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A Warehouse District Resident Responds to Hate

By Deborah LaShever

Fellow Venetians, do not listen to hate mongers! We are better than that.

Instead of being part of a real solution to these problems, involving the human beings who desperately need our compassion and assistance, people like the man I refer to above are intent on tarnishing these citizen who have human and civil rights exactly like we all do. I ask you from my heart, please stay out of this issue if you have no intention of doing constructive to contribute. Do not support and contribute hate. This prejudice, greed and self-seeking. And Venetians are currently working on a viable and I, like you, have a deep financial and personal investment in the welfare of Venice and I love Her as much as you do.

I firmly believe that we need to create a good, solid solution that works for everyone. If it doesn’t work for everyone it does not work.

Just let you know, others of us in Venice are currently working on a viable solution, to propose to Rosendahl in the next budget, that is a compassionate and encompassing one. Let us do our work, please stop involving yourselves if you are not intending to contribute to real solutions. Pushing these people around does nothing, as the history of the issue in Venice proves. If you want to help, wonderful! There’s a lot to do! If you have great ideas, fantastic! We’d love to meet and talk with you, let’s incorporate them!

But instead of trying to help or going through proper channels, the man I am speaking of evidently took things into his own hands. Per Rosendahl’s office, on March 7, an “anonymous” call came in to the Department of Sanitation which began the raid, that occurred with police presence, on the street encampment off 3rd Ave. and Rose Avenue. This man’s own letters basically implicate him in being the one to start the raid on the 3rd Ave. encampment and the devastation of about 50 people who lost everything they had, which wasn’t much.

Lifesaving medicine, which they have no money to replace, glasses and contact lenses, family photos that are irreplaceable, drivers licenses and social security cards, rain proof tarps, water, pet supplies, their artwork, their musical instruments, blankets and sleeping bags, books, journals, jackets—everything—was just taken away from them and thrown in garbage trucks to be hauled to the dump. I was out there myself, that very cold night after the raid, handing out water, blankets and socks provided by the Legal Clinic on Rose for the victims. It was like a war zone. People were literally in shock.

Can you imagine if you came home and everything was gone? Everything you owned in the world was gone? And, you had no money to replace anything? What if it wasn’t a natural disaster that did this nor a war, but rather another person in your community? Do any of you really want to support that? Really?

For his own self-spent spirited and perceived personal gain, this man devastated 50 people’s lives and cost the city bad press and sorely needed money. He took police and city employees’ time for his own personal agenda. This is true criminal behavior. Sleeping on the sidewalk out of necessity is not. The LAPD and the Sanitation Department have better things to do for the whole community than to do to the whims of one or two hard hearted people. What did they gain, after all? Nothing. The un-housed are back on 3rd Ave because they have nowhere else to go. What did they lose? Every- thing. Literally everything. Every shred. And that is no exaggeration.

Why don’t people find out how they can help with this issue rather than spending their time making it worse? I hear so much lately about people being up in arms about bullying. What, the hell do you think it’s about? It’s not about bullying one on one, but bullying one part of our community by other parts of our community. That is really horrifying if you stand back and look at it. There are other Future of Venice Skills Center in Doubt

By Charles Thomas

The Venice Skills Center continues to “hang in there,” thanks to community activists during the ongoing saga of the school district budget crisis. If you have followed this issue, then you are aware the Los Angeles Unified School District claims to be short of the funding needed to operate the network of adult education centers, the Venice Skills Center being one such location.

On March 15, the board of superintendent convened in the much-anticipated vote, among other things, to decide the fate of adult education. The result, in full analysis, could be termed a mixed victory, of sorts. The bad part is that the board voted to “zero out” funding for adult ed; that is, that in a worst case scenario, pending further review, adult ed would be eliminated. The board, by majority vote, approved a budget plan in a worse case review of the numbers, leaving no provisions for adult ed, as they claimed pressures for slashing the budget. Again, this would mean the end of adult ed and our beloved Skills Center. The good part is that a potential $180 million has, interestingly, been located by the superintendent in his reassessment of the budget, and these funds could keep adult ed afloat. The reassessment left the board and superintendent with a tentative plan keeping adult ed operating, but in a more limited capacity. Only ten of the district’s adult ed centers would continue, the Venice Skills Center among them.

The board also voted, in an effort to close further budget gaps, to place a parcel tax on the ballot for the elections this November. Such a levy on property owners, if approved, could raise another $255 million annually.

In both these major votes (as to the budget itself and the parcel tax) the one dissenting vote came from board member Marguerite LaMotte. In LaMotte’s dissenting comments, she questioned the absolute need for drastic cuts and instead stated, “Let’s stop the wasteful spending.” LaMotte’s suggestion is a smoking gun. It is possibly a wake-up call as to what the situation really is at the LAUSD. Let’s examine wasteful spending going on whether it be a result of politics, or perhaps neglect, oversight and poor planning.

For example, as a student at the Venice Skills Center, I believe there is questionable expenditure with school police staffing. I note there are usually two uniformed school police officers on duty at the Center. The Skill Center campus is about one acre in size and the school grounds can be virtually seen and monitored all the same. The school police staffing. I note there are usually two uniformed school police officers on duty at the Center. The Skill Center campus is about one acre in size and the school grounds can be virtually seen and monitored all the same.

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The LAUSD budget pays for the operation of the school police. Salary information on the school police web site indicates that the starting salary is in the $49,000 range for an officer. If only one officer is really needed, then it could be wasteful spending having two. The point is, please look for examples such as this anywhere in LAUSD’s operations so we can bring them to the attention of board members; things they don’t see, or conveniently don’t want to see.

There are worthwhile ideas and suggestions to hear; ideas from students, teachers and others. You can come up with some. (Don’t leave it all to the school board.) You’re probably smarter than you think.

www.freevenice.org
The Ocean Charter School is a wonderful institution which, through many travels and the overcoming of prodigious obstacles to establish itself, has tried, succeeded, to amply satisfy the educational standards set by the law, and make it possible for the students to continue and develop their education with more accomplishment. The Ocean Charter School children thus far have been able to accomplish this successfully, and this latest development would be viewed as farcical if it wasn’t so utterly tragic by the suspicion that the LAUSD is playing political games with the hearts and minds of our defenseless children.

After years of Herculean effort by Ocean Charter and its smart, well-meaning and dedicated leadership, and an improving but not yet compelling academic performance and a spirited school community, the LAUSD is playing political games with the Ocean Charter school children, and the LAUSD’s bureaucracy-gone-mad.

I am absolutely shocked and appalled at the recent decision of the LAUSD’s Board of Education to refuse permission for the Ocean Charter School to build on the Walgrove Campus which was to be the site for their new school.

After all this effort by so many well-meaning parents and students, the LAUSD is playing political games with the hearts and minds of our defenseless children.

The taxpayers employ the LAUSD board & the members of that board should have the power to answer to the taxpayers involved in this particular instance for the apparently complete illogic of their decision; at least those members who voted “yes” could perhaps explain to us how it was that their good sense came to be overruled by the majority. It is, of course, a matter of fact, or more example of the LAUSD’s bureaucracy-gone-mad, too-big-to-fail tradition of profit and profit and profit.

Apart from all the political chicanery involved from Steve Zimm (whose “yes” vote is believed by many to be strategic only) and the rest of the board, throughout the whole of the LAUSD’s bureaucracy-gone-mad, the LAUSD has been unable to attain the financial success of this school, one giant factor never seems to come into the discussion either in the press or in the halls of power at all, to wit the central one, the welfare of the Ocean Charter children at the center of what has now, for them, permanently stopped their education; at least complete illogic of their decision; at least those members who voted “yes” could perhaps explain to us how it was that their good sense came to be overridden by the majority. It is, of course, a matter of fact, or more example of the LAUSD’s bureaucracy-gone-mad, too-big-to-fail tradition of profit and profit and profit.

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Post Office Sale Terms Omit Historical Protection; Rally Scheduled for Tax Day, April 17

By Gruta Cobar

The Venice post office is currently for sale for $7.5 million, and the closing day for bid submissions is April 23. The draft covenant stating that the future owner must make a written request to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) before doing any construction, alteration or rehabilitation to the building. But if permission is not granted within 30 days, the owner can go ahead and perform the work simply by following the recommended approaches of the NPS. Thus, it doesn’t matter whether the SHPO grants permission or not.

Furthermore, there is no provision for the SHPO or anyone else to monitor whether the NPS Standards and Guidelines are being followed. Therefore, if the mural inside the building (or the building itself) is destroyed, there is no legal remedy or penalty to the owner. Also, there is no provision that allows any future public access to view the mural.

John Henning, attorney representing the Venice Stakeholders Association (VSA), filed an official request for Section 106 consideration, which mandates a historic preservation review process. According to Henning’s letter, sale of the post office under the current draft covenant “would result in an ‘adverse effect’ for purposes of Section 106.”

The sale and closure of the Venice post office is considered to be a relocation, with services moving across the street to where it is currently called the Annex. All closures are under a moratorium until May 15, while the Venice post office is for sale because it is labeled “relocation.”

A month ago the Venice community came together and raised the funds to finance an attorney, Elaine Mittleman, in Washington D.C., to appeal the sale of the post office. The lawsuit was filed, demanding that the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) have the power to decide whether the sale of a post office be classified as a closure instead of a relocation.

This latest lawsuit is our third appeal. The previous one asked that the PRC classify Venice as a closure instead of a relocation. The PRC responded that it does not hold the power to make that decision. The current lawsuit demands that the PRC does have that power.

In a best-case-scenario situation, the court will decide that the PRC does have the power to decide what the power is or is not to be considered a closure. The PRC would then decide that the Venice post office classification as a closure. The USPS would then conduct its own investigation, at the end of which they would decide that the Venice post office is indeed a closure. Again, this is a best-case scenario.

Would the Venice post office be saved, then? No, it would just be taken off the relocation list and put on the closure list, which would take the building off the market.

By Jim Smith

When City Controller Candidate Cary Brazeman expressed shock that the city of Los Angeles was corrupt, I wasn’t surprised. I was raised on the scenes in the film, Casablanca, where Inspector Renault discovers gambling at Rick’s as he is handed his winnings. Brazeman was irritated about the city’s Ethics Commission changing the election rules in mid-campaign. In fact, “ethics” is about as foreign to city government as “planning” is to the Dept. of Planning.

When I asked Brazeman if he didn’t know L.A. was corrupt, he responded: “Well, I liked to think it couldn’t get any dirtier… but was proven wrong!”

His reaction is not uncommon. Many of us in Venice have had those moments when we thought it couldn’t get any dirtier, only to be confronted with more corruption.

Corruption takes many forms in the city of the angels. It can be the old-fashioned kind when money is transferred from a businessman to a city official. This is called a campaign contribution in Los Angeles, where most of the city council is beholden to developers. Corruption also can be rigged elections as in the Venice annex election of 1925. Corruption caused the dismantling the Red Cars, the most extensive mass transit system in the country at the behest of the oil and auto companies. Corruption can also take the form of changing the rules in mid-stream, as Brazeman points out. Or, in suddenly deciding a city street is actually an alley to brutalize homeless people. It’s no wonder that a popular film exposing city corruption in mid-century was called L.A. Confidential – the opposite of transparency.

I would argue that lack of transparency in government is an example of corruption. Transparency means openness, communications and accountability. Where is the transparency in Los Angeles? The city regime is about as transparent as the governments of Syria and North Korea.

Readers may wonder how the city of Los Angeles can be compared with these boogeymen of the evening news? Aren’t they corrupt dictators (the term is nearly redundant)? If you really think Los Angeles is a city that doesn’t care, you haven’t been paying attention. It has some of the trappings of democracy. You can attend city council meetings, where whatever you say will be ignored. You can attend neighborhood council meetings, where all the power is a mock legislature in a middle school. The only difference is that the number of uniformed, armed men and women will probably not be lining the back wall at the middle school exercise.

Here are a few examples of the shocking lack of transparency as it affects Venice:

• Not once since he was elected has our Councilmember, Bill Rosendahl, issued an accounting of the Venice Surplus Property Fund. The Fund, which includes money from the sale of city owned property in Venice, is supposed to be used only in Venice. There has been no report on how much has been collected, how much has been spent, what projects it has been spent on, or any other particulars. Our previous councilmember, Cindy Misickowski, who was impeached, was required by the city council to hold an election, routinely consulted with the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council on expenditures. In neither case, however, was a
Plantations of Prisons – California’s Biggest Crop

By Mary Getlein

Jason stood before us, a 30-year-old Latino man. He was here to tell his story of growing up in East L.A. and how he met Javier Stauring, who changed his life. Javier supervises the Catholic detention ministry programs at all juvenile halls and probation camps in Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. He also oversees three other restorative justice programs: Ministry to Victims of Crimes, Ministry to Families of the Incarcerated, and Ministry to Formerly Incarcerated.

Jason was raised in the neighborhood around USC. His father died when he was nine and his mother had to work two jobs. Jason’s 16-year-old brother was given the responsibility of raising him. He grew up in the streets. His mother’s method of childrearing was physical beatings. He described brutal beatings by his mother and older brother. He started using drugs to numb the pain. He joined a gang and got involved in an armed robbery. He robbed people and shot people. He wanted to hurt people the way he had been hurt.

When he committed an act of violence, he felt like people paid attention to him, he felt powerful.

He related that as a 13-year-old, his mother bought a goat and tied it up behind the house. For three days Jason watched the goat. It was a young goat, and Jason’s mother was going to cook it for a family event. So she told Jason to go get his gun and go kill the goat. He couldn’t kill the goat.

Javier asked him why he couldn’t kill the goat, but he could kill a kid on the street. Jason’s response was: “That goat didn’t do nothing to me. It was just a goat, so cute I couldn’t kill it.” But he was accused of being responsible for the kill.

The greatest unions in the state, with a lot of strength, is the prison guard union. The prison guard union is one of the strongest unions in the world. Ten billion dollars a year are used to maintain the prison industrial complex only in California. If only one percent of that budget could be redirected toward prevention, then that money could be used for youth programs so less young people will be drawn to criminal activity.

We need programs to help our youth. There is no infrastructure to fund programs at the present time.

The California prison system is the largest “cash crop” of the state. The prison guard union is one of the strongest unions in the world, with a lot of strength in Sacramento. We need bills in the California legislature addressing these concerns. We need to adopt a culture where we value our youth. There was a bill in Sacramento protesting the practice of shackling women inmates to the gourney while they are giving birth. That bill did not pass. These policies are having a “colonizing effect” on the prisoners in custody. Many of them are more familiar with prison life than life on the outside. This is equivalent to the conditions of slavery, when slavery was legal in most states of the country. In 2012 we have more Blacks in prison then there were slaves in 1850. Blacks are six times more likely to be in prison than whites.

This article is based on a talk given by Javier Stauring, who is co-director of the Office of Restorative Justice. Javier is also Policy Director for the Healing Justice Coalition, a diverse coalition of faith-based organizations in California. They seek to support restorative justice for juveniles instead of divisive, punitive measures that further fracture families and communities.

The talk was held on March 11 at the Church in Ocean Park, in Santa Monica. For more information, visit www.restorejustice.com, email jharper@catholic.org, or call 916-313-4024.
The War Against Women

By Jack Newport

Women of Venus (actually, all across the country) it’s time to wake up as decades of progress are about to be rolled back. At the moment of sounding a modern-day Paul Rever, “The misogynists are coming! The misogynists are coming!”

As one, our pro-life politicians nationwide are pushing bills that would require you to undergo intra-uterine contractions, extend abortion waiting times, allow employers to fire you for using contraception, and require you to tell your employer if you use contraception (for, draw me a picture, perhaps?) And you thought Rush Limbaugh was bad? Actually, I feel like Rip Van Winkle waking up to a society I don’t recognize. I thought equal rights for women had been decided decades ago. Then again I thought the evolution question had been resolved during the Scopes trial in 1925. Evidently not.

So here we are in 2012 and I’m wondering where did these women come from? And why? It’s so extreme lately that Rep. Richard Hanna (R-New York, campaigning to get re-elected, is telling women to support Democratic candidates if they want their rights protected. Obviously Hanna isn’t counting on Tea Bagger support in November.

After a notion to issue a peak last month on the disturbingly popular Rush Limbaugh show: “I’m one of those women who’s had a taste of the pill, and I’d be the first to say that it’s not my favorite form of birth control. In the past I’ve used condoms in support of female contraception being covered by health insurance. (By the way, Viagra has been covered since 1998.)”

On three successive days Rush called Ms. Fluke a “slut” and a “prostitute” and suggested that he’d pay her to appear on his show as a “slut or prostitute in your strug- gle for emancipation. It’s as if someone wiped out all of history.

Before Ronnie was the Void.

It’s particularly galling to see women under thirty buying the whole repressive package – “Yes, I’m a doctor, lawyer, C.P.A., mother, general, anchorwoman... but I’m not a woman’s lib- ber and I got to where I am with no one else’s help!” And the women-perpetrated slurs don’t keep up, they argue, they discuss. These post-Breast-ages’ era women who can now have non-traditional” jobs and even THINK of ask- ing for on-site day care and think about thinking about comparable pay, think about the same athletic scholarship opportunities offered to women as are offered to men.

These women who were born who were in high school are taking for granted attitudes and choices I didn’t even imagine when I was in high school. And that goes from the right of access to accurate, unbiased information about birth control.

Well, Goddess knows there’s a saying that those who forget or don’t learn about his or her tory are condemned to repeat it. And, my dear younger sisters, this is the history Phyllis and Jerry and their crew.

In January for us 22nd was the 13th anni- versary of the Roe vs. Wade decision of the Supreme Court. And if one remembers, the decision reversed a de- cision of a lower court’s ruling that abortion was murder to the decision that the mother of abor- tion was a private matter between a woman and her physician. I read Simone De Bovoor’s “Second Sex,” and Grave’s “White Goddess” in high school, so to me this decision is not an overide. Anyone remem- ber what her name and the thalidomide baby, and how she went to west of those cold liberal northern countries for abortion. You do! Well, 30-year old high school reunion is coming up, and I’m one of those women who’s had a taste of the women who abortions were illegal, and a sample of how is it now that women have the right to their own choice – and I am stating here and now that abortion is my favorite form of birth control. But what happens if you are ill from the pill and the diaphragm slips? In the past, barmaids, receptionists, dancers, students, teachers, women not get maternity leave, and of course, since the Roe vs. Wade decision, the middle and low income people as have the inroads on federal funding for abortion for the poor. Well, surely you didn’t think that Reagan would force his cronies wives, daugh- ters, as a result of not having wanted children, would you? That’s a differ- ence.

It’s too bad that no one has told you youngers, so many women who are being driven by a panic- stricken lover to County Jail, out of town, or married to someone else, of not having the few thousand dollars to have it neatly done.

Because, believe me younger sisters, if anti- abortion legislation is enacted, it will only affect the middle and low income people as have the inroads on federal funding for abortion for the poor. Well, surely you didn’t think that Reagan would force his cronies wives, daugh- ters, and midwives to have unwanted children?

A 13-year old who didn’t know where she was pregnant, until she was five months along and couldn’t remember who did it, much less how; a 45-year old mother of six who winked at the other women as she said, “I just slipped and fell, doctor.” All of the women were suffering from effects of illegal abortion, not the abortions themselves. The doctor or midwife or neighbor who helped the women abort was also guilty of murder.

A film has been showing around the country called “The Story of God”; it part of it on television and frankly, it reminded me of these SUNN movie productions, popular in the late 70s. You, the ones that try to understand the new Re- ships in King Tut’s time, and Jesus and Buddha were all aliens-abominable snowmen; this is an abominable snowman ultraconservative. A three-month fetus is magnified about 1000 times its real-size shape, which is about the size of a little finger. Of course, some theologians understand this, which works on the same principle as a vacuum cleaner. You are then told by the doctor who is, an atheist and former abortionist, that this shows you in this blurry ultrasound wave-up is the mouth of a baby. Note: not fetus, baby. What I saw a series of vaguely shadowed fetal forma-
Who Bombed Judi Bari?

A conversation With Darryl Cherney, Earth First! Activist And Producer Of Daring New Documentary: Who Bombed Judi Bari?

By Margot Pepper

Before global warming permeated contemporary consciousness, Earth First! activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney popularized protests against clear-cutting in the 1980’s.

On May 24th, 1990 in Oakland, California, a bomb exploded in Judi Bari’s car and the former union organizer suffered debilitating injuries alongside Cherney.

Who Bombed Judi Bari?, a new compelling and poetic documentary film directed by Mary Liz Thomson and produced by Cherney, explores the attempts by the FBI and Oakland Police to accuse Bari of planting the bomb herself and the subsequent lawsuit against the agencies that attempted to silence both environmentalists.

The film, which plays out like a Hollywood drama, offers a surprising and uplifting resolution: in 2002, a federal jury found that 3 FBI agents and 3 Oakland officers were guilty of violating Bari and Cherney’s civil rights and ordered the law enforcement agencies to pay $4.4 million.

Yet, like the killing of JFK, the film does leave an unsolved mystery: who then, is the actual bomber of Judi Bari? In 2011, their legal team secured a stop order preventing the FBI from destroying evidence that could contain the bomber’s DNA and ordered it turned over to an independent lab for testing. The FBI is appealing the order.

The following interview with Cherney offers his thoughts as to the bomber’s identity, as well as insights about perseverance against impossible odds, lessons for today’s Occupy movement.

Margot Eve Pepper: Charles Hurwitz replaced Pacific Lumber’s sustainable growth policy with one of clear-cutting old-growth forests under Maxxam Inc. How do you feel about Earth First!’s accomplishments with regard to Maxxam?

Darryl Cherney: We drove Maxxam’s stock down from $4.5 to $3. And we criminalized Charles Hurwitz, made it difficult to show his face and do anymore takeovers. We rescued some redwoods.

Pepper: Some redwoods?

Cherney: Headwaters Forest started out as a 98,000 acre plan and went down to 68,000 acres, and when the politicians were through with it, it was down to 10,000 acres with only 5,000 acres of standing trees. Often, when you’re doing a battle to save forests, you start off trying to save something big and ten years later, there’s only a little something left. So it’s always bittersweet and meanwhile there are hundreds of thousands of acres of rainforests being cut elsewhere. What I try to remember, in order to keep surfing the impossible tidal wave, is that you can save something little but make a big statement and teach other people, too. It’s not just about the issue, it’s about the strategy, the spirit. We got 18,000 acres of Califo, 10,000 acres of Headwaters, or three acres for Julia Butterfly’s tree. Even if it was only three acres, it had a big impact on human consciousness. There’s a Hawaiian spiritual principle that “effectiveness is the measure of truth.” So I like to think that activists can be effective, even in a short period of time, by revealing the truth.

Pepper: Like the Occupy movement, that’s primarily educating, revealing truth. You’re also scattering seeds of this truth and you don’t really know where they’re going to fall or what’s going to grow.

Cherney: Yes and even though we don’t know where they’re going to fall, we know they’re going to fall somewhere. And part of the fun of it is seeing the surprise, seeing somebody who was three years old twenty years ago say, “I followed you guys’ campaign when I was a kid and now I’m working to save the environment myself.”

Pepper: Are you afraid Maxxam is going to go after you or sue you?

Cherney: Maxxam’s old news. This is the case I’m interested in now. Two FBI agents that we used went on to Myth Busters and Special Agent Phil Sera went on the Discovery Channel’s FBI Files as a commentator. With help from the Fair Use Doctrine, in the movie we let the public know that Mike Holmes is an expert bomb guy, Frank Doyle, has actually been found guilty of lying about the bombing of Judi and on me in his police records. And that this person, who is convicted of lying in civil trial, is now a consulting bomb expert on a television show regularly, a featured guest. Now, “Who Bombed Judi Bari?” gives us the opportunity to challenge mainstream institutions, including media, and to reinvigorate an investigation of the bomber’s identity. One of the things we can do to that end, is to challenge Myth Busters to solve this myth: was it in fact Frank Doyle’s voice at the scene just prior to the bombing that said, “This is it! This is the final exam!” Because Frank Doyle testified under oath that that was not him. We maintain that the recording sounds just like him.

Pepper: Your film shows that one month prior to the bombing, the FBI’s Frank Doyle was conducting an FBI bomb school training. What you’re implying is, he thought the real life situation of bombing you was a “final exam,” of sorts, the real thing…

Cherney: That’s what we’d like Myth Busters to explore. We’d like Myth Busters to dedicate an episode to investigating their own guy, using voice analysis techniques. We’d like the film to reinvigorate interest in the bombing. Just like there’s interest in Who Killed JFK? Who bombed Judi Bari?

Pepper: Not too many people succeed in suing the FBI and winning. Are you afraid of retaliation?

Cherney: I know what you’re asking. Franklin Roosevelt once said, “There’s nothing to fear but fear itself?” Fear is situational. It’s a good instinct to have. The important thing is to be wise and to prioritize. What I’m much more afraid of is what’s happening to the planet. As an Earth First’er, what I really fear is the destruction of our planet’s ability to provide life for us and all of our animal friends. Contrary to expectations, a warrior is somebody who offers their life—not somebody who takes a life—but someone who offers their life for the greater good of the community. Earth First! is a warrior society. We’re willing to offer ourselves up for the ability of the earth to sustain us with life. That’s part of what makes Earth First!’ers unique.

Pepper: You were considering the title, “The FBI Stole My Fiddle,” like the song you and Judi sing in the film. What does it refer to?

Cherney: The FBI seized Judi Bari’s fiddle as evidence. But it wasn’t just any old fiddle. It was her childhood fiddle. This is not a small matter to a musician. Judi never got her childhood fiddle back to the day she died. Eventually, after her death, it was released. Even without my knowledge at first. So I’m still exploring the condition of the fiddle and where it is and how we go about memorializing it. But it’s now free. I think, I haven’t seen it. It’s like a myth. Like Loch Ness Monster or Big Foot.

Pepper: Maybe you can add a DVD extra: “Where is Judi Bari’s Fiddle?”

Cherney: I’m not going to tell you. (Laughing.)

Pepper: Do you see any parallels between Earth First! and the current Occupy Wall Street movement?

Cherney: The similarities between Occupy Wall Street and Earth First! are striking: bottom up leadership; vigorous debates between those who advocate property destruction and those who don’t; disruption by the authorities and the ability to catch the attention of the media.

Pepper: What should Occupy activists be wary of?

Cherney: I think the biggest mistake Occupy activists are making is trying to cover too many issues. Also I think it is a mistake to camp out at the various city halls around the country rather than at the doors of the corporate interests. Occupy should be camped out and holding vigils at Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Chase Bank, and so on. The tendency to camp out at city halls is that it’s government space and they are less likely to be evicted and if they are— it will take longer. But camping there doesn’t send the original message: Occupy Wall Street.

Occupy should also be wary of violence. The people who espouse violence discredit the non-violent participants. It is an oppressive act that mimics the dominant paradigm. Many at Occupy Wall Street recognize that the police are part of the 99%. Utah Phillips once said that a cop is a good man (or woman) doing a bad job. To segregate the police from the 99%, simply because they are defending the oppressors misses the point. All of us defend the oppressors when we buy packaged food, live on conquered land in an industrially built house made out of old growth lumber, and go to an industrial school reading textbooks made out of virgin paper teaching what is ultimately garbage. So the holier-than-thou crap has got to go out the window. The police are part of the 99% just as the tea parters are, just as members of the city council are. And the 1% is not to be destroyed. They simply need to eat a bit of humble pie. For me, the message of Occupy can be summed up in one word: equality.

Pepper: What words of wisdom do you have for the current Occupy movement?

Cherney: You are what we’ve been waiting for.
By Phyllis Hayashibara

Esther Chaing, proprietor of Venice’s oldest sushi restaurant Hama Sushi at the Venice Traffic Circle, will host three fundraisers at her restaurant on April 25 and 26 to benefit the Venice Japanese-American Memorial Marker (VJAMM) Committee. On March 22 the Department of the Interior, through the National Park Service’s Japanese American Confinement Site Grant Program, awarded VJAMM a $50,000 grant for the 2012 grant cycle. The Park Service grant requires a $1 match in non-federal funds, and “in-kind” contributions to qualify for every $2 in federal money.

A series of Hama Sushi Restaurant fundraisers will ensure that the VJAMM Committee will top the requisite $25,000 in non-federal money. Throughout the year Esther, has been able to demonstrate her appreciation by contributing to a number of causes, including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Japan’s Earthquake and Tsunami benefit, and the Venice Traffic Circle Sushi restaurant, Hama Sushi, has donated almost $5,000.

For the VJAMM fundraisers at Hama Sushi on Wednesday, April 25, Hama Sushi head chef Kinya Aota created a special “bento” box lunch that includes teryaki chicken, umbingo and potato salads, spicy tuna and California rolls, arame seaweed, rice, and a vegetable tempura, plus a soft drink for $20. All profits from the event will be donated to the VJAMM Committee.

Estimated to begin in 2013, Hama Sushi will donate 10 percent of all food and drink purchased between 7 and 11 pm to the VJAMM Committee. In addition, Hama Sushi will allow the VJAMM Committee to exhibit art works for sale on its walls from April 25 through June 25. Forty percent of the sale price of an artwork will be donated to the VJAMM Committee, with 40 percent going to the contributing artists and 20 percent retained by Hama Sushi.

Esther grew up in Taegu, south of Seoul in South Korea, and emigrated to Los Angeles in 1972 with one of her older brothers, leaving her parents, two brothers, and one sister in South Korea. She studied English and art in night school classes, and worked in garment factories in Los Angeles during the day. “I was a trimmer, and worked twelve to four every day. ’I was a trimmer, and worked twelve to four every day,” she said. “I was a trimmer, and worked twelve to four every day.”

She worked at Condor as an art designer and pattern maker. She worked at Intermarket Costume, which made all the uniforms for the “cast members” in the newly opened Disney World and EPCOT Center in Orlando. A series of Hama Sushi Restaurant fundraisers will ensure that the VJAMM Committee will top the requisite $25,000 in non-federal money. Throughout the year Esther, has been able to demonstrate her appreciation by contributing to a number of causes, including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Japan’s Earthquake and Tsunami benefit, and the Venice Traffic Circle sushi restaurant, Hama Sushi, has donated almost $5,000.

Three years later, eager to become her own boss, Esther opened her own garment factory, renting 900 square feet of space in Carson. Building on her success with her own business, Esther purchased the property, and invested. In 2004, Esther found Hama Sushi in Venice, and when she went there to look at the property, she remembered the early days of her courtship on Venice. The man who would become her husband had worked at the Robert Taylor studio in Venice, and they would meet in Venice for dates on the boardwalk amid the roller skaters with their big black boxes and the odor of marijuana everywhere.

Esther purchased the business and the property, and returned to work and live in Venice with her husband and four children. She sold her preschool in 2005 and her garment factory in 2006.

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Today, the very outgoing and gracious Esther is very comfortable amid her customers at Hama Sushi, and loves to give back to her community in Venice. Esther and Kinya joke that they have both been “promoted.” He to head chef, and she from the server-with-a-great-smile to the owner-proprietor of Hama Sushi. Esther adheres to her mission statement for Hama Sushi, to be “fresh, fun, and friendly,” as exemplified by the freshest, highest grade fish and organic vegetables purchased without MSG, and by her warm and welcoming head server, Athena Mac Donald.

Hama Sushi, founded in 1979, was the first of the authentic Japanese sushi restaurants in the U.S. Esther strives to retain the loyalty of long-time customers as well as attract new customers with a variety of food items to Hama Sushi by treating each diner as an honored guest. She takes pride in the many “Hama romances,” “Hama marriages,” and “Hama babies” that have emerged from sharing good food and a great time in this icon of Venice, Hama Sushi.

Phyllis Hayashibara is a member of the Venice Japanese-American Memorial Marker Committee.

Celebrate the Coming of the Marker

A permanent monument commemorating the incarceration of a thousand local Japanese-Americans during World War II will be installed on the 70th anniversary, April 25, despite high hopes of many Venetians.

Instead an open-air event will take place beginning at 10am, April 25, at the northwest corner of Lincoln and Venice Bivds., the site of the future marker. The event will include an exhibit of the current design of the marker, which is an obelisk. There will also be speakers from the community, including Arnold Mchedlia, who was sent to Manzanar Concentration Camp with his family when he was a teenager.

The Venice Japanese-American Memorial Marker Committee is spearheading the erection of a monument received its largest donation yet on March 12, a $50,000 grant from the National Park Service. The grant is more than twice as much as has been collected in Venice. Even the city of Los Angeles only contributed $8,000. The Venice Neighborhood Council also contributed $1,300, which is greatly needed to pay a required engineering fee. Individual contributions are still being solicited by the committee. However, with the new grant it seems certain that the project will end with a permanent marker.

A fund-raising lunch will be held at Hama Sushi on the Venice traffic circle following the event. For more information, go to venicejamm.org or call 310-390-1576.

The Venice Japanese-American Memorial Marker Committee (VJAMM) invites you to join us in commemorating this historic injustice and to pledge vigilant defense of our rights under the U.S. Constitution so that this may never happen again.
Do Venetians want a ferris wheel installed in Windward Plaza, between the police substation and the skate park? Judging by the emotional comments made by Venetians at the March 5 community meeting, the answer is NO.

Great City Attractions (GCA), a company operating out of Scotland, is eager to install a 200-ft, 320-passenger wheel providing 14-minute rides for $15/person. The profits would be split between the GCA and the city of Los Angeles. Venice would get more tourists, less parking, increased traffic and the trash that usually follows all of the above.

Scheduled to operate twelve hours per day, seven days per week, the wheel would be able to accommodate more than 16,000 riders per day. While locals were firm that Venice is full to capacity with tourists, Nigel Ward, GCA representative, maintained that the wheel will attract only the people that are already here as opposed to drawing in additional visitors. However, according to Ward himself, the number of visitors to the National Railway Museum in York, UK, increased from 700,000 to 900,000 subsequent to the installment of a GCA ferris wheel.

Ward also stated that GCA currently has 5 wheels in operation and that it has completed “over 30 successful wheel projects” in the past. However, their wikipedia page mentions only one operating wheel.

According to the GCA wikipedia page, the company went into receivership in Beijing after breaching the conditions of a loan. The same source also indicates that GCA allegedly embezzled money in Berlin and it was thus named in a report lodged with the prosecutor’s office.

“They are unaware that their wheel is leaving their town,” said Ward when asked where the wheel proposed for Venice is coming from. Although unable to tell us its current location, Ward informed those present at the community meeting that we will not be getting a new wheel.

The wheel would be set on a 75x60 foot platform and it could be installed in ten days and taken down in a week, according to Ward. When asked about strong winds and earthquakes, he said that “if the wheel fell over, there would be nothing left of LA by then.”

While trying to re-assure the outraged audience in his heavy Scottish accent, Ward did not seem to understand basic logistics of Venice. For example, people come to Venice to smell the ocean and escape their air-conditioned cubicles, not to sit in the enclosed, air-conditioned capsules that his wheel would provide.

Furthermore, Ward’s wheel concept would include a VIP wheel capsule serving champagne. When asked how he is planning to obtain an alcohol permit inside a city park, he proved to be unaware that in this country we have such a thing.

Safety-wise, there is a reason why the Santa Monica ferris wheel is placed parallel to the ocean as opposed to perpendicular, like the one proposed for Venice, which would maximize wind resistance and therefore its likelihood of falling over. Also, the Santa Monica wheel is only 82 feet tall, while the one in Venice would be 200 feet.

And why would we need a wheel in Venice when the one in Santa Monica is only two miles away, offering an almost identical view, half of which is the ocean. Why doesn’t the GCA put its wheel somewhere with a better view, more parking, and in need of more visitors? Not for lack of such location.

Piggy-backing on Venice’s coolness to make a profit is not news to Venetians, although the Scots might have felt ingenious to come up with such a popular location, where tourist scarcity is not an issue.

The California Coastal Commission (CCC) will have to approve the proposed ferris wheel, which does exceed the height limits set by the CCC itself. In addition, the wheel would obstruct the view of the ocean, which is also against the CCC’s regulations.

The company proposing the wheel is applying for a 3-year permit, with what many locals see as likely extensions after that. If history is to be learned from, we should remember that the Masonic, V-like sculpture currently standing in the Windward Plaza was supposed to be there temporarily. So was the Eiffel Tower, by the way.

Venice is already overcrowded with shoulder-to-shoulder pedestrian traffic, with Windward Plaza being the most crowded spot in the area. While I understand why GCA would choose to put their wheel here, I don’t see how we will be able to access the bike path and why we wouldn’t choose to live downtown if we wanted to stare at a 200-foot man-made structure instead of taking in the immensity of the ocean.

Please call the CCC at 562-590-5071 to voice your concerns about the proposed ferris wheel.
Armed Guards at Whole Foods

By M.A. von Pfeiffer

I’ve shopped at Whole Foods stores across the country and I’ve always enjoyed them. I’m willing to pay a bit more for my food in order to have certain quality- and ethics-based assurances. Generally, they are clean places filled with fit people, organic food and new age music your unicorn will love; however, there’s trouble in paradise. My local Whole Foods in Venice, California, has been populated by teams of radios-in-the-ear, uniformed security guards with guns. Not only are firearms allowed, WF pays a handsome sum of money for the insurance and to the third-party security firm to make it so. Why? Is it still a good idea? That’s a relevant root question but unfortunately a larger one than that which can be covered here; however, according the American Bar Association’s website our yearly average of 30,000-ish deaths from firearms is eight times higher than that in it is in our economic counterparts in other parts of the world. As a companion statistic, it is also true that the homicide rate of our “kill-leader” demographic (males 15-24) is 10 times higher than in most other developed countries. The second fact is taken from a study by former marine and ex-president of the Sacramento chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, Dr. Bill Darston. What both of these number have in common is that they suggest the idea that of “threat-mulls-violence”, or mutual assured destruction, as a deterrent isn’t working. It just ain’t.

The armed services are a profession, as are the police. The public and workplace are both targets. They are allowed to levy weapons upon other humans after severe training—of body, brain and spirit—as individuals and in syncronized fashion as a team. The “if works-in-movies” idea of arming organized security that are not of a professional-lifestyle grade is whimsical and dangerous. Giving individuals the same uniform and radios does not transform them into a moldable entity with the grace to move with single-intentioned synchcrony. An individual with a clean background check and an eight—or forty, for that matter—hour course does not mean the participating individual will treat the arsenal to handle it appropriately, and resultant collateral damage— with the weight it is bestowed on— is going to be done if not done lazily. Bullets inducing about armed guards posted at food store in a third-party security firm to make it so. Why? Is it still a good idea? That’s a relevant root question but unfortunately a larger one than that which can be covered here; however, according the American Bar Association’s website our yearly average of 30,000-ish deaths from firearms is eight times higher than that in it is in our economic counterparts in other parts of the world. As a companion statistic, it is also true that the homicide rate of our “kill-leader” demographic (males 15-24) is 10 times higher than in most other developed countries. The second fact is taken from a study by former marine and ex-president of the Sacramento chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, Dr. Bill Darston. What both of these number have in common is that they suggest the idea that of “threat-mulls-violence”, or mutual assured destruction, as a deterrent isn’t working. It just ain’t.

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We live in a world shaped by history. It is hard to escape our personal history - parents, aunts, uncles - and others who want to shape us in their mold. One means of escape that has likely been practiced by many readers is to run away to Venice. Here, at the end of the continent, we can create our own history, our own personality.

Even harder to escape is the social and political history. Like it or not, we are all Americans and we carry considerable baggage, even here in Venice. We live in a country that has been shaped by world-historical events including the atom bomb, Nazism, the Holocaust, the demise of the socialist bloc, terrorism and seemingly endless wars, to name a few. And it is the political history of this country that has brought us to a more and more authoritarian society. These events include the Kennedy assassination(s), Watergate, Iran Contra, and 9/11. No matter when one was born, these events continue to play a role in our everyday lives.

Neither the mass media nor academia seem to have any interest in explaining why events happen and their significance to our lives. Thus we are left to figure out our own relationships with the story that Kennedy was shot by a lone gunman (Osvaldo), who in turn was shot by a lone gunman (Ruby). Watergate was caused by a bunch of Keystone Kops or Plumber; Iran-Contra was dreamed up by a crazy fellow named Ollie North, and was not the subversion of democratic government; and 9/11 was done by a bunch of religious fanatics and had nothing to do with U.S. foreign policy.

Thomas Mallon, author of Watergate: A Novel (Pantheon, 2013) seemingly has no interest in delving deeper into this pivotal event in American history. Mallon’s main interest is character development, which quickly turns into character distortion. Olfram Fred LaRue, who was a highly placed actor in the Nixon administration, was a man without a title or a clear job duty. This undoubtedly made it easier for him to work on Nixon’s reelection since he had no bothersome job duties. He was a protege of Mississippi’s Senator James Eastland, an unrepentant racist. LaRue was also the architect of the Republican “southern strategy,” which gained that party a solid block of electoral votes in the South. In Mallon’s treatment, LaRue is a really nice guy with a liberal girlfriend.

Another Watergate conspirator to get a personal make-over by Mallon is the infamous E. Howard Hunt. He was the CIA’s point man on the Bay of Pigs fiasco, a failed invasion of Cuba in 1961. He later became a personal assistant to CIA Director Allen Dulles. Shortly before his death in 2007, Hunt made a taped death-bed confession of his involvement in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He named as co-conspirator David Phillips, Cord Meyer, Frank Sturgis, David Morales, William Harvey, as well as a French gunman, Lucien Sarti, who worked for the Mafia, and Lynda Bird Johnson. Sturgis was one of the “Plumbers” who was arrested in the Watergate burglary of the Democratic National Committee’s offices in 1972.

In Mallon’s novel, Hunt is portrayed as a family man who is very much in love with his wife Dorothy, who was also the “bag lady” who delivered hush money to those arrested in the break-in. Mallon says Hunt’s life was shattered when Dorothy was killed in a plane crash in 1972, while carrying $10,000 in cash. All of what Mallon says may be true, but Hunt and LaRue were no means upstanding citizens. Both had no compunctions when it came to subverting democratic government to get what they wanted.

The real story behind Watergate surfaced with the publication of the best seller, Silent Coup (St. Martin’s Press, 1991). Perhaps Mallon doesn’t read non-fiction. In it, authors Len Colodny and Robert Gettlin show that Watergate was not only pure greed but that people – powerful people – were really out to get him.

As is often the case in real life, there was something even more evil and dangerous lurking in the shadows behind Nixon. For those of us in the anti-war movement, Nixon was the president we loved to hate, perhaps more than Bush. But to the military/covert action establishment there was growing alarm about Nixon’s liberal foreign policy, including his efforts to establish detente with the Soviet Union and his unprecedented trip to China and meeting with Mao Zedong. Now that China makes all our cool gadgets, it may be hard to understand just how much the far right hated China in 1972. The rabid anti-communists in the Pentagon and CIA were horrified that the President of the United States would sit in the same room with the devil incarnate. Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, Admiral Thomas Moorer, went so far as to establish a spy operation in the White House.

When the spying was uncovered by the soon-to-be infamous Plumbers, Nixon and his staff first considered filing treason charges against the ring. However, they later decided tolush up what was known as the Mooresgreed Affair (Navy Yeoman Charles Radford was the spy in the White House). Even though the spying stopped, the Pentagon unease continued.

For those who are challenged by abstractions, we could say God, Allah, Brahma, Yod, Ahura Mazda is Light – Life – Love Endlessly. Sounds like Fun. It will make the universe a better place in which to get a little help from our friends. Obviously, there are be new developments in recent years, as memoirs are written and files are declassified. Do a little sleuthing on the internet to uncover the facts.

Watergate: A Novel will likely get a lot of publicity as the 40th anniversary of Watergate rolls around. Unfortunately, the book is a fantasy that uses real people’s names but alters them beyond recognition. Those who want to know the true story of Watergate should take a look at Silent Coup (silentcoup.com), which is available at Powell’s Books (powells.com) for as little as $3.50. Powell’s is a fully unionized alternative to Amazon.com. It might also be available at used book shops or thrift stores. Parts of the book are on-line at: nixonera.com/etexts/silentcoup/contents.asp. There have been new developments in recent years, as memoirs are written and files are declassified. Do a little sleuthing on the internet to uncover the facts.

I never met, however, I remember, vividly, fiercely and formally, Oscar Levant. He was a brilliant pianist, close friend and interpreter of George Gershwin’s music, as well as a master wit and raconteur. Jack Paar idolized him and had him on his show many times. Oscar was a Capricorn Horse, with a profoundly sardonic wit. He claimed the height point of his multiple careers was making Joan Crawford cry – not an easy task. In films, where he played himself, the producers and director just let him make his own contributions to the films, cinematographically, verbally and musically. He was always charming, delightful and an exciting addition to any film, with or without Joel Grey.

At this time I request you bow your head and spend a couple of meaningful minutes sending Oscar some positive, enlightening, and nourishing thoughts. It will make the universe a better place in which to hang out. We will all be wiser and more joyful for it. For those who are challenged by abstractions, we could say God, Allah, Brahma, Yod, Ahura Mazda is Light – Life – Love Endlessly. Sounds like Fun. We make our own challenges, problems, aspirations, victories and attainments. Of course, we can get a little help from our friends. Obviously, there are less than perfectly evolved souls out there. When the time is right, it is a spiritual opportunity to give them a hand, as we get a hand, or finger, from others. It’s all Karmic, cool and the only way we really learn. 2012: time to realign oneself to the reality of our own Light Life Love, which is Good.
Roger Houston made. Exchanging vows, Silence and I are wed....

03:11 Saturday, March 24, 2012. ... The weariness says “no; just go to bed.” As useless, too, to quote his body was buried beneath a bed of unspoken lies. His mind drifted off on a warm summer breeze and as a young lady laughed hanging up her secrets, to unveil some hidden thing. I pause, reflect chilling red. I listen to the Silence, whispering Her secrets. Her secrets are known to me. I am, after all, the keeper of the day’s events: found oasis, to clean and fix all of the broken things, her eyes upon the silivered lives scattered around, she tried to focus and find.

That Woman

that woman worked tenderly around
to clean and fix all of the broken things.
her eyes upon the silivered lives scattered around,
to clean and fix all of the broken things.

The lives emerged
and she pulled them together.
it took so long
and it didn’t make any sense.
but lives rarely speak clearly.
in the end
she with heart and love
offered piles of splinters to them

pieces go somewhere
words are woven, colors composed
broken things are mended
lost - even lost, is here, is home.

Nobody knew anything.
everybody wondered.
and we are all
and we are all so tired.

That Woman

by KL Bratton

Belly-Up

Clean fingers raking profits
Knee deep in overdrafts
Pinky rings a glow
Fists full of dollars
Crown frowned faces
Market pirates snatch Seconds...
Plundering transactions
Needy pockets
Empty hearts
Everybody loses

Written by: Vanessa L., Lexi, Eric, and Frankie

Pink Cloud Poem

By Philomene Long

I walk out on the beach
only one pink cloud and
it above my head —
low in the sky.

Such silence!
I raise my writing book
as if it is a chalice and pen
for the cloud to give me
a poem

A soft rain fell.
The poem fell
onto the page —
Such silence!

The Freaks of Venice

the roar of the jets
is the roar of the ocean —
& that’s all you need to know
about God’s plan.

the freaks of Venice Beach
meant to write that down & sell it
in day glow paint -
but they’re too busy, being freaks

chewing the scenery — with the status of
movie-stars, who never sold out
spewing confessional sound bites

which bounce off cruising black & whites
& slide all over the body of tattooed Marilyn —
who leans against walls, everywhere
in assured, iconic empathy.

ah - their screams:
drunk, stoned
or straight as an arrow

they snuggle neatly around that lizard tongue
which still licks Ocean Front Walk
clean of irony.

HERE, YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE & WHAT YOU KNOW

as you wander around
feasting on coffee & cinnamon rolls;
digging:
that Chuck Norris only ever has two speeds -
walk & kill

how forty bucks can get you a “legal marijuana” cer-
tificate

observations of kinetic malfunction
at Muscle Beach – are free

& the beachfront apartment sign that says
I can make it to the fence in 1.5 seconds – Can you?
is not a joke.

it’s while you’re checking out t-shirts of the dead &
spectacularly over-rewarded

you realize
fame just might sink into the sea
here at Venice -

leaving fundamental humanity.

but we’ll still have the freaks -
who always have their shit together -
even when they haven’t.

even though their humanity is
a pure karmatic truth of often haunting
pictures -

psycho-derelict shadows, sparkling filth
etched deeply into the lens....

they understand that

EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE LED TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW

& when they’re tired? they just lie down

a little bit harder than most
on the concrete pillows of a system they are deeply
rooted in

the freaks of Venice:
life-splittered players & jittery receptors
playing out their moment, by the waves

beneath that year-round Los Angeles sun
as if it was some divine beach ball - set on fire
& kicked into the sky -

& because they know
the Pacific Ocean has already
swallowed them all.

— Jeremy Roberts
It is time for meaningful citizen input now as the school budget must be finalized by June 30, and that’s probably closer than you think. As to mounting meaningful forums for hearing ideas from the constituency, possibly we might have a friend in La-Motte, the board member with the courage to say, “Stop the wasteful spending.”

We thought we had a friend in board member Steve Zimmer. On February 9, Zimmer, who represents our district, came to the Skills Center to speak to students, teachers and others on the issue of budget cuts. A big part of this meeting was the “question and answer” segment. One of the most obvious questions on people’s minds was how Zimmer would vote as to the big budget question on continuing adult education. Would he go along with the proposal to gut adult ed, or resist? Zimmer’s rhetoric sounded real good. He sounded in support of his constituency’s issue at hand. With all said, however, Zimmer never directly responded to the specific issue of how he would vote. As one Skills Center instructor commented, “He managed to wiggle out of that one.” This can give pause and concern when dealing with politicians. It’s too bad Zimmer didn’t join with LaMotte in dissenting from a budget plan that would do away with our school. I am sorry Zimmer couldn’t find it in his heart to stand behind what he proposed to us on Feb. 9.

The Los Angeles Times, in its March 14 article on this issue, quotes parent activist Lydia Grant as saying, “The district has never been good at keeping its promises.” Grant’s comment underscores what was set forth above. Zimmer again came to the Skills Center on March 28 for a more informal talk with a handful of teachers and a few students. Zimmer reiterated his belief that adult ed will survive for now and to expect the next “board moment” on their May 8 meeting when more significant information will probably emerge regarding what is going to happen. Zimmer himself believes the budget deficit has been overestimated by about $40 to $55 million, explaining “we have a conservative CFO” (at the school district) and that is partly why the numbers skewed in a bleak direction. Zimmer says the availability of additional funds will depend on the success of labor negotiations with the teacher’s union. Between the union and district, there is arbitration in progress regarding furlough days, and the outcome could bring in another $60 million.

The final analysis seems to be a big “we don’t know” and “wait and see” depending on whose numbers are to be believed. Again, community activism is paramount to stay on course seeing the Skill Center’s survival through, with the least damage. In large part, it’s up to the people.

Please visit http://lastudents.org and http://saveadulted.org for suggestions to contact your elected representatives. These sites also list events and especially the rallies where we have demonstrated our numbers and show of support.

A rally, one was held on March 13 at the LAUSD Headquarters. The rally was yet another exciting event, slightly different from the first one in February in that we were an even finer collective. The fashion statement of solidarity was a show of red T-shirts and ribbons worn headband style. There was food and a “disco-capable” sound system set up on a platform, with dancing in the street. These activities might induce you to attend a rally on behalf of this issue, as they are enjoyable perks, and besides contributing your presence to a worthy cause, there is also some fun to be had. Again, please see one of the aforementioned websites and . . . . . . join us!
Post Office Sale Terms Omit Historical Protection; Finally Scheduled for Tax Day, April 17
–continued from page 3

the market at least until May 15. It is speculated that the moratorium will extend until after the November elections to avoid delaying absentee ballots.

When asked why the building is for sale while still in litigation, Michael J. Elston, attorney working for the USPS in Washington DC, stated that whether the PRC has the power to decide if it is a closure or a relocation is now in no way related to the sale of the Venice post office. However, as already mentioned in the best-case scenario, it could.

Mark Ryavec, of VSA, asked Council District Representative Bill Rosenthal to bring a motion to compel City Attorney Carmen Trutanich to file suit in District Court. The lawyer was demanded that the USPS obtain building permits for the renovation work currently being done at the Annex.

"The USPS is not even paying for the cost to migrate the building that they are not in the business of. The city need not pay the USPS to dismantle itself," said Norman Kulla, Rosenthal’s legal council. Therefore the USPS is exempt from building permits.

Although probably enacted to prevent the dismantling of the postal service, a service provided for in the constitution, these exemptions are now being used by the USPS to dismantle itself.

Unofficial reports are that the USPS is planning to sell the Santa Monica post office, a 1936 structure, and move customer service to a smaller annex nearby. We hope to consolidate our efforts with Santa Monica and pressure our politicians to step up and move customer service to a smaller annex.

We are having a rally Tuesday, April 17, tax day, to occupy the post office. Please join us from 3 to 5:30 pm with signs, slogans and lots of enthusiasm. Let’s let any interested future buyers know how we feel and that we are not ready to give up!

Last but not least, let’s not forget that that post office crisis is a manufactured lie that has the ultimate goal of killing all government institutions in favor of increasing the profits of big, private companies.

A survey conducted by the USPS itself regarding the possibility that they will have to sell it back at cost, minus buying and investing costs?

Beach parking lot issues contact: Department of Beaches and Harbors at 310- 305-6050 Vivian Sunner (parking unit) or e-mail Beaches.lacounty.gov.
By Sam Schatz

I moved to Venice when I was 17 years old from freezing cold Pennsylvania. It was the weather, the ocean, and the bohemian lifestyle that made me fall in love with this little part of Los Angeles. Back in the early '70s Venice was the bohemian nexus of Southern California, much like the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco was to Northern California.

During those days, many small California bungalows were for rent. These small homes were originally built as summer homes for people who lived inland. Most of these bungalows were laid out in a plot or two of land in a rectangle grid like configuration, two rows of simple bungalows from street side towards the back of the lot in a row with a strip of grass lawn separating the two rows of bungalows. Due to the proximity of each bungalow, neighbors would get to know one another well. The rent was $85 to $95 per month. I remember a single family home on Millwood Ave. and Palms Blvd. selling for $16,000 to $18,000. A larger corner house sold for $28,000. Those were the days.

I lived on California Avenue about a block from West Washington Blvd. (now known as Abbot Kinney Ave.) with my sister, Amy, in 1973. I ended up living in Venice for the next 25 or more years. The local public library was at the corner of California and Electric Ave. Also, at this time, the "Babe Brandon" brought home her son and her husband, and her father, and her brother. They all lived in Venice. I got to know them personally, and especially Bobby and his wife Betty. I knew the Brandellis pretty well. Obviously, Abbot Kinney has changed a lot.

Venice was home for artists, hippies and a good contingent of the gay and lesbian community. Everyone commingled and got along pretty well. Generally, Venice was home for artists, hippies and a good contingent of the gay and lesbian community. Everyone commingled and got along pretty well. In the early seventies, there were drugs, bikers and gang activity. However, all of these elements were what made this area exotic and alluring. A very interesting area was the canals. The homes there now are 3 story modern designs that cost millions for someone to own. The canals have been filled with sediment and were mildly odiferous. The canals were filled with sediment and were mildly odiferous. The canals were what made this area exotic and alluring.

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Community Events – day by day

Sunday, April 1
• 2pm - Klezmer Band Jam. Talking Stick. Free.

Monday, April 2
• 7:30pm - Ten Performances, Ten Minutes each. Reception following. Electric Lodge. $10.

Tuesday, April 3
• 9pm-12am - Live Jazz on Tuesdays. Del Monte Speakeasy (Townhouse, downstairs). 52 Windward. Free.

Thursday, April 5
• 7-10pm - Dudley Cinema. Rod Bradley’s political and experimental films. Beyond Baroque. Free.

Friday, April 6
• 7-11pm - First Friday at Abbot Kinney Blvd. Lots of people and open shops. Free.

Saturday, April 7
• 10am-5pm – Music/fun/food and hand-made goods from 60 booths at “The Venice Meet” Opening Day. Parking lot of Westminster Elementary School. Free.
• 10:30am-12pm - Afroacrobie Dance by instructor Kimberly Muglill Mullin celebrates AfroCaribbean culture through weekly dance and live percussion. Electric Lodge. $15.
• 7pm - Award winning Vietnam poet Quy David St. John with Professor Anna Journey reading poetry. Beyond Baroque. Admission $7, students/children/children $5, members Free.

Saturday, April 8
• 1pm - 90 Poets for Occupy Day. Hosted by Mark Lipman. Beyond Baroque. Free.

Monday, April 9
• 7-8pm - Occupy Venice General Assembly every Monday/Thursday. Bring firewood for fire pit. Ananda’s Backyard, 1354 AK Blvd. Free.

Tuesday, April 10
• 7-11pm - “A Modern Vaudville Comedy Show” featuring comedic actress Shaw Peletsky. WizZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. $10.

Wednesday, April 11
• 7-10pm - Suzy Williams sings at Danny’s Deli. Truly amazing jazz/blues on second Wednesdays. Free.
• 7-11pm - Singer/Songwriters Sam Luna followed by Kathleen Benton and 10pm Vinyl Party. WizZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. $10.
• 7pm - Venice Underground Comedy: Local talent & national headliners every Wednesday. Del Monte Speakeasy (Townhouse, downstairs). 52 Windward. No Cover.

Thursday, April 12
• 6:30pm - Venice Neighborhood Council & Venice Chamber of Commerce Town Hall Meeting on “SiICON Beach in Venice?” Westminister Elementary School Auditorium.

Saturday, April 14
• 1-5pm - Art Opening: Paintings of Bayou, Hellbent, Euth. CAVE Gallery. 1108 AKB. Free.
• 6-10pm - Grassroots Acoustica. Talking Stick. Donation.

Sunday, April 15
• 7-9:30pm - Venice Neighborhood Council Board Meeting. Always Open to the Public. Westminster School Auditorium. Free.

Thursday, April 19
• 6pm - Venice Art Crawl. Find the maps online or go to OFW and Windward. Free.

Friday, April 20
• 7:30pm - Spoken Word and poetry performances by Seraphime Angelis, Richard Ferguson, Joan Gelland and Christian Georgescu. Beyond Baroque. Admission $7, students, children $5, members Free.
• 8 & 10pm - Singer/songwriter Suzy Williams and pianist/song writer Brad Kay and Friends. Moose Lodge. 1600 Ocean Park Blvd. $10.

Saturday, April 21
• 10am – Student SAT Practice Test complete with Princeton Review administrators. AK Library. Free.
• 11am-6pm - Venice Beach Surf & Skate Music Festival and Swap Meet. Venice Blvd. and Dell Ave. Benefits the Boys & Girls Club of Venice. Free.
• 9pm - Elynn Mayee’s Poetry Rodeo open reading. Bring five minutes poetry. Band will improvise alongside you.Beyond Baroque. General Admission $8, students & seniors $5, members free.

Sunday, April 22
• 8pm - “Solo Show” by Venice film/broadway actress Maureen Teefy (Greece and Fame). Beyond Baroque. Admission $7, students, seniors, children $5, members Free.
• 8:30pm - Seinfeld TV actor/comedian Larry Hankin performs/delights in “Street Fables & Tales”, Talking Stick. Free.

Monday, April 23
• 7pm - Bioneers Meeting of biological pioneers who work with nature to heal nature. G-2 Gallery. Free.

Tuesday, April 24
• 6:30pm - The Venice Book Club meets for their selection of the month. Light refreshments served. AK Library. Free.

Wednesday, April 25
• Memorial Marker fundraiser at Hama Sushi. See Page 7 for details.
• 8-11pm - Singer/Songwriters Cadence Burns followed by Tatum Reeves and Trey Campbell. WizZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. $10.

Thursday, April 26
• 6pm - Adult Yoga. Bring a mat and get ready to breathe. No yoga experience necessary. AK Library. Free.
• 7-10pm - Mikal Sandoval’s “Speakeasy” featuring Dutch Newman and the Musical Melodians. Talking Stick. $10.

Friday, April 27
• 7:30-10pm - Subversive Cinema. 212 Pier. Free.

Ongoing Events

Food
• 12:30pm - 2nd and 4th Thursdays - Vera Davis Center. 12:30pm - 2nd and 4th Thursdays - Free Food Distribution.
• Vera Davis Center - Sign up for Food Stamps (EBT Cards). Call for date and time. 305-1865.
• 5-7pm Mondays - 1st Baptist Church - Meals. Pre-packs 2:30-3:30 Saturdays. Westminster & 7th St.
• 8-10am Sundays - Ocean Front Walk, near Rose Avenue.

Music
• 8pm-12am - Hal’s Bar and Grill features Live Jazz, Sunday and Monday nights. Free.
• 8:30pm - TKO Comedy’s “Open Mic” for comics, musicians. 212 Pier. Free. Every Thursday.
• 12-2pm - Saturday and Sunday; Music at Uncle Darrow’s. 2,560 Lincoln Blvd. Free.
• 5-9pm – Venice Street Legends. Venice Bistro, OFW & Dudley. Every Wednesday. Free.
• 6-10pm - 1st Thursday - Psychedelic Surf Rock. Mollusk, 1600 Pacific Ave. Free.

Movies
• 5:30pm - Abbot Kinney Public Library Thurs-day Movie Night. Call 310-821-1769 for title.
• 6-10pm - 7 Dudley Cinema - First Thursdays at Beyond Baroque. Free.

KIds
• 6:30pm - Abbot Kinney Public Library Children’s Pajama Storytime. Second, Fourth, Tuesday evenings.

Miscellaneous
• 11:30am-2:30pm - The Venice Oceanarium (a museum without walls). Venice Pier. Every Sunday, weather permitting. Free.
• 6-9pm - McLaughlin-Finnegan Wake Reading Club. Lloyd Fisher - Marina Del Rey Library. 4533 Admiralty Way. First Tuesday of the month. Free.
• 6-8:30pm - Eco-Yoga. 3rd Sunday of the Month. Church in Ocean Park Hill & 2nd St. Bring a mat. Donation required.

Computers
• Venice Library offers a variety of Free Computer Classes. 310-821-1769.
• Vera Davis Center offers free computer use: M-Th 10am-Noon and 1pm-3pm; Fri 1-3pm.

Get Your Local Event Listed
Email your time, date and a brief description to Calendar@freevenice.org by the 20th of the month. Please take out an advertisement if you charge admission.

Location Guide
• Abbot Kinney Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd. 310-821-1769.
• Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 310-822-3006.
• Burton Chace Park, 13630 Mindanao Way, marinadelrey.lacounty.gov
• Danny’s Deli, 23 Windward Ave.
• Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave. 310-306-1854 - electrichodge.org
• G2 Gallery, 1503 Abbot Kinney Blvd 310-452-2842.
• Hal’s Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 310-396-3105 - halbarandgrill.com
• Oakwood Recreation Center, 757 California Ave.
• Pacific Resident Theatre, 703 Venice Blvd. 822-8392 pacificresidenttheatre.com
• SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x15.
• Talking Stick Coffee Lounge, 1411c Lincoln Blvd. 450-6052 - thetalkingstick.net
• Vera Davis Center, 610 California Ave. 310-305-1865.

Free Venice Beachhead • April 2012 • 15
Calendar Compiled By Karl Abrams
Back by Popular Demand
The most popular Venice poster of the 1980s, depicting a big event on the beach on Aug. 16, 1936, is available again.

- Price: 13” x 19” print: $15; Prices for larger sizes, and/or frames, available on request.
- Send check to: Beachhead, POB 2, Venice, CA 90294.
- Credit cards accepted at www.freevenice.org
- For more information: call 310-396-2525

Silicon Beach (?) Town Hall
The Venice Neighborhood Council and the Venice Chamber of Commerce will hold a town hall meeting at 6:30pm Thursday, April 12, at Westminster Auditorium, 1010 AKB, to discuss the emergence of “Silicon Beach” in Venice.