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April 2023 #478

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Do You Know Who You Are?

by Gerry Fialka

A friend commented on my Venice film, The Brother Side of the Wake (aka Bro-Side), proclaiming it as “slightly mesmerizing self-indulgent hodgepodge.” I felt that would be a great pull quote for the poster. Funny!?! Whaa?!? Then a few weeks later, he wrote back again and really perked me up with this comment: “I must say I have been haunted by a brief, but powerful moment ... the simple 2 second shot of you on the boardwalk when you ask an unseen passerby ‘Do you know who you are?’ I think this is one of the best moments in all the films I have seen this year! It stays with me !!”

“Do you know who you are?” is a question that indeed sticks with people. I saw it on a bumper sticker on a car in Venice recently. We live in a community of many people who are employed in the entertainment business. Their movies and TV shows delve knee deep in the swamp muck of identity searching. Consider Jean-Luc Godard’s quip: “Hollywood films are documentaries of people acting.” This town is filled with actors who play other people. Or do they?

Their industry rag, The Hollywood Reporter, recently glared a front cover headline story on Harrison Ford: “I Know Who the F*ck I Am.” The Mother Nature Goddesses exclaim: “It’s about being yourself on purpose.” - Raquel Welch. “No one can take me away from me. I’m always going to be OK.” - Pamela Anderson.

My mother called me years ago to announce that Joy Behar had dropped Marshall McLuhan’s name on the TV show, The View. Recently, Joy says, “My whole career has been me being me. So why would I change it? It’s the thing that works.” She may not know the McLuhanism: “If it works, it’s obsolete.” What does “work” mean? I like to commingle contradictions. How can we celebrate differences to enable insights, and invent new questions?

I recall Andy Warhol suggesting, “It’s not who you are, it’s who you think you are.” The actual quote is “It’s not what you are that counts, it’s what they think you are.” Does my mis-remembering reveal something about who I am?

Popeye, one of the first semioticians, yelps “I yam what I yam” which can incite more contemplation, for the young and old alike. YouTube superstar Emma Chamberlain explains, “I feel powerless about my own identity at times, because I feel like it’s in the control of the public.” What is “control”? Who is “the public”?

As Venetians, who are we? As individuals? As community? Contemplate these words from the Quarterly Review of Biology, 2012, A Symbiotic View of Life: We Have Never Been Individuals: “Death is an ending, a curtain closed, and yet a threshold where your decomposing corpse merges with the rest of the world. Truly, we have never been individuals.” Truly?

John Locke writes that personal identity is made up of “sameness of consciousness.” He holds that personal identity (or the self) is a matter of psychological continuity to be founded on consciousness (for example, memory), and not on the substance of either the soul or the body.

But how do we nurture confidence in our search for identity? With seriousness, wit or what? Who can help? Our community can help us define our-

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THE VENICE BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

By Jon Wolff

Original Save Venice held its annual Venice Black History Month celebration in the Abbot Kinney Memorial Library on Saturday, February 18. This was the first opportunity for Original Save Venice to have activities indoors at the Venice library since before the Covid lockdown. The library director John Frank, and the library staff and security, made extra efforts to provide the space for the 2023 event.

The program for the day included mounted photographs and history books to help visitors learn of the unique history of the Venice Black Community. Speakers took turns detailing the struggles of the People of Venice. And local musicians played live music for the attendees.



Jataun Valentine and her daughter Jenny, photo by Margaret Molloy

But this year’s event focused on one speaker named Jataun Valentine. She is particularly notable for being a descendant of Irvin Tabor, one of the primary Black Founders of Venice. Ms. Valentine is born and raised in Venice and, at 86 years old, is considered by many in the community to be the “Queen Mother of Venice”. Venice had the privilege of seeing her in person this day by the help of her daughter Jenny and son-in-law Benito.

Jataun Valentine’s role in Venice is not just as a mere figurehead though. Her lifetime of activism in Venice has contributed greatly to the preservation of the Venice we all know and love. Ms. Valentine served on the Grass-



Jataun Valentine and Peter Demian, photo by Margaret Molloy

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SET UP FOR FAILURE THEY NEVER HAD A CHANCE

by Garry Featherstone

In my first article posted in the Beach Head I explained why I thought it was a bad idea to house the homeless in Motels without certain conditions. Let me be clear. In my opinion, the homeless that are addicted to drugs, or the ones suffering from some form of mental illness, should be treated for such before being placed in permanent housing. My reasoning is as follows.

Because you remove the unhoused from the streets, does not change their drug habit, nor does it change their behavior. After being placed in a motel, that person is still a drug addict and his or her behavior does not change. They still go out all times of the day and night and collect and look for things that will support their habit. Whether it’s recycling, searching through garbage, or just plain stealing, nothing has changed.

My point, as we speak, 75% of the homeless that were housed in a motel, continues to get high. Nothing has changed. All of the Motels the homeless were placed in, are supervised by St. Josephs. St. Josephs are at these motels 24 hours a day.

The problem is that the people that are supervising the homeless, have limited experience dealing with people addicted to drugs. Even though they don’t recognize the symptoms, even if they did, what would they do? Nothing is being done now which is my point. The same habits continues, even under the supervision of St. Joseph’s.

After inspecting each motel over weeks, I must tell you that what I observed enhances my opinion that the homeless were set up for failure. What I can tell you is that St. Josephs is not taking this undertaking very serious. How could they when the homeless continue to display the same behavior they displayed on the streets. Bottomline, the homeless are still addicted to drugs while under St. Josephs supervision.

Why do I care? Because removing the homeless from the streets was only done because the well to do were complaining, led by City Council Woman, Traci Parks. It’s so obvious. Look who they removed. All the homeless by Golds Gym and Google. Money, Money, Money.

They never attempted to removed those on Venice Blvd, under the freeway pass, and the surrounding area. Look at those on Jefferson Blvd. But now that one of the homeless guys died in a fire, and this fake ass black woman who lives in Playa Del Rey, keep complaining, just maybe they’ll clean that area up.

Please keep in mind that the homeless are not getting real drug treatment while housed at these motels. It’s a waste of time.

What I’m explaining to you, I explained in a letter to mayor Bass, and city council Woman, Traci Parks. I was ignored, and I understand why. No one gives a damn whether the homeless make it or not, as long as they are not around the well to do. They accomplished their goal, with the help of Mayor Karen Bass.

It is not hard to get the homeless to go to motels to get out of the cold and rain. However in a article I just read, they are praising Traci Parks for getting the homeless off the streets. NEWS FLASH: They are still drug addicts.

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PEACE ON BEACH

LETTERS

Hello

I am writing to share the letter (attached below) from Richard Glass. Richard was born and raised here in Venice. He has had a successful business, Glass Hair, at Main and Windward for years. Since his Venice duplex apartment building was purchased in January of 2022 he has been the victim of a landlord who not only harassed him emotionally but ultimately kicked him out of his home. Richard is a local gift for the community. That this happened to him is disturbing and unfair. On the advice of his counsel, he is not naming his harasser. I know Richard is not alone, this has been happening in Venice for years - my family was kicked out of our home of 27+ years (my predatory landlord made us sign a non disclosure agreement).

As a successful local entrepreneur and neighborhood staple, I thought this may be of interest to The Beachhead.

Thanks for continuing to shine a light on injustices in Venice.

Gwenn Victor

Letter from RICHARD GLASS

I am writing in hopes that shedding some light on my story might help others dealing with the same housing plight. LA County’s COVID-19 Tenant Protections Resolution was set up to protect lower and middle income citizens from the plight of ending up amongst the growing numbers of unhoused people in our community. It was supposed to allow us a financial reprieve as we all struggle to make up for the losses of income during the pandemic.

One of the key elements within the resolution provides anti-harassment and retaliation protections. My landlords, attorneys have used their legal training to repeatedly harass me via frivolous lawsuits in an effort to do what the tobacco lobby did/does to anyone who dared not act in their best interest. Curiously, a third lawyer who leads their harassment efforts is formerly disbarred attorney taking on the “fight” against me pro bono. It is abundantly clear that their efforts are carried out in order to drain my financial stakes to the breaking point.

This game of legal chicken has cost me what little resources I had. I am now left with no choice but to raise money via a GoFundMe to protect myself from being cast out of my home of 16 years. I should be allowed to repay any back rent over the next 12 months. But instead, three lawyers have joined forces against one Black man who is a life-long member of the Venice community. This economic bullying, using the court system as their billy club of choice, threatens my safety, peace, home and well-being. I am sure I am not the only one this is happening to. And we need to talk about how to enforce the protections against those out to exploit their economic privilege over those of us who are still struggling to right the course of the past three years.

When Anne Heche passed away, my salon was the last place she stopped before her fateful accident. News outlets around the country reached out to me to get the inside scoop on the story of a beautiful, fallen movie star. I hope the plight of someone who is simply a good man and a good citizen will raise interest as well.

<https://gofund.me/91a73fe1>

Richard Glass

Hi guys I hope this email story finds you well.

My Name is Tamar Lewis & my husbands name is Lucien Lewis. I am from Philadelphia & my husband came to Venice in the 90's. His brother was killed & the neighbors put a plaque in his honor on 6th & Rose Ave.

My husband & I met in January 2020 & we're married by November 2020, he came & stayed with me in Philly for three years. During this time I was a certified peer specialist, one of the best I must say, I am 41 credits away from my degree in psychology. I had to withdrawal from school, there's another whole story there, I was also diagnosed with a mental health disorder of BI Polar with a touch of PTSD in 2008. I am also 8 yrs clean from drugs and alcohol.

The pandemic hit hard & my PTSD worsened. I felt as if I had to leave Philadelphia & if I didn't I was sure I was going to die! This was true in my mind. Plus because of all that went down escape was urgent, as if someone had put a hit out on me. No one did it was just my reaction to the things happening around me.

After 3 yrs my husband felt a change of scenery was necessary & that my mental health would benefit from it & boy was he right! The only thing I didn't know was that we'd be homeless 9 months after arriving in beautiful LA. At this current time my husband works, I since last week have two jobs & we've been finding it impossible to save for a security deposit while living in hotels & getting swindled by people.

The two friends my husband does have are on section 8 so we were sneaking to stay with them. That worked for about 60 days, we are not trying to get anyone put out of their home. So after working overnight last night & not sleeping all day today, being cold & out of money, I'm back at my overnight job with a tent wondering where we're going to set it up tomorrow morning so that we can get some rest. My husband gets off at 2am so he will be wondering around until I get off at 6:30am. We've also been calling 211 for the last three days only to be told everything is full or just being placed on hold until the phone hangs up on it's own.

I read your article in the Free Venice Beachhead because I was wondering what happened to the tents on 3rd. I was ready to join them for a while, it seemed organized. Our things are in the Public Storage on 4th & Rose, we wash clothes at the laundromat across the street. The owner is awesome I forgot his name. We also frequent the Rose Cafe & that little Mexican restaurant across from it. I absolutely love their coffee. I work two jobs in Brentwood and my Husband works in Westwood he's also an artist & we sell art on Venice Beach from time to time. Coming to LA has really been a emotional help to me but some housing would be even better & some access to mental health treatment for myself so that I can continue my healing journey. If there is anything you guys can do for us it would be greatly appreciated. I would also like to volunteer to help you guys with the paper I love to write or anything else I can do.

Thank you for taking the time out to read this it felt good to tell some of the story.

Scan Me to make a donation to the Beachhead

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Venice Black History – continued from page 3

roots Venice Neighborhood Council when the council was composed of women and men who genuinely stood for the interests of the people in the community. She worked with the tenants of Lincoln Place Apartments and protested to save their homes from being demolished by corporate gentrifiers. She fought to put art in the Oakwood Recreation Center. She helped to start the free breakfast programs for schoolchildren in Venice in the 1970s. And Ms. Valentine was on the front lines in the fight to save the historical Black church, the First Baptist Church of Venice, from being turned into a mega-mansion.

Jataun Valentine spoke of the past struggles in Venice. She talked about how the Pro Active Code Enforcement (PACE) program targeted only the homes of People of Color in order to force them out of Venice to make room for gentrifiers. She helped start the Venice Neighborhood Action Commission to stop selective code enforcement. She recounted the times when the LAPD broke down Black elderly residents’ doors to intimidate them and to push them out of Venice. She described the police’s gang injunction, which was used to displace Black families, but which was later declared unconstitutional. Back then, Ms. Valentine had boldly told the police, “You guys need to be re-educated. You’re going by old rules.”

Jataun Valentine talked about the issues concerning Venice today. She mentioned the ongoing problem with gentrifiers letting their dogs run loose and off leash in the park. This is a problem that the police refuse to deal with. They let affluent White dog owners break the posted laws daily, menace children and seniors with large dogs, and verbally abuse local People of Color when told to observe park rules. This lack of police response contrasts sharply with their regular practice of stationing police cars at the park every time a Black family has a barbecue or a birthday gathering at the picnic tables. Ms. Valentine assured the audience, “We’re still working on it.”

Jataun Valentine, who is born and raised in Venice, has always spoken about homelessness in Venice with far greater compassion than any and all of the newcomers to Venice. At the library event, she addressed the subject of homelessness simply: “They’re unhoused and they’re people too.”

Jataun Valentine acknowledged the contributions to Venice by many of the people in attendance. She encouraged everyone to keep on fighting until we win. And that once we start something, we finish it. She said that Venice is worth fighting for. About her own contributions to the fight for Venice she said, “I’m a little bitty part of it.”

A Portion of the Black History of Venice of America

By Margaret Molloy

Abbot Kinney was a published eugenicist. Venice of America opened on July 4, 1905 as a segregated recreation development for Whites only to enjoy. The Black community that built and maintained Venice of America, and envisioned much of its success, was relegated to an area of restrictive covenant known today as Oakwood. Sanborn Maps show the Venice of America “Commercial District” on Abbot Kinney Boulevard (previously known as Lake Street, and later West Washington Boulevard) between Westminster Avenue and Venice Boulevard only. The area north of that was known as the “back country” and excluded from Venice of America. That area is known as Oakwood today. Black people were excluded from the public beach and ocean in Venice. The only public beach area available to Black people was in Santa Monica, and called "Inkwell" by the White community.

Existing thriving coastal Black communities in Santa Monica and Manhattan Beach were decimated, first by White vigilantes and later by the segregationist policy of eminent domain implemented by those city governments. The Black community in Venice was the first intentional Black coastal community in all of California, and is the only remaining intentional Black coastal community on the entire West Coast. As such, the Venice Black community must be recognized and protected as a Sensitive Coastal Resource Area defined in Section 30116 of the Coastal Act. Section 30116 is a specifically “inclusive” policy. Section 30116 is embedded in its entirety in the Venice Land Use Plan (LUP) certified by the California Coastal Commission in 2001, but has never been appropriately acted on, to the detriment of this community.

The Ku Klux Klan was very active in California, including in Venice in the early 19th century. A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) raid on the Klan headquarters in downtown Los Angeles in 1925 exposed that registered Klan members included prominent businesspeople in Venice and Ocean Park (Santa Monica). The register also included police and civic leaders in Hermosa Beach and other areas of Los Angeles.

In spite of all of this, Arthur Reese became Abbott Kinney's right-hand man and the official “town decorator” of Venice of America. The contributions of Mr. Reese’s creative vision built by his crews of workers mostly from southern states, embodying the spirit of Louisiana and the Mardi Gras, with joy, warmth, and celebration became embodied in the culture of Venice. That is very far from the spirit of the Victorian White community of that day.



Arthur L. Reese (circa 1903)

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Then and now, the description of the “Spirit of Venice” as a unique, creative, Bohemian culture, with cultural capital and economic capital based on that culture, has been accrued without ever recognizing the source of that Spirit in the Venice Black community.

Additionally, Abbot Kinney deeded his personal home on the Venice Canals to Irvin Tabor, his chauffeur and confidant. Mr. Tabor had to tow that home to its current location at 1310 6th Avenue in Oakwood because of the prohibition on Black people living in the Venice Canals at the time.

A March 27, 1920 article in the Venice Vanguard titled, “Character Not Color” exposed the unique circumstances in Venice. This history should be celebrated and preserved at all costs, as a living lesson to other communities in a time of racial divide.

The mansionization and gentrification of Venice these days is replicating the divisions of old in the most painful of ways: physically, spiritually, economically, and socially. It has to stop! Original Save Venice encourages you all to visit the Venice Black History photo exhibit in the lobby of the Venice library.

“The sooner that sanity and not vanity prevails in some sections of this country, the sooner we will have the results that many are striving for.

CHARACTER, NOT COLOR

Never in the history of Venice, we believe, has there been a colored man appointed to the election board. We are proud of our town to know that its people are broad-minded and high-minded enough to recognize worth and character, and quality, instead of inequality. Mr. Arthur Reese has been in Venice for a number of years, a man of family, property owner, and is a highly respected citizen. The sooner we recognize the principles and capabilities of a man, regardless of creed or color, prejudice will be overcome. The great emancipator saw fit to free the slaves: he believed all men were born equal in God’s sight, and if that great mind saw fit to work and fight for the cause, he would expect us to do the same.”

Is Jim Murez drawing pay for running the Farmers Market, when their Articles of incorporation prohibit it?

First is the original sexual harassment complaint and the The Department of Agriculture’s response. One of their suggestions is to complain to the market manager.

The Operating Rules show that Murez alone operates the market through Venice Action Committee. There’s lots of questionable issues but....how do women Who feel harassed but need the work put up with his shit? The women who complained had to give up her second most profitable market!

VAC has been around since 1986. The last Amendment fo the Articles of Incorporation shows #V - nobody should be getting any income - Murez has Gotten between \$35K to \$100K annually just for the market. One year has him at \$225K.....

Sweeps: LAHSA has no shelter to offer the homeless, so a charade of providing housing results.

"We’ve also been working with LA Sanitation to bring more Care and CARE+ cleanups alongside sustained outreach to those unhoused individuals. These initiatives are led with offers of resources and shelter through outreach services and City partnerships." - from Traci Park’s 3/25 newsletter.

This is not factual. In fact I was at a CARE+ recently with one LAHSA person and I didn't see him approach the residents, let alone offer a resource. He walked by them and appeared more interested in interacting with the Sanitation or Law Enforcement present.

CARE+ Sanitation Sweeps are not (by law or in practice) led with any offers of shelter or other resources. The "outreach services" people at them are more like embedded sweep ride-alongs. And **without real housing resources to offer**, there's not much else can they be.

This isn't the only disturbing comments in her newsletter .<https://mailchi.mp/39ebc-c039efe/a-better11-is-underway-6263889>



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Who are you? – continued from page 1
selves. Perhaps it can conjure a clue. We seek others to realize who we are. Alan Watts says that everyone is seeking to find out who they are. If you do find out, then you are in trouble. We are constantly in flux, forever changing.



Here Alan Watts elaborates: “Trying to define yourself is like trying to bite your own teeth. When a man no longer confuses himself with the definition of himself that others have given him, he is at once universal and unique. He is universal by virtue of the inseparability of his organism from the cosmos. He is unique in that he is just this organism and not any stereotype of role, class, or identity assumed for the convenience of social communication. The hallucination of separateness prevents one from seeing that to cherish the ego is to cherish misery. We do not realize that our so-called love and concern for the individual is simply the other face of our own fear of death or rejection. In his exaggerated valuation of separate identity, the personal ego is sawing off the branch on which he is sitting, and then getting more and more anxious about the coming crash! Naturally, for a person who finds his identity in something other than his full organism is less than half a man. He is cut off from complete participation in nature. Instead of being a body, he ‘has’ a body. Instead of living and loving he ‘has’ instincts for survival and copulation.”



Deepak Chopra ventures: “A person’s identity is a socially induced hallucination. There’s no such thing as a person. There’s only a bundle of consciousness that’s constantly in flux.” How can we integrate personal identity with the collective consciousness as a unifying force?

Local poet Joseph Paulson probes further: “For me, ‘other’ began as we separated from ‘nature’. I can’t tell you what level of consciousness a wildebeest has. But as proto humans drifted higher in consciousness they began to see themselves as more distinctly apart from or other than their environments.” The word “nature” comes from natus, meaning “born” from “the forces of the material world; that which produces living things and maintains order.”

Picasso synergizes more ideas: “We all know that Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies.”

Here artist R. Crumb talking about losing a sense of self while taking LSD: “I took some bad acid in November of 1965, and the after effect left me crazy and helpless for six months. My mind would drift into a place that was very electrical and crackly, filled with harsh, abrasive, low grade, cartoony, tawdry carnival visions. There was a nightmarish mechanical aspect to everyday life. My ego was so shattered, so fragmented that it didn’t get in the way during what was the most conscious period of my life. I was kind of on automatic pilot and was still constantly drawing. Most of my popular characters — Mr. Natural, Flaky Foont, Angelfood McSpade, Eggs Ackley, The Snoid, The Vulture Demonesses, Av’ n’ Gar, Shuman the Human, the Truckin’ guys, Devil Girl—all suddenly appeared in the drawings in my sketchbook in this period, early 1966. Amazing! I was relieved when it was finally over, but I also immediately missed the egoless state of that strange interlude. . . . To be fully alive is a stupendous struggle! We want the rewards without the struggle — a fatal error! . . . No such thing as an easy life! Everybody has a hard time . . . struggle or die! To find out what’s really going on it’s necessary to get around the ego . . . an art requiring persistent and determined effort . . . Me, me, me... myself & I . . . oh no!!! Trapped in my stupid self!”

On this journey to find out who we are, what about centers without margins? Carl Jung observes



that “the ego has been seen as the center of consciousness, whereas the Self is defined as the center of the total personality, which includes consciousness, the unconscious, and the ego; the Self is both the whole and the center.”



McLuhan explores this yearning: “Quest for Privacy and Identity Turns Everybody into Nobody . . . When things come at you very fast, naturally you lose touch with yourself. Anybody moving into a new world loses identity. If you go to China, and you’ve never been there before, you’re a nobody. You can’t relate to anything there. So loss of identity is something that happens in rapid change. But everybody at the speed of light tends to become a nobody. This is what’s called the masked man. The masked man has no identity. . . Violence, whether spiritual or physical, is a quest for identity and the meaningful. The less identity, the more violence.”



Lenny Bruce exclaims: “Thank you, Masked Man.” He influenced many people’s search for self-identity. One of them was Frank Zappa, who asserts: “Everybody in this room is wearing a uniform. Don’t kid yourself” to the audience on his “Burnt Weeny Sandwich” 1970 album. This challenge “to be real” is forever facing us. Frank continues, “Who are the brain police?” He specifies the brain. Let’s think about what entails personal identity. How do we integrate this amalgamation of mind, soul, and language?

“Love thy label as thyself” - James Joyce, who is the epitome of being brave and bold.

So “Shake your ESP ear” with “This above all: to thine own self be true,

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.” – Shakespeare, Hamlet.



In fact, on page 248 of *Finnegans Wake*, we read, “My other is mouthfilled.” The birth of language? The birth of identity? Maybe we can continue our journey of not knowing what we don’t know about ourselves. And smile! Then laugh at our “subnsciousness.” (another invented word by Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*, page 224)

Dig it & Dance! Sing and Shout: “Who are we?” “Who am I?”

We can ruminate on rubbish, too. It is Godly to upcycle. Think about what we throw away, the tangible and nontangible. How does that reflect on who we are? I dumpster dive Venice history. I found a collage art piece recently with the words “the closer you are to normal, the further you are from yourself” signed “g. pizzle 05-17-18.” I searched for any hints of who wrote this, no luck. Anyone know?

I found a current issue of one of my favorite newspapers, Financial Times. In her latest column, entitled “Greater Expectations,” (2-18-23) Enuma Okoro writes: “Imagine if our deeper sense of identity came from how well we loved each other, and how much attention we paid to sustaining the well being of all creation. Maybe this might shift the often overburdened expectations we have for what constitutes a well-lived, successful and purposeful life.”

This is Venice. We are L-O-V-E!

VENICE BEATS ADDENDUM:

See you at The Venice West on April 2 for Venice Beats II <https://www.facebook.com/events/842381870350476/>

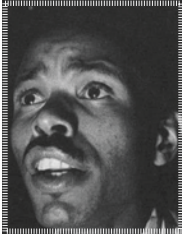
Celebrate who we are, and where we came from, and where we are going - Music, Art, Poetry, Comedy, Community!

Venice BeachHead Beats article: <https://thevenicebeachhead.com/2022/09/02/our-story-by-gerry-fialka/>

THE VENICE WEST tour on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9vsPk1iSts>

“The 2022 Venice Beats event at The Venice West was phenomenal! The best show ever. I’m so thrilled to have experienced the evening with the most talented people - performing. . . the sax player Carol Chaikin, Kahlil Sabbagh, Brad Kay, Pegarty Long, and more. Eric Ahlberg knocked it out of the park! Producer/host Gerry Fialka and singer Suzy Williams outdid themselves. Wow wow wow! They MUST do it again. I was blown away.” - Venice Community activist Linda Lucks

“No Self, No Fear” – Joseph Ledoux.



Babs Gonzales was fearless. As an amazing bebop vocalist, poet, and self-published author, he was highly regarded by the Venice beats. Jazz writer Jack Cooke explains that Gonzales “assumed the role of spokesman for the whole hipster world... [becoming] something more than just a good and original jazz entertainer: the incarnation of a whole social group.” To circumvent racial segregation, Gonzales wore a turban and used the pseudonym Ram Singh, passing as an Indian national. (Korla Pandit did the same.) Using this identity, Gonzales worked at the Los Angeles Country Club until becoming a private chauffeur to movie star Errol Flynn. Whilst hospitalized for appendicitis in 1944, he assumed the Spanish surname Gonzales as he “didn’t want to be treated as a Negro,” later explaining that “they were Jim Crowing me in ofay hotels and so I said if it’s just simple enough to change my last name, why not?” After the outbreak of World War II, Gonzales was forced to return home to Newark to report for military duty, but was declared unfit for service after arriving to his inspection dressed as a woman.

Babs was one of the inventors of bebop language. Gonzales’ writing is included in the historical collection *The Cool School: Writing from America’s Hip Underground*, whose editor Glenn O’Brien defined Gonzales’ voice as one of many “outsider voices ignored or suppressed by the mainstream [that] would merge and recombine in unpredictable ways, and change American culture forever.” Babs was doing Finneganesse, the language about language that James Joyce invented. Things don’t exist on their own, they exist in relationship.

Let’s flip the new metaphors and questions into empathy and endearment. Kind feelings and noble affection reign supreme. Celebrate our search for identity with our tribute to Babs, and many cultural icons - artists, poets, musicians - who echo the free spiritness of 7 Dudley Avenue, when it was The Venice West, and then Sponto Gallery, including Eden Ahbez, ruth weiss, Frank Zappa, Aya Tarlow, Ornette Coleman, Philomene Long, Dave Frisberg, Wallace (Semina Culture) Berman, Lenore Kandel and many more song and dance people. Join us at Venice West, 1717 Lincoln Ave for Venice Beats on April 2. We will be celebrating music and poetry that defines us. Kahlil Sabbagh will be singing the first jazz song in Arabic: Yep-Roc Heresay by Slim Gaillard, who is written about in Kerouac’s *On the Road*: “One night we went to see Slim Gaillard in a little Frisco nightclub. In Frisco great eager crowds of semi-intellectuals sat at his feet and listened to him on the piano, guitar and bongo drums... Now Dean approached him, he approached his God; he thought Slim Gaillard was God.” Eminent Venice legend Wallace Berman seconds that emotion with his mantra: “Art is Love is God.”

MUSIC UPDATES:

Congrats to Sunny War, who was featured recently on TV: CBS Saturday Morning, and Stephen Colbert, and print: Rolling Stone, and The New Yorker.

Thanks to Jessica & Johan for their annual Fat Tuesday Parade (Feb 11, 2023) on the Venice Boardwalk. It was a joyous “Bon ton roula” (pronounced “bahn tahn roolay”), a phonetical approximation of “bons temps rouler”, that’s Louisiana Creole French for “good times roll.” Let’s rock’n’roll these best of times.

Hotel Voucher Living – continued from page 1

Look around Venice and you will see Homeless Men and Women sleeping in doorways of stores, up and down Lincoln Blvd. They are sleeping on side streets, alleys, and these homeless people display the same behavior as the ones housed in motels. My problem with this is Traci Parks and Mayor Bass, were only concerned with getting the homeless out of the white folks area.

Bottomline, it is my opinion that the homeless placed in motels were set up for failure. I base my opinion on the way they live at the motels. Nothing has changed. Bicycles and motorcycles all over the place. Rooms are filthy and nasty. Some rooms have been damaged.

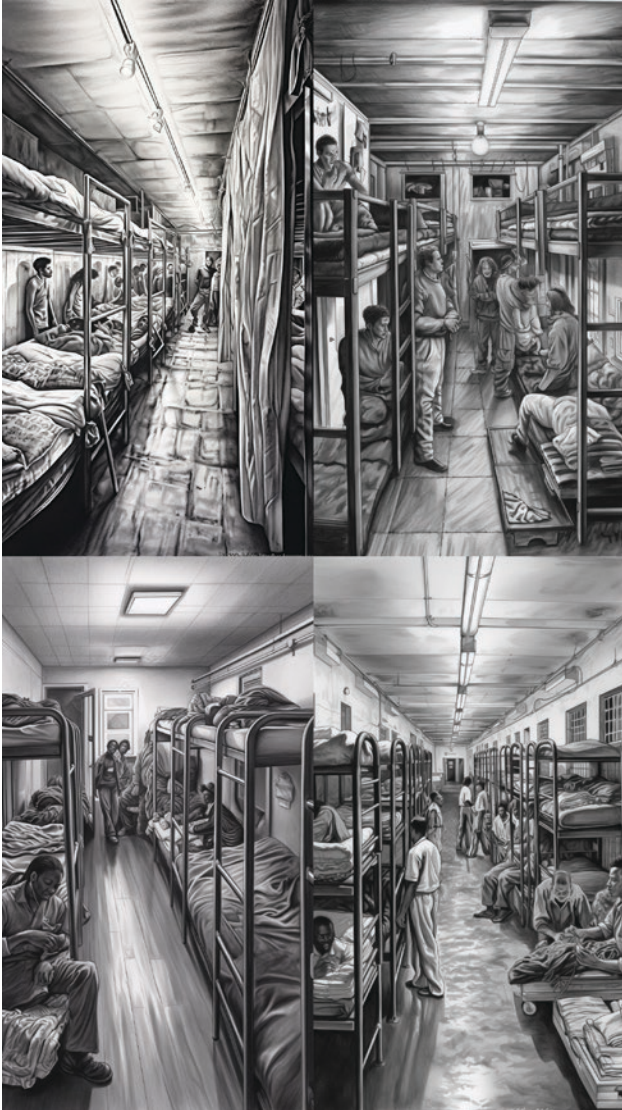
They are still collecting trash, and most of them stay under the influence everyday. So, you’re going to take this product and place it in a apartment and hope for the best. The homeless have been tricked and set up for failure.

The first thing that should have been done was to attempt to provide drug treatment to those that are addicts. Every person suffering from some form of mental illness, should have been evaluated by a doctor, and started receiving treatment. If drug addicts were enrolled in treatment, by the time they get ready to look at an apartment, some of them will be clean and sober and ready to go forward. They are sitting in these motels doing absolutely nothing.

I want you to keep something this in mind. You cannot blame the homeless because they were pretty much forced off the streets. They were placed a position in which they could not defend themselves against.

I want everyone to think about this. The city continues to allow the Coastal Commission to allow the wealthy to build all over Venice, in most cases under questionable conditions. The builders submit plans for one thing, and build another, then come back and submit a revised copy of those plans. What about the homeless. When is the city going to build a Treatment Center in Venice. Oh, I forgot, the well to do don’t want them in Venice. The same way the Coastal Commission is allowing the wealthy to build what they want, I’m sure they can bend the rules for Drug Treatment Center.

If you were going to open a hospital, you must recruit staff to run it. Staff that know what they are doing. When the Mayor undertook this SAFE PROGRAM, she should have recruited men and women that know what they are doing. That’s not the case here. When you see what I see on a daily basis, it only reinforces my opinion that the homeless were set up for failure.



VNC ELECTION 2023

By Eric Ahlberg

By the time you read this, the Preliminary Results will probably be out.

All right it’s over, and we are finally free of the moral posturing and buzzword bromides, unless you go to a VNC meeting, something I have vowed never to do. I much prefer working and communicating with a good group of do-gooders in a good collective. I rule out meetings ruled by Robert’s Rules of Order, Brown act disclosure rules, conflict of interest rules, and petty rulers. But I guess that’s their thing.

How do I love the VNC? Not very much. I am ever reminded that all politics are local, the rhetoric is the same at all levels, “...it is a strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. They conduct public affairs for private advantage. Many politicians are eels in the fundamental mud upon which the superstructure of organized society is raised. “ - Ambrose Bierce

Local politics gets very stupid, as does your opponent, and why do idiots keep getting elected, are the voters idiots? These kind of thoughts drove Venice Griot George Carlin to abandon voting, declaring that he doesn’t want any responsibility for electing the idiots who just fuck things up. And Please, can we quit with the “I want to listen to everybody” and “I want to fix Venice.” It is a sign you’ve never done anything, or just lying,

So I raise my poison pen to mock the clown show, safely from my armchair.

The Venice Neighborhood Council is advisory to the City Councilperson, currently Traci Park in CD11. She owes her successful election to office to the Apartment Owners Association and The Police Protective League and Republicans Funders, they spent \$634,148.31 shit posting Erin Darling. This also saved Traci from spending too much time hating on B and E, so she could spend more time on shiny futures. Seeing her at community meetings and events now, well we used to see B at those kind of things, feeding fan fantasies, that’s what you do, that’s what’s being sold here.

Same as it ever was.

I don’t see much progress in any city stuff since her election except for self-aggrandizing PR.

Same wanton destruction of people's ID, phones, and papers, further impoverishing vulnerable homeless campers, when the camps are swept out. It takes Police Street Closures. Then St. Josephs interns to hand out vouchers and inform the poor of the sweep out date. After the warning period expires, the sanitation crews proceed to trash their way through whatever the evicted have not been able to escape with on their way to hotel hell where social isolation and lock down curfews may apply. Up goes the government cruelty index, on your dolla! Housing for LAHSA to give to homeless is all used up. Things are looking up for Traci Parks.

Each encampment sweep/eviction is its own poverty opera, the poor, the politicians, rich, landlords, the cops, social service workers, sideline cheerleaders, earnest helpers, the flash of the police closure perimeter, the grind of the trash trucks, car alarms going off, loudspeakers, someone off their meds because they were trashed. This poverty opera plays out daily in locations all over this country. Thanks Capitalism and Leader of the Free World.

“No one’s life, liberty, and property are safe, while the legislature is in session.” - Mark Twain

Again, fortunately the VNC is only advisory. Only 1,983 people voted in the last Venice Neighborhood Council election. Venice has a population of about 40,000 people, so that works out to about 5% of the community voting, but many of those may not actually live in Venice. Hardly a mandate.

The following evaluations are useless for voting now, yet they retain a value as short gestalt assessments...and I don’t have results yet. Who was worthy or unworthy of your vote? Should you regret your voting? Probably. Let’s see.

President.

Brian Averill - While we have liked him, he has joined the opposition to the Venice-Pacific Supportive Housing that VCH is developing in the Venice Median. Caving to the NIMBYS buys you entry to a special political circle

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in the Canals.Sorry, you sold out Brian. Please don’t say too large, too expensive, and too ugly, attracts crime. That description fits the entire city.

The main reason to vote for Brian is the other presidential candidate:

Daffodil Tyminski - Her campaign statement fawns on Traci Park, as all of Traci’s supporters are doing. Tropes: Better Days are here again, that fellow who ruined Venice is gone. I hear she is difficult and not well organized. She worked with the Sheriff’s Department on Boardwalk Cleanup.

Vice President:

Vicki Halliday - “We are not pitted against each other on land use, social or economic issues, and should be able to come up with solutions that will work for everyone.” Anyone who tries to please everyone will please no one.

Jim Robb - We still like him.

Secretary:

Tima Bell - seems like a good man.

Treasurer:

Eric Hartnack - Real Estate Agent

Helen Fallon - Traci Park Supporter

Jay Handal - Board Member for 12 years. A lot of bad stuff has gone down over the last 12 years, Bonin Trash-ing, votes against VCH developments. Outreach Officer:

Brian Finnerman - boring boilerplate Statement, His Facebook page has a “Menstruating should be free” embroidered thing on a telephone pole. Might be a good disrupting wild card, for 5 minutes.

Sima Kostovetsky - a NIMBY supported by The Current, talks “Common Sense” which sounds like more beatdown on homeless people in the name of law and order. Common Sense is the set of prejudices acquired by age 18.

Community Interest/Community Officer:

Noreen Ahmed - She seems free of NIMBY rhetoric and has creds on the homelessness issue.

Melissa Montesi - boilerplate candidate statement, but she is a creative, and seems to be friends with good people on FB.

Bruno Hernandez - Curator of Venice Art Walls, shows community support activity in Oakwood.

Communications Officer:

Nico Ruderman - This fellow was a lead proponent of the Recall Bonin campaign, i.e., aligned with Republicans...although he claims to be a Democrat.Though he is running unopposed, we recommend not voting for him.

Chair of the Land Use and Planning Committee:

Michael Jensen - He is a business attorney and wants drastic revisions of the Venice Median Project, which is the lawyer’s version of death by a thousand cuts, i.e., NIMBY Tool.

Gabriel Smith - Born in Venice, some mutual friends who are good people. Emphasizes height limits on Lincoln as his big issue.Better than Jensen probably.

At Large Officers: You get to vote for only one. I like that because it means you may win with 100 votes or less. The diversity of opinion is good, maybe, but not for everybody?

Lauren Burgess - Seems to be the focus of this article: “I left my dream husband, house and job — now I’m gay, happy and traveling”

Lisa Redmond - Seems like a good person, associates herself with The Catholic Worker.

Zack Best - Vague Boilerplate campaign statement. A sincere restaurant manager. Hmmm, fast food or gourmet?

Eric Allen Donaldson - “I believe the political system of the past has failed our neighborhood.” That statement could be interpreted many ways, and is a NIMBYS trope.

Erica Moore - distributes food to the hungry.

Sergio Perez - Manages “The Great Western Steak and Hoagie Co.” Good guy.

Amara Iman Hordt - Billy Attaway (jr) Wife. Jataun Valentine’s Niece, Realtor? Jataun does not endorse her.

MATT SEDILLO and RUBÉN FUNKAHUATL GUEVARA



CELEBRATING THE RELEASE OF THEIR NEW POETRY ALBUM
GRITO de LOS DOS de LOS
with Special Guest: Linda Ravenswood
7:30pm reception hosted by Venice Arts Council

8PM FRIDAY MAY 5, 2023
BEYOND BAROQUE
681 VENICE BLVD, VENICE, CA 90291



RUBÉN FUNKAHUATL GUEVARA AND MATT SEDILLO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF A SPLIT POETRY ALBUM “GRITO DE LOS DOS DE LOS” ON CINCO DE MAYO, MAY 5TH 7:30pm AT BEYOND BAROQUE, VENICE.

(Los Angeles, CA – March 29, 2023) MultiMedia Militia is proud to announce the release of their latest project, a split poetry vinyl album by Los Angeles Chicano heavy weights, cultural icon Rubén Funkahuatl Guevara and revolutionary poet Matt Sedillo with a reading, live and on YouTube at Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center, 681 N. Venice Boulevard in Venice, on Friday May 5, 2023. Pre-show reception at 7:30pm hosted by the Venice Arts Council, followed by 8:00pm show with special guest poet Linda Ravenswood. For more information contact Beyond Baroque at (310) 822-3006.

“Grito de los Dos de Dos”, (Los Dos – the two – de Los- from Los Angeles. Los is Pachuco slang for Los Angeles). The Grito de Dolores (“Cry of/from Dolores”) was the battle cry of the Mexican War of Independence, uttered on September 16, 1810, by Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Roman Catholic priest from the small town of Dolores, near Guanajuato, Mexico. It is a battle cry against oppression and for liberation. The album features: 15 tracks with 2 tracks written and performed by both poets, digital download and an insert with text of all poems, illustrations by Roque Torres and liner notes by George Lipsitz, Paul Ortiz and Guadalupe Carrasco Cardona. The album was produced by Michael Beserra, recorded at Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory, mastered by Deeskee at Weightless Audio and executed by MultiMedia Militia. More information available at MultimediaMilitia.com.

“The voice known by the name of Subcomandante Marcos proclaimed that our words are weapons, parts of an arsenal that we may need at any time. On this album, Matt Sedillo and Rubén Funkahuatl Guevara arm the people of Los Angeles and the people of the world with words in rhythm and rhyme, words shouted and whispered, words that wound and words that heal. They speak about stolen lands and stolen lives, about longing for love and losing it, about dangerous dreams and deadly

continued on page 10

MARYAM ASKARI



IYENGAR YOGA RETREAT
13-20 May 2023

 centro yoga unconventional wellness

book now!
0836 600284

Thursday April 20, 2023

Commemoration of the Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument

81st anniversary of Executive Order 9066 of 1942 35 years after the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 54 years after the first Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage in 1969

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

In person at the Northwest Corner of Venice and Lincoln

Keynote Speaker
WARREN FURUTANI



Warren speaks at the Commemoration in 2019

Much-appreciated, tax-deductible donations can be sent to:
Venice Arts Council/VJAMM
P.O. Box 993, Venice, CA 90294
Checks payable to “VCH/VJAMM”
Venice Community Housing serves as fiscal sponsor for the Venice Arts Council and the Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument Committee

For a complete list of donors and supporters visit
www.venicejamm.org

VJAMM Educational Outreach Support

Abbot Kinney Festival

"Adventures in JA History in Venice/West LA" website

Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant

"Behind Barbed Wire" and "And Then They Came for Us," 2019

Beyond Baroque

Corner of Lincoln and Venice: Stories from the VJAMM

Day of Remembrance at JANM

"Get Around" arts and music crawl, 2019

Katari: Keeping JA Stories Alive, 2021

Manzanar Pilgrimage

"Masao and the Bronze Nightingale," 2022

Mark Twain MS Asian Pacific Island Heritage Month

"May Sky: Kaiko Haiku," 2010 and 2018

Passover Seder Crawl, 2022

Santa Monica AAPI Heritage Month, 2021

Santa Monica 4th of July Parade, 2022

Santa Monica Landmarks Commission, 2023

Sawtelle Stories Forum 14, 2017

Stop Asian Hate Rally at VJAMM, 2021

Tsuru for Solidarity, 2020

Venice Community Calendar, 2019

Venice Community Housing

Venice Heritage Foundation, 2019

Venice Heritage Museum

Venice HS World Languages Global Studies Magnet

Venice Historical Society, 2017

Venice-West LA JACL "1000 Cranes" to King Fahad Mosque, 2017

"We Said NO! NO!" film by Brian Maeda

Westside Youth Academy (formerly YouthBuild)

SAVE THE DATE! THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023!

VENICE JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL MONUMENT FUNDRAISER AT HAMA SUSHI RESTAURANT

213 WINDWARD AVENUE “ON THE CIRCLE” IN VENICE

4:00 - 9:00 PM - DINNER ONLY

ORDER ANYTHING ON THE MENU!
ONLINE: hamasushi.com/menus
310-396-8783

Hama Sushi will donate 10% of all dinner sales to VJAMM for educational outreach, continuing maintenance of the monument, and funding for the Annual Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant

- On-site dining open
- Outdoor patio open
- 1.5 hour table limit
- All parties must be present to be seated
- Take-out/Phone & Online Orders
- Delivery Apps

Congratulations to Ryan Horio, the 2023 recipient of the 3rd Annual Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant!



venicejamm.org
facebook.com/VeniceJAMM
manzanarcommittee.org



Thank you to Esther and Jung Chaing of Hama Sushi in Venice, for your continuing support of the VJAMM! (Photo taken in 2017)



Arnold Maeda inspired the Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument (VJAMM) Committee to persevere in its seven-year quest to erect the monument on the same corner he, as a teenager along with his parents, reported for the bus trip to Manzanar in 1942 with only what they could carry. The Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant encourages college students to speak out against injustice as Arnold has done, and to help the Manzanar Committee plan and attend the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage. (Photo taken in 2018)

Where Has All The (affordable) Housing Gone?

Since 1999 over 1320 units of affordable, rent-controlled housing have been removed from Venice’s housing stock using the Ellis Act, which allows owners to take their buildings off the rental market. Developers, investors, and wealthy individuals usually target low-rent buildings for purchase, evict tenants with the Ellis Act, then turn around and, very often before the legally-mandated waiting period is over, re-rent at market rates. Over 28,300 units of affordable, rent-control housing have been pilfered in this way across the city of LA. Tenants rarely know their rights and the city doesn’t care. See it here <https://www.cesinaction.org/maps-of-ellis-act-evictions-1>

Mine is a familiar story to many... When my landlord died, a group of owner/investors bought the 4-unit building on 3rd Street. The first eviction trick they tried was the ‘owner-occupancy’ exemption, claiming one of the owners would move into my unit. But when I saw the owner’s gorgeous mini-estate in Ojai it was obvious she didn’t intend to move to Venice – and they dropped that scheme. Plan B was to evict us all using the Ellis Act and unfortunately that worked - even tho they sent mailings to wrong addresses and the owners didn’t attend a hearing I showed up at (City Attorney Delgadillo somehow flipped that around two years later when he instructed a judge to dismiss my small claims suit against the new owner because I hadn’t shown up at that hearing!).

Within a year they had emptied us all out of the building and sold it – and soon the next owner was renting two units at market rates despite Ellis rules that units be offered first to evicted tenants at the same rent if re-renting within the first three years after the eviction. Complicated! Apparently too much for the city of LA, which has done nothing about the constant abuse of the Ellis Act over 22 years, despite tenants inability to pay higher rents, and the not-unrelated increase of people living on the streets.

“Where Has All The (affordable) Housing Gone?” grew out of my experience. It’s a participatory art project exploring the loss of affordable, rent-control housing in Venice. Over the past two months community members, most of us new to each other, have been photographing and writing about the hundreds of properties where people were evicted using the Ellis Act. We’ve also looked at other ways affordable, rent-controlled units have been eliminated and replaced with market-rate rent-controlled units, single-family houses, and hotel rooms and other types of short-term rentals.

We’re looking at this situation from the POV of diverse community members: lifelong Venetians, new Venetians, evicted Venetians, newly housed Venetians, and unhoused Venetians. We’ll put together an installation from the materials we produce in Beyond Baroque’s gallery, opening in late May.

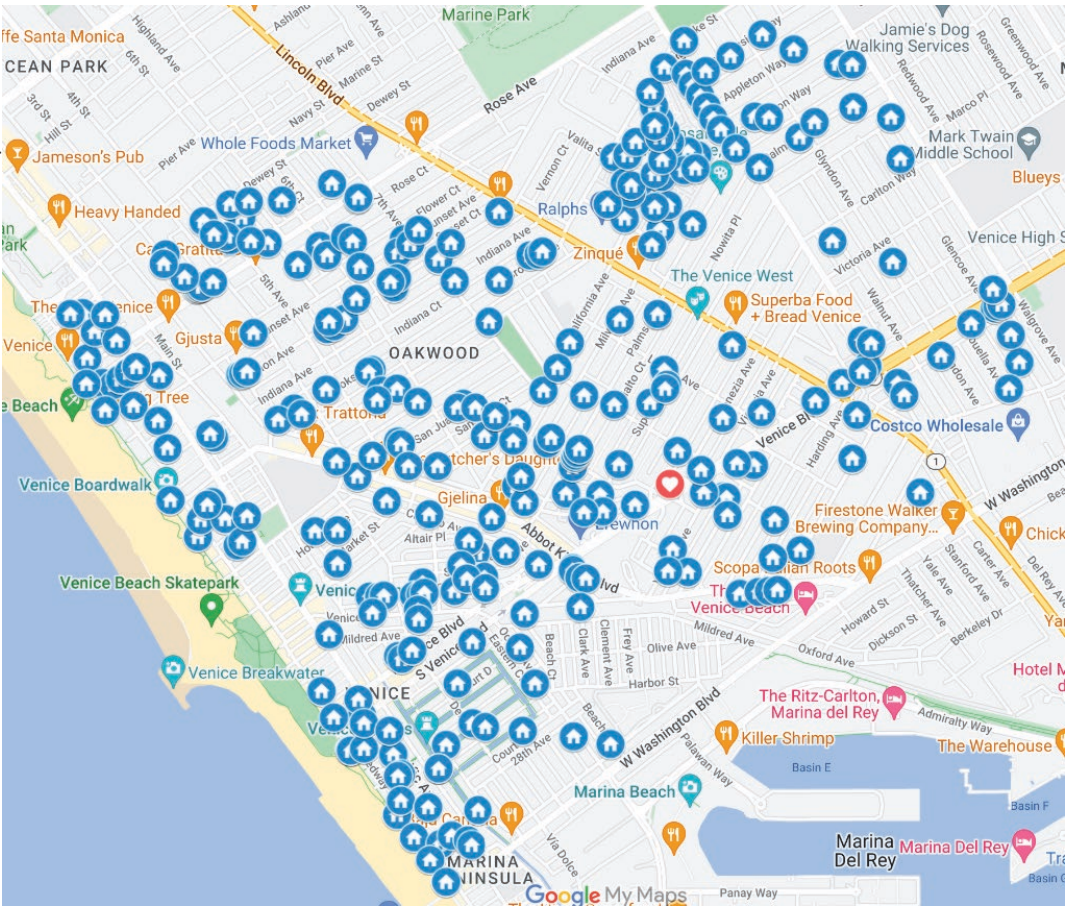
Why Now?

On March 31, 2023, most of the covid-era tenant protections in the city of LA and Los Angeles County will end. Despite covid-protections over the last three years building owners have evicted tenants with impunity – but tenant advocates are now expecting an eviction tsunami and a surge in the number of unhoused (see below for tenant resources). According to the US Census Bureau about 226,000 LA households are still behind in their rent, but starting April 1, 2023, they will have to pay their full rent and back rent as well. There are some new protections, but confusion about what’s new and what’s expiring will make it harder to sort out.

Resources for Tenants Needing Information and Help
StayhousedLA - <https://www.stayhousedla.org/> (workshops, connection to attorneys)
Westside Local of the LA Tenants Union - <https://latenantsunion.org/en/locals/#Westside> (6:30pm meetings at Reese Tabor Park in Oakwood – 1st and 3rd Wednesdays)
Eviction Defense Network - <https://edn.la/services/> (online training videos, workshops, attorneys)
Coalition for Economic Survival - <https://www.cesinaction.org/tenants-rights-clinic> (workshops, advocacy)
Keep LA Housed - <https://twitter.com/KeepLA-Housed> (workshops, advocacy)

Call for stories – and other contributors
If you’ve ever been evicted using the Ellis Act - or if you’ve experienced an attempt to evict you from a Venice apartment, we would really like to talk with you and hear your story (anonymously or otherwise since we know these aren’t always happy stories). Translation available. And... if you’d like to join and contribute your design/photo/social media skills please let us know. Please contact Judy at wherehasallthehousinggone@gmail.com or LM at 310-822-3006

This map below locates the properties where tenants have been evicted from rent-controlled buildings in Venice using the Ellis Act.



For more info on the project contact Judy Brannan at wherehasallthehousinggone@gmail.com or Beyond Baroque at 310-822-3006. Big thanks to host and co-producer Beyond Baroque - and our community partners Venice Arts Council, Venice Community Housing, Venice Equity Alliance, The Original Save Venice, and Westside LATU. And many thanks to the California Arts Council and California Humanities for support.

Tenant Harassment

We’ve learned it’s very common for tenants to face harassment to drive them out of their rent-controlled homes. LA’s Anti-Harassment Ordinance (TAHO) is meant to protect tenants from harassment by landlords, but as Jack Ross wrote in Capital & Main (A Year Into New Los Angeles Law to Protect Renters, City Has Taken Zero Landlords to Court, 9/28/22), TAHO is almost completely toothless, with no funding or will for enforcement - and “... one word is to blame. The ordinance states that private attorneys “may” be awarded reimbursement if they win TAHO cases, not that they “shall”

be awarded reimbursement.” This “found poem” by Tom Laichas, constructed of words taken from LA’s TAHO, works with the meanings of “may” (= maybe/might) and “shall” (= must) when it comes to tenants’ rights:

Private Right of Action

A tenant may
An aggrieved tenant may
A tenant prevailing in court may
The court may
the landlord may
a civil proceeding may

may use
may institute
may be awarded
may impose
may be enjoined
may be commenced

may make studies and investigations

The following words and phrase whenever used in this article shall be construed as defined in this section
Words and phrases not defined herein shall be construed as defined in Sections 12.03 and 151.02 of this Code if defined therein.

Shall may be construed
Shall may be defined
shall may be construed as defined therein

Shall use be construed
and institute defined
awarded as defined
as enjoined as commenced may be.

May be aggrieved
any person organization entity
may be aggrieved

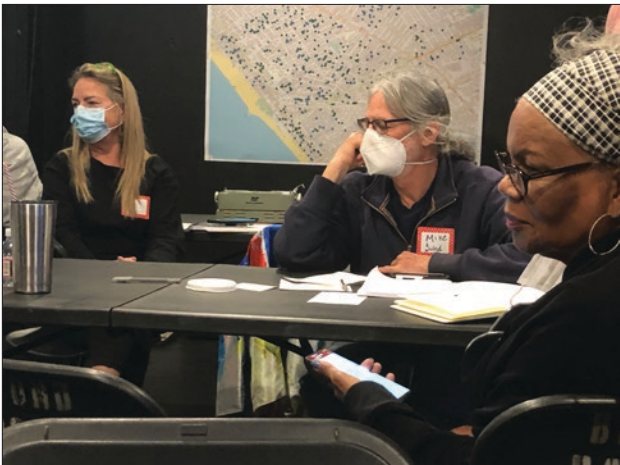
may institute civil proceedings
may be awarded damages
may not
may be awarded fees and costs
fees and costs construed
may be defined
may be awarded
due to harassment

City clerk mayor effective date
Do ordain may
do find that may
to read as may

may this bad conduct
be construed defined construed
as a misdemeanor.

Approved as to Form and Legality
I Michael N. Feuer City Attorney
I Odeborah Briethaupt
Deputy City Attorney

Shall not notice evictions.



8 • April 2023 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD
BLACK HOLE marty liboff

We're all being pulled down a Black Hole
Time pulls us down, down, down
into the vortex
faster, faster, faster
born, growing, grown, old, dead
atoms formed, atoms rearranged
formless, formed, formless
looking from the inside out-
incomprehensible madness, a mess
looking from the All- the All
YOW! Here I go!
I'm going down, going, going, going
gone...

DEATH marty liboff
(a blues song)

Death is stalking us all the time
for no reason or rhyme.
His skeleton hand touches us and we're gone
doesn't matter if it is right or wrong.
Good people and bad must go
across the river Styx we row.
When our time is up we die
our friends and relatives will cry.
In the end we all croak
even the giant Sequoia and mighty oak.
All history's great and famous are dead
a cold grave is their bed.
We will all kick the bucket
so forget your worries and fuck it!
Don't let your Spirit get down
it's a sure way to go down in the ground.
Give a little happiness while you're here
cherish your loved ones and hold them near.
Give everyone more love
before you wear wings above.
The future is never here
it's your moment so never fear.
We are rainbows and light
the time is now so shine bright
and dance with your baby all night
dance with your baby all night.
We are rainbows and light
the time is now so shine bright
and dance with your baby all night
dance with your baby all night. (repeat)

I BOMB THEREFORE I AM
By Gigia Bellaterra

Ooh say can you see
by the billboards' neon lights
what so proudly we heil'd
at the twilight's last gleaming.

whose broad stripes and bright stars
turned entertainment machine
o'er our tablets we watch
genocide, now live-streamed!

and the rockets' red glare
the bombs bursting in air
gave proof through the night that
"I BOMB THEREFORE I AM!"

oh yes,
make no mistake -
we live in a police state,

and it threatens
the whole world -

truly nowhere is safe.

Third Stroke

By Majid Naficy

The wind carried us
To an unfamiliar restaurant.
It was Valentine's Day.
We clinked our glasses together
And got lost in the hubbub of lovers.

The food was not good.
We paid the check
And got up to leave.
You grasped my hand.
Suddenly I heard:
"Hold me! Hold me!"
And you fell into my arms.

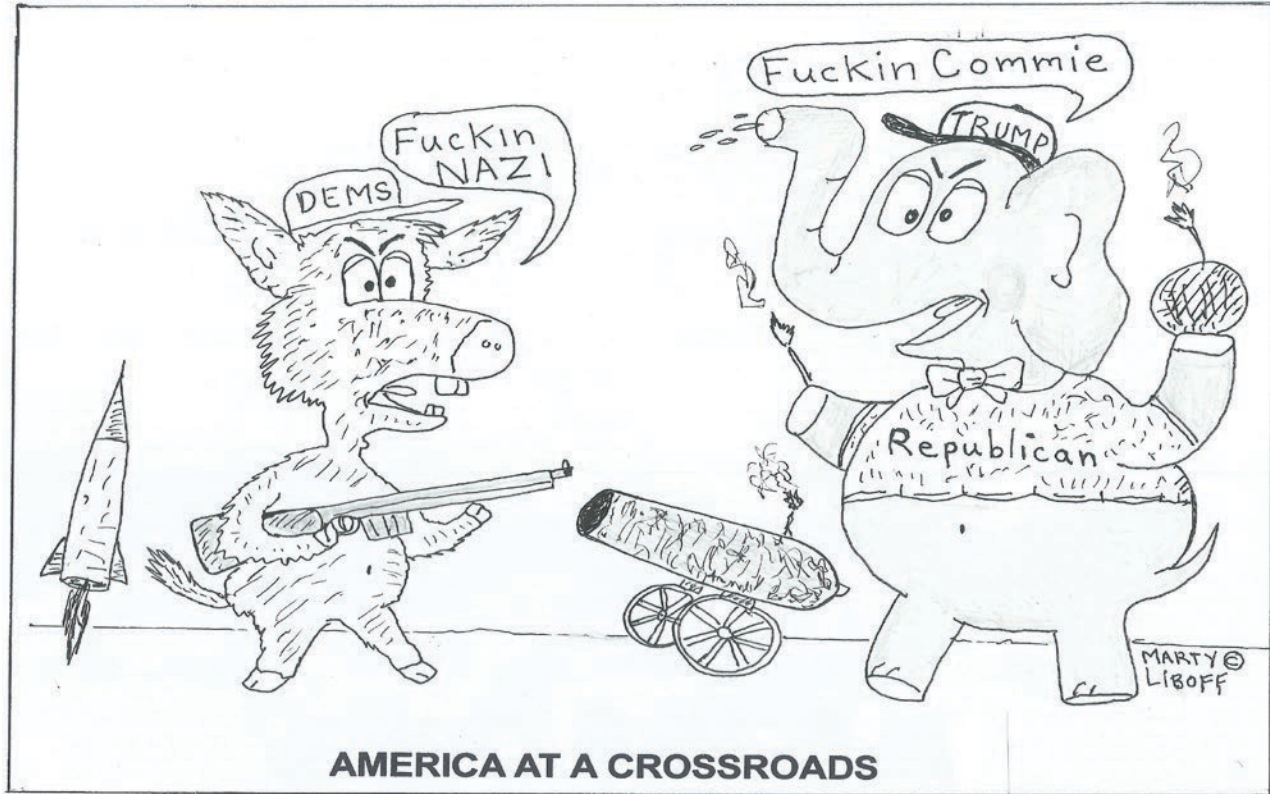
Now, after midnight
While I am returning home
From the hospital alone
I see you smiling at me
In all your confusion.
I say: "Third time lucky"
And cry in the wind.

February 15, 2023

A Poem I Didn't Write

by Mark Lipman

There's a poem I didn't write
about train derailments
and banks collapsing
tumbling over like a bridge
with rusted pylons that fell
right into our drinking water
because I didn't know
whether I should call it
he or she.
There's a poem I didn't write
about world peace
about the chance we had
when the walls of an apartheid state
came down, because it never did,
it just went higher,
as we marched in the streets
for more missile sales for peace.
There's a poem I didn't write
about another mass shooting
encouraged by politicians
blaming the uterus
for the collapse of civilization,
while we cheered on drone strikes
as a kinder, gentler way
to steal the world's resources.
There's a poem I didn't write
about a dog gnawing
on a child's arm
while the cop kept repeating
"Stop resisting," for the cameras,
as I came to realize
that cats are better
for the simple fact
that they never worked
for the police.
There's a poem I didn't write
for an honest politician,
because looking left and right,
I just couldn't find one,
whether the excuse was told
through willful ignorance
or an outright lie,
in the end it made no difference,
the poor still died on the streets.
There's a poem I didn't write
about the day we finally woke up
and realized that other poor people,
regardless of where they were born,
are not our enemies,
that the billionaires
and their cronies
were the only ones
that felt our rage.
I didn't write that poem,
but I tell you,
my pen is ready.

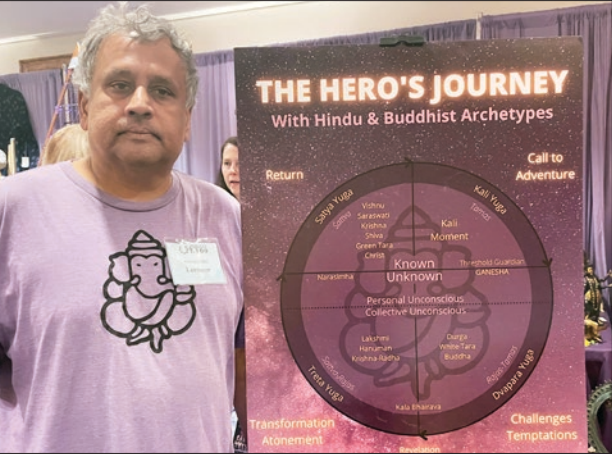


What the heck is a Conscious Life Expo?

By Enyaj Pitchford

Having found myself in a state of transformative change, where my three children are grown, my income has vanished and my savings are negligent, I’ve discovered that going to an EXPO can present a plethora of unexpected opportunities and inspiration to create one’s own enterprise. Recently I revisited one of my favorite events. Every year, in the first weekend of February, at the swanky Hilton Hotel by the LAX, illuminated creatures of all persuasions gather with their wares and wisdom at the Conscious Life Expo. It is quite the gala of the New Age marketing; the fashions are exquisite, original and oft over the top, but always fun and awe inspiring. I defy anyone who claims these people of healing persuasion and prophesy are “phony”. They believe in what they say and do and offer. If you don’t, that’s your right. But don’t be the spoiler of this uplifting, festive menagerie of knowledge outside of your history books and tic tok presentations! For those philosophical and conspiracy seekers, or curious about crystal revelations, UFO encounters, meditation techniques, brain wave enhancement and manipulation, and seers of a cure of any physical, psychological, spiritual or emotional relief and understanding, seek no further. You have found your tribe! There is something for everyone here and it’s all with good vibrant company. I am never disappointed and always meet a new group of delightful people, who know how to enjoy themselves. There are endless aisles of wares; many of which you’ve never imagined existing but now you know you need it. Frankly, I never get to see the entire place, as I always meet some interesting people that I want to spend a lot of time with and would need an entire second weekend to finish looking around. The lobby offers an ongoing musical venue and dancing throughout the day , late into the evening. The raw talent exudes from every inch of this event. And it’s good energy!

I’ll share a few favorites. Gabi Lima IG @mandalite_soul had her brilliant, fluid, colorful and skillfully rendered mandala paintings, some centered around a mirror. They were as inspiring as she was! I enjoy sacred geometry artwork, yet these works are unique in their bright yet original color schemes and fluidity of application. They bore a fresh, natural energy that is often absent in these skillful renderings. Then I stopped by Isabella Philly, with her wide brimmed pointy hat, of the californiawitches.com and sat a “spell” with her and all the unique products. A sweet woman who wants to normalize the natural world as part of our daily, healing routine. My favorite lecturer/ story teller is Manoj, the Hindu Murtis dealer. A Murti is a statue of one of the many Hindu gods and goddesses. I’ve been told there are over 250,000 but have not confirmed this with the erudite Manoj, so don’t quote me. I always think of them all as the many aspects of the great Source of all Creation, great and small. And in our pantheon of great knowledge with limited understanding, poor humble human beings do their best to explain certain psychological, astrological



and physiological phenomena of our experience of being a Spiritual being in a material, finite vehicle called the body and our quest to worship an unseen all powerful being. Quite a trip, this being a human! Especially , if one considers the aspect of reincarnation, that starts out from a mineral, atom,cell, amoe-ba,bacteria, plant, insect animal...something like

that, until through the eons of time you are formed into a human being. And that’s where consciousness truly begins! Manoj takes one on a hero/heroine journey,through a series of inquiries, to discover the avatar or murti for you! For me, it was meditating Hanuman, the blissful servant who does without doing, whom I adore, yet secretly hope I don't get too used to the life of a celibate, which me and my vibrant murti currently share! Lord help me!

I tried a few meditation techniques with head-phones emitting sound and radio frequencies, but can’t say it really moved me. Maybe it wasn’t the place for me to do that. Others seemed transformed. Entered rooms of people in bliss from a meditation that didn’t engage me, while others seemed fully blissed out. I think I like to meditate alone, these days. I tried to see the obligatory psychic. Everyone was raving about Bashar,who actually is channeled by the nephew of the legendary songwriter Paul Anka, Darryl Anka. Unfortunately, I was online for the event and then had to use the restroom and when I returned the hall was jammed with people going around the bend. They were handing out numbers to limit those that could enter. Not wanting to replace Bashar's super eager fans, I asked questions to those waiting in line. One woman flies all over the world, she’s from Ohio, to hear what Bashar will say. She’s convinced he always says something amazing and relevant and has been consistently doing so for the decades she’s been following him. Other’s seemed equally convinced and have been attending his appearances several times. Well, Bashar, wherever you are, you have quite a fan base! Here’s a couple of quotes I got from him online: “Surrender is not giving up something. True surrender is the total acceptance of yourself. Just be who you are, it will see you through.” “You are already what you think you need.” “Do not rely on the outer world as your measuring stick for your own spiritual growth. Rely on your response to the outer world to determine how much you have grown.” “The first step towards true enlightenment is to lighten up on yourself.” “The true Secret of the Law of Attraction is not how to learn to attract what you prefer, it's how to learn to let go of what you don't, so that you can let in what is trying to get to you automatically - by definition. That's the true Secret and that's why it's effortless. It's just about letting go and letting in. It’s not about having to learn to do something you're not already doing.” I find that rather encouraging; I don’t have to do anything but alter perception. Just get rid of things and thoughts that do not serve me. Worth a try! Thanks Bashar; I like this guy!

I then went to check out the talent show. I met one of the authors and presenters of the UFO question at the talent show. Alan Steinfeld, author of “Making Contact” also does stand up and just tore up the audience with all his unique New Age humor, I haven’t heard since I read Swami Beyondananda in the 90’s. The talent show was put on by the illustrious and supremely fashionable -she outdid herself this year, as her shoes and outfit matched her cute boxes of luggage she rocked and rolled by- Dr. Sarah Larson. What an event she gathered and hosted in her sophisticated suave style! Amazing humor, spoken word and a whole ensemble of hip hop dancers, put on by Christophe Mendy of Paris. It was hard to But it was hard to choose the best that night, as the comedy and spoken word was off the hook, but Christophe left happily with \$500!

My next goal was to attend a UFO conference. This is one of the highlights for a lot of people here. Now, I must admit, I did not go in there as a believer, even though I certainly have seen such a phenomenon. I expected a bunch of talk of little green men and what they told them about the end of the world or something to that nature. But Mr. UFO himself, Alan Steinfeld spoke elegantly and intelligently with two colleagues, well established in this field, beginning with their early knowledge of remote viewing. That’s a kind of meditation technique where you see the unseen. One of the men there actually wrote to NASA about seeing pyramids on Mars and NASA responded by sending him a previously unpublished picture of that very site, way back in the early 70’s. Alan’s book “Making Contact” which is a compilation of experts in the



field from the US and UK defense office, to Harvard,and a long list of interesting people, including Bashar, But the lecture was focused on a Universal Consciousness that is beginning to recognize human beings as one of them. And as Nicolas Tesla puts it, “it’s all vibrational energy.” What was delightfully unexpected were not the answers given but the questions posed. The UFO and Extraterrestrial were viewed from the angle of new levels of consciousness, arising within us. What famed author and professor of quantum physics, Amit Goswami (“The Self -Aware Universe”) wrote in his book review captured my feelings: “the authors finally ask the right questions: What will human beings realize in finding themselves to be part of a larger cosmos? Are we dealing with beings of a different non-material order?. Humanity has to evolve from rational to intuitive beings for this momentous day to arrive.” He then goes on to extol “Making Contact” as “exciting, readable to everyone with an open mind”

And last but not least , I must give a shout out to Zak, the sacred stone deliverer, aka Captain Native America. Since he was a child his Native American grandparents asserted that he had the gift of bringing stones back to Nature, to a sacred site. At the expo, he dresses in his Captain America costume, but by his appearance, it’s easy to surmise this is definitely a Native American Captain! He is a dear man, who makes a living finding the source of EMT waves in your home. EMT waves, by the way, are caused when an electronic field comes in contact with a magnetic field. There’s plenty of research on the Internet on how these waves can cause headaches, brain fog and worse! He has a small electronic device that tracks them and knows ways to offset the problems they cause. Brilliant! He has a pile of stones he gives away at the expo, that he dug up in the Los Angelino mountains, and they are Indigenous to that particular area. He explained to me the significance of a stone; it is the first sign of civilization moving out of the trees. People had a stone to throw, as their first weapon, to scare the animals away and to dominate some of the landscape as their own. It’s the most primal tool of freedom of movement on the planet, and it mitigates the Spiritual loss of aggression that has been done in its name, to bring a sense of peace back to the planet, and our civilized world. A lot of people dismiss what seems naive and frivolous, but to me, it’s innocent and vital to return to the path of peace and harmony on the Earth. Zac is a Super Hero of Indigenous cultural understanding and history. He refers to his mission as his Native American Entanglement. You can reach Zac at 415-828-3335.

So I want to invite you to join this trippy experience come next February. It will certainly brighten up your winter day and open new doorways in your mind. Definitely get you thinking about worlds outside that may have never entered your thoughts before, and that’s a good thing!

Toxic Bro Code: TBC

What is it?

It’s a bro code that we’ve recently added the word toxic to. Much has changed socially, compounded with the 3 year plague-demic. TBC is eventually exposed and healing may begin when people are ready to share their injuries and suffering. It takes ownership and honesty.

Add another layer of insulation and protections, the Internet maintains Toxic Bro Code and supports further harm. Healing community of TBC is to have Elders that advise, a safe space to share and the time dedicated to share, nothing is accomplished in haste and rush.

Toxic Bro Code, TBC: is a commitment between bros and the identifiable narcissists that supports theft, rape, domestic violence, emotional, mental, spiritual abuse, and physical violence... TBC harms so many as it feeds, nurtures and enables misogyny and patriarchy. Toxic Bro Code does not know and may ignore the rules of engagement, especially the 2023 updated rules of ‘consent’ when socializing.

The toxicity is visible and known when there’s police reports and arrests made, if ever. The toxic bro code is can be disrupted, temporarily, until bros have reconvened. They allow time to pass to pick up their habits of lies, theft and reconstruct their new plans in new circles.

The bro code has changed with the times to toxic and because the internet supports campaigns of liable, slander and fraud, much time is spent deflecting and redirecting communities’ attention with a heap of lies. The redirection helps hide the actual truth. A Toxic Bro Code Campaigner, TBCC, may spend much time causing division and confu-

sion in community while building supply for their personal gain and needs; they enjoy campaigning heavily with community politics. Community falls over themselves to protect TBCC and do not make time to discern or investigate, taking everything in at face value. There’s a pattern, a M.O. and even if these are known harms and as incidents are exposed, the toxicity is protected and creates a bleep in their normal operations.

The circle of Toxic Bro Code in Venice has supported many who have thieved and a few who are known to be rapists. Venice Narcissist Club - is a community of toxic bro code and it’s seemingly falling apart. For the last 12 years there have been too few elected and seated who do not see Venice as a commodity and a place to be profited from. There are too few who see Her as a creative and historically rich community by the sea. Too few in our community know of the Black, Indigenous, Japanese and Latino history of Venice.

What’s the worse scenario with TBC?

Campaigns led by People of Color who further nurture White supremacy and colonization by abusing and hurting POC community.

Now read this again and switch TBCC- for Mean Girl Circles

The socialization on social media isn’t social. It’s communications with filters, memes and emojis.

How to Remedy:

Toxicity is a known factor to socialization... not healthy for anyone, only truth can heal that hurt.... Bittersweet truth.

Men call out and help your bros be wholesome and healthy... it takes time and it takes truth. Break the cycle of B.S.

The BAR CENTER AT THE BEACH

The new BAR Center at the Beach has been open for a few months and I have been going there. No, it's not a bar and you can't get a beer or whiskey there. It is a Jewish Community Center. Monday through Friday they have senior lunches and classes for all seniors. Many of the members are of different religions and backgrounds and you don't have to be Jewish. It used to be the Israel Levin Senior Center but it is now a community center for all ages. The building was built and is owned by the Jewish Federation

The senior programs are run by Jewish Family Services. Noa is our wonderful new director. She is helped by Janet and a great staff and volunteers. Seniors can enjoy lunch and enjoy various classes during the week. Meals are kosher so don't expect a ham sandwich or shrimp. Classes are free and are a lot of fun.

CLASS LIST:

Mondays

10 AM Fit and Fun with Shifra

1:30 PM Arthritis Foundation Exercise with Phyllis

Tuesdays

1 PM Dance with Noa

Wednesdays

10 AM Yoga with Allyn

11 AM Art, Puzzles & Games with Noa

1:30 PM Arthritis Foundation Exercise with Phyllis

Thursdays

11 AM Therapeutic Movement with Jenny

Fridays

9:15 AM Movement & Dance with Noa

10 AM Fit and Fun with Shifra

11:15 AM Shabbat Gathering

In addition there are parties, movies and lectures. They have been having a great klezmer band with Gustavo, Freddy and me. There are also various singers and musicians entertaining us old farts. There are a lot of good times for all!

The new BAR Center will also have other activities in the future for people of all ages. It is at 201 Ocean Front Walk, Venice. marty liboff

* You Are Here

Rhubarb

ACROSS

- 1 Brit's hydros, in America
5 Sarcastic laugh syllable
8 Mini bar order
11 Advanced
12 ___ way
13 Hotel convenience
14 Far south?
16 Brasserie list
17 * Those with no "air", according to a '92 film title
18 Salon options
19 * Local heir to 6-Down
21 Brown shade
24 One way to begin your commute
25 Bone: Prefix
27 Win a rematch
29 Pound sound
30 Cub bearers, in Spain
31 "Volare (___ Blu Dipinto Di Blu)" 1958 hit
32 Disney doe
34 Ultimate word in USB
36 "Saving Private Ryan" craft: Abbr.
37 Spanish 101 word
39 Turn red, perhaps
41 Comme une jeune fille
43 1988 self-titled C&W album
44 Clothing line
46 Apples or pears
47 * "Wizard of Venice"
50 What you'll do on Adderall and/or Viagra
51 Animals with pouches

- 55 Bristol beat
56 Instruments for Cannonball Adderley and Charlie Parker
57 37-Across homograph, or a Cockney toast opener
58 Persian poet for whom one of Beyoncé and Jay-Z's children is named
59 Opposite of 41-Across, in some shops
60 Suffix akin to -trix
61 Time
62 English word with Guinness record for most definitions: Pl.

DOWN

- 1 Cookout side
2 Part of an Asian capital's name
3 Start to freeze?
4 * Post
5 "Is there a Dislike button!?"
6 * Something etched on a local antique?
7 Parks' partner
8 Mexican once ranked as world's richest man
9 Lingering sensation
10 Workers whose numbers are declining?
12 * Rome was not built in a day... but Venice was born in this Roman year

1	2	3	4			5	6	7				8	9	10
11					12							13		
14				15							16			
17									18					
				19				20						
21	22	23				24					25			26
27					28		29				30			
31				32		33		34		35		36		
37			38		39		40		41		42			
43					44			45		46				
	47			48					49					
50							51					52	53	54
55						56								
57						58					59			
60						61					62			

- 13 Found first on a ghost's to-do list
15 Behave violently, again
16 Second City train inits.
18 Take action
20 Artfully persuasive in speech
21 What you might call a sugar farmer
22 They're not glutton-free
23 Parties
26 ___ Park, Colorado
28 Finishes
33 McCartney reportedly wrote this classic melody in a dream (if he dreamed en español)

- 35 MRSA risk
38 Woodland deities
40 Silencer?
42 Boot features
45 Grindr request?
48 Peach or plum
49 Race invented about 800,000 years before its time
50 Barrie baddie
52 Turning point
53 In the middle: Abbr.
54 Sound from
56 Rudy's coach in "Rudy"

Solution:

<https://wp.me/pixww-2Dg>

Grito de los Dos de Dos – *continued from page 6*
desires. In a world ablaze with hate and hurt, they give us words that can be weapons for struggle, that can provide ways to overcome fear, that teach us, as Guevara says, to stoke the fires of hope and despair and to kiss the flames of acceptance, redemption and salvation.” -George Lipsitz

Hailed as “the best political poet in America” and “poet laureate of struggle” by acclaimed historians and journalists, Matt Sedillo has spoken at over a hundred campuses across the United States and on three continents and has received The Joe Hill Labor Poetry Award (2017) and The Dante's Laurel (2023). He is the author of “Mowing Leaves of Grass”(2019) and “City on the Second Floor” (2022) both on FlowerSong Press. More on Sedillo at www.mattsedillo.com

Rubén Funkahuatl Guevara is a multifaceted native Angelino Chicano rock & soul musician, singer, songwriter and bandleader with Ruben And The Jets (co-founded with Frank Zappa), record producer of Chicano rock and roll en Espanol compilations, performance artist, poet and playwright, fiction writer, author and activists. His memoir, “Confessions Of A Radical Chicano Doo-Wop Singer”, (University of California Press, 2018). Guevara was a finalist for the 2019 International Latino Book Awards for Best Autobiography in English. In 2021, the KCET/PBS arts and culture program, Artbound, premiered “Con Safos” a documentary based on six decades of his work. It was nominated for an Emmy and won LA Press Club awards (Lively and inspiring” -LA Times). More on Guevara at www.tantrikfunk.net.

CALENDAR
beyondbaroque.org

Obscenely Poetic: Poetry & Jazz
live at Beyond Baroque
Friday, March 31 7:30 PM PDT
Beyond Baroque presents an evening of diatonic feels in rhyming verse & auxiliary prose. Inspired by Rhys Langston's first track in Grapefruit Radio (published by Black Market Poetry), this powerhouse line-up features three poets based in Los Angeles: multi-media artist Rhys Langston, drummer/spoken-word poet A.K. Toney & the magic of Tori Gesualdo. Enjoy the poetry with a jam-out performance by The Cesar Hernandez Quintet.
Free Writers: A Collection of Our Truths
Saturday, April 1 2:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque
Join us for a reading with the writers of the Francisco Homes, a collection of transitional homes for formerly incarcerated communities

Three Hundred Streets of Venice California
Saturday, April 1 7:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque
In this extraordinary collection, Tom Laichas is our Vigil, guiding us through Venice, California, and its ancient namesake. Throughout Laichas shape-shifts from resident, to historian, to social critic, to ghost, moving among one neighborhood's heavens and hells. A work of poetry, prose, and memoir, Three Hundred Streets of Venice is masterful, provocative, and unforgettable.

My California: A Reading with
CA Poet Laureate, Lee Herrick
Saturday, April 8 7:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque
Join us for a night of poetry as Beyond Baroque welcomes Lee Herrick to Los Angeles. Last year Herrick was appointed California Poet Laureate by Governor Gavin Newsom. He is the author of poetry books Scar and Flower, Gardening Secrets of the Dead, and This Many Miles from Desire. A Fresno native, Herrick is a professor at both Fresno City College, and University of Reno, Lake Tahoe. As Poet Laureate he plans to improve access to poetry and the arts in communities where people might not have ready access to them.

A Reading with The Santa Monica Review
Saturday, April 8, 3:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque
West Coast lit mag Santa Monica Review celebrates its spring 2023 issue with readings by four contributors: Short story writers Kristen Leigh Schwarz and Gregory Tower, poet and novelist Kareem Tayyar, and writer, critic and fiction writer Yxta Maya Murray. SMR editor Andrew Tonkovich emcees. Free copy of the journal with admission.

Kissing in the Cold
Friday, April 14th, 8:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque
How to cope with death and death in its many forms? How to embrace the constant eb and flow of an influx life? And how to embrace the fact that the only unchangeable variable in this world is change? Wu re-collected her own past work, transferred the emotional energy, and headed into the studio to start moving and writing.

"OUR" Art and Music Expo!!
Saturday, April 15, 2:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque
Join us for a one-day festival featuring iconic artists & musicians of Venice. There will be punk, reggae, & jazz! Music performances by: Cycotyc Youth, No Reaction!, Sick Sense, Who Cares, and Doug Mug & The Thugs. Food & craft vendors will be tabling on-site.

Visit their website for more
www.beyondbaroque.org

ARE YOU HUNGRY?
FREE FOOD AT VENICE BEACH

(Times and places occasionally change)
*Hope for the Hearts of the Homeless- Pam & Joel and friends. Coffee, pastries, snacks. Thursday & Sunday around 9:45 am. On the Ocean Front Walk near Ozone Ave.
*You Matter- Michael's picnic with friends. Tue. & Thur. around 11 am. North border of Venice on the Ocean Front Walk near Ozone Ave.
*Oasis Network Inc. with Dan & friends- various groceries, bread, fruit, vegetables. Sat. & Sun. around 9am. Ocean Front Walk by Dudley Ave.
*Venice Equity Alliance- Bread, fruit, & vegetables. Wed. 12:45pm. 132 Brooks Ave.
*St. Joseph Center- their clients, to-gomeals. Mon. 10-11:50, Tues. & Thurs. 12-2:50. 204 Hampton Dr.. Also weekly food if you register at (310)396-6468 ext.313
* St. Mark Church Free Food Pantry
Every Saturday from 11am to 1pm
940 Coeur d'Alene Ave, Venice 90291 (entrance Garfield Av) Vegetables, fruits and other food items. No registration needed. Drive-thru and walk-in options. Call St. Mark Parish at 310-821-5058 or email us at loavesandfishes@stmarkvenice.com
* Venice Family Clinic - Free bag of fruits and vegetables. Every 3rd Wed. of the month. 10 AM to 12 PM. 589 Rose Ct.

The Trip Bar
2101 Lincoln Blvd, Santa Monica
https://www.tripsantamonica.com/calendar
Tue 4/18 The Painkillers and Mark Leggett
Tue 4/25 Peter Demian and Suzy Williams
Mondays, Open Mike
Unurban Cafe
3301 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica

RIP Butch Mudbone – Butch lived in Venice for many years and leaves behind his ex-wife Cheryl, son Chris, and many friends. In Venice, he performed solo, with his Blues band, with Uncle Bill Crawford, and with the Canaligators. Legend! Memphis Tribute: Butch Mudbone: Native Blues Legend The global community lost a beautiful soul and a great player and contributor when Beale Street legend Butch Mudbone was killed in a multi-car accident on January 2 (2023). Butch, Bear Clan, was a Sundancer for 16 years, a Road Man for the Native American Church (NAC) and leader of other ceremonies. Butch was always a rebel, fiercely opposed to war and occupation of Native Land, and marched to the beat of his own drum. When he married his wife Caroline, he already had one beautiful son, Christopher Mance and the couple later had two more children: Zyanya Hawk, and Willie EagleDancer. He also leaves three grandchildren, David, Carter, and Marilyn. Butch instilled in his children a love for their culture; and his eldest son, Chris is a proud father and the founder of Born x Raised; his daughter Zyanya is a community organizer and jingle dancer; and his youngest son Willie is an amazing athlete and jokester like his father. Butch was an amazingly talented blues guitarist. He came to Memphis with his young family on a school bus in 1993, and played a set at Proud Mary's that night, as part of the old Sun Studio Revue. He quickly became a popular fixture on Beale Street, leading his own bands, and working as a sideman for other Memphis Blues artists. Butch wrote and performed true Blues music throughout the U.S. and many parts of the world. He opened shows for B.B. King, James Brown, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, James Cotton, Jesse Ed Davis, and Professor Longhair among other global blues icons. He also played with many struggling and rising local musicians. Last year, the Memphis Blues Society honored Butch with a well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award.

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Los Angeles Tenants Union
West Side Local Meetings
1st and 3rd Wednesday; 7-8:30pm
Oakwood Recreation Center
767 California Ave., Venice, CA 90291
Casework de casos: 213-986-8266
Sindicato de Inquilinos de Los Angeles
Reuniones de la Sección Oeste
1er y 3er miércoles; 7-8:30pm
westsidelocal.latu@gmail.com
424-272-1618

What Do You Think Re: Eviction Moratorium
By Laura Lok (L.A. Tenants Union - Westside Local)
How long will the eviction moratorium last? Homelessness is baked into our system. What do you think are viable ways - at the grassroots level - to keep people engaged and qualified to afford housing? Perhaps the question is how can we, the people, help create a more fair and just system that includes safe and clean housing for the everyday person? Stress, lack of education and/or resources, drug abuse and mental health issues are rampant among those who are homeless. Tell us what you think at: westsidelatu@gmail.com www.latenantsunion.org

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211 is a Joke in Our Town

by Pat Raphael

Imagine a trapeze artist attempting a high stakes maneuver, jumping off a swing, and not having another swinger ready for the catch, after the aerial acrobatics. To the neighbors on the sidewalk, there was something familiar, in knowing that if the weather ever gets real bad, just go hang out by the skatepark in the late afternoons, and wait for the shelter bus to pick up and take a ride to the Armory. There you would get a hot meal, and a hot shower (shower shoes a plus), and if you're the type who can fall asleep around other people, a warm dry bed. But somewhere in the halls of power, a high stakes big switch is being maneuvered, and to raise the degree of difficulty, this maneuver is being attempted during historically cold and rainy weather (throw in a few hail days too), where demand for shelter services will be at all time highs. Remove the net.

All this is happening as new leadership in the executive is promising results, and our new council representative is feeling pressure to deliver on the number one campaign issue that rode her into power. Here is where the upbeat messaging from the PR managers is diverging from the lived reality on the ground. The Council District's Homeless Czar rolled out 211 with much fanfare -- he describes a twenty minute wait time, and since the Armory is no longer available, you'll get a motel voucher where, according to Traci Park at the BridgeHouse Zoom conference on March 22, these vouchers are for up to a two-year stay.

Wow. Sounds great. Just what my neighbor hanging out under the 7-11 awning might need. On Thursday, March 9th 5:25 PM, two days before the "atmospheric rivers" that the weather guy keeps harping on was due to hit, my initial call to 211. I spent about fifteen minutes on hold, then a Community Resource Agent came on the line and did her best to explain to me how shelter beds get activated. The city is broken down into zones, and if I am calling from a zone where beds are available, then I would be directed where to go, or transportation can be arranged. But if no shelter beds are available then motel vouchers would get activated. All this is being done at the direction of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. But before I could get my hopes up or get a question in, I was quickly told that all shelter beds are full and there are also no more motel beds available, city wide. But a glimmer of hope came at the end of that first call. The Agent told me that if the rain is not coming down right now, there might be resources that are not activated yet, and that I should call back in a few days to check if the rain brings more resources online.

Then comes a drenching weekend of cold and rain. During those rainy days, I did not see my neighbor for whom I made the initial call, so I never followed up as the Agent told me, and can not say if response improved during that March 10-11 rain storm.

Tony! Toni! Toné! singing "It Never Rains in Southern California" while another week with days of pour-down rain. On March 14, I see my homie with a blanket draped over a cart behind Staples just as the rain starts to drizzle. I told him the results of the last call, and I explained that if LAHSA releases motel vouchers he might be able to get one. "Anything's better than this rain, bro. Make the call"

I called at 9:48 AM, "all circuits are busy" I called again. Nothing. Hang up and call right back. "all circuits are busy". At 9:51 I called two more times, getting the same message. Then at 9:54 AM, my heart leapt with excitement as I got a ring tone instead of that busy message. Little did I know I was only just at the beginning of an all-morning long saga.

The voice prompts when calling 211 does some of the initial triage. Once it determined that I am not seeking shelter with children, and this is not a domestic violence call, it offers a website to go to, and for me to file a service request form, and I would get a call back from a Community Resource Agent. Going online was not an option for me, so I chose to stay on the line and wait for the next available agent.

During the rain, calling from a cell phone, my wait time was over two hours and 15 minutes. I am fortunate to have ready access to charging for my phone, but imaging my phone at 20 percent.... I could wait all morning, and as soon as the agent picks up, my phone goes dead.

But even then, finally getting an answer after over two hours waiting, things did not get much better. The next available agent came on the line and told me that the long wait was due to the high volume of calls seeking service. I didn't want to feel like after all the wait, I wasn't getting my time with the agent, but really there wasn't much more to be said once the agent told me that all the shelter beds were full, and also all the motel rooms from the voucher program were also full. I asked her about the Oakwood rec center, which sometimes is opened as an inclement weather emergency shelter. She told me that this was not on her list of possible shelters, and that it was not up to her what resources are made available. Her job was simply to get on the line and tell me no beds or vouchers were available.

Once more a glimmer of hope as I was hanging up: I can register my telephone number, then I would get a text alert if something becomes available. Now I start wondering if something is better than nothing... especially when that something is just a text to tell you there is nothing.

The optimist in me hopes against hope. I registered and immediately began receiving text alerts at all hours of day and night. All together, a total of eight texts over four days. No-Reply texts with slightly varying verbiage saying the same thing: "Do not reply, shelter beds may be available, but we will contact you if you are next in line. No motel vouchers are available". Some even go further and say, "you have 1 hour from initial outreach to respond to secure a spot". Wow... does that mean I am close to getting a bed? Nope. Never did a text say anything more than nothing is available.

Having gone through all this myself, it is clear that the 211 system needs more humans available to answer calls. Of course some days may need more help than others, and a responsive, nimble system will understand how to up its capacity when demand peaks. I wonder if it ever dawned on LAHSA and the non-profit that runs the 211 call center to tap into their clients to expand their pool of candidates. Substantial outreach should easily be able to identify the unhoused who can be trained to do this job. Good people who care exist, they are not unicorns. It just takes an intentional effort to find and hire these candidates. And in hiring these workers who care, people on the ground being served will find an empathetic agent on the other end who intimately knows what you are going through. Of course agents can't just care and not have city backing of resources for them to offer, so the intermediate and long term aim should be increasing capacity. We want when a drugged out tweaker feels like they've had enough of running the streets, for there to actually have help available.

Then, just as fast as they started coming, the texts stopped. No outreach agent ever made contact or any follow-up inquiry to know of the shelter needs or my status in the elements. I guess if that two and a half hours didn't beat it out of me, I can call back again and try to restart the process. But really, why would I put myself through all that? I know rain comes and goes. Most of the unhoused, have just resigned to fend for themselves... maybe catch a spot under the library porch? If the 41.18 patrol doesn't come through in the middle of the night during the rain (like what happened at the handball courts at 3am during the rain).... maybe, just maybe, this cold night might include some sleep.

