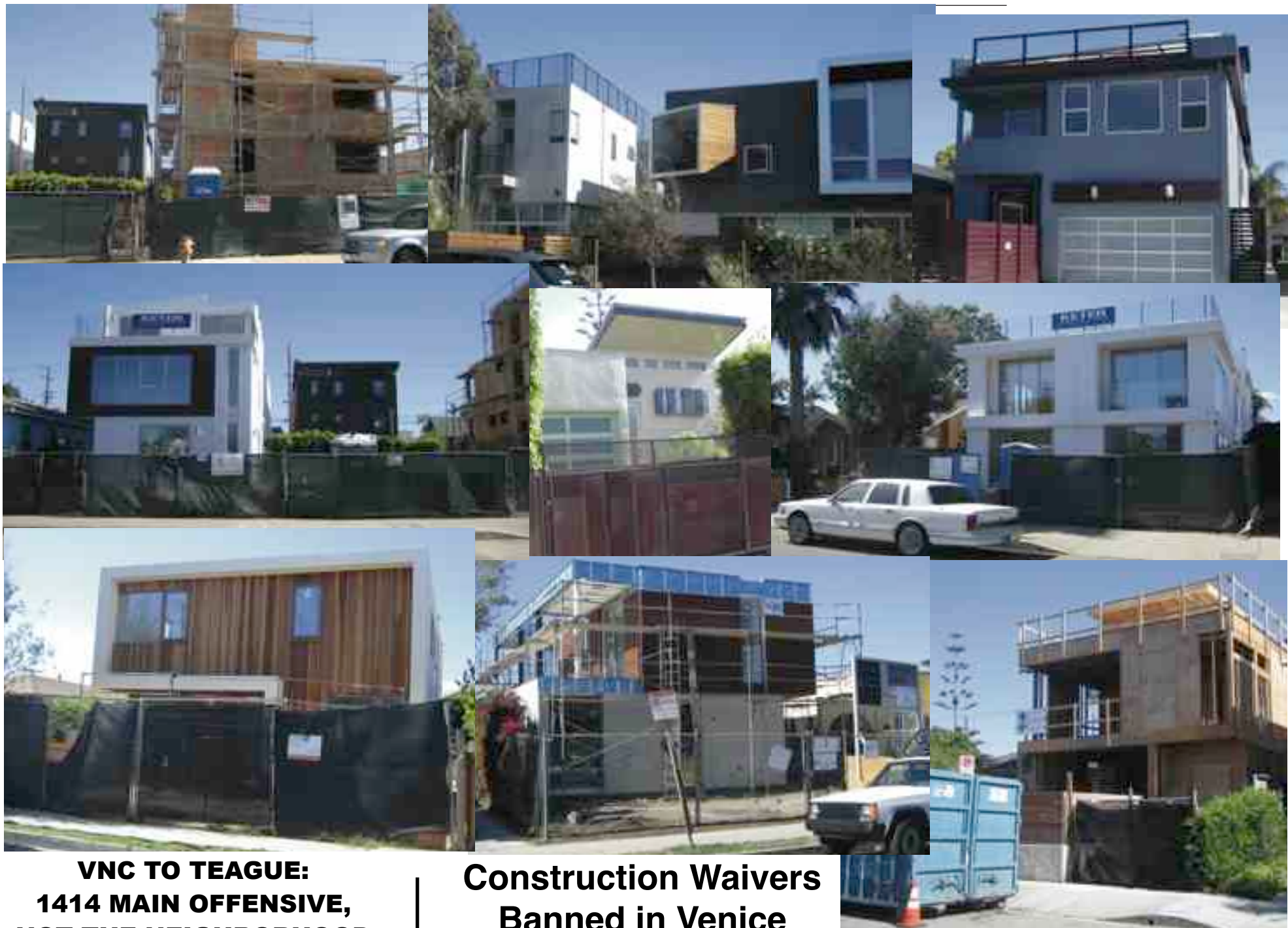


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VNC TO TEAGUE: 1414 MAIN OFFENSIVE, NOT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Krista Schwimmer

Across the country, a deadly force is destroying the character of neighborhoods forever. Jeremiah Moss, author of the blog, “Vanishing New York”, calls it “hyper-gentrification.” Grandchild to gentrification, Moss bemoans that this 3rd wave “is bigger, faster and meaner than its parent. It is also sicker, a sociopathic system with no compassion.” Behind this force stand not individuals – but corporations, banks, politicians, and even police. Although Moss is writing to save New York, what he says can be applied to Venice now. Battles have been lost in this quirky, coastal city. The month of March, however, marked decisive victories against hyper-gentrification: the first, an end to dinimimus waivers; the second, a community vote against Jason Teague’s “Nightmare on 1414 Main” development.

On March 18th, the community came out to hear just how the VNC would weigh in on Jason Teague’s oversized, ill-conceived project. The full motion by LUPC to deny was read, as well as the project summary. Jason Teague and Brian Silveira then had fifteen minutes to argue their case. Teague spent most of his time explaining the robotic, underground parking, as well as demonizing the neighborhood, calling it unsafe in the evenings. “We are trying to keep the art and remove the crime,” Teague exclaimed. Ironically, Captain Brian Johnson, Pacific Division, had earlier reported that violent crime was down in Venice this year. Teague showed no serious changes to the project design.

Next, Brian Silveira, planning consultant for the project, purportedly was going to educate the council on one of the most important aspects of the project: the use of SB1818. He began with the Mello Act, a law designed to fight gentrification in the area, saying that larger units must supply a minimum number of affordable units. He then claimed that their project was “valuable” because “in the future the only way to keep affordable units in the Venice coastal zone . . . is

– Continued on page 11

Construction Waivers Banned in Venice

By Greta Cobar

In a major victory for Venice, the California Coastal Commission passed a motion to stop the city of Los Angeles’s from allowing developments in Venice to be approved under de minimus waivers.

Following the March 12 Coastal Commission meeting, all developments in Venice will have to go through a Coastal Development Plan process to be approved.

Over the last two years the city of L.A. misleadingly approved 82 construction projects in Venice under de minimus waivers. The construction allowed by these types of waivers is supposed to be less than ten percent larger than the original dwellings; it is not supposed to change the character of the neighborhood; and is not supposed to include grading, among other restrictions. None of these restrictions were enforced by the city of L.A., and waivers were rubber-stamped left and right. As a result, big box-like construction that is not in line with the character of the neighborhood went up overnight all over Venice, especially in the Oakwood area.

Subsequent to the California Coastal Commission’s decision to pull the waivers for Venice, Gregg Shoop, who works for the city of L.A. and was in charge of evaluating the waiver requests for Venice, was transferred out of his position and replaced with Alan Bell.

On March 31 Samuel In, a retired building inspector and 37-year city employee was sentenced to two and a half years in prison resulting from a federal probe into bribe-taking at the Department of Building and Safety. Last year he plead guilty to felony bribery, and admitted accepting more than \$30,000 in bribes.

Samuel In is one of five former Building and Safety employees who have faced either criminal charges or dismissal as a result of the bribery probe, and all of them are just a minor spotlighted example of the corruption taking place throughout the city of L.A. when it comes to construction.

– Continued on page 10

Boxes Blight Brooks

By Anthony Castillo

Here at the Beachhead we devote a lot of space to the proposed mega development projects like 1414 Main Street, the hotel on Abbot Kinney, the Google land grab, and others past and present. And we’ve done so and will continue to do so for good reason. But in just the last year or less I’ve noticed a quieter form of gentrification going on just one block over from me in my neighborhood along the two blocks of Brooks from Lincoln west to 6th Ave. It’s what I like to call the “blight of the big box house.” We’ve all seen them, those huge square two or more story homes that take up almost all of the lots they are built on and stick out like sore thumbs amongst the other smaller, older homes they are built between.

But now along this two block stretch of Brooks soon it may be the older, small homes that will stick out like sore thumbs, as more and more big box homes go up in the places where once stood a home that gave this street the character it once had. Those homes are rapidly (at times it seems almost over night) being replaced by this hideous new breed of box. What the heck the designers of these things have against a pitched roof I will never understand. Just pitching the roofs would help them blend in just a little bit better with the existing surroundings, but still not make these huge multi story squares any less of a blight, which is what they are. They only serve to strip away the family character of this working class neighborhood and drive more of the long time residents out of Venice.

I’m all for home improvement, and I understand that due to termites, bad plumbing, and out-dated electrical wiring, some older Venice homes may be in need of some serious renovation, or worst case scenario, torn down. But is the big box house the only alternative to what stood before? How about building a new Crafts-

– Continued on page 11

Above: New construction on Brooks, between Lincoln and 6th Ave.
 Photos: Anthony Castillo



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Open Letter About Public Urination, Stuff on Sidewalks....and Parking

By Deborah Lashever

If you are concerned with the urination and defecation in your neighborhood, lobby Bonin to install more public restrooms! Do you realize that we have 16 million visitors a year and about 20 public restrooms – that all close in the early evening and open at 8 am? Not one public restroom anywhere in Venice except the Boardwalk – with the exception of Vera Davis Center and the Library during the day and NOT EVEN ONE at night anywhere! Where do you think all the tourists go? And on First Friday where do all the food truckies go? And after the bars close? Please do not blame the unhoused people for the mess. They are not responsible for the thousands of tourists who "do their business" all over Venice because we do not have enough public toilets! In one hour three weeks ago I saw 6 tourists pee in the parking lot by the handball courts because the lines for the bathrooms were 25 people deep. It was a Saturday but not even the Summer yet! Unhoused people need a place to go too. You act like they are being criminals because they have a basic human need! Can you 'hold it' for 12 hours? Did you know that the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights – that the U. S. signed onto – states that access to hygiene is a basic human right? This is not a homeless problem but is being blamed on them. This is the city's bad. Simple solution: more bathrooms! (There are many designs that take the fear of using them for prostitution and drug abuse away, by the way, so that well used excuse is null and void at this time.)

"Cleaning up" by taking all the belongings of unhoused people is inhumane as well. When the raid on 3rd Street occurred a couple of years ago the police threw away all the unhoused people's I.D.s, birth certificates, irreplaceable photos of relatives, family Bibles, essential medications like heart pills and blood thinners, pet equipment, blankets and sleeping bags, clothing and everything they owned. They do not have a place to store their stuff so that unsightly pile on the sidewalk is all they have in the world! Just because you wish you didn't see it should they lose everything? Is this justice? If you really want the stuff off the sidewalks lobby Bonin for a bigger voluntary storage program like the one we have on the Ocean Front Walk by the paddle tennis courts. It has been working at twice the capacity since November. The volunteers are in danger of being injured because of all the lifting and hauling we must do for lack of room. We could store many, many more people's items but we do not have the space! We do not have to resort to criminalizing the poor with all the "clean ups" on OFW and other places in Venice! What a waste of the city's time and money! There are inexpensive, easy, humane solutions!

It may surprise you to note that there is NOT ONE emergency bed in all of the Westside of Los Angeles and embarrassingly scant services of any kind in Venice. It is not true that unhoused people do not want help. They just do not want it in Skid Row or Lancaster. I hope you realize that Venice is their neighborhood too. This is their community. Many have been here much longer than you. The solution is to give some assistance to get them on their feet – not to bitch about how wrong they are for being poor! I hope you never have to live on the street yourself, but if you do I hope people are kinder and more compassionate to you than you are being now. It is not all about you in your million dollar place with your tender sensibilities – these people are trying desperately to merely survive! That sidewalk is hard and cold! Why don't you help them? How would it actually hurt you if you did? How would it help all of us if you used your money, your contacts and political will to help?

Parking? Try diagonal lines on our widest streets. Almost twice the parking at hardly any cost! No passes needed.

There are simple solu-

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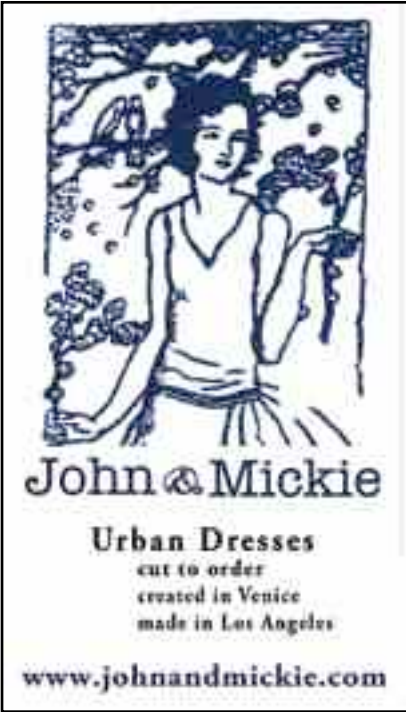
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Above: Storage container for the house-less, currently located by the paddle tennis courts

tions – with the will. The problem is that people want to go on with the upgrading of their seemingly important and busy lives, not wanting to be part of the solution – but just wanting the "problems," as they define them from their narrow point of view, to magically go away by throwing police at them! Poverty is not a criminal activity and so cannot be solved by police intervention!

Please, please help with humane solutions! Don't just talk and talk and talk about the problems! Ticketing, throwing homeless people in jail and taking all their stuff costs us all many, many thousands of dollars a year per person and does not fix anything – but hurts quite a lot! Buckminster Fuller said it best when he said, "To change something, build a new model that makes the old model obsolete." Please join us – or at least support us – in creating that new model. Lobby Bonin for humane solutions for unhoused people and to stop the criminalization of poverty.



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The Drum Circle and the Criminalization of Free Speech

By Ronald Keith McKinley

The Drum Circle has been under siege since its inception twenty-five years ago. A loud vocal minority has always found it offensive.

Randy Banks, ex-marine and capoeira instructor, started this drum circle in response to suppression of drumming on Ocean Front Walk. Randy took us to the hill just east of the spot of the sand gathering. With just two drummers, me, Deon (whose last name I don't remember) and Randy on agogo bell, the drum circle was created. Some people complained of the noise. This was hand-drumming only. Snares and floor toms, drums played with sticks were not allowed. We enforced this.

Rasta Randy's idea was to have church on the beach: a church with drummers, a place where people could commune with nature. He did not allow alcohol. There was a time when there was no drinking in the drum circle. We simply stopped playing when someone brought alcohol into our church. This only works if everyone stops playing. When our church grew, so did the unenlightened drummers. Still no matter what you have heard, the majority of people don't drink; the majority of people don't use drugs; a sizeable amount doesn't smoke.

Free speech means you will hear things you don't want hear. It's free speech. If it offends you move on. Don't move to Venice. If you moved to Venice now for the vibe, free speech is part and parcel.

The weekend of March 15-16 the America Ninja Warrior tryouts dominated the beach. The lights stayed on all night. Powerful spot lights kept it daytime. In my apartment on Horizon there was constant light pollution.

The competitors were allowed to set up tents and sleep on the beach, some of the unhousted did the same.

There was police everywhere, making their presence known, criminalizing with a look. Folks on the receiving end of this know what I mean.

After the American Ninja Warrior tryouts people migrated to the drum circle, the only free place for people to gather.

The police have been trying to shut down the drum circle after sunset. This is done with force, after all this is a police force. This has been happening only recent, in the last 3-4 years. It works sometimes.

I have played there for all of the twenty-five it's been alive. It is a living thing that changes like all living things. And like all living things, it will fight for its life.

The police came on like an occupying army, all bluster and contempt.

A group of four hundred young people were pressed together dancing. I mean dancing!! It was beautiful. No fighting: black, brown, yellow, white dancing. I can still see them – our future. The police said: "You have to stop." The dancers ignored them. You don't ignore the LAPD; they reacted, calling in more police, in riot gear. A helicopter arrived just before a scrimmage line was formed in the sand.

When people on the boardwalk saw all this they rushed to the drum circle, making it larger – the police had officially made it worse. I left after the "fuck the police" chant started.

I sat in a nearby pagoda, getting as much sand as possible out of my shoes and drum bag. I watched in awe the lack of good judgment the police displayed.

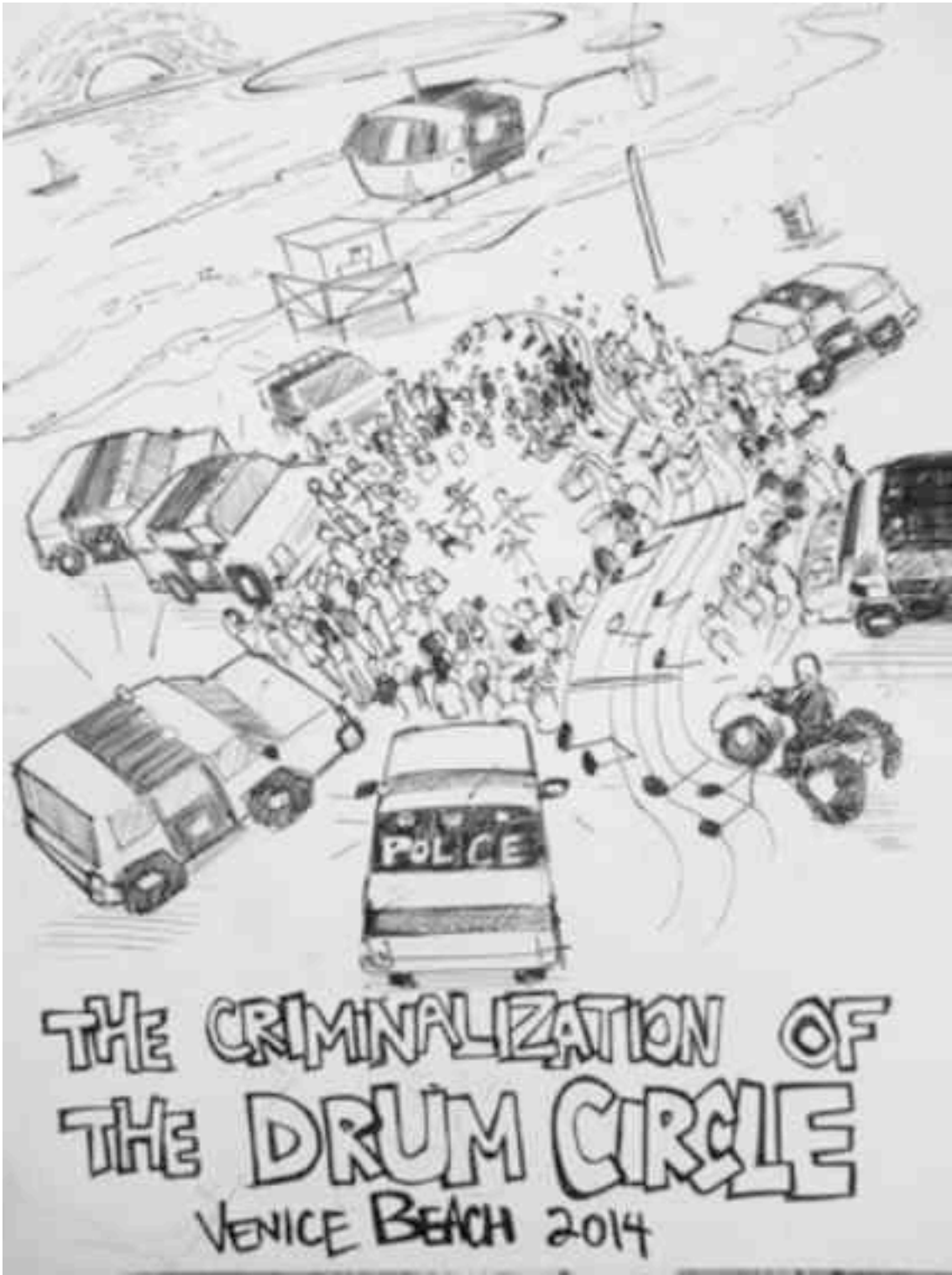
The American Ninja Warrior tryouts show who is allowed on the beach after sunset; of course there are no drugs or alcohol, or smoking – really?

Security and freedom don't balance – as one increases, the other one decreases. People who say they are concerned about your safety will take away your freedom, and then you will have neither.

The weekend of March 22-23 there were no flare-ups, no "fuck the police," no American Ninja Warrior tryouts. I can sleep. No light pollution, no loud amplified voice naming contestants. The unhousted no longer hide among the contestants and sleep on Ocean Front Walk, because of the illegal curfew; they didn't keep me awake with spotlights on motorized lifts.

The police were still out in force, they stood around wasting limited resources on maintaining control. Pushed aside was the issue of safety, making the beach safe for corporate free speech, exploiting and suppressing the Venice vibe.

The drum is the second musical instrument – the human voice is the first. If they take away the second, how will the first fair. Use your first instrument, or you will have neither first nor second.



Above: Drawing by Audrey McNamara

Below: Cops and Alex Thompson, convicted felon and wanna be cop settled for cop cheerleader
Drum Circle, March 22

Photo: David Busch



Santa Monica Airport to Become a Park

By Laura Silagi

It just came to my attention that there was a response to my January article about the Santa Monica airport. I stand by all the facts I presented.

To update what has been happening since then, last Tuesday, March 25th the Santa Monica City Council held a meeting focusing on the future of the Santa Monica Airport. As a representative of the Venice Neighborhood Council's Santa Monica Airport Committee, I focused on the unfair treatment dealt to Los Angeles residents by the city of Santa Monica. As long as there is an airport in Santa Monica, of whatever size, it is important for Los Angeles residents' health and safety that the city of Santa Monica changes two practices.

First is the policy that is called the "Fly Neighborly" program that "Highly Recommends" prop planes to turn south over Venice and then east over Mar Vista. The flight schools have used this route for training and the majority of prop planes flying east do the same. The FAA, in a meeting with our committee said that this policy is solely one of Santa

Monica. These prop planes rain noise and lead pollution down on our homes, parks and schools.

The other unfair practice of Santa Monica has been to block any change of jets departures. If jets were to fly northerly on take-off there would be no conflict with LAX departures, as there is when these planes fly over Venice toward the ocean. This conflict means that jets departing SMO have to idle waiting for permission relayed from the LAX tower to the SMO tower that the SMO jets are cleared for take-off. This idling results in extreme levels of black carbon and ultra-fine particles blowing into the neighborhoods to the east. This pollution has been documented by scientists at UCLA. Also, those under the take-off route have been plagued by noise and jet fuel pollution for years.

Reminding Santa Monica of their unfair practices falls upon us. No citizen group or individual in Santa Monica is doing it.

The Santa Monica City Council meeting did have a great deal of positive outcomes, however. Here is a summary described by Airport2Park, a Santa Monica group working toward turning the airport land into a park.

"Santa Monica, CA, March 26, 2014 – After nearly four hours of public testimony the Santa Monica City Council last night voted unanimously to begin the process of reclaiming the land at Santa Monica Airport for the benefit of the whole community. 'We are on the way to getting our park,' said Airport2Park spokesman Gavin Scott. 'It's a great day for this city, and we applaud the council members for their vision and courage – and for listening to the people of Santa Monica and surrounding communities.'

Following staff recommendations, additional recommendations from the Santa Monica Airport Commission, and ideas from the public, the council directed staff, among other things, to begin creation of an Airport Concept Plan to identify low-key land uses for when the airport closes, including the possibility of a park and firmly excluding commercial development. The process would start with the 35 acres known as the 'Western Parcel' that the City

Ruthie in the Bakery

By Marty Liboff

My mother, Ruthie began managing a Jewish bakery on the oceanfront in 1951. It was two blocks north of Venice in old Ocean Park. Ocean Park in the 1950s was predominately a poor, older Jewish community with beautiful turn of the last century buildings. In 1959 the city decided to redevelop old Ocean Park and they began forcing all the old time residents out so they could demolish it for new high rises. We were lucky and found an old house a couple of blocks away. The bakery moved in 1959 to the Venice Ocean Front Walk on Dudley Ave. where the Titanic is today, in the Cadillac Hotel building. A few steps away on Dudley, the Venice West Cafe opened in 1962. It was run by John Haag and his wonderful baleboosteh* wife, Anna. The Venice West Cafe was a cool hangout where weird, wild beatniks with scraggy beards and wild eyes would rant like crazy poetry. John and Anna were the honorary king and queen of Venice and they helped found the Peace and Freedom Party and the Beachhead newspaper. They were great friends of my mom and hung out at the bakery quite often. If John and Anna were the unofficial king and queen of Venice, Ruthie was the mayor. Back then, Venice was even poorer than old Ocean Park. There was an amazing mix of old Jews, hippies, bums, gonifs*, assorted nuts, homeless and druggies. There was also a poor black neighborhood, da hood, nearby.

Ruthie made the bakery the cultural center of Venice, especially after the Venice West Cafe closed. She managed the bakery through four decades and four different owners. For 15 cents you could get a cup of coffee and a day-old bagel with a lively kibbitz* about politics, TV, drugs, race, the war, and the rising cost of cookie dough. If you were broke, she would give you a couple bucks, and load you up with day-old bread and broken cookies. She would even feed the hungry dogs and pigeons. Ruthie made sure that nobody starved on the beach. I remember many great stories around the bakery. Here is one...

In 1965, I was about 17 years old when the Watts riots broke out. The TV was warning everyone to stay home, especially at night. That evening, after my mom heard the news, she said to me, "Let's take a walk to check and see if the bakery is O.K." She didn't even own the shop, and to risk our lives for a few onion rolls seemed silly to me. I argued and pleaded, but Ruthie just put on her sweater and said, "If you're too chicken, I'll go myself!" Well, this tiny woman, all of five feet, calling me "chicken" got me going, and so out we went walking into the night.

Venice looked like a wild party of crazed Somali pirates. Some stores had broken windows, and a few black men taunted us. Some were very drunk. I was ready to wet my pants, and I begged my mom to turn back and go home, but Ruthie just kept marching onward to the bakery. She opened up the bakery door and began giving away the food. I stupidly hung up a sign saying, "Please don't break in."

As we were about to leave, four huge threatening men carrying pipes and baseball bats blocked our path. I nearly pooped in my underpants! Ruthie stepped up and said, "You guys know me. I've been here for years helping you guys." A giant of a man with a crowbar came over and put his arms around Ruthie and said, "Ruthie, we all love you. Don't you worry, we'll make sure nothing happens to the bakery."

The next day we walked back to the bakery. The Jewish market and deli and all the shops were smashed and looted. Men were roasting sides of beef over trash cans that were taken from the kosher butcher, while grumbling to us, "What did that damn butcher do with all the pork chops?". The only shop not broken into was the bakery...



Above: Ruthie in the bakery, by the bread cutter, circa 1961

*baleboosteh = a strong willed woman and head of the household

*gonif = a crook

*kibbitz = joking around, small talk

In Memoriam Billie Harris Serving the Highest Art 1937-2014

From the late sixties until shortly before he died Billie Harris was a superb musician playing pure, beautiful jazz on his tenor saxophone in and around Venice.

When he first arrived in Los Angeles he lived in an old Helms bakery truck with his wife and two children at the parking lot at the end of Rose Avenue. He would often get his tenor out and start playing on Ocean Front Walk, his wife would get her flute and join him. Friends would come by with whatever instrument they had and they would soon be making a most joyful noise.

Soon, however, they felt the need for a more permanent place to live and play. It turned out that at exactly that time Jerry Rowitch was converting some property he owned across from the Westminster School into Venice Place. It was to house various art-related businesses. Billie arranged to convert one space into living quarters and a jazz club, which they called the Azz Izz. With help from friends and other musicians the club opened in 1970

There were many other places that presented jazz in Venice before and after the Azz Izz: The Comeback Inn, Hop Singh's, Hal's Bar and Grill, Driftwood, Canal Club, but none matched the Azz Izz as a place to consistently hear good jazz. Jazz musicians from around the county, the country, and the world heard of the Azz Izz and many played in its magical confines. Some of the famous were Art Blakey, Bobby Hutcherson, Blue Mitchell, John Carter, Horace Tapscott, Arthur Blythe, Frank Morgan, and Billy Higgins. It was an incredible experience and the music really got next to your heart. But Billie and his friends could not do the music and the business, and by 1978 the magic had pretty well run its course.

Billie Harris also played soprano saxophone and was a composer. He recorded two CDs under his own name, *I Want Some Water* (Nimbus West Records, NS 510 C) and *Billie Harris at the Balcony* (produced by Katsuyuki Ueno). He also recorded with many others including Horace Tapscott's Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra.

He played regularly at The Café Balcony on Rochester Avenue in West Los Angeles, and could often be found at the corner of Rose Avenue and Ocean Front Walk. He also played at several events for Venice Community Housing. When he played for the brunch at the Seventh Annual edition of Jazz at Palms Court, he walked up Palms Boulevard playing his tenor and continued playing on through the crowded court yard and on to the stage. He loved playing and he loved playing for people.

I was privileged to know Billie in all these settings and considered him to be a good friend and a great musician. The following sketch was made of the two of us at Café Balcony by an artist unknown to me. Billie's passing is the end of an era and I miss him.

— By Chuck Bloomquist



Left: Billie Harris and Chuck Bloomquist, Dec. 12, 2002

Below: Billie Harris



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Not Another Gjelina at 320 Sunset!

By Greta Cobar

The owner of Gjelina is pushing against the wishes of the Venice community to open a restaurant/bar/take-out food and alcohol establishment at 320 Sunset.

The first thing that got the community rallied against this proposed development was Fran Camaj's (Gjelina's owner) misrepresentation of the project. At the March 5 Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) meeting, the development was presented as a "bakery with accessory retail," failing to mention its proposed off-site beer and wine sales.

Jim Murez's staff report for LUPC also failed to mention the proposed off-site beer and wine sales. Such a mention did miraculously appear in the City Planning notice, however. Murez stated that it was not in the original application, and it must have appeared later. Subsequently Murez was accused of "either gross incompetence or deliberate obfuscation," and LUPC was accused of lacking integrity, honesty, truth and transparency.

Just around the corner from the Google Binocular building on Main and also from its proposed expansion at 320 Hampton, it is no secret that Camaj is trying to capitalize on being close to Google. Venetians worry that if allowed, others will follow. Nobody wants to see Sunset becoming anything like Abbot Kinney.

As a matter of fact, that very block of Sunset, between 3rd and 4th, is where some of the best loved artists in Venice have their studios. It is also the heart of the Art Walk, which raises tens of thousands of dollars yearly for the Venice Family Clinic, and the Art Block, when those of us who cannot afford the Art Walk get to go and see the amazing work created on that very block and its immediate surroundings. Next Art Block is May 4!

Undoubtedly the proposed new development is out of character with the neighborhood, and most of



Above: current dwellings at 320 Sunset

Photo: Greta Cobar

us agree that we do not need another place to buy alcohol in Venice – we already got plenty. The artists in that area and the art lovers who visit would most likely not be able to afford a Gjelina-type bill anyways.

The restaurant would have a capacity of 110 customers and employees, without providing any parking for either its clientele or staff. Furthermore, its patio dining will be located just ten feet away from residential homes. It is scheduled to stay open 19 hours/day, from 6 am to 1 am. "He (Camaj) exploits the neighborhood for his own financial gains, and has no regard or concern for how to be a good neighbor," a resident in the area said.

Currently there are no other restaurants, bars or shops on that block. The proposed development would require a change of use for the dwelling, which is currently zoned M1 for manufacturing. The

applicant is requesting a zone change to commercial. However, Venice has very little M1 zoning, and if this area is changed to commercial, it will set a precedent for others to follow, eliminating what little M1 zoning remains for artists.

The April 2 LUPC meeting was changed into a "special" meeting so that the agenda could be posted 24 hours before the meeting instead of the mandated 72 hours. When 320 Sunset appeared on the agenda, with such a short notice and not enough time for the public to prepare, Venetians took action. The meeting was eventually canceled and re-scheduled for April 16 at 6:45, Oakwood Rec. The Venice Coalition to Preserve Unique Community Character is also holding a public meeting on April 12, at 4:30, First Baptist Church. Attend and speak up!

New Bollards, More Yellow Than the Old Bollards

By Greta Cobar

It is unclear why Mike Bonin, our Councilperson, held a Town Hall meeting on October 29, 2013 to hear the public's input concerning bollards, cameras and blocking off the streets leading to Ocean Front Walk (OFW). During the meeting the public was vehemently against all such so-called "safety measures."

Speaking as any other politician, Bonin assured us at the Town Hall meeting that he was there to listen to us. Whether he listened or not is irrelevant, for he went ahead with the plan that he had before the meeting, to install bollards and cameras and to block off the streets.

"I appreciate that many people were outspoken against bollards or cameras, and I very much took those opinions into consideration. Ultimately, I weighed those opinions against public safety and came to a different decision," Bonin stated in an email message to the Beachhead.

The safety concern was raised following the August 3 death of Alice Gruppioni, an Italian tourist on her honeymoon who was struck by the car that Nathan Louis Campbell drove onto OFW from Dudley. Ironically, Dudley is the one of the few streets that has permanent, metal bollards at

– Continued on page 11



Disregarding Town Hall public input, Bonin installed new bollards on OFW

Photo: Greta Cobar

RIP: Mama Faith Santos Kelly: February 8, 1953 – March 7, 2014



Photos: Ray Rae www.rayraepix.com



This page, top to bottom, left to right: Suzy Williams and Gerry Fialka; Emily Winters; Katie Sullivan; Slavin' David, Juan Alcala, Jaynee Novak; Regina Barton; Greta Cobar; Barbara Mastej and John Ransom; Jaynee Novak; Dave Healey; Suzy Williams and Hillary Kaye; Merritt Evan Raff; Chris Rudd

Opposite page, top to bottom: Mary Getlein and Andrea Wittenberg.; The Tree Man; Sam Clay; Slavin' David, Gerry Fialka, Suzy Williams

Photos: Margaret Molloy – March 15

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7 Dudley

By Rex Butters

there was no stage at SPONTOS
only performers one and all
noisy travelers milled about
that inter-dimensional way station
hung on 3 white walls
eye enlightening art
images blazing with the sounds
rebounding around open ears
and no walls at all
as overflow revelers flooded
out the brick street store front entry
inside forbidden image cinema
and poetry both golden and tin
a fiery light in a blackening
world of numbness

there was no stage at SPONTOS
just thick damp salty night air
roomfuls of people
hot free savory food
overloaded outlets
confusing congregation of chords
dark dada back room bacchanals
stinky skunky spicy
green goods going up
in sacred smoke
he evil elfin churlishly cherubic
his foot in the door
holding The Lady's portal open
for gypsy artist shaman fools
barefoot sandy dancing
Her Solstice celebrations
beat crazed saints grateful
to survive another cycle

there was no stage at SPONTOS
just hyper inspired multi-level conversation
and celestial sound
the voice of a community
splashed in paint/sung on drums
guitars, saxes, harmonicas
music quakes shake off
greed's grip on Venice
if only for the night
the dream of free and open art
visible from space as a beating heart
a Temporary Autonomous Zone of our own
experimental theatre and community activism
on the still smoldering ashes of the Venice West
holy ground art temple
joyful party pit
lucky for us
we were there

“Sponto’s” partied like the good ol’ days

The close-out party at Sponto's, March 15th, was so much fun! The music started with Eddie La Grosse and was followed by Suzy Williams and the Nicknamers. They were wonderful, and Suzy sang all of her signature songs, including "Dirty Old Men Need Loving, Too," and "Moon Over Venice." Suzy had everyone up and dancing, and there was dancing in the streets outside the gallery.

The gallery is in the location next to where Sponto had his original gallery, occupied most recently by Henry's Market. It is much bigger than the original gallery, and was covered with art from artists in the Venice community. It was great to remember how much fun we had, over the years, at Sponto gatherings. Sponto would open his doors to street artists and give them a chance to sell their work in a gallery, instead of only in the street.

Slavin' David followed Suzy, and had everybody dancing again. It was a good turn-out, with old friends rediscovering each other at our old stomping grounds. It also turned out to be Gerry Fialka's birthday, and everyone sang Happy Birthday to him, as he blew out the candles on his cake.

Sponto was a force for change in our community. He brought in new artists and provided a place for community. He would let Gerry Fialka have his film exhibitions at the gallery. He often booked comedians and poetry readings and it became a hip place to go to. Over the years he became a major player and friend to many. Venice hasn't been the same since he passed away. You could feel his spirit in the party, because there was nothing Sponto loved better than being the host, and welcoming new and old friends. He made his space available to artists and musicians, poets and writers. And lots of beautiful young ladies. Sponto definitely was fond of the ladies. A good time was had by all who were there, and all were hopeful that this venue would be used again for parties.

– Mary Getlein



Free Venice Beachhead • April 2014 • 7



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Delightfully ELLYN...

By Anne Alvarez

Ellyn Maybe shares her name on the poets monument wall alongside Philomene Long, Linda Albertano, Jim Morrisson and a slew of other Venice Poetic Greats. However, you would never know it just by meeting her.

Maybe is shy, gentle, and introspective. She comments on accomplishments and associations in the most nonchalant modest manner.

Such as when she tells me Jackson Browne is one of her biggest supporters; Browne encouraged Maybe to expand her art. She recently finished recording the first full length album collaboration with musical ingénue Robbie Fitzsimmons at Groove Masters, Jackson Browne's studio. The album is a combination of poetry and music.

Jackson Browne wrote the following on her website. It describes accurately what takes place when listening to Maybe recite her poetry:

"I have started to write something about you for your site several times, and each time I am struck by my inability to describe what you do in terms beautiful enough, original enough to do you justice. But it's always been this way. Who has ever been able to say in other words what a song says? Maybe it's why I like your poems so much, they say what can only be said in exactly the way you say it. The best way of turning someone on to you is to play you for them".

Maybe was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1964, where she first began to write during her childhood.

Along with her family, she relocated to Southern California in 1980 seeking reprieve from Wisconsin's relentlessly cold weather.

In 1994 the family moved once again to the Westside when the family's apartment in Chatsworth became un-inhabitable due to damage caused by the 1994 Northridge quake.

Maybe wrote her first poem while living in Manhattan, NY in 1986. She was hit with a wave of inspiration while walking past a bookstore window display of a mannequin holding books. "The words just came to me, she recalls."

I ask her what inspires her poetry now. It ranges from Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen to Stephen Sondheim. "Poems, just come to me, something sparks it and I don't revise much," says Maybe.

Maybe sees college campus tours, venues and festivals such as 2013 Symbiosis Festival in the future for the Ellyn and Robbie project.

Ellyn Maybe poetry books are available at Beyond Baroque's bookstore or Amazon. For more info on Ellyn's current and future projects check out: ellynmaybe.com or ellynandrobbie.com



Left: Ellyn Maybe at the newly restored Poetry Walls

DO YOU FEAR ME

Do you fear me cause I wear a purple friendship bracelet?
Do you fear having me as a friend?
Are you afraid to introduce me to your grandparents?
The only perfect thing about me is my perfect lack of confidence
does that freak you out?
I'm fat. How does that sit with you?
I wear political pins does that bother you?
I'm a bookworm. Does that depress you?
Are you terrified cause i've been bas mitzvahed
Are you scared cause i think spiders are sacred?
I'm left handed, oooooooooooooo No comment.
Do you worry about me cause i'm a virgin?
Cause i'm loud and sometimes embarrassing
are you wary of spending time with me?
I know where the feminist bookstores are in a whole bunch of states
Does that make you tremble?
People think i'm younger and older than i am
Does that reflect badly on you somehow?
I don't always comb my hair
can you hear it coming?
Is it my ugliness or beauty that frightens you the most?
Are you afraid of me cause i'm human?

---Ellyn Maybe

BEACHHEAD SAVES THE DAY IN JAPAN FOR HAMA SUSHI IN VENICE

By Phyllis Hayashibara

Kinya Aota, head sushi chef at Hama Sushi in Venice, had planned to return to his home on the northern island of Hokkaido in February, 2014 to spend some time with his elderly parents and his brothers and their families. Aota has been living in the U. S. for some twenty-five years, and has been working at Hama Sushi for nine and a half years. He missed his country, and he missed his family.

Esther Chaing, proprietor of Hama Sushi, understood and agreed with her head chef's decision to return to Japan. She let him know that Hama Sushi would certainly miss Aota, but they would somehow survive when he left in February. The increasing popularity of Hama Sushi's new lunchtime hours expanded the business so much, however, that Esther asked Aota to stay on at Hama Sushi for a little while longer. Kinya didn't want to leave his long-time boss, Esther, but he also didn't want to disappoint his parents, whom he had already told of his plans to return home. Aota didn't know exactly how to approach his parents about his change of plans.

Then Aota's brother, Tomofumi, emailed from Japan, saying that he bumped into the Free Venice Beachhead article on Hama Sushi and Esther Chaing, published in the April 2012 edition, when he searched online for "Kinya Aota Hama Sushi." Tomofumi translated the article into Japanese and told his family about Kinya's life at Hama Sushi, and of Esther Chaing's contributions to the Venice community, particularly her fundraising efforts on behalf of the Venice Japanese American Memorial Marker. Tomofumi advised Kinya to call their father. The senior Mr. Aota told Kinya that he was proud of Kinya's work with Esther at Hama, and proud of their contributions to the community and for the VJAMM. Mr. Aota told Kinya he should stay as long as Esther needed him to help at Hama Sushi.

So Hama Sushi head chef Kinya Aota will be staying on a little while longer, organizing the kitchen staff and the lunch and dinner menus. The Venice Japanese American Memorial Marker Committee is grateful that Kinya will be on hand to lend his support to the VJAMM fundraiser at Hama Sushi on Wednesday, April 23, 2014. Program begins at 11 am, and lunch will be served to eat-in or take-out between noon and 2 pm. Bento box lunches may be reserved in advance by contacting Phyllis Hayashibara at 310-390-1576 or phyllishayashibara@earthlink.net before Monday, April 21. Corporate orders may be reserved by contacting Esther Chaing at 310-308-6347 or

hchaing@yahoo.com before Monday, April 21. The \$20 bento box lunch will include chicken teriyaki, cucumber and potato salads, spicy tuna and California rolls, shrimp and vegetable tempura, plus water or soda. A vegetarian option is also available. Esther will generously donate 100% of the lunch profits to the VJAMM, and 10% of dinner sales to the VJAMM. For dinner reservations between 6 pm and 11 pm, call Hama Sushi at 310-396-8783.

Kinya says everybody in Japan knows about the tragedy of the Issei (first generation to immigrate to the U. S.) in America during World War II. There is no animosity on the part of the Japanese from Japan towards the Japanese in America, he said. "The Japanese respect the Issei, and though the Japanese of course fought for Japan, they know about and respect the 442nd," the all-Nisei (second generation, U. S.-born) Regimental Combat Team. "The Japanese," said Kinya, "believe the Japanese Americans to have been so brave, and they understand the Japanese Americans' position during the war." The Japanese also know of Daniel Inouye, long-time U. S. Senator from Hawaii, who lost his right arm in battle in Tuscany, Italy, while leading a platoon in the 442nd. Kinya considers these soldiers his "heroes." In April 2012, Kinya first volunteered his services for the VJAMM fundraiser at Hama Sushi, as a way of showing his appreciation and respect for what the Issei and Nisei had endured and overcome. "The Japanese Americans," said Kinya, "blazed the trail for the newcomers," the shin-issei (new first generation).

Kinya did visit his family in February for two weeks. His furusato, or hometown, lies in central Hokkaido, a small town called Biei-cho, between Furano and Asahikawa, about 100 miles northeast of

— Continued on page 10



Above: Kinya Aota and Esther Chaing at Hama Sushi

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April is Poetry Month – Venice is the Place for Poetry

THE MOTH

*(In Panama there are moths that live solely on tears;
the tears of large land animals.)*

By Philomene Long

The poem comes
Its currents brush
My lips
Even in sleep
I want to stay near
To what I fear, near
Enough to keep
An eye on it.
I awake
Feel it on my fingertips
Try to clutch it
Before it darts away.
Cannot.

This morning
In the room
A poem, wings beating
John Thomas
Snatches merely
A hot fragment
Before it is gone.

Stuart Perkoff
His voice darkening, died
With the unwritten poem
Fluttering in his fist
Two hours later
I bent to kiss his face
Felt the heat of it
Still on his forehead.

Asleep, awake
Even in our deaths
I suppose the poem
Does not need us
Holds its own bright secrets
To itself
Knows it is finer
Than all these lines
Of iridescent wing dust, pale ash

NOW IT IS LONG AGO

(for Philomene, Christmas, 1988)
By John Thomas

After the mythical coupling,
after the rain: streams
of water that had once been
sky, spent, trickling languidly,
lazy and irregular, through
broken gullies to wherever
everything goes.

After the mythical coupling,
after the rain: birds singing
in the wet hedges.

After the mythical coupling,
after the rain, they lie damp
and close and still, wrapped
in a single garment
sewn from butterfly wings.

Now it is long ago, night
is on its perfect way, and
the moon still hotly growing.

POEM FOR PHILOMENE

by Stuart Z. Perkoff

Philomene--
I had a flash/image
of you standing in
what I call yr "nun's
position"--hands clasped,
head bowed, body a
straight line balanced--
& looking at you standing
that way in my
mind--stunned by
the beauty of you--
I realized you look like Maud Gonne--
the Angel of the Irish Revolution,
Yeats' lifelong passion
& muse
figure--

Philomene--
daughter of lite
bring yr luminous dance
to open new visions,
within the black
against which
all struggle

Venice as Mecca or Jerusalem

By John Haag

I sit here on the sand,
a holy place on sacred land,
remembering the tribes and clans
that gathered here, took counsel
and dispersed; foreseeing all
the ones that will arrive,
drink our blessed water and survive,
only to disperse in turn
to spread the word
amongst a disbelieving world.

Take heart, my heart,
for here is never lost
anything forever (but the soul
at times sent wandering
along some other plane).

It too returns home safely
found like a cache of nuts
the squirrel lays by against
a cold day in hell, forgets,
then comes upon in time
of need.
Rejoice!
The promised land is here;
The time is near at hand.

HAIKU VENICE (Kerouac Style)

by krista schwimmer

Counting her change
the young clerk looks through me –
I am already a ghost

At the Subway off Windward
the wild woman licks
rainbow colors from her eyeshadow case

Midnight on Riviera
laughing with my husband –
two baby possums watch from above

Victory at VNC tonight! Oh, Toledo
Horizon, Market and Main!
In Calgary, Cousin Jimmy in ashes

poetry is the game

who worked hardest
abt the poem
it
was supposed
to say yr heart
simply-
in all that
whirls abt u
u pluck
what u can eat only
not wasting
a syllable
u learned
to walk on
knowing
most of us
are punished
for hoping
too much

the gratitude
sung to her
is habitual
as the breath:
take
all u want
: u must
give it back
& a song
to her is this

– Tony Scibella

Home

your love is my love
your people are my people
when I look to you
I see myself
we are taking a step, on the way to peace
instead of nuclear tests,
we take the test inside –
is this our sister? Is this our brother?
if so, why aren't we helping them?
it's so sad
these people are out in the cold
forced to look through windows locked against them
at night, look at the bright windows
a'blaze with light
they stand outside, just for a moment
and look in,
gaze at the every-day beauty of most homes
it is such a gift, to have a home.
you only know how precious it is,
when it is ripped away
whatever reason, it is gone
and you are on “the road again”
and your journey through time & space
becomes so much harder.
Open your heart and take a look around
are you using your heart?
or is it shuttered forever, like those windows?

– Mary Getlein

Gaia

By Ronald K. McKinley

Mother cries trembles
What reinvented perversion awaits her?
Body plagued by surface tension
Beginning marked by endings
Cold where she should be warm
Hot where she should be cool
Body music discontinuance pulsed with unnatural pull
They pick at her bones
What an abomination
Spawned from an intellect of entitlement
A distorted superiority the mask of youth
The willed stupidity distract and entertains
Me not us
I not why
Mother weeps you don't see because you're looking not seeing
Just thinking no feeling linked
The true binary
Mother is racked with sobs
We feel the quakes
She says things only a mother would say
Why haven't you talked to your mother?
She sends you messages all the time
But you are too busy doing important things
Things she doesn't like
She raised you better than this
Connect with your mother and your kin
She bore you from her body
Your mind fragments of her womb the connection to the universe

This Paper
Is A Poem

simply

By Frank T. Rios

simply
the words
spoken
simply
when she taps
tells me to move aside
so the poem can come thru

& the butterfly i love
flutters
on the naked tongue
& the night shatters
like bone into history
& the memory fades
like pollen on its wings

& i sit alone
with my muse
a dying butterfly
hovering over
the broken poem

& god only knows
the simple breath
more beautiful
than the rose.

Songs Of The Gods

The gods sang. Their songs breathed life into our ancestors. This was magic breathe. A poem to life. A gift song from the gods. Our great ancient ones sang spirit songs. They sang to the rivers and fish and the deer to keep them plentiful. They sang to the sun and moon to keep them in the sky. They sang to the clouds to water the wheat, corn and rice. They sang to the mysteries and blessings of the universe. Our mothers fed us songs in our wombs. With the milk from her breast she sang us songs of love and protection. The sick were cured with healing songs and chants. Singing eased our pain. The spirits of the dead were sent off to heaven with death songs. If we stopped singing the heavens would fall, the rains would stop, the rivers would dry up and our crops would die. If we stopped singing to the stars they would close their blinking eyes on us forever. Once we could hear the oceans and rivers singing to us. We sang with the winds and rain. The owl, the willow trees, the crickets, the coyotes would sing along with us. We were part of the great spirit breathe of the entire earth and universe. We would play our drums and flutes for the stars in the sky. We sang for our hopes and dreams. We sang to ease our fears and tears. We would sing to lead us through the darkness.

The long
nights went by in brightness in song and poems and stories. We sang away our hunger and despair. We sing to the visions of the future and our memory of the past. We sing to our strength and to our helplessness. Today we only sing to nothing. We have lost our magic. The gift of breathe from the gods wasted on trash. We have made our mother earth sick with pollution and cancer. Where are the spirit songs from the heavens and earth today? The turtles and birds and lions weep. The tears from poisoned rivers flow. We must sing again to cleanse our polluted bodies and minds. Let us sing again to mother earth that cries out in pain. Sing Sing Sing – Oh gods, heal our hearts and souls...

– Marty Liboff – c. March 2014

Dr. Bradley Bobbs

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Construction Waivers Banned in Venice – Continued from page 1

According to the Venice Specific Plan, construction under de minimus waivers, granted under the Venice Sign-Off (VSO), is so minor that it has no impact on the neighborhood, but that was clearly not the case. In fact, taken cumulatively, the 82 construction projects approved by the city of L.A. within the last two years under such waivers have threatened to change the unique character of the Venice community by replacing turn-of-the-century California bungalows with bigger and taller, cheap, ugly, box-like construction.

Although single-family homes, these new constructions are built to the edge of the property, eliminating the traditional front/back yards, which has a negative impact on the environment and the animals that live in the area. The developers who bought out what many times were pioneer, minority families, used all of their unscrupulous tactics to benefit their deep pockets, such as allowing properties to sit for a year so that the Mello Act, which provides for low-income housing, would no longer apply.

The California Coastal Commission’s decision to cease giving the city of L.A. the power to pass de minimus waivers for Venice was a result of grass-roots community activism spear-headed by the Venice Coalition to Preserve Unique Community Character. On March 12 a group of Venice activists traveled to the Long Beach Coastal Commission meeting with documents incriminating the city of L.A.’s practice of handing out de minimus waivers.

Peggy Lee Kennedy prepared a document exposing illegal construction at 803-805 Marco Place and 2431 Wilson Ave. At Marco Place there was no notice of proposed development, and the application for the de minimus waiver (approved by the city) included grading on the property, even though no grading is allowed under such waivers. On the other hand, the developer on Wilson Ave. was scheduled to ask the Coastal Commission’s permission for a demolition that had already taken place.

Laddie Williams also traveled to Long Beach on March 12 with a document concerning the development at 720 Indiana, which is not consistent with the unique community character.

Ivonne Guzman joined Kennedy and Williams and delivered to the Coastal Commission a document concerning 660 Sunset, where a remodeling permit was used to demolish the entire property, leaving only a portion of a wall standing in order for it to pass as a remodel under a de minimus waiver.

The March edition of the Beachhead, which extensively covered proposed over-development in Venice, was handed out to each of the commissioners.

We surely do appreciate when a government entity does its job and protects us not only from greedy developers, but also from the corrupt city of L.A. Many thanks to the dozens of Venice activists who made this happen, and to the Coastal Commission for enforcing the Venice Specific Plan and the California Coastal Act in Venice.

Stay involved by attending the Venice Coalition to Preserve Unique Community Character meeting on April 12, at 4:30, First Baptist Church; and the Land Use and Planning Committee meeting on April 16, at 6:45, Oakwood Rec. Center.

BEACHHEAD SAVES THE DAY IN JAPAN FOR HAMA SUSHI IN VENICE

– Continued from page 8

the capital of Hokkaido, Sapporo. “Look up the MAC laptop wallpaper called ‘Blue Pond,’” said Kinya, “it’s taken at Biei-cho.” The town has become increasingly popular with tourists mainly from countries in Asia such as Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan, who come for the beautiful scenery of fields of flowers and vast, rolling hills. “I consider myself a country boy,” says Kinya. The senior Mr. and Mrs. Yoshimasa Aota run Giovanni Stained Glass Studio in Biei, to teach the craft of stained glass and to sell small works of art. They have been operating the studio for the last twenty years, after they closed their handicrafts shop of yarns and embroidery. But this is Mr. Aota’s retirement occupation, assisting Mrs. Aota with the studio. He retired from public office, having served as the town’s number three elected official, the

Treasurer of Biei, after the Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Mrs. Aota grew up in Nara on Honshu island, near Kyoto, nee Akemi Sasaki. She met Yoshimasa when he visited Nara on a school trip. They met at a gift shop at the deer park in Nara. They corresponded for three years, and then Akemi moved to Hokkaido and married Yoshimasa. Yoshimasa’s father had a general store in Biei and also worked as a carpenter. The new Mr. and Mrs. Aota raised three sons, Kinya, Kazuyuki, and Tomofumi.

When Kinya told his family of his plans to move back to Japan in February, 2014, his youngest brother, Tomofumi took it upon himself to “rehabilitate” his oldest brother to ease his return to Japanese society after twenty-five years in the U. S. Kinya said he appreciated his younger brother’s advice to

show respect for their father. Kinya realized he would have to temper his highly independent ways, and communicate more with his father rather than doing just as he pleased, for example, riding his motorcycle wherever and whenever he wished. As Tomofumi sought to learn more about Kinya’s life in America, the younger brother happened upon the Free Venice Beachhead article of April 2012. “Miracles happen,” says Kinya, of his younger brother’s finding the Beachhead article online just at the right time. “This saved my family.” Kinya considers another “amazing, great thing”: his father had changed. The senior Mr. Aota had been a typical Japanese father: very strict, not emotive, a man of few words unless he was being very critical, which was often. Kinya used to confide in his mother, who always encouraged her son. Kinya remembers always being afraid of his father’s disapproval. Now, Kinya said his father seemed like a different person after he’d read of Kinya’s accomplishments in the Free Venice Beachhead. The senior Mr. Aota was very complimentary, saying he was proud of Kinya. His father was so touched and overcome with emotion, he uncharacteristically wept as he told his son how proud he was. His father was also friendly and talkative, and he and even expressed a desire to visit Esther Chaing at Hama Sushi in Venice. November 1st will mark Kinya’s ten-year anniversary working with the Hama Sushi family. Kinya feels happy he doesn’t have to worry about his parents, who are healthy, fine, and active. And thanks to the Free Venice Beachhead article, his parents don’t have to worry about Kinya, either.

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VNC TO TEAGUE: 1414 MAIN OFFENSIVE, NOT THE NEIGHBORHOOD – *Continued from page 1*

to develop projects of 10 units or more in this little tiny piece of undeveloped commercial area that we have.” He conveniently did not speak of the very real, neighboring residential area that would be completely altered by this project or the fact that, if the project was approved, they would be removing affordable units themselves!

Standing up against the project, Irv Katz and Rick Garvey, both longtime residents in the immediate vicinity of the project, gave a thorough, clear, succinct fifteen minute presentation. Katz began, arguing that the increased density brought by the project would increase the strain on resources. Showing photos of the diverse family homes in the area, he stated that “new development of the Venice Coastal Zone shall respect the scale and character of community development.” He ended his part by saying: “The proposal for 1414 Main Street is a whale. The homes that surround are gold fish. Please do not drop this whale in our goldfish bowl.”

Rick Garvey took over, saying that the neighborhood had many areas of concern: size, traffic, parking, excessive use of the alley, as well as the noise and drunken disorderly conduct that restaurants and “the so called performance space” would bring. Garvey spent much time going over just how ridiculous it would be to have the entrance to the parking through the alley. One of the adjacent streets, Horizon Avenue, is one way going west. This in itself would affect the flow of traffic in and out of the project. As to the idea that there will be no cars coming from 1414 down Toledo, Garvey said even the developer, currently staying there, uses it!

According to Jeremiah Moss, one of the strategies of hyper-gentrification is “to foster an environment of fear.” That night, on numerous occasions, supporters of 1414 Main attempted to do just that. One of the most egregious examples was so called urban planner, Brittany Debeikes. She said Venice was “infamous” for its gangs, local crimes, and drug abuse. Teagues’s

project would invigorate the area. Towards the end of her presentation, she once more insulted the neighborhood saying, “This section of Main Street . . . can be riddled with crime and vandalism and hooligans loitering in our alleys and sidewalks at times.”

Unbeknownst to Debeikes, however, one of the slides she showed of the “dilapidated” neighborhood, was a photo of a resident's home, waiting in line to make a public comment. When he reached the podium, Michael Wambach began by saying how he was going to talk about the unwanted precedent the project would set when, much to his surprise, upon seeing a photo of his building, he learned that for the last fifteen years he had been living in a ghetto! After the laughter died down, many more spoke against the project. Kathleen Lawson, another Horizon resident for 26 years, pointed out that since Teague had taken over the property, she and others were constantly picking up bongs, bottles, lighters, and trash all the time. She and another resident expressed concerns about how such a project would affect their children who played in the alley right now.

Throughout the evening, both sides held up bright pink signs with either “Deny 1414” or “Approve 1414”. Some of Teague's supporters even painted the address on their faces, making it seem like they were attending a football game rather than a very serious community meeting. One such woman was Jules Muck, a local artist allowed to not only stay in Teague's building right now, but to paint a garish mural over it, featuring a giant, green Chihuahua. Holding a black puppy, she said, “I’ve been in these buildings. They’re coming down whether you approve it or not because they’re falling down.” Just two days later, however, Teague hosted the Venice Art Crawl at this same building.

When the time came for the council to vote, however, the majority of the members saw right through Teague's tactics. The first to comment was Tommy Walker, an African-American who grew up in Oak-

wood during its rougher days. After listening closely to both sides, he was terrified by “the usage of the word crime in the community.” He could not understand why an individual would move into a community and “be that afraid of the community that you’re moving into that you feel the need to change the dynamics of it.” He also declared that “this is not a ghetto!” Irv Katz, also unimpressed by Teague's fear tactics, told him if he was so afraid of Venice, “to build his enclave elsewhere.” He also pointed out that just recently the Abbot Kinney hotel had passed only AFTER they had removed their fourth floor.

Even members who had previously voted for other developments were unimpressed by not only the project design, but by Teague's inability to connect well with the community. Mark Salzburg summed it up when he said “The neighborhood, to me is a lot more valuable then the parking.” Bud Jacobs went a step further saying “To be honest with you, I found your presentation kinda sophomoric and offensive to the community.”

The VNC passed the LUPC motion to deny 1414 Main Street with a vote of 14-1. Having been soundly defeated now in two critical community meetings, the neighborhood has clearly spoken. The question is: will the City of Los Angeles hear? Earlier that night, Councilman Mike Bonin said that the applicants on 522 Venice Boulevard that the city had denied, were now planning to sue. His response: bring it on. He also expressed his concern that the way SB1818 “is being applied it is resulting in a net decrease in affordable housing.”

For some neighborhoods in Venice, hyper-gentrification has already stuck a decisive, if not fatal, blow. But, for the neighborhoods once part of the original Venice canals, the people, armed with real facts, real concerns, and real determination, have held back its powerful force another day. Yes, Jason Teague, you should be afraid – not of the gangs of Venice, but of the spirit of Venice itself.

Boxes Blight Brooks
– *Continued from page 1*

man style home or a Spanish Mediterranean looking one that doesn’t take up every square inch of the property. Many home owners have been building larger dwellings in their back yards while still keeping the front house in tact. That’s fine with me, because unless you go down an alley or look really hard you may not even notice them, and the view from the street is still one of a quaint old Venice neighborhood.

As property values continue to rise with the likes of Google moving in and Joel Silver setting up shop in what should still be the Venice Post Office, it seems that many Venice residents are selling their properties and taking the money someone is offering them to leave Venice. But what has happened on Brooks is something akin to a cancer cluster near a toxic dump sight. The concentration of this mass exodus is truly stark, over a dozen and counting. Hopefully with the moratorium placed on de minimis building wavers the march of the big box home will be stopped. Let’s work to keep this from spreading to other streets in the Oakwood area of Venice. And if you are going to sell your property, don’t sell it to someone who is planning to level your home and put a big box in its place. You may be leaving Venice behind, but the rest of us will still be here and we don’t want to live on streets lined with mini sky scrapers.



Above: New construction that thankfully does not look like a box Photo: Anthony Castillo

Santa Monica Airport to Become a Park
– *Continued from page 3*

will take control of July 1, 2015 (when a 1984 agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration expires).

To emphasize the City’s determination to take control of the whole airport, the council decided to free itself up by paying back \$250,000 in grant money previously received from the FAA and rethink the rules for renting airport buildings after the current leases end July 1, 2015, as well as ending or limiting the sale of dangerous, polluting aviation fuel.

Airport2Park, the organization residents formed last summer to advocate for building a big public park on the airport site, sent a delegation of five members, each of whom spoke for two minutes, laying out the case for the need for and feasibility of building the park.

According to Mr. Scott, the group was particularly grateful for the forceful statements by council members, including Mayor Pam O’Connor and Council Member Kevin McKeown, denouncing the fear-mongering tactics of aviation interests who claim that if the City closes the airport, outrageous development will take its place.

Airport2Park is also grateful for the outpouring public support against the airport’s continued operations and in favor of Airport2Park’s vision for a great park.“

New Bollards, More Yellow Than the Old Bollards
– *Continued from page 5*

its intersection with OFW. Campbell intentionally drove onto the sidewalk to get onto OFW. As many have stated at the Town Hall meeting, nobody can stop a madman.

The plastic bollards that flatten to the ground when any vehicle touches them and that were installed immediately after the August murder became nothing but an eye-sore and a tripping hazard in a matter of weeks. Bonin recently replaced them with identical ones, except that the new ones are yellow and the old ones were white. In the numerous places where one of the bollards has broken off, a new one was not installed. That gives plenty of space for a vehicle to pass – if space was actually needed, but it is not, because they flatten. How is this supposed to prevent a murder similar to the one that occurred in August?

The hidden goal of this so-called “public safety” measure is to install cameras all over OFW. It is nothing but an excuse for increased government surveillance right in our back yard.

“The new bollards are temporary, and I hope to replace many of them (depending on location) with bike racks, art, large flower pots, or permanent bollards. We have not determined the total number of cameras or locations, and nothing will happen all at once. Things will likely be phased in,” Bonin wrote in an email message to the Beachhead.

“Bonin is our elected rep. I respect that he listens to the community and makes his own decisions. That is his right,” Linda Lucks, VNC President, told the Beachhead.

Whatever happened to our right to privacy?

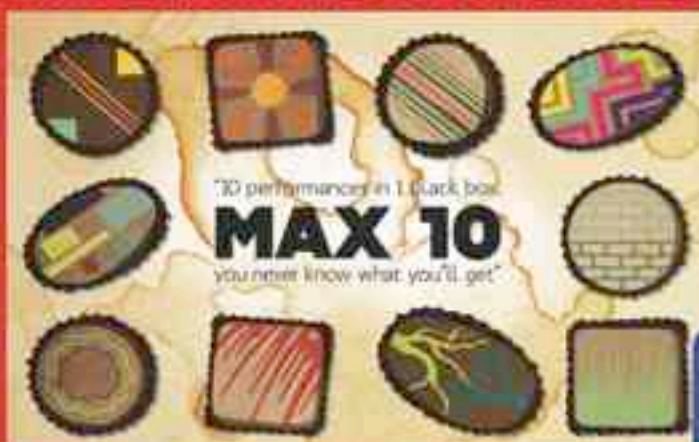


Your Neighborhood Solar Powered Arts Facility!

The Electric Lodge is a laboratory for artists and environmentalists. We engage our community through the visual and performing arts, innovative classes, programs and seminars, providing experiential contexts and opportunities for dialogue. The Electric Lodge is a torch bearer in the effort to stimulate public understanding and support for the creation of a sustainable worldwide eco-system.

MONDAY APRIL 7TH - 7:30PM

Ultra-Experimental Performance Lab



\$10 ADMISSION - Reception To Follow

Artists Include:

Brent's Showgirls
Damien Bjorn Rudd
Elizabeth Yochim
Josephine Hyde
Natasha Maidoff
Seven Sisters
Story Chicks
Terrie Silverman

Wash. premiere in 2012



FRIDAY APRIL 4TH - 9:00PM



**A NEW
LATE NIGHT
PERFORMANCE
SERIES**

FREE ADMISSION
The Union Project Dance Co.
w/ D. Reuben

HIGH VOLTAGE



FRIDAY APRIL 4TH - 10PM

FREE DANCE PARTY

SPARK AFTER DARK

10pm-Midnight
LIVE DJ



SUNDAY APRIL 6TH, 20TH & 27TH

FREE LOVE Animal Rescue

"Any size, any breed, any need"



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Come say HI
& Meet Your
New Best Friend!
10am-1pm



**APRIL 20TH
BUNNY
ADOPTION**
www.1arabbits.org

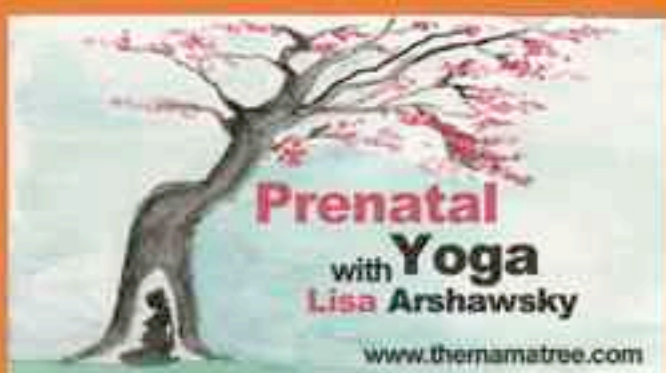
THURSDAYS - 12:30PM - 1:30PM

Kundalini Yoga

\$10 *Suggested



TUESDAYS - 12:15PM - 1:30PM



WWW.ELECTRICLODGE.ORG

The Electric Lodge is located at 1416 Electric Ave Venice CA 90291
(between Milwood & California streets, one block east of Abbot Kinney)

We strongly encourage alternative transport: Walk, bike, Blue Bus #2 or Metro #33 or #333. However, we also have FREE on-site parking.