is now illegal (and punishable by six months jail time) to engage in any of the following behaviors: Washing your hair in a public restroom; Sleeping on the beach or in parks during the day; Sleeping in a car; Shaving in a public restroom; "Aggressive" panhandling. The definition for "aggressive" involves all verbalizations requesting assistance. Signs are still legal.

In addition, the City has passed laws that placed a "chilling" effect on those wishing to assist the homeless, by feeding them. The 9th circuit court of appeals upheld laws in Santa Monica which prohibited public feedings, unless a permit were acquired. The terms of the permit, which were required for events accommodating more than 150 people, placed a minimum \$500 clean-up fee, payable to the City, as well as a more modest permit fee simply to pass out food to hungry people.

Paul Grymkowski, a former owner of the chain Gold's gym and a deacon in a local church, had been passing out food two days a week in Palisades Park for a number of years. He was providing high quality, vegetable-intensive meals, which were enormously popular among the homeless. Upon passage of the anti-feeding law, he changed his format and began to display signs reading "The Grymkowski Family and Friends Picnic." He reasoned that he could not be arrested and jailed for holding picnics.

The police began to show up at Grymkowski's events, and shortly thereafter, he discontinued serving meals in the park. The Status Report from The City of Santa Monica reveals that the number of public feedings dropped from 26 down to only five, since the adoption of the permit laws in 2002. The status report also includes the rationale for the permit laws: "The feedings often attract large crowds. As most of the persons receiving food are, or appear to be homeless, they usually have significant amounts of personal property with them...wear and tear on park property is substantial. Perhaps most importantly, the scheduled public feedings tend to facilitate homeless people staying in the streets."

Well, I guess if they don't eat, they won't be living on the streets (or anywhere else) very long...

Several years ago, Grymkowski expressed concern that he would soon be jailed for his large heart. At this point, he has moved his picnics out of the park to the "legal" interior of the OPCC Access Center.

Homelessness is increasing in Santa Monica. The ravages of the economy and the termination of the Section 8 housing program in Los Angeles have all

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See
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*Recommendations
for Addressing
Problems of
Homelessness*
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Lincoln Place: Venice Gulag?

By C.V. Beck

What is going on with Lincoln Place, you might enquire? Well, let me tell you. It is very quiet over here, too quiet! many might say. It's like that episode of the Twilight Zone, you know, the one where the bank teller, Burgess Meredith, goes to sleep in the bank vault and wakes up after atom bombs have gone off and he's the only person left alive on the planet.

Well, it's like THAT here, the Venice Gulag! Of course, because it's also in a vacuum (which nature abhors), certain persons are attracted to the grasses and lawns for purposes of irresponsible dogwalking... that is, these certain persons deliberately come here to let their dogs roam through the buildings, terrorizing and killing feral cats and other animals, and not cleaning up after the waste products of their pets-- mostly while talking intently on their cell phone as an excuse. Oh, yes, frequently, these clowns have their backs turned away from their pets, to make sure they DON'T see anything. People go out of their way not to go to the dog parks – but to come here – where they think they can do anything they want to...with attack-trained german shepherds and other large overly-alert canines. I have dealt directly with a number of these grandiose people and on a toe-to-toe basis with same at least once. This continues to happen over and over, like a rerun movie on late night TV.

The security guards, of whom we have a great number, do basically nothing but eat and chat during the day while circling the complex many, many times, dropping their food wrappers and coffee cups from "S-Bux" on the ground and at night, they sleep - while getting paid.

Many times, I look out the living room window and see security guards sitting in their vehicle or on old beat-up looking bicycles, in my field of view. When I take out the garbage or go to my car, I see them to the west-- like statues in silhouette across the meadow (I mean the vacant lot)--where the flowers are mowed down regularly with a phalanx of gas-powered edgers, filling the air with blue-silvery gas fumes and leaded particulates, polluting our earth with heavy metals. Anything green or flowering is destroyed over and over again, just to make sure.

Additionally, these landscape helpers continue to use with great regularity the unlawful gas powered leaf blowers despite my best efforts to stop them. Management has been informed many times and apparently the guys just don't get it. I have called the police and the South Coast Air Quality Management District all to no avail. The one time I observed the office manager stopping a landscape cleaning guy with the unlawful gas powered leaf blower was when a group of potential buyers were on a walk-through this past month.

These gas powered leaf blowers are not permitted to be used within the city of Los Angeles within 500 feet of a residence, did you know this? Does anyone, really?

We do NOT have the quiet enjoyment we are supposed to have with garden apartments or any kind of apartments within our used-to-be fair city limits.

In many parts of Lincoln Place, the grasses have been replaced by bare parched dirt, dry and cracked, part of an apparent "scorched earth policy" by the owner's harsh and oppressive policies. The dry grasses crunch when I walk on them and there are deep cracks into the earth, some 9",10",up to 12-1/2" deep, in front of my place.(I measured today, Sunday, July 20th). Weeds have been allowed to grow up through the blacktop alleyways and throughout the garage and carport areas, nettles grow 4 and 5 feet high, remaining untouched, despite my requests for weeding of weeds and not for weeding of flowers.

The Lincoln Place Tenants Association (LPTA) has received two awards coming out of the Barney Frank-chaired Financial Services Committee in

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40 Years Ago - Beachhead Hits the Streets on Dec. 1, 1968

By Jim Smith

1968 was one of those tumultuous revolutionary years like 1917, 1848 and 1789 and 1776. Unrest, led by a youth revolt, spread across the world. France nearly became a socialist country and Czechoslovakia nearly became a capitalist country. The Tet offensive proved conclusively that the United States was not winning the war in Vietnam. Rev. Martin Luther King and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy were assassinated. The Democratic Party was breaking apart, as Chicago demonstrations turned violent and bloody. The Tlatelolco Massacre by the Mexican Army in Mexico City killed hundreds, if not thousands, of the country's youth. That nightmare still weighs heavily on the country's conscience. Millions of young humans on planet Earth were alive with new ideas, new music and new ways of interacting. As the Buffalo Springfield put it: "There's somethin' happenin' here. What it is ain't exactly clear." Forty years later, it still ain't exactly clear what happened.

The Sixties Generation was unique for a number of reasons. After World War II there was an explosion of babies as GIs returned from years away from their spouses. The years immediately after the war witnessed the height of the American Empire. Half the world gross product was produced by the U.S. Optimism and faith in the future was soaring. Public works, a university education for all, and an ever improving life were the accepted ideology.

But as the baby boomers began going to college, that world began to shatter. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 brought home the real possibility of nuclear annihilation. The assassination of John F. Kennedy ended the hopes and dreams of millions. Segregation and racism weren't about to go away. The Vietnam War kept growing and seemed entirely senseless. Into this boiling cauldron was poured the catalyst: pot and LSD. Psychedelic visions of a world based on love, joy and meaning moved most of an entire generation to view their lives in an entirely new way. Venice was again at the center of the storm.

It was an ecstatic time to be in Venice. Rents were low, and the neighbors were non-judgmental. A job was something one did if it was absolutely necessary to earn some money. The real "job" was existing in the open air University of Venice. Getting up in the late morning and just walking toward the beach meant that anything could happen. Often, one ended up with new friends and perhaps someone new in bed. The next day the world started anew.

In the Venice of yore, anyone seen wearing a suit or driving a late model car was taken to be a landlord come to collect rent. Quick! Out the back door, if



Nature Returns: Nettles take over carports at Lincoln Place. Photo: D. Shep



you don't have it. Likewise, anyone with a camera was probably a narc, as was anyone who asked for your last name. Wanting too much personal information about someone - job, address, background - tagged the inquirer as a square who wasn't living in the Now. And Venice in 1968 was living the endless summer.

But every good story needs a villain, and into our story came the Venice Master Plan, a devious scheme by the L.A. city government to destroy the Venice we knew, and replace it with a high-rise nightmare, with a yacht harbor where the canals stood and a freeway bisecting Venice into Black and white neighborhoods. It was urban renewal at its worst. Urban removal was a better description.

Fortunately, Venice had its share of political radicals who knew how to call a meeting, make a flyer, pressure elected officials and build a community.

John Haag, with his wife Anna, had been the proprietor of the Venice West Cafe, one of the last Beat hangouts. When it closed in 1966, Haag was ready for something new. He got involved with civil rights activities and was an initiator of the California Peace and Freedom Party. His efforts were instrumental in putting the new party on the ballot in 1967 as an anti-war alternative to the Democrats.

By 1968, it was clear to him and others that if change was going to come to America, it would happen community by community. Haag; Jane Gordon, a teacher; and Rick Davidson, an architect; decided to work full time for the Venice Peace and Freedom Party. They were given an office at 1727 W. Washington Blvd. (now Abbot Kinney Blvd.) by artist Earl Newman. Out of this office, scores of activists came and went, and occasionally held brain storming sessions. Out of one of these sessions, it was decided to launch either a Venice newspaper or radio station.

The newspaper won out. It was dubbed the Free Venice Beachhead. Free Venice was a term that was being applied to lots of different organizations that were emerging to fight the Master Plan, or to organize theater groups, food distribution and child care. Beachhead could be interpreted several different ways. In military terms a beachhead (the Normandy Beachhead) is a toehold against an entrenched enemy. Many people felt that Venice was a beachhead for a radically new lifestyle. A Beach Head is also a pot smoker, of which there were many among the planned readership. Other definitions of beachhead may occur to you as you think about it.

The first issue – it was planned as a bi-monthly until the amount of work overwhelmed the staff – appeared on Dec. 1, 1968. A front page editorial proclaimed, "This paper is a poem."

It went on, "We decided not to sell it to some of you, but to give it to all of you. It is a poem for all the people...Our subject this issue is Venice. Our purpose is to create a community."

While John and Rick are no longer with us, and Jane has moved to the Valley, we of the current Beachhead collective are very proud that another founding member Carol Fondiller is still part of our staff, and still cranks out her unique prose when she's good and ready to do it.

Forty years ago the Free Venice Beachhead was greeted by Venetians as a welcome new addition to their community. We hope that in 2008, we continue to earn your welcome and your support. *




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The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder

Written by Vincent Bugliosi
(A Book Review by Jack Neworth)

As his time in office winds down George Bush speaks of retirement wistfully. He looks forward to playing golf, cutting brush and "replenishing the coffers" (his words) with lucrative speaking fees. I don't imagine he's given any thought to standing trial for murder. Former Los Angeles District Attorney, Vincent Bugliosi, has given it a lot of thought.

In his controversial, new book, "The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder" Bugliosi cites a litany of examples of Bush's deceit in taking the U.S. to war in Iraq. Methodically, he outlines the case for holding Bush criminally liable for the deaths of over 4000 American GIs and 100,000 innocent Iraqis. Nancy Pelosi may have taken impeachment off the table, but Bugliosi has a different table in mind, a courtroom defense table.

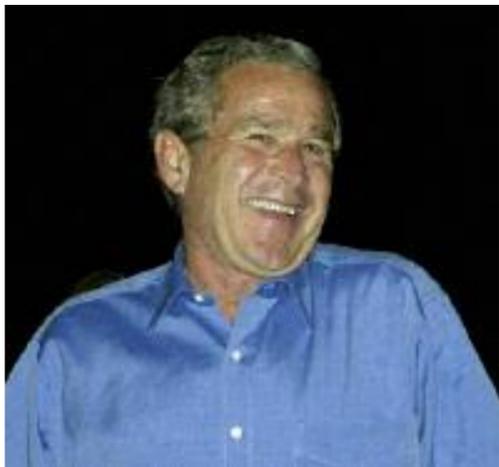
Before you automatically dismiss his theory, keep in mind Bugliosi prosecuted 106 felonies in L.A. County and won 105. He tried 21 capital cases and won all 21. He candidly states that at 73 years of age he's not about to tarnish his hard-earned reputation. But in our legal system no one is above the law, and for Bugliosi that includes the president.

Bugliosi has authored three number one best selling books and won three Edgar Allan Poe awards. His greatest fame, however, came from prosecuting the Manson family, the book of which, "Helter Skelter," sold seven million copies. This latest book has sold 130,000 copies (no small feat in hard cover.) And yet none of the mainstream media has interviewed him. (Or even taken his advertising dollars.)

Opponents have called Bugliosi many things but "frivolous" or "unprepared" probably were not among them. Neither would "partisan." He supported McCain in 2000 and freely bashes liberals throughout the book. ("How do they sit up straight without the benefit of a spine?")

Step by step, Bugliosi outlines the case that Bush, in a conspiracy with others, knowingly and deliberately lied us into the war. For example, on October 7, 2002, he told the American people that Sadaam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction that he could unleash upon us or give to terrorist organizations. He indicated an attack could take place "any day." Six days earlier, however, in the NIE (National Intelligence Estimate) 16 different intelligence agencies clearly stated that Sadaam was NOT an imminent threat. It suggested only if we attacked Iraq might Sadaam be inclined to use those weapons. (Which, as it turns out, weren't there in the first place.)

While we have heard many of these arguments before, when Bugliosi takes it into the courtroom it changes the dynamic radically. He spent hundreds of hours researching jurisdiction. Murder charges could come



Laura and I are having the time of our life, Bush said in 2005. Not so for everyone.



Artist: Khalil Bendib - see cartoon book, page 7

from the federal Attorney General, or from any of the 50 state attorney generals or from any of hundreds of D.A.'s within whose district a soldier lived and then died in Iraq.

As for "intent" to commit murder Bugliosi gives the example of a drunk driver who has no intent to kill someone. However, his reckless behavior reveals his intent. Bush, in a conspiracy with Cheney, Rove, Rice, Rumsfeld, etc., recklessly lied us into war in spite of the evidence and all could be subject to criminal prosecution.

Among the most compelling sections of the book occurs when Bugliosi hypothetically puts Bush on the stand in cross-examination. With a skillful series of penetrating questions, he backs Bush into a corner where either answer points to his guilt.

While the mainstream media has ignored Bugliosi, if you go to YouTube and type: "Bugliosi

Bush" there are numerous interviews. Bugliosi hopes that because of the book at least one D.A. in the country will have the courage to indict Bush and the others. To that end he offers pro-bono help of his time and advice.

Bugliosi realizes getting Bush in a criminal courtroom is a longshot. But he notes that in Chile it took 30 years to bring Pinochet to justice. He reminds us there is no statute of limitations for murder.

In 2005 Bush told reporters, "Laura and I are having the time of our life." Unfortunately for thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of dead and wounded, there hasn't been such joy. The inside covers of Bugliosi's book are poignantly filled with photos of GI's who died in Iraq because, in Bugliosi's legal opinion, of Bush's criminal behavior. "Somebody has to pay," he says.

Bugliosi does not advocate congressional hearings or impeachment. He recommends waiting until after Bush leaves office and then trying the case in a court of law. In a nation of laws, he thinks it proper to let a jury decide on the guilt or innocence of George W. Bush on the charge of murder. I imagine he might think it fitting if Bush's post-presidency brush cutting was as part of a chain gang. *

Brooks Avenue Neighbors Fight Subdivision

By Amanda Renner

Neighbors on Brooks Avenue have banded together to fight a new development proposed to be built at 720 Brooks Avenue.

Nathalie Godts said the two structures would consist of single family residencies, built with two inches between the buildings, standing about 30 feet high and stretching from one end of the property to the other.

This is part of the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance, which was created to supply more affordable housing opportunities in Los Angeles.

Although the Neighborhood Council's Land Use and Planning Committee policy statement on massing, scale and mansionization states that any new development projects will try to accommodate

neighborhood concerns, the neighbors fear how the project will affect the future of the street.

"If this would go through, it would set a precedent for more to come," Godts said.

In an effort to stop the project, Godts, along with several other neighbors, have dedicated a countless amount of time and energy to file appeals and attend neighborhood council meetings as well as public hearings.

Godts took pictures of every house on the street and put them in chronological order to show the difference in size among the houses already occupying the street and the proposed building.

The final appeal will be August 6 at 4:30 pm in the Henry Medina Parking Enforcement Building at 11214 W. Exposition Blvd.

The residents of Brooks Avenue ask that fellow Venetians come to support their neighbors and prevent similar developments from being built in the future. *



The Wonderful World of Westminster

Photos by Amanda Renner



By Amanda Renner

During the peak of summer the Ocean Front Walk in Venice is packed with tourists, locals and everything in between.

The block of Westminster Avenue, between Speedway and Ocean Front Walk, offers relief from the crowded walk that lines the beach.

Here the buzz of traffic fades away and the chatter of people replaces it. A variety of smells from various restaurants fills the street, drawing people in for a light snack or large lunch.

People will find a variety of food choices: pizza sold by the slice, a delicatessen, Thai, Mexican and Indian cuisine, and a coffee shop and deli.

Instead of busy dining rooms or placing orders into small windows, most of the restaurant's store fronts are barn style doors. When an owner arrives in the morning, they set out their sidewalk sign and swing open the top half of the door.

An array of people can be found sitting outside of the coffee shop; reading, at computers, people watching or just enjoying the day.

A tradition in the making was started here last year by Fruit Gallery owner Nina Merced. She as well as other shop owners on the street pulled together to serve the street's first ever free thanksgiving dinner to the Venice community.

"Culturally it is so diverse," Merced said. "That is what makes the street so beautiful."

This small street, tucked away quietly on the boardwalk, is the perfect place to escape the fast-paced life of Los Angeles and relax in the wonderful world of Westminster. ✱



Photo: Michael Loomis



On Westminster



Zelda's Corner Deli

Photos by Ben Swinchart

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Art by Chase Photos by Amanda Renner

Marx in Venice

By Mark Lipman

Contrary to public opinion, Karl Marx is alive and well ... and was living, at least temporarily last month, in Venice.

His reincarnation comes to us thanks to the fact that the one thing you can't kill is an idea. So, in order to clear his name, he has returned to us in the form of actor Bob Weick, who, for an hour or so, sets the record straight in the play, "Marx in Soho," brought to the solar powered Electric Lodge by producer Michael McAteer.

While here, the Beachhead took the opportunity to meet with the cast and crew and had the pleasure of speaking with its creator Howard Zinn, best known for his book, *A People's History of the United States*. Here's a little of what we learned:

Beachhead: What are some of the misconceptions about Karl Marx and communism that you are trying to clear up with this play?

Howard Zinn: Probably the biggest misconception is that Marxism leads inevitably to something like the Soviet Union, that is to bureaucracy, centralized power, dictatorship. It is the lack of understanding that Marx believed in the freedom of the individual. He believed that the state, even if taken over by the proletariat, only lasts a short time and the state would disappear when its functions were no longer needed. That is the greatest misconception of Marx, the failure to recognize how much he believed in individual freedom. He would have been appalled at the way his ideas were distorted in the Soviet Union and in other countries that call themselves Marxist.

Beachhead: How can these concepts be applied to today's world?

Zinn: Well, today's world is a capitalist dominated world and it is a matter of organizing people, organizing working people, all over the world, in every country, to pose their governments to change their systems to move towards a socialist system.

Beachhead: Is there any way that capitalism and communism could be compatible?

Zinn: No, not really. Maybe some characteristics of capitalism that some future society might take over, some degree of freedom of the markets, but in the most fundamental ways they're incompatible.

Beachhead: It has been noted that at the end of the 19th century the world was on the brink of socialist revolution, as exemplified by the Paris Commune, and the only thing that stopped it was the outbreak of World War I. How does war figure into all of this?

Zinn: War has always been a way of cutting short the development of a revolutionary movement, by mobilizing everyone against an enemy overseas and it is a way of diverting the revolutionary energy of people towards war.

We also spoke with Bob Weick on what drew him to the character of Karl Marx, who now has 161 performances under his belt. "It's because he was a family man, like me," Bob says. "He was someone who loved his family, which you can see from the play and he wanted to create a better world for them."

"What about his ideas on communism, how would you update them for the 21st century?" we asked.

"That's just the thing," Bob says, "there's nothing to update. His ideas on communism still work and are still valid today. The problem is that communism, the way he conceived it, has never been tried. Believe it or not, Karl Marx was not a Marxist. He never

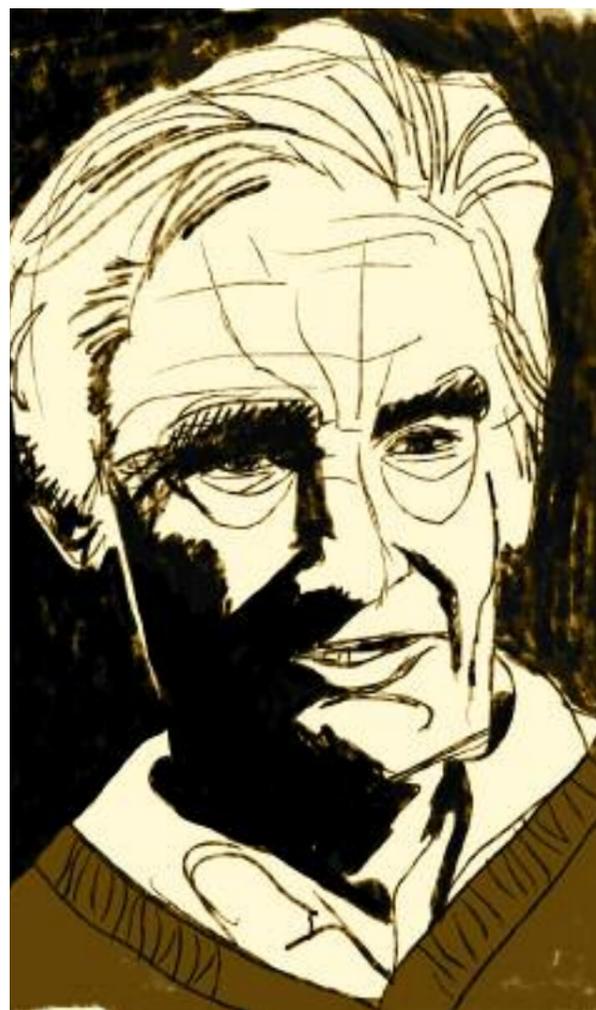
agreed with the way his ideas were used. He wanted dialogue, not dogma.

"But when it all comes down to it," Bob continues, "it's about today. It's about the community that we live in here and now and how what Karl Marx spoke about 150 years ago is still valid today."

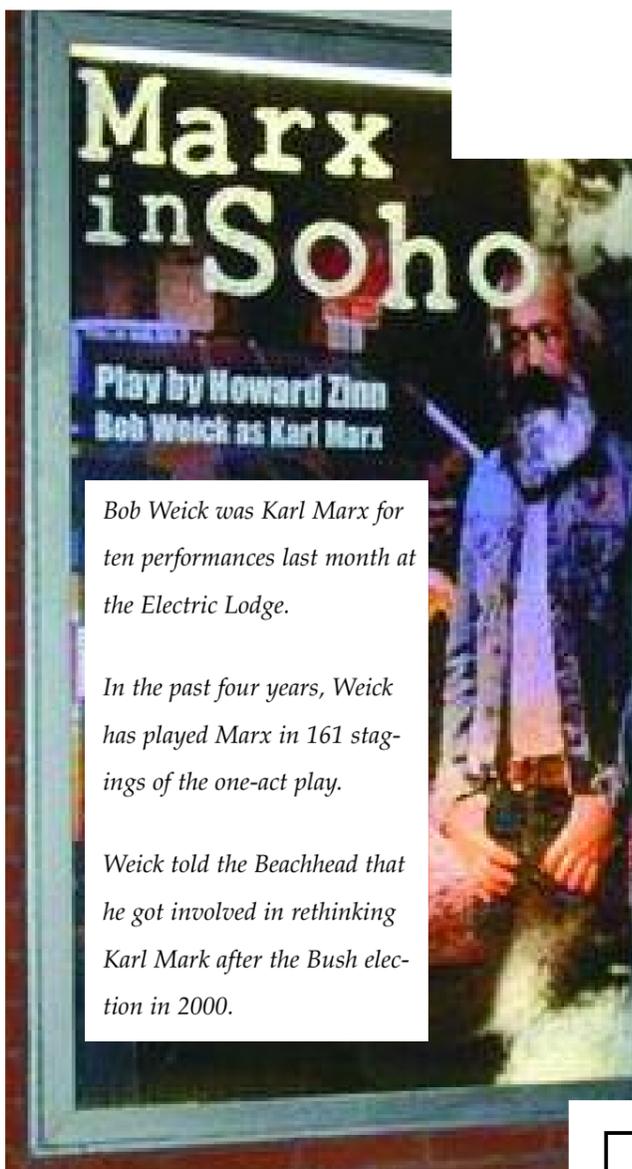
In performance he underlines this by pulling clear examples of unemployment, poverty and homelessness from our own daily newspapers, at times to the discomfort of some audience members, as they shift in their seats, when on stage he boldly declares what we all know to be true that 1 percent of this nation owns 41 percent of our entire wealth and it's only getting worse. In the words of Zinn's Karl Marx, "Your employer is paying you poverty wages, but is making much more for himself in return, so that he gets richer and richer and richer, while you stay poor."

The solution?

Well, standing from his soapbox, Karl might tell you, "It is time for the workers of the world to unite." *



Howard Zinn, author of *Marx in Soho* and *A People's History of the United States*



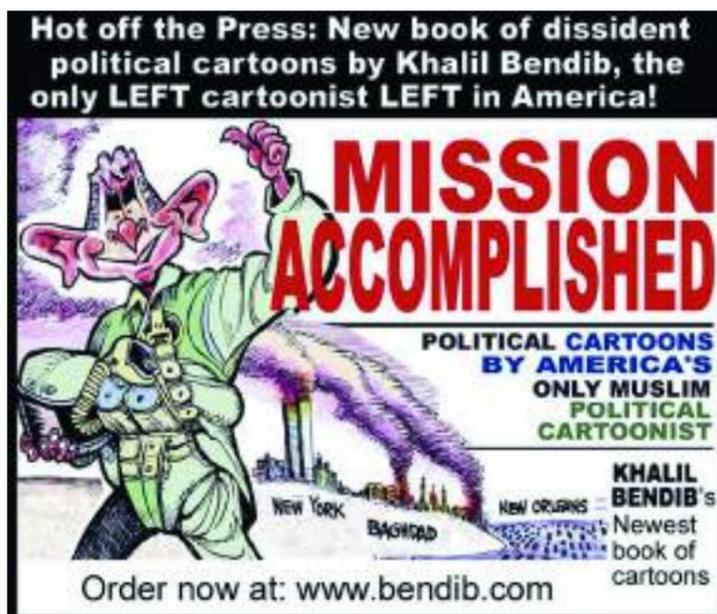
Bob Weick was Karl Marx for ten performances last month at the Electric Lodge.

In the past four years, Weick has played Marx in 161 stagings of the one-act play.

Weick told the Beachhead that he got involved in rethinking Karl Marx after the Bush election in 2000.



Bob Weick

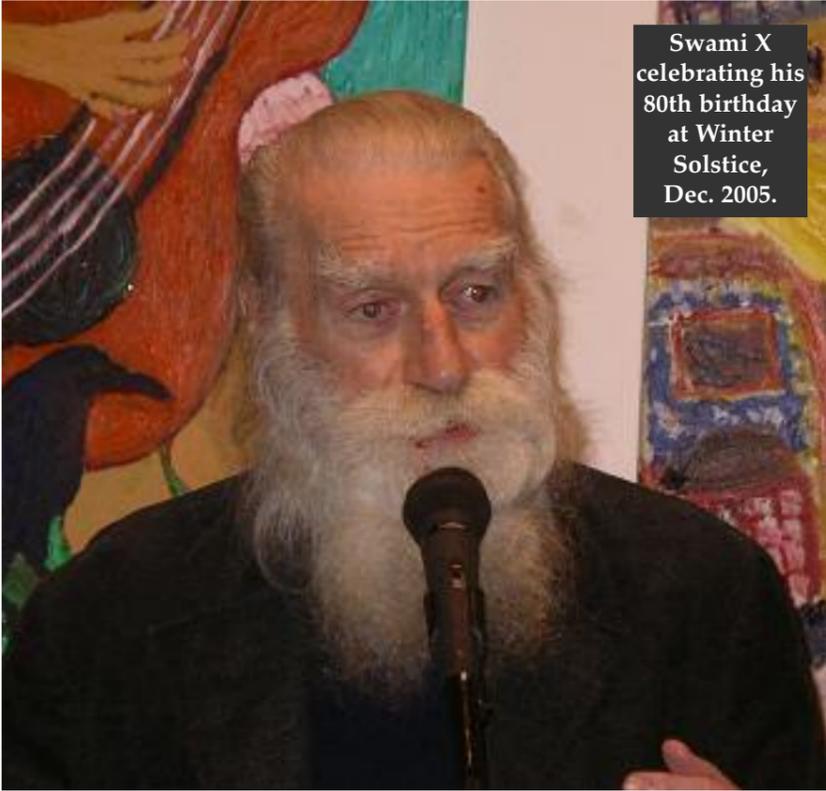


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Swami X celebrating his 80th birthday at Winter Solstice, Dec. 2005.

Swami X Speaks Enneagram II

The Enneagram is the most ancient numerological self-analytical system known to man (embracing woman) (and God bless them) (with or without a license). Personally, I am so ancient I fondly and profoundly remember the wit and genius of Oscar Levant. When asked what he thought was the high point of his career, he said it was making Joan Crawford cry. They never wrote any dialogue for Oscar; they just let him be himself and that was more than enough to delight the human beings of that time.

Well, anyway, back to the Enneagram and any other problems you might be pursuing. If you don't know your Enneagram Number, I've got your number, and for a modest fee, I am prepared to enlighten you, along with your buying lunch at a 5-star topless restaurant.

The major information you need to integrate at this time is that you are a soul, and the center of the universe. This may be a little heavy for you to digest right now, but it's imperative that you get it down in the next four or five years. It's all inside you; you just have to turn your attention within. It's an inside job.

In the meantime, know that I love you, no matter how F---ed Up you may be. Always remember, we all came from that Effulgent Reality, the Supreme OWow; and we all return to that.

I know reincarnation is a fact because it had to

take me more than one life to get this F---ed Up.

(See July 2008 issue of the Beachhead, at www.freevenice.org for calculating your Enneagram Number.)

1's are angry about the lack of perfection in themselves, the world, the galaxy, the universe and Donald Trump. They want perfection more desperately than Donald wants to F---k someone. They are hard-working idealists and are never late for an orgasm.

2's want to be loved and occasionally worshiped. They habitually think of themselves last. This makes them popular, and a mark for neurotically successful con men and women. They need to wake up and smell the bogus stocks, bonds and aphro-

disiacs.

3's make great actors due to their difficulty of dealing with their feelings. They develop a variety of guises in an attempt to cover all occasions. They have the challenge of becoming emotionally honest and having a second coming.

4's are too identified with their own feelings; often turning them into emotional yoyo's. But then again, there are no boundaries on their compassion, which makes them easy dupes for ruthless politicians, pimps and insurance salesman. They have a great love of beauty and an unnerving time settling down with just three or four lovers.

5's worship knowledge in an effort to sate a raging, insistent paranoia. Recognizing the limitations of the mental realm, they turn within and move into the soul, where they discover the Blue Bird of happiness hanging out on the limb of Susan Sarandon. (I sincerely believe Susan to be a great actress, a lovely woman and a spiritual goddess, and I am looking forward to meeting her in the Bliss Plane.)

6's live with anxiety, and sometimes a 17 year old Polanski reject. The 13 year old's charge was that he was a lousy religious experience. 6's have a gang of good qualities, however. They could use a heavier helping of faith and trust in themselves and that the Effulgent Reality, alias OWow, the Big Bopper and the Blue Bird.

7's are a blinding blend of multi-talents, hypersensitivity and a charismatic arrogance. They mean well but sometimes get too personally involved, as we all tend to do, when the moon is in Scorpio. Basically, the 7's want to party, with no painful consequences. God bless them, and may they never get caught off ease.

8's may have a compulsion to be in charge at all times. Sadly, this denies them a glimpse of the Blue Bird. When they do get a shot of Light, they make magnanimous, benign leaders. They're gentle on the inside and tough on the outside. Justice is their mantram. Concrete is their birthstone.

9's labor under the illusory limitation that they are not worthy to blissfully live in the present moment, so they spend all their time in the past or future, remembering the bad times, or planning for a future that never gets here. They are generally indifferent to destiny and fate, but will, on occasion, enjoy a good dishonest gin game with rich guileless strangers.

OWow bless you,
Swami *



Art by Jeffrey Hirsch

Beyond Baroque in peril, again?

Beyond Baroque, Venice's poetry center, is still without a lease at the old Venice City Hall, 681 Venice Blvd. It has been more than five months since the Los Angeles City Council voted to renew Beyond Baroque's lease to its offices, bookstore and theater for the next 25 years.

Sources inside the L.A. city establishment say that, contrary to a city council resolution of February 29, Beyond Baroque may lose the part of the lease pertaining to its historic theater, the heart of its operations.

Apparently, L.A. Theater Works, which has offices in the Beyond Baroque building, even though its performances are held at the Skirball Cultural Center in the Santa Monica mountains, is pressuring the city council office for control of Beyond Baroque's small theater.

Beyond Baroque is celebrating its 40th year in Venice, during which time it has promoted local poets and writers, staged performances, held writing classes and published collections of poems. L.A. Theater Works, on the other hand, seems to have little or no connection to the community except that its free office is located in a city building in Venice.

While Beyond Baroque functions on a shoestring budget, L.A. Theater Works' website touts its "Producers' Circle" where donors are encouraged to give from \$1,000 to \$50,000 to the organization.

If L.A. Theater Works found offices closer to its Hollywood base, its space would be available to other deserving Venice organizations or for Beyond Baroque's goal of setting up archives of the works of Venice Beat poets and writers such as Philomene Long.

An organization of supporters not affiliated with the Institution, called Friends of Beyond Baroque, has been formed to ensure the survival of the institution. Its members have contacted Councilmember Bill Rosendahl to urge him to uphold the Council Resolution awarding Beyond Baroque's lease to all its historic space and protect this precious Venice institution intact. Friends of Beyond Baroque can be reached at: FriendsByndBaroq@aol.com.

A Beachhead article from March 1974, by Carol Fondiller, announced that the LAPD was vacating the city hall building and that it would be available for Venice community organizations, such as Beyond Baroque.

"This wonderful piece of art deco architecture would be perfect for the Venice Town Council meetings. It has parking places, it's fairly central and damn it, it's ours!" Fondiller wrote.

"It's our Venice City Hall, she continued. "Los Angeles took it away from us and put in their occupying forces!... City Hall belongs to the people!"

*

Profanities

A New Poetry Book by Sherman Pearl

Beachhead sustainer and poet Sherman Pearl has written a new book of poetry. Profanities is the name of the book and the hook that ties the poems together. Even so, Pearl rises above the everyday profanities of life in ways that make many of the poems quite uplifting.

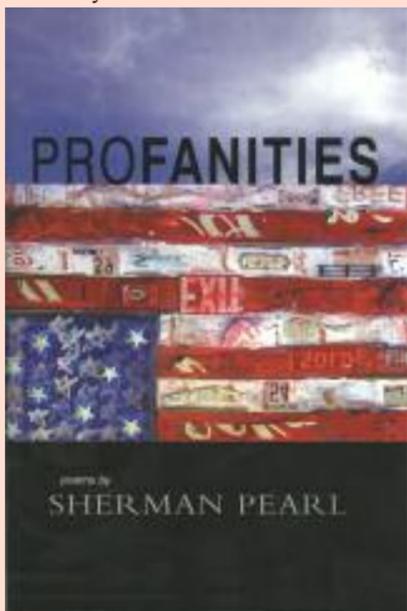
The Beachhead printed one of the included poems, *Auction*, in its January issue. The remaining 28 poems are likely to be new to our readers.

Some of the titles include: *The Big Lie*, *The Last Speaker of Amurdag*, *Demolition Derby*, *To the Vagrant Who Shit in My Yard*, *I Read the News Today Oh Boy*, and *To the Vanishing Bees*.

Sherman Pearl's writing will stick to your ribs. He's been writing poetry for a good many years and knows his craft. Long after you think you've forgotten the poem, something you come across will remind you of it. That's not bad when you consider the price per poem in this \$12 book is only 41 cents. For a taste, read *To the Guy Who Painted Graffiti on the Freeway Overpass* in this issue of the Beachhead.

Profanities can be obtained at the Beyond Baroque bookstore at 681 Venice Blvd.

—Jim Smith *



A Walk through the Walk

By Maria E. Montano

A bus roars by, and
A duck quacks,
Again and again.

His reflection
In the muddy canal waters.
He's a Venice personality.
He is the duck from the Grand Canal.

A pigeon sits down on the pagoda roof.
It's a sunny day,
Many people, lots of waste.
He's a happy pigeon.
He makes his nest under the roof.
He brings food for his young.

I see a crab
Taking in some sun
In the middle of the rocks.
He's playing dead now,
He thinks no one can see him.
He sleeps.
The roar of the waves
Soothes a sleeping mind.
The crash on the wet sand,
Resonates from afar.

It is the ocean,
A door to aquatic life.

The end of a day at the shoreline
A blanket of bright oranges,
Where life flourishes
And creative love survives.

Old Memory

By Mary Getlein

It's an old memory
Of a child gone out to play
Who never came back.
She went into a stranger's car
And was found dead,
I didn't get into the car.
But I watched her get into the car.
I didn't do anything – I told her not to.
But she got in the car anyway.
Two detectives came to my house to question me.
I told them what I saw! Two old white guys,
Hats on their heads, overcoats on.
We lived in Wisconsin. It was the 80s.
I don't know what they looked like, really.
I saw them for a minute, only.
Years later: my brother says: the past for us is no good.
It's not good to go in the past.
We know what is waiting for us.
Monsters wait there to hurt us, again.
Monsters that used to be parents.
But turned into monsters and scared us,
And beat us, and screamed at us. And
Threatened to kill us, and we were little and
We didn't know what to do, and besides,
They were our parents.
During the lunch his eyes never met mine.
So when they finally did, they were scary.
"Do you remember dad before he turned
into an asshole?" No, not really
I know he did something to me
But I can't remember.
We took acid and I think we had sex
And he went away
And we never talked about it,
And I went away and stayed away.
And after I became homeless he never helped me.
And I asked my sister: why didn't anyone ever
Help me?
Because I was homeless? I stopped being your sister?
And she didn't really know why.
And I know it probably has to do with the title!
"homeless"
and they see you in the stereotypical way:
drunk, dirty, filthy, screaming on the corner
at the sky!
Cut off from humanity.
Especially the original family you come from.
Crying to the wind!
Where is my mother? When is she coming back?
And she never comes back.
And you're still cold, dirty, wet, lonely, drunk
And cut off from humanity.
But you're home, in Venice
And sometimes people come by and feed you
And someone gives you a sweater or a coat
And somehow you make it through.
And you sleep, somehow, on the streets of Venice.
Homeless, but at home

Philomene and the Lady

(A year ago, on August 21, we Venetians lost our poet laureate, Philomene Long. This poem is dedicated to her memory)

By Jim Smith

Just what was the relationship
between Philomene and the Muse?

It's true, the Lady showered Philomene
with gifts of inspiration
And the Lady had honored Philomene
by showing herself, gliding above the sea.

But in the end, did she grow jealous
- and gods can get very jealous -
of this mere mortal who understood
each of the seven realms of wisdom?

Philomene once said, "I don't talk about Her much.
You have to be very careful.
She is, after all, the Angel of Surprise."

Stuart Perkoff, who knew the Lady
better than anyone in Venice
Said: "Poets be afraid
she is coming for you."

Philomene and the Lady
Do they now walk across the beach
invisibly and hand in hand?
Or do they float past each other
without even a sideways look?

Philomene dressed all in white
The Lady dressed all in black

To The Guy Who Painted Graffiti On The Freeway Overpass

By Sherman Pearl

My car zooms under your words
(or whatever the hell you've scrawled up there)
and at this speed
I can't decipher your language or fathom
how you managed to balance above the traffic
while aiming your fearsome spray
I drive past
this limb of the city's skeleton
but my mind screeches to a halt, imagining
that a caped super-hero
had swooped down, paint can in hand,
not to save us from evil
but to startle us out of complacency; or that
some dark angel had reclaimed
this road because we've failed to beautify it.

Most likely you're just a street kid
come to remind us you're here among us
up in our rafters, down in our basements.
No space is safe;
you've tagged all the walls
we've erected against you; now it's the clouds
you're writing on.
I think of you suspended above the danger, the law,
the humdrum, I picture myself beside you
risking all for art,
tied to the girder with strings of nerves—
creating something larger than art, more powerful.

I've never been that high, kid,
but I think I'm beginning to see what you mean.

golden sun

by hillary kaye

I have been lucky to have
shared the company of
Angels and I have been
lucky to have seen
Visions too beautiful
to express
I have held on to
tears & let them
flood the
ground around me
and have
harvested
forbidden fruit
wild berries
& golden suns
I have stood up to
the darkness
more than once I
have fought
it & won
I have survived
a country
I am disgraced
by and
I have
found
places small
places
in which
to thrive.

Third Populist Manifesto

By Mark Lipman

The sons of another
Whitman awake
Retake the word
Retake the song
There is no time now
for sleeping till noon
in your shuttered rooms
There is no time now
as New York crumbles
beneath our feet
under the trampling
of a nation of sheep
as Kabul is wiped
off the map
as the Palestinian
follows in the footsteps
of the Native American
gone with the echoes
of a thousand mother's cries
everyone asking "Why?"
Not for freedom
Not for democracy
But for a new kingdom
ruled by philanthropy

Yes, blood is thicker
than water
but not as thick
as oil

How many must still
be killed
to keep the drills
alive?

Where are the new Ginsbergs
the new Dylans
the voices of a new generation
with their cut-up jeans
and back packs
Where are all the great
minds of today
Still roaming their
dark alleyways?

Yes, Ferlinghetti is still alive
but so too is Berlusconi

The usurper is still
in the House
And all the voices
remain silent
How many Kyotos
must be rejected

How many Johannesburgs
over-ruled by a party of one
How many rulers selected
and promises broken
before we stand up
and speak out
and take back
what should be ours
guaranteed by birth

Whitman's wild children
are all alive and well
So put down your demis
and pick up your pens
Get on your buses
all going "Further"
And let your voices
be heard.

this paper is a
poem

38 Recommendations for Addressing Problems of Homelessness

Homeless Taskforce Recommendations to the Venice Neighborhood Council – May 20, 2008 (Instead of responding to the Taskforce, it was dissolved by the VNC)

General

- 1: That the VNC work regionally with other neighborhood councils on the problem of homelessness.
- 2: That the VNC work with the CD11 office and other Westside Neighborhood councils to advocate for regional solutions to homelessness including encouraging adoption of any VNC recommended Venice solutions by other Westside neighborhoods.
- 3: That the VNC encourage the formation of a committee of homeless people that would encourage responsible behavior by homeless people in Venice.

Housing

- 4: That the VNC Identify and publicize all of the shelter and transitional housing resources in and around Venice.
- 5: That the VNC advocate for more homeless Section 8 vouchers for St. Joseph Center and other westside homeless services providers.
- 6: That the VNC conduct outreach and education efforts to identify landlords (including owner-occupants of single family dwellings) in Venice who will consider accepting tenants with homeless Section 8 vouchers.
- 7: That the VNC advocate for an increase of the Fair Market Rent for homeless Section 8 vouchers provided by St. Joseph Center and other westside homeless services providers.
- 8: That the VNC request the addresses and other identifying information and encumbrances including lease terms of all city-owned property in CD 11.
- 9: That the VNC advocate that the City not sell or otherwise dispose of any city-owned property in CD 11 that could be developed as housing for extremely low- very low or low income people and that the VNC notify other neighborhood councils in CD 11 of that demand and encourage them to take similar action.
- 10: That the VNC advocate that a significant portion of the apartment units to be built at 3631 Centinela Avenue (the old Firehouse) be set aside for homeless people.
- 11: That the VNC advocate transforming existing public parking lots into parking structures that incorporate SRO housing and supportive services for senior and/or disabled homeless people in a manner that preserves and/or enhances existing public parking and enhances the surrounding neighborhood.
- 12: That the VNC identify specific sites in Venice where shelters, transitional housing and permanent housing with

supportive services can be located.

- 13: That the VNC identify a location or locations in CD11 where homeless people may lawfully park and sleep in their vehicles.
- 14: That the VNC consider the development of a permanent supportive housing project without resident parking requirements for homeless people who do not own or have access to a vehicle and on condition that they do not acquire such transportation during their tenancy.
- 15: That in response to the housing crisis, the VNC propose a pilot project city-wide that would enable a property owner to apply for a suspension of zoning and building codes for a period of two years (renewable) that would otherwise render an existing rental unit illegal on condition that those premises be made safe and habitable, that the premises be occupied by very low income people at affordable rents and, in the event that parking is insufficient, that the premises be rented to people who do not own a vehicle – the program to be administered by the Los Angeles Housing Department.
- 16: That the VNC obtain an inventory of affordable housing in Venice including all shelter beds, transitional and permanent housing and further, that the VNC request that other neighborhood councils in CD 11 obtain the same information for their neighborhoods.
- 17: That the VNC recommend that City of Los Angeles consider acquisition of failed condominium projects for conversion to affordable rental housing.
- 18: That the VNC periodically conduct a survey to determine the inventory of low and moderate income housing in Venice.
- 19: That the VNC advocate that the Los Angeles Housing Department create a program to assist in the acquisition of small apartment buildings, units to be made affordable to low income people.

Supportive Services

- 20: That the VNC identify locations in Venice where restroom facilities are provided 24/7 and where security is provided.
- 21: That the VNC advocate to keep the bathrooms on Venice beach open 24/7 and provide security sufficient to allow people to utilize the facilities safely; and further, to provide Automated Flush Toilets (AFTs) at other locations in Venice including on Lincoln Blvd., Abbot Kinney Blvd. and selected city parking lots.
- 22: That the VNC identify (or advocate for in the event that none can be found) facilities nearby where vehicle holding tanks can be flushed.
- 23: That the VNC advocate that a survey be conducted of homeless people in CD 11 to ascertain important demographic information and to obtain information concerning their needs and that other neighborhood councils in CD 11 be encouraged to support this action.
- 24: That resources be made available to undertake a comprehensive survey to identify those homeless people in Venice most “at risk” according to an established vulnerability scale.
- 25: That the VNC advocate that the LAPD provide a locker

- facility on the westside to avoid trips across town following arrests and to adequately secure people’s possessions.
- 26: That the VNC advocate for more drug treatment, mental health and job training programs in Venice for homeless populations.
- 27: That the VNC support the effort of Councilman Rosendahl to expand services provided to veterans at the Veterans Administration Center.
- 28: That the VNC design a survey to determine “customer satisfaction” for services provided by government, churches and other nonprofit organizations to homeless people in Venice.
- 29: That the VNC work with the Venice Chamber of Commerce to provide more trash cans in Venice.

Education and Outreach

- 30: That the VNC host a series of town hall meetings to continue the dialogue between housed and unhoused residents in a safe place for everyone.
- 31: That one of the town hall meetings focus on a demographic overview of homelessness both regionally and locally and include experts to be determined and that this overview be coupled with personal experiences of homeless people from our community.
- 32: That the VNC sponsor a community outreach event to bring the housed and unhoused members of our community together that would include music and the arts, educational booths of nonprofits and others who provide supportive services, job training and employment opportunities for homeless people.
- 33: That all of the town hall meetings and outreach events include an action opportunity (e.g. a clothes drive) to assist the homeless.
- 34: That the VNC publicize the existence of the CD 11 service directory.

Legal Advocacy and Law Enforcement

- 35: That the VNC advocate that Municipal Code 85.02 which provides: “No person shall use a vehicle parked or standing upon any City street, or upon any parking lot owned by the City of Los Angeles and under the control of the City of Los Angeles or under the control of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors as living quarters either overnight, day to day or otherwise.” be amended to permit sleeping in vehicles overnight on selected city and private parking lots.
- 36: That the VNC meet with the LAPD to express concern that homeless and disabled people are being targeted in enforcing parking restrictions and to advocate that all laws be enforced impartially in our community.
- 37: That the VNC request that the LAPD develop a team of officers with primary responsibility for outreach to and liaison with local social services providers.
- 38: That the VNC determine whether the LAPD has received the training required by Penal Code Section 13519.64 and if not, advocate that all members of the LAPD receive this training immediately. *

Town Hall Hears from the Experts

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Erlenbusch said that nationally we should continually advocate for Section 8, support the Section Eight Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA) now in Congress and support the National Low Income Housing Coalition, which is calling for a National Housing Trust Fund.

At the state level we were urged to support Housing California’s campaign for a permanent source of funding for affordable housing and a letter writing campaign to the Governor’s office to move the “California Plan to End Chronic Homelessness” off the shelf and into action.

At the local level Venetians can support Housing L.A. and meet with Councilperson Rosendahl to make use of his full support and his promise not to compromise. Generally, Erlenbusch said, we must continue to have dialogues and more town halls and support the L.A. “mixed-income residential development” ordinance. L.A. is one of the few cities in the nation that has not as yet adopted such an ordinance and Erlenbusch is pleased that “Bill Rosendahl is extremely supportive of that [new] ordinance” which gives developers incentives for bringing more affordable housing to L.A..

This Venice town hall on homelessness may ultimately be considered a great success. The people of Venice are now more informed about the homeless and more motivated than ever to help them get the affordable housing they deserve. *

Homeless No More

–continued from page 3

contributed to the swelling of the numbers of the poorest of the poor. The service visits at OPCC support this perception. The number of people served at OPCC’s Access Center for FY 2004-2005 was 2,095. By FY 2006-7, the number had jumped to over 2,700.

Interestingly enough, the official Homeless Census, sponsored by Los Angeles Homeless Services Association, tells a different story. The census reports that the numbers of homeless in Santa Monica dropped 25 percent between 2005 and 2007, from 1991 to 1506. This was dutifully reported in the Santa Monica Daily Press, which quoted city officials as stating that the results of the homeless count demonstrate that the efforts of the city to help the homeless are working.

John Maceri, the Executive Director of OPCC, did not return calls from TAB inquiring as to the discrepancy between his agency’s figures and what was reported in the press.

The City of Santa Monica has launched an aggressive program to address the “homeless problem.” The shelter programs in Los Angeles County, of which Santa Monica is a part, currently offer a maximum of about 12,000 beds, for a population of over 73,000. This figure includes the “winter shelter” beds, when the National Guard Armories open their doors between the months of November and March and transitional housing beds. For Santa Monica, “homeless capital of the United States,” the emergency and transitional shelter beds total 261. This figure increases by 464 if one adds in the transitional housing beds, which can be occupied for up to two years. Julie Rusk, director of Santa Monica City

Hall’s homeless effort, seized upon the so-called “drop” in homelessness in Santa Monica and proclaimed, “We are going in the right direction.”

Rusk did not return calls from TAB requesting an explanation for the apparent drop in the homeless census at the same time that the service numbers for OPCC were on the rise. Stacy Rowe, Human Services Administrator, did agree to speak with this reporter. She suggested that the reasons that the figures for OPCC were on the rise was due to the “excellent” job of outreach that agency was doing.

However, the word on the streets is that the numbers of homeless in Santa Monica is exploding. “We’ve got people flooding in here like nobody’s business,” said “Dave,” who was parking his bike in front of OPCC.

Under the banner of addressing the “homeless problem,” Santa Monica has recently set up a “Homeless Court.” The questionable constitutionality of bifurcating the legal system and setting up a court for only those in particular economic stratum does not seem to bother city hall. Homeless court convenes once a month, to hear cases involving “quality of life” and other petty cases against homeless individuals. The city’s website hails this as “an innovative pilot project.” Spearheaded by Santa Monica Homeless “Czar” Ed Edelman, the court will offer drug and psychiatric assistance, rather than jail time, to those arrested for “petty offenses.”

In “Ending Homelessness in Santa Monica,” authored by the Urban Institute, a think tank in Washington, D.C., a “big stick” approach is advocat-

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Douglas Eisenstark salutes the Beachhead for its coverage of the Lincoln Place crisis.

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More Than Unruly

Anti-Semitism in Venice? The place were thousands of survivors of concentration camps sought refuge after World War II? The home of hundreds more retired garment workers from New York City?

Eric Mankin, a Venice North Beach resident, has undertaken a one-person campaign to ensure that it doesn't happen here.

It all began for Mankin on July 3, in the early evening, when he went out for a walk on the boardwalk with his dogs. One dog got off the leash and ran into Unruly, the lingerie/provocative clothing store at 511 Ocean Front Walk.

Unruly is next to a synagogue, the Pacific Jewish Center, near Paloma Avenue on Ocean Front Walk.

Mankin said he spoke to a woman working in the store in the process of getting the dog out. He says he casually mentioned, in what he thought was a humorous way, that it was unusual to have a sex clothing shop next to a synagogue. Mankin said that rather than being appalled, that it is something he's always regarded as a symbol of Venice's inclusiveness and diversity, and has often pointed this out to visiting friends.

Next the owner of the shop, Ruly Papadopulos, walked up, and, according to Mankin, immediately asked him if he was Jewish. Mankin acknowledged

that he was, though non-observant. Papadopulos responded that he said he hated all Jews.

Shocked, Mankin said, "Excuse me???" He said Papadopulos repeated, "I hate Jews" and then repeated it again.

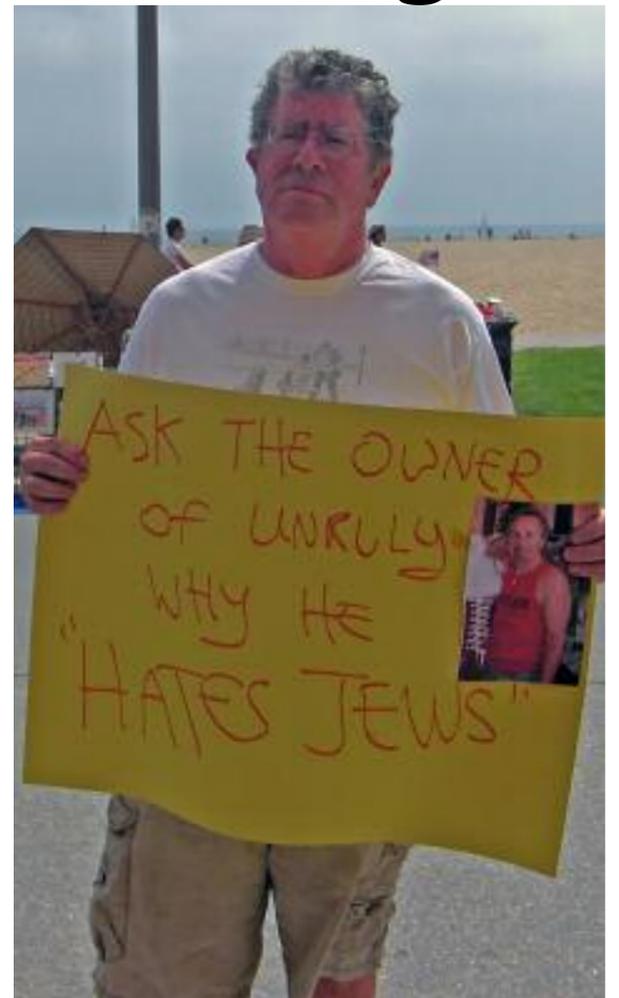
At this, Mankin said he was starting to get angry. Their faces got close together. Mankin says the woman from the store then sprayed him with pepper spray.

Since then, Mankin has been in front of the shop with a sign (see photo to the right).

One July afternoon, Mankin was joined by three Venetians bearing signs. Papadopulos called the LAPD who after consulting with all concerned told the picketers that they were within their rights as long as they didn't block the entrance.

Occasionally, a customer would stroll into the shop and ask what was going on. One customer admitted to Mankin that Papadopulos had told him, "The Jews think they own the world." This is classic anti-semitism. It exists only in the minds of those ruled by hatred and separatism.

Mankin's story even landed in the New York Times on July 20. Go to: www.nytimes.com - search for "Eric Mankin." *



Eric Mankin



Lincoln Place: Venice Gulag?

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Washington, DC, on HUD Housing by the National Alliance of HUD Tenants.

One award is for our tenants' role in saving rent control in California in the June primary. The other is for "winning landmark victories to save (our) homes." These awards were proudly accepted by attorney Amanda Seward on behalf of the LPTA.

About two weeks ago now, AIMCO minions began unboarding the empty apartments around those where human beings still live. Why are they doing this? It might have something to do with the last lawsuit in court that we had won.

The appeals court case that found the Ellis Act evictions to be illegal because the California Environmental Quality Act (which protects us) trumps the Ellis Act.

Some of the former residents have asked when they would be able to return to their apartments. Apparently, what is holding up the works is that the city government has no "mechanism" to return people to their units and needs to develop one, I guess on our backs.

I helpfully suggested to one of our unlawfully evicted residents that the sheriffs be allowed to smartly walk people backwards into their apartments, thus eradicating the grievous removals of two and three years ago. While funny, this is still a very good idea and would be, of course very visual in a Venice sort of way, wouldn't it? *

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Homeless No More

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ed, using the threat of increased incarceration as the prod. "As things stand now," states the report, "the only 'or else' that the court will have, as it urges homeless people to 'cooperate, or else,' is a relatively short stay in jail. We believe it will need a stronger 'or else' to make a real dent; changing the jail could supply that strength."

This brings us to the spectre of Army Regulation 210-35. Drafted into law in 1997 and revised in 2005, 210-35 calls for the setting up of "civilian inmate labor camps" on military bases. There has been much buzz, mostly on the internet, concerning closed military bases being reconfigured as "concentration camps." The fact is that 210-35 reveals who the denizens of these forced labor camps will be. Section 3-5 (a)(6) states that the camps should be set up in compliance with the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. This was enacted under the administration of Ronald Reagan, in 1987.

The Army Regulation goes on to mitigate any sort of press coverage of activities or inmates, and chillingly states that if inmate deaths occur, the host agency will not be held responsible.

In an interview last fall with Danielle Noble of the Homeless Liaison office in Santa Monica, Noble explicitly denied any knowledge of 210-35. "We have enough trouble getting the homeless into regular housing," she said. "Why would we put them in concentration camps?"

I guess I have some questions, too. Why would someone be arrested for shaving in a public restroom? Why would the City of Santa Monica put forward \$476, 237 (estimated costs for one year pilot Homeless Court), which admittedly served only eighty-two people in a one year span of time, when it would cost less to simply house these individuals?

Why is the legal system being altered to criminalize poverty? Why does the Urban Institute advocate "changing the jail" to "make a dent" on homelessness? Why in the world does the Army now have in place plans to place homeless people in forced labor camps?

The poor are always with us, or so stated the Bible. Maybe the U.S. Government has made different plans. *

CommUnity Events – day by day



Friday, August 1

- 7 - 10pm - **Art, Music & Food** - Abbot's Habit, 1401 AKB.
- 7:30 - 10pm - **First Friday** on Abbot Kinney Blvd. Stores are open.

Saturday, August 2

- 10:30am - **L.A. Zoomobile** - Abbot Kinney Library. Free.
- 12pm - 5pm - **Oakwood BBQ and picnic**. - Oakwood Recreation Center. Pot luck and good food by LAFD, music including Kwanza and performance by children from Pacific Resident Theatre, games and entertainment.
- 3pm - **Poetry Gets the Blues** - Publication party for *Profanities* by Sherman Pearl (see page 8) with blues guitarist Bernie Pearl. Refreshments, Free. Ocean Park Library. 2601 Main Street.
- 7pm - Pop concert "**Torme Sings Torme**" starring Steve March Torme and 10 piece band. Free. Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey.

Sunday, August 3

- 9am - 2pm - 2nd anniversary party at the Mar Vista **Farmer's Market**. Special performances by Kinetic Theory Circus, magician, face painting, fresh fruits and vegetables. Venice & Grandview Blvds.
- 9:30 - 11am - **Lincoln Place Tenants Association** - monthly meeting. Penmar Recreation Center, 1341 Lake St. Music at 5pm. at Lincoln Place.
- 10am - **Festival of the Chariots** - Hare Krishna parade down Ocean Front Walk - Indian music, dance, vegetarian feast. 837-8147

Wednesday, August 6

- 4pm - **Recycle Away!** Find out how the recycling process works from start to finish. Abbot Kinney Library. Free.

Thursday, August 7

- 6:30pm-8:30pm - **A Window Between Worlds** - a special viewing of The Monster in Me exhibit - hands-on workshop - 710 4th Ave.
- 7-10pm - Oliver Mtukudzi and Rocky Dawuni. **Afropop from Zimbabwe and Ghana**. Santa Monica Pier.
- 7pm - Picnic in the Park - **Marina del Rey Summer Symphony**: Shostakovich, Debussy, Gershwin, Ravel, Respighi - Burton Chace Park.

Friday, August 8

- 7-9:30pm - **Venice Town Council** - at the United Methodist Church auditorium, 2210 Lincoln Blvd. - Dinner for \$5 if you have it - check web for agenda: venicetowncouncil.org

Saturday, August 9

- 11am - **Westside writers** meet to discuss works in progress. All welcome. Abbot Kinney Library. Free.

Sunday, August 10

- 11am - 7pm - 3rd Annual **Venice Beach Music Festival**. Music by Aliens, Stobo, The Virginia City Revival, Ninja Academy, Steve Watts Band and headliner: Sugarbitch. Windward Plaza, near OFW.

Tuesday, August 12

- 6-10pm - **Rock 'n' Roll film made in Mexico**: From evolution to revolution. Spontos. Free.
- 7pm - Travel the historic **Route 66** with nationally acclaimed guest lecturer/historian Jim Conkle. Abbot Kinney Library. Free.

Wednesday, August 13

- 4pm - Program Finale. Firefighters, pizza party and raffle. At the Abbot Kinney Library.
- 6:30pm - Live music preshow: Unpopable - balloon base funk/blues followed by **The Silent Revolution of Truth**. Spontos. Free.

Thursday, August 14

- 7-10pm - Carmen Consoli, Juana Molina and Samantha Crain. **Indie-Pop singers**/global songstresses. Santa Monica Pier. Free.

Sunday, August 17

- 4pm - **Celebrate Philomene Long's birthday**. Poetry, poets, remembrances. Beyond Baroque.

Monday, August 18

- 8pm - **This is the L.A. River** - an EPFC youth documentary film. The Unurban Coffeehouse, 3301 Pico Blvd.. Free.
- 7pm - **The 5th Dimension with Florence LaRue** - Burton Chace Park. Free.

Thursday, August 21

- 7-10pm - **Peter & Gordon with Gerry and the Pacemakers**. The British invasion once again on the Santa Monica Pier. Free.
- 7pm - Picnic in the Park - **Marina del Rey Summer Symphony**: Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue, Barber, Rachmaninof - Burton Chace Park. Free

Tuesday, August 26

- 8pm - **Suzy Williams and Her Solid Senders** play swing, jazz and jump blues. Temple Bar. 1025 Wilshire Blvd. \$10.

Saturday, August 30

- 7pm - **Marina del Rey Summer Symphony**: Cleo Laine and the John Dankworth Group - Burton Chace Park. Free
- 7:30pm - 10:30pm - An evening of music, drama and poetry of immigrant America. **Planet Siqueiros Pena** presents a unified voice of critical expression in three distinct art forms: music, drama and spoken word. SPARC. \$10
- 8pm - **Venice Cabaret Theatre** at the Blankenship Ballet Studio. An artistic and musical experience with the charm of a European cabaret theatre. 132 Brooks Ave. \$10 prepaid, \$15 at door.

Ongoing Events

EDUCATIONAL

- 9:30am, Tuesday, Aug. 5 & 19 - **Westside Quilters**. Group meets to quilt, crochet, and knit. All experience levels are welcome. Some instruction is provided. Abbot Kinney Library.

KIDS

- Ongoing - Kids, if you are between three and five years old, your parents can register you for **Head Start** Preschool. It's free and there are two locations in Venice. Call 397-2659 or 399-3371.
- 7pm, Tuesdays - **Pajama Storytime**. Alphabet storytime continues (weekly until June 24) with Strong "S." Craft project follows storytime. Abbot Kinney Library. Free.
- Electric Lodge - "**Moo Moo Musica**" - multicultural music and dance activities for babies thru 4 years old. 9:30am Mon; 10:45am and 3:15pm Tues and Thurs; 8:30am and 9:15am Friday. \$16. 1416 Electric Ave.

MUSIC

- 8-10pm, every 2nd Thursday - **Live Music at Danny's Deli**, 23 Windward Avenue.
- 6pm - Wednesday. **Singer/guitarist Evyn Charles**. Sidewalk Cafe. 1401 Ocean Front Walk.
- 8pm - Sunday and Monday - **Live jazz**. Hal's Bar and Grill.
- **Live Music at The Good Hurt**, 12249 Venice Blvd, See week of events at - www.goodhurt.net

POETRY

- 7:30pm - Wednesday, **Open Mic night**. Talking Stick Coffee Lounge. 1630 Ocean Park Blvd.

THEATER

- June 27 - August 3: The Santa Monica Theatre Guild presents **Cabaret**. 2627 Pico Blvd. 828-7519.
- 8:30pm, Friday & Saturday; 7:30pm, Sunday, **Mamafied** - A world premiere comedy. The Edgemar, 2437 Main St. Ocean Park. \$25.

POLITICAL

- 10am - 12pm, Sundays - "**The People's Voice**" - Stand up for freedom of speech. Santa Monica Palisades Park. Ocean Ave at Santa Monica Blvd.

MEDITATION/YOGA

- 6pm - Monday and Thursdays - **Hatha Yoga** - Vera Davis Center, 610 California Ave. Donation.
- 9-10am (ish), Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays - **Stand-Up Comedy Yoga** on the beach with Vanda and Friends! Rose Ave and the water's edge. 360-789-1466.
- 7-9pm, Wednesday - **Maha Siddha Yoga** with Swami. Indian veg. feast after class. 14 Wavcrest Ave#2. Free.

FREE FOOD

- 3:30 - 5pm, Every Friday - Veggie giveaway. Vera Davis Center, 610 California Ave.
- 5pm, Every Thursday - Food Givaway - Donated by the Venice United Methodist Church. In the parking lot.
- 2-5pm, Every 4th Saturday - Free hot meals. First Baptist Church of Venice. 685 Westminster Ave.
- 12:30-1:30pm, August 14 and August 28 - Community food distribution project. Hosted by Mildred Crush Foundation. First come first served. Vera Davis Center.

Get your local event listed in the Beachhead. Send information to Calendar@freevenice.org by the 25th of the month. (If you can afford an advertisement, please take one out - \$25)

Location Guide

- Abbot Kinney Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd, 821-1769
- Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 822-3006
- Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey. marinadelrey.lacounty.gov
- Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave, 306-1854, max10@electriclodge.org
- Hal's Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 396-3105 - www.halsbarandgrill.com
- Pacific Resident Theatre, 703 Venice Blvd. 822-8392 - www.pacificresidenttheatre.com
- SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x 15.
- Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave, 399-2078
- The Gathering, 132 Brooks Ave. 310-396-8205 - www.udcworld.org/thegathering
- United Methodist Church and Auditorium, 2210 Lincoln Blvd. (at Victoria).
- Westminster Elementary School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (enter auditorium from San Juan Ave.) 606-2015



Old pals, (l to r) Jimmy McLuskey, Art Marquez, Joe Madrid, at their morning hangout, Cafe Venicia, 827 Ocean Front Walk

Photo: Maureen Cotter