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Above: Eclectic Ave., by Frank Strasser - read the artist interview on page 11

Local Coastal Plan to Become Law of Land for Venice

By Greta Cobar

The Venice coastal zone is about to lose the direct oversight of the California Coastal Commission, and be placed under the jurisdiction of the city of Los Angeles under a proposed Local Coastal Plan. It was one of Mike Bonin's campaign promises when he ran for City Council, and is now one of the main goals of his office.

Our last encounter with the California Coastal Commission, on June 13 2013, involved our community's united fight against the city of Los Angeles's proposed Overnight Parking Districts, now famously known as OPDs. At the end of that hearing the Coastal Commissioners unanimously voted against the city's proposed parking restrictions in Venice and publicly stated that Venice is being "short-handed by the city of L.A."

The city of L.A.'s lawsuit against the Coastal Commission concerning OPDs in Venice was dropped January 13. On that day Councilperson Bonin released an open letter to the community stating: "A far more pressing, far more comprehensive, and far more real parking issue for our neighborhood is the need for daytime preferential parking districts."

"The certification of a Local Coastal Plan, which would allow our city to create parking and transportation solutions that meet Venice's needs" is how Bonin is planning on establishing daylight preferential parking districts in Venice after the Coastal Commission denied the city's similar requests on three previous occasions.

Subsequently, a January 19 Los Angeles Times article by Martha Grove quoted Bonin as saying that

by pushing for a Local Coastal Plan for Venice he is aiming to get "Venice out from under the thumb of the Coastal Commission."

"I don't believe he said that. I don't think it's true," Chuck Posner, Coastal Program Analyst with the California Coastal Commission, told the Beachhead regarding Bonin's statements.

A Local Coastal Plan for Venice "would have the same policies as the California Coastal Act, without any recognizable differences," Posner stated in a phone conversation with the Beachhead.

In order to establish permit parking in the coastal zone, the number of spaces allotted to permits needs to be replaced by new parking spaces on a scale of one-to-one. This measure is part of the California Coastal Act and it would have to be part of any Local Coastal Plan as well. We all know that there is no space for additional parking spots in Venice, and how Bonin is planning on going around that constrict is very unclear. Improved public transportation always sounds good, but Los Angeles has historically been lethargic in making that a reality.

"City law does not currently align with state law and does not reflect the Coastal Act. It makes no sense to have that type of conflict, as it creates a tremendous amount of aggravation. A Local Coastal Plan would make city law comply with the Coastal Act and with state law," David Ewing told the Beachhead.

"Los Angeles is doing what they should have been doing," Posner told the Beachhead. "The goal of the California Coastal Act is for every coastal zone to have its own Local Coastal Plan," Posner continued.

— Continued on page 10

1414 MAIN TOO MUCH FOR LUPC!

By Krista Schwimmer

As California experiences one of its worst droughts in over 156 years, creating dangerous conditions for wildfires, a different kind of fire is burning in the neighborhoods of Venice. This fire is kindled by avarice and arrogance. This fire is driven by rapid, sometimes rogue, real estate development. Whether the development project stems from a misuse of Small Lot Subdivisions or, as in the case of the proposed 1414 Main Street Project, a twisted interpretation of California's SB 1818, the result is the same: destruction of the unique landscape of Venice. Luckily, it is not too late to meet these fires with another equally powerful fire, one kindled by outrage and assembly.

Such community outrage was evident in the January 15 meeting of the Land and Use Planning Committee (LUPC) at Oakwood Recreation Center. The turnout was so large that everyone was moved to the gymnasium, delaying the start of a night packed with serious building agendas. Before addressing one of the most contentious development projects, 1414 Main, the chair opened the floor for five minutes of public comment. Four individuals spoke out against Small Lot Subdivisions (SLS's) in Venice. Peggy Kennedy said that there is a motion before the city committee run by Tom Labonge to look into this matter. She reminded LUPC that the Coastal and Venice Specific Plans (VSP) supersede the general city plans, as well as that to qualify for a three lot subdivision, the lot needed to be at least 5,500 square feet. She and Ivonne Guzman, also concerned about SLSs and the Mansionization of Venice, said the community was not being notified

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Dear Beachhead,

I'm happy to say that our annual reading of Moby Dick, on the beach went fabulously. We had a good crowd and great readers who kept the book moving. We actually finished the book on Sunday at 8:00 pm, a great record of 26 hours. This year, along with the reading, we also presented a showing at Beyond Baroque of the 1956 movie "Moby Dick," starring Gregory Peck. The audience loved it. But we couldn't have enjoyed the success without your generous contributions and sponsorships and we are grateful and thankful to you. We look for your continued support in 2014.

Sincerely,
Tim Rudnick, Director, Venice Oceanarium

Dear Beachhead,

A feature article in your last issue of the Beachhead purports to show that our local airport (Santa Monica) has somehow been a "bad neighbor". It fails to make its case because the arguments are based on faulty data, falsehoods, and other myth-information. The argument presented goes like this: the airport only serves the purpose of a tiny minority of pilots living in Santa Monica; the airport is a danger to the community; it is no use to anyone else--so let's make it into a park.

The author says that there are some 300+ licensed pilots living in Santa Monica and that this shows the facility is being operated for the use of a privileged few. This conclusion is bogus. The airport is used by people from all over Southern California and the country, and from all over the globe, every day. Aircraft and pilots based there are but a portion of the airport's users in any given time period. More local pilots live in Los Angeles than in Santa Monica. The airport is a major general aviation transportation hub for the western United States. Some of the wealth and wellbeing of Venice come directly from it. Santa Monica City has estimated that more than 200 million dollars come in yearly just to them.

To bolster her contention that the airport is physically dangerous, the author cites the now infamous list attributed to Zina Joseph, President of the Friends of Sunset Park homeowner's group. This list is very deceptive and can easily lead a casual reader to erroneous conclusions. The list is a raw, unsorted compendium gleaned from the National Transportation Safety Board's database of accidents and/or incidents for approximately the last 30 years that are indexed by the words "Santa Monica". When this list is culled of irrelevant reports such as those that pertain to occurrences in other localities, or merely run-of-the-mill landing mishaps like flat tires, the dramatic conclusions melt away. There are about two incidents involving the surrounding communities every three years, on average. In fact, to the best of anyone's knowledge only **one** person on the ground has died or even been seriously injured in the entire 93 year history of the airport. That is a remarkable safety record, but not at all unusual. A child at Penmar Park is far more at risk from normal playground activities than from any operation at the airport.

The author alleges that there are dangerous amounts of air pollution coming out of the airport but the evidence she offers either does not support her position or is inconclusive. The recent EPA lead study found no levels of lead around the airport neighborhoods anywhere near what is considered unhealthy by the federal government. The so-called "UCLA study" on particulate matter was not university sanctioned and was not conducted by personnel with the specialized training necessary to conduct it. Its conclusions are based on two, one-day samples taken in two separate years and tell us essentially nothing worth knowing. It would be good to know, but one needs to know the true facts, which were not present in the report.

The author opines that the airport premises are not secure. Again, this is simply not the case. There is a dedicated police facility on the airport. Access to the airport is controlled with card keys, and there is practically no crime of any type. I totally disagree about warrantless searches. The fact that airport security does not routinely search planes and passengers makes me feel more secure, as a freedom-loving American citizen, not less.

The substantive issue of noise was dealt with back in 1984 when an aggressive noise abatement program was instituted as part of a legal settlement between the Federal Aviation Administration and the City of Santa Monica. Since that time, no neighbors

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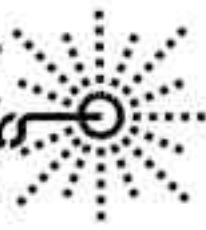
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are routinely subjected to noise levels above 65dbL as measured and monitored by microphones in the vicinity of the runway ends. You can still hear aircraft but their noise levels are now on a par with other sources of noise in the community and pose no danger whatsoever. These noise levels are enforced by robust municipal fines and, or, permanent banishment from the airport, in some instances for "busting" the noise monitors.

The author implies that there must be some sort of calumny towards Venice on the part of the FAA or Santa Monica City in the designation of flight paths. Nothing of the sort is true. Flight paths are designed for best-fit noise abatement and flight safety. The Sunset Park neighborhood is a hill and so, for noise abatement and safety, flights go over Penmar Golf Course to get more distance between the departing aircraft and local homes. Aircraft departing on instrument flight rules follow the runway heading (270*) for procedural safety rules set by the FAA.

Most offensive to me is that the writer ignores three vitally important aspects of the airport in an attempt to show that we would lose nothing of value if it were closed. The first is the role the airport is expected to play during natural disasters similar to the Loma Prieta Earthquake up in San Francisco in 1989. The airport may likely be our only source of relief for needed supplies and medical care. In an emergency this airport can handle large military and civilian cargo aircraft and helicopters. It will be a lifeline for all of us, come the time of need. City and county fire departments routinely stage out of our airport for day-to-day emergencies.

Secondly, the writer doesn't mention the activities of private aircraft flying routinely for the public benefit. Groups like Angel Flight West fly needy people, and sometimes animals, for compassionate need, most often medical, into and out of the Los Angeles area with its many major medical facilities and teaching hospitals. These flights are done by volunteer pilots using their own aircraft, their own time, and bearing all the flight expenses themselves, to help ensure that a fellow citizen gets help. These pilots help mend a big gap in our healthcare net and they do it out of our local airport about 800 times a year. God Bless them.

Thirdly, the airport channels business and money into our communities - parks take money out.

So finally, the author would have us trash all the beneficial things we get from our community airport to speculate on yet another park. And speculation it would be as Santa Monica has said it cannot afford to build a park should they get a grip on the land and I don't doubt that. The last two parks built in Santa Monica came in at over \$6,000,000 an acre. Even all of the out of control development now going on in Santa Monica, could not cover that kind of overhead. The city has tried once already to begin a "Century City West" project at the airport in the late 1980's. They were only foiled when their attempt to develop 37 acres along Airport Avenue into 6, six-story office buildings was to be put before the people by referendum causing the city to shelve the idea until a later date. They will try again.

Sincerely,
Bill Worden

Bonin Mute, County Screws Ballona, Shelly Luce is Fast and Loose

By John Davis

Councilperson Mike Bonin could have made a positive impact on the Ballona Wetlands, but failed to comment on behalf of the City as the County Board of Supervisors voted to approve a Memorandum of Understanding to fast-track a flood control project that would bulldoze all 600 acres of the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve. He probably wants the people who voted for him to believe it is in the County's hands.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas led the County Board of Supervisors to vote for what he called a restoration. Zev Yaroslavsky, who represents Venice, abstained without comment.

Changing the course of Ballona creek will invite flooding rather than preventing it, letting ocean water come closer to homes and businesses. Storms and tidal surges would be brought one step closer, thanks to the Supervisor's thoughtless approval. And it threatens the City of Los Angeles, too. High levees are planned along Fiji Way, Lincoln Blvd, and Jefferson Blvd. that would block existing public views of the wetlands. And if they failed in a flood, we are reminded of Hurricane Katrina and the failure of levees there.

The lower reach of Ballona Creek is a Federal Flood Control Project constructed in 1941 and modified in 1954 under the U.S. Rivers and Harbors Act. In 1998 the U.S. Congress asked the local Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to report back on recommended alterations for the purposes of flood control and the environment, inclusive of the fresh groundwater aquifers found in Ballona, which have been designated as a "Potential Source of Drinking Water" under the State Porter Cologne Act. The proposed project would ruin fresh groundwater resources by inviting saltwater to invade. The County is ignoring the fact that it is the U.S. Congress that must by law approve alterations, not just the local USACE District and the County Supervisors.

The private business behind this mess called itself the Santa Monica Bay Restoration **Foundation** (SMRBF). A former State of California Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) employee, Catherin Tyrrell, who latter worked for Playa Vista, was the incorporator. As late as 2010 SMRBF deceptively listed its physical address as 320 W. 4th Street, Suite 200, Los Angeles. This is the address of a State Office she used to work for, the LARWQCB.

Between the time the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of the State in 1990 and 2010, SMRBF sucked off the public tit. For twenty years it used basement offices, phones, computers, meeting rooms, insurance and electricity, all provided at State expense for a private entity. SMRBF Board members included Assemblyman Richard Bloom. Mary Small of the California Coastal Conservancy also shared the Board with others closely associated with major energy concerns. They were caught by the public and forced to move to Loyola University around 2010. Executive Officers of the LARWQCB let this parasitic group consume the public resources for decades until the public began to complain.

Later in 2002, a State Agency with a similar name was created by the legislature, named the Santa Monica Bay Restoration **Commission** (SMRBC). This is appears to be a case of mimicry.

Subsequently SMRBF provided a website that claimed to represent the SMRBC and itself at the same time, blurring the distinction between the two. That was changed after the public discovered what was happening. Private business should not claim to represent the State of California, yet this was the case for years.

Recently SMRBF fled from its old name and now calls itself the Bay Foundation.

According to the IRS, Shelly Luce is the President and Executive Director of the business entity SMRBF, and was formerly associated with Heal the Bay. Luce also claims that she is the Executive Director of the SMRBC, a State Agency.

However, she is not a State employee nor is there a public description of her duties, responsibilities, or powers as they relate to the State's business. She purports to conduct the State's business by using a private email account with no public access. Luce has signed important documents on behalf of SMRBC with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The problem is that the State SMRBC cannot produce records of her actions in this respect and she has failed to disclose them at public meetings. The records were, however, obtained from the Army under a Freedom Of Information Act.

The SMRBC consists of very important political types like the Secretary of Resources and Secretary of the Environment, for instance. Bonin represents



Political cartoon by Khalil Bendib

the City of Los Angeles, owning a seat on the Governing Board. Deputy Nate Kaplin attends the meetings. Yet, they have allowed this charade to continue uninterrupted and without question.

For years Luce has directed the Governing Board of SMRBC to approve money that was deposited into the accounts of SMRBF, absent from any State control. SMRBF then reported them to the IRS as revenue.

A State Treasury Account was created for the SMRBC to induct funds from any source allocated by the State Assembly to improve Santa Monica Bay and the Ballona Wetlands. The State has made no allocations, however. Other funding sources from both State and Federal have come into play, which could have and should have been deposited in the State Treasury, where they could have been publicly tracked.

Rather than allowing the funding to reach the State, in a ruse Luce has directed the SMRBC Governing Board, including Bonin, to approve depositing every cent into accounts controlled by the private business she directs. The Treasury Account has remained empty since the SMRBC was created. The inferred logic presented is that the State cannot afford to provide an Executive Director and that the State cannot afford to account for funds, so the private SMRBF has ridden to rescue California by assuming those jobs. They are more like corporate raiders.

G. Wang, a Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board employee, signed at least one application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the State for a grant under the U.S. Clean Water Act. The funds were deposited into the private accounts of SMRBF. Around 2006 a million dollar settlement from the California Public Utilities Commission was directed to the SMRBC, but was deposited into the private SMRBF account, without ever reaching the State, as intended.

In a recent Financial Disclosure required by the California Fair Political Practices Act of 1972, Luce claimed that she did not file a Schedule C to the IRS, and reported no income. However, public IRS documents from SMRBF clearly demonstrate she has had an income exceeding \$100,000 that same year. There is clearly a contradiction here. The question begged is why Luce has failed to disclose income she received from the private SMRBF as its Executive Director?

On January 14th Luce testified to the County Supervisors that the SMRBC had requested that the County apply for permits from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to alter the Federal Ballona Creek Flood Control Project. However, there is no record of the Governing Board of the SMRBC ever considering or approving it, nor did Luce disclose this fact at any public meeting.

When asked under the California Public Records Act, the County could not produce a request from SMRBC. It looks like Luce just whispered into a low level County staff member's ear, and the County Department of Public Works started this massive stealth project on that basis alone, with no public record at

all. She is trying to fly under the radar, undetected. But that is not easy when six hundred public acres are at risk from bulldozers.

The County first claimed the documents it submitted to the U.S. Army were provided by the SMRBC. This is not the case. After making a legal request for the records that the County submitted to the Army, Patricia McPherson of Grassroots Coalition, a Venice-based environmental non-profit, was referred to a private website to download the 408 Flood Control Project materials. It was not a State website. It appeared to be an .ftp download site for the private SMRBF.

When other County staff members became aware of this, they disallowed further access to the site with no explanation. But McPherson was able to obtain some of the documents first.

The State of California did not ask the County for this Project and there is no record to validate that claim made on the record by Luce. She previously signed a letter asking the USACE Los Angeles District to withdraw from a 2005 Joint Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement project that would have answered to the 1998 Congressional request. Again, she did this on behalf of the SMRBC. Sadly, this was not approved or even disclosed to the Governing Board of the SMRBC at a public meeting, leaving the public in the dark.

Luce's written request was provided by the USACE, but when the SMRBC was asked, it could not produce the same record at the State level.

This is how she plays it, fast and loose, assuming the collective public intellect will not catch on to the overblown shell game. But we have. And it is not her game alone – the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission has known about this for years and taken no action. They only approve, in lock-step, without ever a dissenting vote, including that of Councilperson Mike Bonin.

It looks like Bonin's motion to rename State Road 90 was nothing more than a dodge to hide his true intentions of assisting in bulldozing 600 acres of the last freshwater wetlands in California. All for an ill-conceived flood control project. Since he has taken office, he has voted yes to every destructive Ballona agenda item when present at SMRBC meetings, just like every other Commissioner. The analog is the pied piper leading rats off a cliff, with no objections from the unquestioning community, with Luce playing the role of the piper.

The County made the false claim that the Ballona Bulldozing Project was environmentally acceptable.

It decided to skip a step. The Board of Supervisor was first required to have a project approved under the California Environmental Quality Act, with public hearings. In this case it did not.

Decades of experience with County and City already inform Angelinos to watch the Supervisor and City Council with a microscope because that is where the cheating is done on a normal basis.

Hey Google, Don't Be Evil!

By Anthony Castillo

The image that relatively new Venice resident Google puts forth to the general public is one of a progressive company guided by it's company motto "Don't Be Evil." Former Google CEO and current Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt said in an interview with NPR recently "I thought it was the stupidest rule ever." What Google co-founder and current CEO Larry Page thinks of the motto he is said to have come up with along with Sergey Brin, is anyone's guess. But if the funding choices Google has made this past year and up to the present are any indication, Google reality is very different from the Google image.

In 2013 Google, along with other tech giants such as Facebook and Yelp, joined the American Legislative Exchange Council, ALEC. This, in the same year that over 60 major U.S. corporations abandoned ALEC (including Wal-Mart) along with over 400 U.S. state legislators.

Who is ALEC and what do they do? The web site www.alecexposed.org describes ALEC as follows:

"ALEC is not a lobby; it is not a front group. It is much more powerful than that. Through secretive meetings of the American Legislative Exchange Council, corporate lobbyists and state legislators vote as equals on 'model bills' to change our rights that often benefit corporations' bottom line at public expense. ALEC is a pay-to-play operation where corporations buy a seat and a vote on 'task forces' to advance their legislative wish lists and can get a tax break for donations, effectively passing these lobbying costs on to taxpayers.

Along with legislators, corporations have membership in ALEC. Corporations sit on ALEC task forces and vote with legislators to approve 'model bills'. They have their own corporate governing board which meets jointly with the legislative board. (ALEC says that corporations do not vote on the board.) Corporations fund almost all of ALEC's operations.

Participating legislators, overwhelmingly conservative Republicans, bring those proposals home and introduce them in statehouses across the land as their own brilliant ideas and important public policy innovations – without disclosing that corporations crafted and voted on the bills.

ALEC boasts that it has over 1,000 of these bills introduced by legislative members every year, with one in five of them enacted into law. ALEC describes itself as a "unique," "unparalleled" and "unmatched" organization. We agree. It is as if a state legislator had been reconstituted, yet corporations had pushed people out the door."

In other words, ALEC has institutionalized corruption, plain and simple. If you live in a state that has a Republican Governor and a statehouse and senate under Republican control, you can expect ALEC legislation to be introduced and enacted regardless of how unpopular they may be with the people of that state. But even blue states are not immune from ALEC. It's just that their 'model bills' have less of a chance for passage.

Why did so many corporations and state legislators decide to leave ALEC in 2013?

ALEC is now in its 40th year. Until recently ALEC had done its work in secret and was almost unknown to the vast majority of U.S. citizens outside of ALEC's membership. But the murder of Trayvon Martin at the hands of racist vigilante George Zimmerman changed that. Florida's 'Stand Your Ground' law that Zimmerman used to justify his murder of unarmed teen Martin was born from ALEC. In fact those laws were one of ALEC's proudest accomplishments, having gotten them passed in 24 U.S. states. Nearly half the country! Though they go by different names such as 'Shoot First' laws, or 'Make My Day' laws, they all have similar wording and purpose; to increase gun sales on behalf of the gun manufacturers that wrote the bills to begin with. But thanks to public outrage over the blatant brutality of these laws after Martin's murder, ALEC's hand in crafting them was exposed. Thus began the mass exodus from ALEC. Corporations that wanted to maintain a friendly public image (i.e. McDonald's, Coca Cola, Pepsi, even Wal-Mart) worked to distance their names from ALEC.

But these gun laws are only the tip of ALEC's legislative iceberg. In the 80's ALEC was a huge supporter of South Africa's system of Apartheid. Yes you read that correctly, ALEC was on the side of the White minority rulers and their racist system of Apartheid. ALEC used its influence to discourage South Africa divestment plans that were being put forth in state houses across the country at the time, as well ALEC worked to keep Nelson Mandela in

prison. The administration of Ronald Reagan welcomed ALEC's help in this fight till the end of Apartheid and after. ALEC has worked to successfully pass 'Right To Work' laws in blue states such as my home state of Michigan. ALEC has over-turned worker safety regulations in state after state, passed laws to end Collective Bargaining, expanded prison construction and its funding, cut funding for public education, fought immigration reform, enacted laws that make it illegal to document animal cruelty on factory farms and slaughter houses (Ag-Gag bills), passed voter ID laws that strive to suppress the vote in state after state, blocked increasing the minimum wage, and basically worked to privatize anything and everything it can possibly get its greedy hands on. This list doesn't begin to scratch the surface of ALEC's roll-back of public rights in favor of corporate profits.

ALEC's former and current membership, featured speakers, and past award winners reads like a who's who of far right-wing radical, politicians and operatives. Names like Tom DeLay, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Jessie Helms, Gov. Scott Walker, Milton Friedman, Andrew Card, Gov. Jan Brewer, Newt Gingrich, House Speaker John Boehner, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Pete Coors, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Gov. Rick Perry, Tommy Thompson, Gov. John Kasich, George H.W. Bush, Ted Cruz, Paul Ryan, and of course the Koch brothers, Charles and David, to name but a few. In fact the Koch brothers have been and continue to be a major driving force behind ALEC.

When ALEC met in Washington DC at the end of last year to mark it's 40th year, it was leaked that the new thrust of ALEC is to stall the switch to clean energy by getting laws passed in state after state that would make it so home owners would be charged for putting solar panels on their homes and not be given tax breaks or credit for the surplus energy they produce and put back into the grid. It was also found out that tobacco companies like Altria/Philip Morris USA wrote 'model bills' that would change how moist tobacco products are taxed (such as fruit flavored "snus") to make them cheaper and more attractive to younger users. These are just a couple of the newest ALEC ideas, and for the first time, Google was there.

If Google's ALEC membership wasn't bad enough, it's not the only far right-wing group Google has thrown its support and its money behind. While Google lists the groups it gives money to, it does not say how much money it gives, as U.S. corporations are not required to publicly disclose their funding to political advocacy groups. Google only lists its financial support as "substantial." But since Google hired former Republican House of Representative member Susan Molinari back in March of 2012 as its Vice President of Public Policy and Government Relations, the swing to the far right has begun. Some of the other groups Google has given "substantial" grants to in the past year include: American Conservative Union, Americans for Tax Reform, CATO Institute, Federalist Society, Heritage Action, Mercatus Center, National Taxpayers Union, R Street Institute, Texas Public Policy Foundation.

For those readers not familiar with what these groups are all about, here's a bit of detail on a few of them. Heritage Action is the political advocacy arm of the Heritage Foundation. This Tea Party styled group has worked consistently to repeal the Affordable Care Act and pushed for the fall federal government shutdown. (FYI, the Affordable Care Act originated from the Heritage Foundation as a response to the Clinton task force on revamping the U.S. health care system back in the 90s. Now it fights tooth and nail to repeal its very own idea.) In August of 2013 TX Senator Ted Cruz further cemented his Tea Party street cred by addressing cheering crowds on the nine city "Defund Obamacare Town Hall Tour" that Heritage Action put together. Speaking of Tea Party darling Ted Cruz, Google has a track record of supporting him through its Political Action Committee, Google Inc. Net Pac. This PAC gave Cruz a \$10,000 contribution in 2012, and has already contributed to his next reelection campaign.

Americans for Tax Reform is the group run by anti-government, fundamentalist, zealot and Republican operative Grover Norquist. He and his group are



responsible for the "Tax Protection Pledge" that any Republican who cares to call himself a Republican must sign. The signatory pledges to never vote to raise taxes no matter what the circumstances. This has made it impossible to roll back the Bush tax cuts, raise any new revenues, balance state budgets, or to fairly tax the 1%. According to the Centre for Responsive Politics, ATR received 85% of its funding in 2012 (\$26.4 million) from Karl Rove's ultra partisan, dark money group, Crossroads GPS.

National Taxpayers Union has an agenda much like that of ATR. It's headed by Duane Parde, who was an ALEC Executive Director for eleven years.

The CATO Institute is the think tank behind much of the past and present far right Republican pro-corporate strategies.

The Federalist Society is a network of right-wing judges and lawyers. You may recognize the names of these members: Justices Samuel Alito, John Roberts, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas. In fact Google sponsored a gala fundraiser for the FS in Washington DC honoring Justice Thomas. At this event Google was listed as a top-tier "gold" sponsor. Google lists the FS as a group receiving its most "substantial" grants in 2013. There's no need to go into detail as to what the five conservative Supreme Court Justices have been doing to our rights. Their ruling on the Citizens United case (go to www.movetoamend.org for more info) and the gutting of the Voting Rights Act says enough.

In addition, the Washington Post reported that Google provided a \$50,000 sponsorship to the Competitive Enterprise Institute, another far right group doing its best to thwart any efforts to address climate change. And Google has also funded "Google Policy Fellows" at CEI for at least the last three years. All this while Google installs solar panels on many of its 'campuses' and surrounding buildings. Image vs. reality.

Google has not commented on why they decided to join ALEC when so many other corporations were rushing to leave it, or why they choose to give grants to other far right-wing groups. Google might point out that they also give grants to left leaning groups such as the American Constitution Society, NAACP, and People for the American Way, which they have. But when you rub shoulders with the likes of Exxon-Mobil, the Koch brothers and gun manufactures, the we're just playing both sides stance doesn't hold up. Lisa Graves, Executive Director of the Center for Media and Democracy puts it this way: "There really aren't two proportionate sides to the facts about climate changes that are underway, as to whether working people should be paid a living wage, and whether corporations should have to pay taxes just like working people do. By funding extreme groups on the right under the guise of a false equivalency, Google is enabling groups that seek to undermine government."

Google is a company looking to the future. But it is funding far right-wing groups that are organized, powerful, and well funded and that are actively working to turn back the clock on our rights as private citizens, deregulate and/or privatize everything, take away what little democracy is left in this country, and deny that climate change is even a possibility, let alone a fact. To learn more about ALEC, Google's involvement, and sign online petitions urging Google CEO Larry Page to leave ALEC, go to the following web sites. If you have to, you can Google them.

www.alecexposed.org
www.sourcewatch.org
www.prwatch.org
www.forecastthefacts.org
www.sumofus.org

GUANTANAMO, REVISITED

By Mary Getlein

The Guantanamo Bay Detention Center in Cuba needs to be closed, now. Obama promised to close it when he was running for office in 2010. After he was elected, the issue disappeared from his agenda. Guantanamo has been in place for 11 years and has been a center of human rights violations since day one.

Prisoners are held without criminal charges or rights to trials, which is a human rights violation. The United States criticizes other countries for the same thing (i.e.: Iran, China, Turkey, etc.) and refuse to admit the illegal practices that are going on in Guantanamo Bay.

Most prisoners have been imprisoned with no legal charges. They were arrested and taken from their homes to jail after 9/11, and were charged with being "terrorists". People were arrested from the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia for arrest and interrogation. Prisoners have been tortured in many ways, including indefinite detention, solitary confinement, physical violence and psychological abuse.

Many prisoners were turned in by neighbors for huge bounties of \$2,000 to \$5,000 for lying about their neighbors and calling them traitors or terrorists. 92% of the prisoners were not connected to Al-Qaeda or The Taliban. 7 prisoners have been convicted by military courts at Guantanamo Bay.

The total number of prisoners has been 779 and 166 remain. The Obama administration plans to hold 46 of the detainees indefinitely and has done nothing to discharge 86 men who have been cleared of all charges in 2010.

Guantanamo has been charged with the crime of torture. The horrible photographs of this practice were released years ago and everyone was duly horrified at this practice. Then somehow, the horror went away. The reality of Guantanamo torture is still going on. Examples of this are sleep deprivation, chaining people in stress positions, exposure to very cold temperatures and sexual humiliation. Torture creates mental and emotional effects to both the victim and the torturers. Information gained by this practice is unreliable, as people will say anything to get the pain to stop.



Hunger strikes have begun in 2013. So far, 100 detainees have joined the hunger strike. The military personnel have started force-feeding one-fourth of the prison's population. This is a brutal practice of strapping people down into chairs and pushing large tubes through the nose, down the throat and into the stomach. Prisoners have reported the military personnel using the same tubes for multiple prisoners without cleaning off the blood.

In response to this, in July 2013, prisoners at California Pelican Bay State Prison called for a nation-wide hunger strike to protest torture conditions inside U.S. prisons.

Closegitmo.net aims to end all U.S. sanctioned torture. President Obama promised six years ago to

shut down Guantanamo, and had agreed it was a threat to national security. The existence of Guantanamo is a human rights violation and a stain on the image of the United States. President Obama has not come any closer to shutting it down.

If you don't really care about this issue, thinking that is has nothing to do with you, just remember that this is how human rights are taken away. If no one protests this, it will keep on happening.

The World Medical Association and the United Nations view force-feeding hunger strikers as torture. This operation costs U.S. taxpayers \$2.74 million per detainee, compared to \$78,000 per inmate at the U.S.'s most secure prison.

To get involved and find out more, go to www.closeGitmo.net

References available at www.metapeaceteam.org

New Year's Day Venice Penguin Swim

By Beth Allyn

Cecelia Klinger, who grew up swimming in the icy waters of Lake Michigan (can we say burrr) is credited with starting the Polar Bear Swim here at Breakwater in 1952, but it wasn't until 1960 that it became an organized event when one of our local lifeguards, Darrell Willey (as if I needed another reason to love our men in red shorts) proposed to make it official. It is now known as the Penguin Swim.

Since then the New Year's Day swim has become a yearly event. And about 15 years ago the SCAQ (Southern California Aquatics) Masters Swim Club expanded the event to include a race with the first male and female swimmers across the finish line being crowned king and queen.

Standing in the crowd all these years, I often thought about joining in the event but then thought, what am I effing nuts? And yet every year I would still think "man what a great way to start the new year" and I would make a plan for next year only to have the morning of the first arrive and be either too hung over or feel that it was way too cold even to consider it. I know this is Southern California, but live here long enough and anything below 50 is too cold.

But then this year arrived and found me mourning the loss of a friend and the need to feel something – even something cold, something she could no longer feel. So with the planets probably aligned, I thought this is the year. The week leading up to it I did my morning runs in the water to make sure I wouldn't die of a heart attack, and I made my final decision.

I was early that morning, number 4 in line, but I was only going to do the plunge since I am not much of an ocean swimmer. When the time came I ran into the water with 100+ other bodies and didn't even think about the water temperature, I just felt exhilarated and glad to be alive. The plunge isn't really a swim, but a run around the lifeguards just in front of the break. It was so much fun! Afterwards I changed into something dry, and I sat back and watched the women of the Alaskan Swim Team beat almost everyone in the swim, and I realized that while I might



Above: January 1, 2014 Penguin Swim
Photo by: Steven Christensen
www.stevechristensenphoto.com

not be able to swim as fast as them, I could really swim that distance. It really isn't that much of a swim. I also realized something else: it's really is a great way to start the year. The year had just started and I had actually already achieved a goal. So come on out and join me next year. Maybe you'll start with the plunge first also, or maybe you'll do the swim – but either way you won't be disappointed.

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❖ Protein Powder – 2 lbs. \$14.99

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Pete Seeger: Never Gone

By Anthony Castillo

On January 27th at the age of 94 iconic folk singer, folk song collector, song writer and activist Pete Seeger died in New York. As a folk musician, Seeger was a living archive, carrying on the folk tradition of trading songs in an oral musical history to pass them on and preserve them. For Seeger folk music was more than just music, it was a tool for social change – by creating a sense of community, it could then lead to political action. Seeger was political from an early age and stayed so until his death. He had integrity beyond reproach and a life-long commitment to the struggles of common working-class people that was unwavering.

Seeger began his career as a folk singer in the 1940's after dropping out of Harvard, where he attended for only two years during which he studied journalism, published a radical newspaper, and joined the Young Communist League. He ended up going to New York City and being introduced to Lead Belly. He would then meet and form a group with like-minded folk singer/song writer Woody Guthrie. The Almanac Singers did benefit concerts for migrant California farm workers. Before World War II the Singers sang anti-war songs and labor songs. After the U.S. became involved in WW II they sang anti-fascist songs. It was the group's pre-war songs that caught the attention of the FBI for their leftist political messages. The group split up. Seeger rode the rails by hopping on freight trains to trade songs and expand his catalog of folk music.

By 1948 Seeger was performing as a solo artist alongside Paul Robeson at the Village Vanguard in Greenwich Village. They would both go on to perform concerts in support of Henry Wallace's presidential bid on the Progressive Party ticket. About this time Seeger invested \$1700 in 17 acres of land that overlooked the Hudson River and began building a log cabin. He lived in Beacon, NY in that home for the rest of his life.

In the period from 1950 to '51 Seeger's musical career broke big with his group the Weavers being signed to Decca records and going on to sell four million albums. The group had many hits like Seeger's classic "If I Had a Hammer" and a number one with Lead Belly's "Good Night Irene." Seeger also wrote "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?", "Turn Turn Turn" (later made even more famous by The Byrds' electric version) and had a hand in coming up with the song that became

the anthem of the civil rights movement in the 60s, "We Shall Over Come," which was based on black spiritual and labor songs. These songs would be inspirational to the next wave of folkies such as Phil Ochs, Bob Dylan, Billy Bragg and many others.

But Pete Seeger's Communist past and leftist politics would in 1955 earn him a subpoena from Senator Joe McCarthy's red baiting House Un-American Activities Committee. Seeger refused to answer any of the committee's questions, but instead offered to sing them any and all songs that they had asked about. Not surprisingly, the committee refused his offer. Seeger was charged with ten counts of Contempt of Congress and sentenced to a year in prison. But the indictment was dismissed as false on appeal in 1962. However, he ended up being blacklisted, like many other entertainers and artists had been. The Weavers were no more, as they could not get booked for concerts or continue to make records. Seeger again went solo but he would not be allowed to appear on network television again until 1968.

Seeger would continue to perform, record and work for progressive causes for the rest of his life. He sang against the war in Vietnam, for labor unions and workers' rights, marched with Dr. King, and worked for the environmental clean-up of the Hudson River, which he did for decades with his Hudson River Sloop Clearwater project. The clean-up by General Electric finally began in 2009. He sang kids' songs, humorous songs, topical songs, but he always encouraged you to sing along.

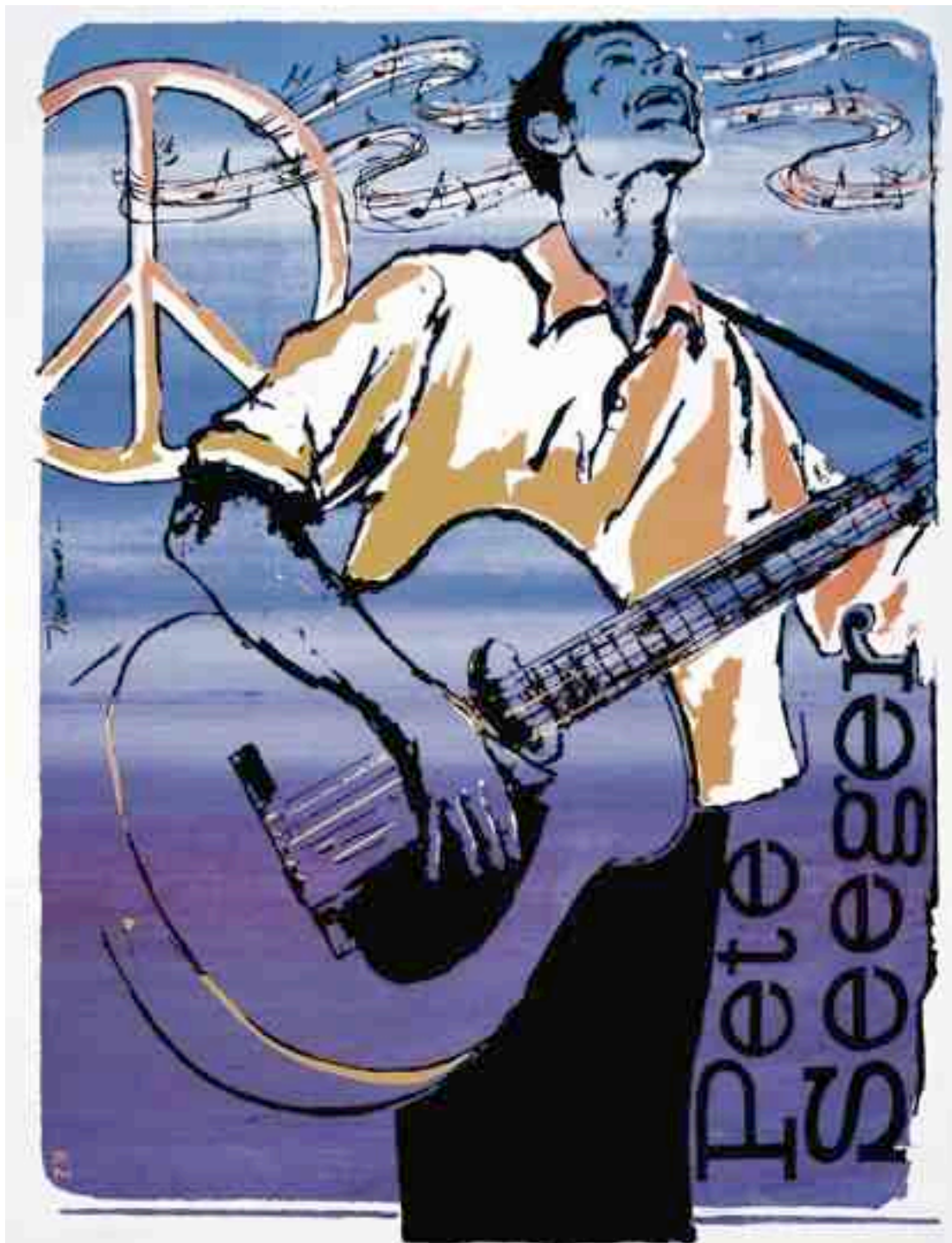
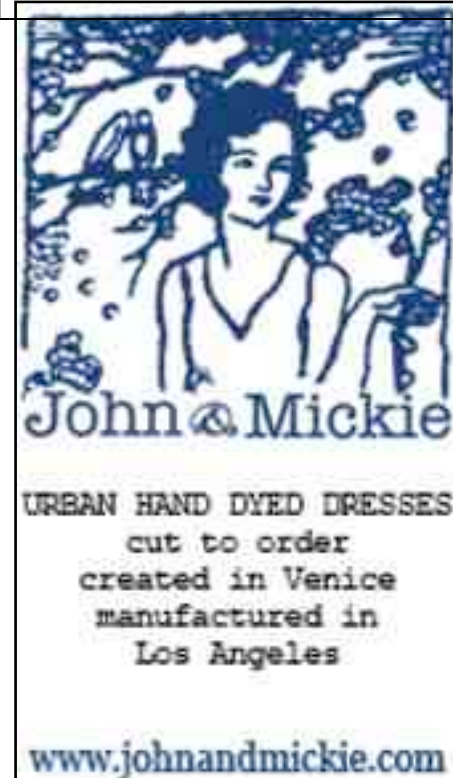
Seeger was honored and awarded many times over for his music, but he was always uncomfortable with the notion of stardom, and distrusted commercialism. In fact, when he was inducted into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame, the presenter of the honor was Pete's old friend Arlo Guthrie, who commented on the Weavers "Good Night Irene" reaching number one: "I cannot think of a single event in Pete's life that is possibly less important to him." Seeger gave no acceptance speech, but instead led a sing-along of "Good Night Irene." Pete Seeger also received one other award of note among the many – the Order of Felix Varela, Cuba's highest cultural award in defense of the environment and against racism. Pete Seeger was a role model of the highest degree, may we all be inspired to follow his lead.



Arlo Guthrie
writes about
Pete Seeger:

I usually do a little meditation and prayer every night before I go to sleep - Just part of the routine. Last night, I decided to go visit Pete Seeger for a while, just to spend a little time together, it was around 9 PM. So I was sitting in my home in Florida, having a lovely chat with Pete, who was in a hospital in New York City. That's the great thing about thoughts and prayers- You can go or be anywhere. I simply wanted him to know that I loved him dearly, like a father in some ways, a mentor in others and just as a dear friend a lot of the time. I'd grown up that way - loving the Seegers - Pete & Toshi and all their family. I let him know I was having trouble writing his obituary (as I'd been asked) but it seemed just so silly and I couldn't think of anything that didn't sound trite or plain stupid. "They'll say something appropriate in the news," we agreed. We laughed, we talked, and I took my leave about 9:30 last night. "Arlo" he said, sounding just like the man I've known all of my life, "I guess I'll see ya later." I've always loved the rising and falling inflections in his voice. "Pete," I said. "I guess we will." I turned off the light and closed my eyes and fell asleep until very early this morning, about 3 AM when the texts and phone calls started coming in from friends telling me Pete had passed away. "Well, of course he passed away!" I'm telling everyone this morning. "But that doesn't mean he's gone."

Left and above: Earl Newman's silkscreened original posters
Thanks to Earl's generosity, the Beachhead will receive 75% of all proceeds off the sale of Pete Seeger posters
\$40 each, \$75 for both
www.earlnewmanprints.com
for these and other great posters, such as the Gashouse and Venice West in the '60s



Book Review: Art Tiles at Venice Beach

By Eric Ahlberg

You may stroll in the eternal carnival that Ocean Front Walk has become. You may sit upon one of the distinctive cement and wooden benches and not even know that your ass is probably very close to some really hot Art.

In 2000 two Venice artists created these tiles to depict distinctive Venice events. Clayworks was a decorative ceramic art business working with at-risk youth with the Venice Community Housing Corporation.

Now we have cooked up a little book about the tiles, a graphic Venice History book of sorts, the beautiful ceramic renderings of important elements in Venice's Dharma. You have the Canal Festivals, the Nude Beach, the Gas House, Gondolas, Oil Pollution, Love, the Drum Circle, the Fire Breathing Chainsaw Juggler, Break Dancing, Biking, Muscle Beach, Surfing, Skateboarding, the Pavilion, the Plaza.

No wonder we love this place, it has all the makings of a movie. From free land to \$2.7 million bungalows in Ghost Town, Venice Beach has a jaded history, and this book will help you remember.

From the Jacket:

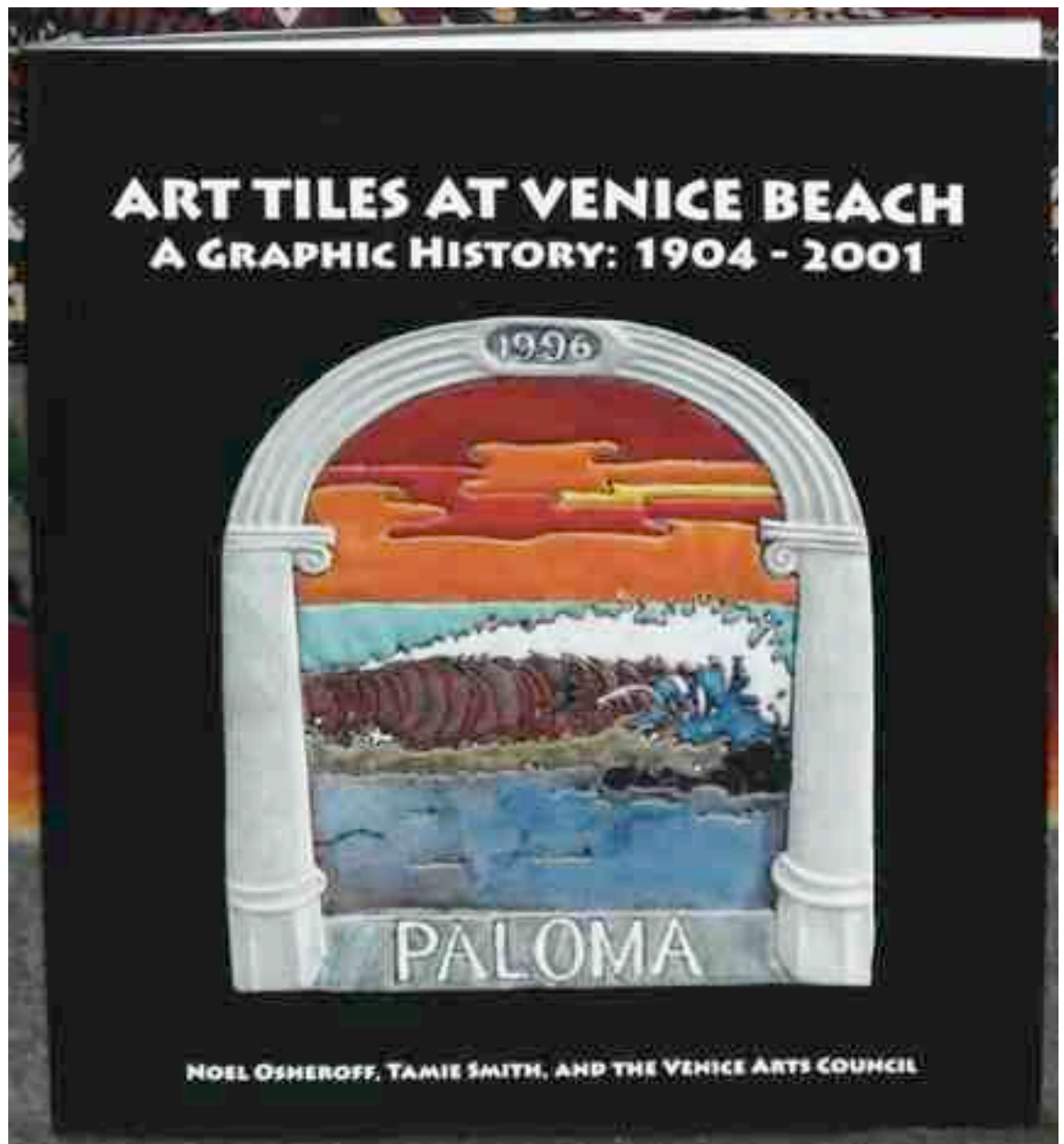
"Want to love Venice even more than you do now? As a 20-year resident of Venice I have walked, biked, staggered, bladed, jogged, stumbled, and strolled my way down Oceanfront Walk. This little book exists to remind us of Venice's oddly rich history that has made Venice a mecca for generations of artists, musicians and free thinkers – and now, of course, real estate agents." – Matt Malloy, actor

"By drawing attention to public artworks in Venice, this book helps preserve our shared history and memories." – Francisco Letelier, Venice muralist, artist and poet

"There are lots of things to see in Venice, but some you have to look for. The tiles on the boardwalk benches are easy to miss, I did for many years. But once you realize that there are more than one, you start checking all the benches. Yammo! Cool stuff right under your nose (or tush). How very Venice." – Chris Hero, artist and teacher

We are printing this book in January 2014. It will be available at Small World Books and all over Venice. We are currently looking for sponsors to help us print the book.

Contact: emilywinters@verizon.net



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How To Become An OUTLAW

(Don Quixote on a motorcycle)



Larry Hankin and Edie McClurg
 a comedy by Larry Hankin



The Roosterfish - Serving Gay Venice Since 1979

By CJ Gronner

Walking down Abbot Kinney, I heard a lady (carrying bags from a chain store) say to her friend, "Oh, that's a gay bar," as they passed The Roosterfish - and kept going. It most certainly is, and according to owner/manager of 23 years, Gary Mick, one of the hardest things about running "The Fish" (as he endearingly refers to it) is keeping it gay.

When so much of the town is getting fancier (and duller), sometimes you just want a down home, stiff drink. With the choices getting slimmer and slimmer for that kind of outing on the block, sometimes we'll find ourselves throwing out The Roosterfish as an option. It's always cool, gay or straight. I sat down recently to talk with Mick about the bar's origin, history, current days and what it's like to be pretty much the only gay bar on the west side these days.

Walter Schneider and his partner B.M. Alexander were pioneers of the gay part of West Hollywood, opening their successful bar, The Gallery Room, in 1962. They also ran a hot club of the day, the Up Disco. After a while, Schneider and Alexander decided they'd like to live in Venice, and a friend found them a prime location on Abbot Kinney (when it was still called West Washington) to open a gay venue at the beach. Contrary to popular belief, the name "Roosterfish" doesn't have anything to do with the cock angle. It was chosen because Schneider and Alexander loved sailing and fishing off the coast of Cabo San Lucas, and the roosterfish is an especially feisty game fish, with a comb on top like a rooster. So there you go.

Schneider ran The Roosterfish until his death in 2006, and left the bar to four of his friends, including Mick. Mick still gets choked up about Schneider's death, as they'd grown very close over the years, and Schneider's presence is clearly missed every day at The Fish.

I asked if there were any old photos I could see from back in the early days, and Mick amusingly answered that there were some, but they all look exactly the same as the bar does now! And that's exactly what people like about it ... with all the change going on in Venice, it's really nice to have a place that keeps it as real as they ever did. "We try to keep it looking this bad consistently." Rad. The only things that have really changed are some lighting, and the art changes out every 8 weeks ("Always homoerotic or male nudes.") so hit up Mick if that's your artistic genre.

Though Mick threw open his arms and said, "Everyone is welcome at The Fish!", I did need to ask if it's annoying to have straight people (like us) come in and hang out. He laughed and said it did bug some regulars when that happens, because there are so few truly gay bars around anymore ("Even West Hollywood is all metrosexual now ..."), especially on the west side. He explained that the gay bar is a very important step in someone's coming out process, and a bar like The Roosterfish is a safe place for newcomers to get comfortable with their sexuality and be around like-minded, understanding peers. So straight people are certainly welcome, it should just be understood that it is what it is, and it is a gay bar, a main meeting

place, so be mindful of that.

There's also no need for straight guys to grab their girlfriends and make out with them right when they walk in to pronounce their straightness. The Roosterfish guys already know. And laugh at that.

In all the years that the Fish has been around on Abbot Kinney, I've never once heard a problem or complaint. If anything, people are happy The Roosterfish is still around, keeping the street a LITTLE bohemian, a little true cool still. Mick says the LAPD never have had to come, (even during the heavy gangster times that happened nearby). The very few times there have been physical altercations, it's always involved a heterosexual male - usually drunk. Mmmm hmmm. Mick didn't think there were too many stories to share that would be good in a "family" paper, but if those walls could talk ... you'd want to listen.

We were talking about First Fridays ("No regulars will come anymore that day, it's too big a hassle" - yep), and all the development (which has been good for business, admittedly, if not character or sense of place), with stuff like the ridiculous proposed hotel for Abbot Kinney. Mick cracked me up when I had said people at the LUPC meeting about it were citing things like transients and pedophiles as (dumb) reasons to oppose the thing, and he said, "Well, they could just send them our way!" Ha! Neither of us want to see the street turn into another Promenade, though it seems to be going that way a bit. At least the Fish helps to still give it some edge.

The Roosterfish will be celebrating its 35th year open in Venice this March, and when I asked Mick his feelings on that, he said, "I want to say thank you for the respect all these years. Venice treats us very well." Respect and being treated well ... the makings of a long and happy community (or any) relationship. Congratulations to The Roosterfish on their 35th - and many more!

***The Roosterfish is located at
1302 Abbot Kinney Blvd.***

Hours are 11 am - 2 am, 7 days a week.



Anthony Newley Hits Venice

By Suzy Williams

Run, don't walk to The Pacific Resident Theatre on Venice between Shell and Oakwood, to see one of the most charming, heart-warming musical evenings you've experienced. This compact, brilliant little revue with no intermission has 26 fantastic songs that flow together with a wee plot that ties it tidily. For even though Anthony Newley is no longer with us physically, his music lives. (I had the pleasure of attending *Pure Imagination* last week with Venice's own songbird extraordinaire, Kathy Leonardo, who worked with Newley on tour in the seventies and had tales to tell of his on-the-road shenanigans).

First, designer Norman Scott's setting: a classic and cozy, black and shiny nightclub, circa 1963 with risers, all kinds of subtle lighting, long silvery-black mellomar curtains and a baby grand piano. Where else can you find such an evocative atmosphere today?

A pianistic fanfare, and out step our colorfully "Mad Men"-dressed cast, taking their places all about the stage, and launching into a series of familiar melodies and moves we remember from watching all those variety shows on television way back when. But who knew so many were written by Anthony Newley (and his partner Leslie Bricusse)? Yes, we may know that Newley was responsible for "What Kind of Fool

am I?" and "Who Can I Turn To?," but how about "On a Wonderful Day Like Today," "The Candyman," and..."Goldfinger"??

The lovable cast has a knockout, fixate-able blonde, Jane Noseworthy, who, in "Typically English" does a great character study of an Englishwoman, a German, a Russian and an American girl, all in one breath, it seemed. Sami Staitman is 13 and has a robust voice and a joie de vivre that makes one optimistic for youth and all mankind. Tap dancer and tenor Shaun Baker, brings all his New York finesse to the show, and Robert Jacobs, tall and striking, plays the seductive bad boy to the hilt. Dana Dewes is the heart and soul of the production, with her mane of dark tresses and the glamourest of dresses. This evening of Newley music, newly appreciated, is feel-good entertainment. Why not step out to the PRT and feel good? Yes!



- The Venice Primer-

Walkin down da Venice Boardwalk
Everyday people Talk
Venice can be a Menace
Cops may kick yer Ass
Skateboards zoomin By
Everyone gettin High
Bikes runnin down old Ladies
Segeways hittin Babies
Some hawkin Crap
From all over da Map
Thugs stealin Stuff
Hookers sellin their Muff
Movie stars and the Rich
Starvin homeless sleep in a Ditch
Ain't it a Bitch
Dogs of all Kinds
People losin their Minds
Gang bangers Bangin
Suicides a Hangin
Pigeons and seagulls Shit
Even on Jolie and Brad Pitt
A pit bull walks with a Crook
Another tourist Took
I can write a Book
Meth,crack,Cocaine
Every drug to make ya Insane
Lost a job Again
Drinkin Gin
Bein homeless ain't a Sin
Sleepin in a Garbage Bin
Hippies smokin Pot
Some have & have Not
A thief sellin a bike that's Hot
Phony Healers
Drug Dealers
Fortune Tellers
Worthless Fellers
A crazy in the Head
Cold without a Bed
Lookin to be Fed
Until you're found Dead
Gays & Lesbians
Screwin producers & Thespians
Loonies & nuts Yell
Yer all goin ta Hell
Tourists run from their Smell
Jim Morrison singin to Charles Manson
The Beach Boys writing California Dreamin
Musicians play all Day
Krishnas & Christians Pray
Tourists Pay
If ya sleep in yer car ya can't Stay
Hunks showin their Nuts
Sexy gals showin their Butts
While walkin ugly Mutts
Sick & in Despair
No one to Care
Is a real Scare
Waitin for Obama Care
Beautiful empty sand & Sea
No one wants to swim in feces & Pee
Young & old Fucks
Water is 5 bucks
Man,that Sucks
Pigs beat yer Head
Yell,You're better off Dead
Cause the cement's your Bed
Some with & without Talent
Ain't got a Cent
Can't pay the Rent
Rent used to be 100 dollars
Now its 5000 Dollars
& everyone Hollers
Drummers bangin da Drum
Dunks drinkin Rum
A billionaire dancin with a Bum
Whites,Blacks & Asians
Hangin out with Martians & Vegetarians
My arrest was Wrong
Just smokin a Bong
My poem is too Long
Shoulda been a Song
Venice has it All
The small & Tall
The sad & Mad
And every Fad
So just be Glad
To be Livin
Venice is Hell & Heavin...

Marty Liboff -c. 2013



Beyond All This

By Aryn Youngless

Beyond all this
There is more
There are new beginnings
A new day & time
Filled with laughter
& friends

Beyond all this
There will be sunrises
& sunsets
Cascading stars
& moon lit nights
Songs with harmony
& sorely out of tune
Yes, life

Beyond all this
Are new beginnings
New endings
1000 do-overs
Gallons of tears
Mingled with smiles
& glorious food

Beyond all this
Are more reasons to try
Than give up
To forgive, than regret
To embrace, than let go
& to let go
When you must

Beyond this moment
There will be more
EVERYTHING
With each step we can
Tailor, trim
Envy & love

Beyond all this
We can always
Start again

22:10 Saturday, January 18th, 2014, Adullam, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Ed Sullivan Show featuring John, Paul, George, and RingoFlashed past, the decades. Things have come around. Was only yesterday. First heard the sound. I was but ten years old. Ed Sullivan Revealed them to America. Began A spiritual adventure. Rock and Roll Was back on track. I heard the bell's bright toll. Still vivid, those fresh faces, the delight Of hearing their renditions. Sunday night Would never be the same. Down in my soul. I understood the little girls. Control Was cast aside. Part of the master plan. No turning back. The future has begun. It was just yesterday. They still resound Between my ears. My soul was fertile ground Happy Valentine's Day, Venice, Roger Houston

Never
Forgotten:
Amiri
Baraka

By Anthony Castillo

On January 9th at the age of 79 famed poet, playwright, teacher and activist Amiri Baraka died in his home state of New Jersey. Born Everett LeRoi Jones, he began as a Beat Poet alongside Alan Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. He published his first major collection of poetry “Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note” as LeRoi Jones. He wrote his 1964 play “The Dutchman” dealing with racial tensions, and it garnered wide critical acclaim.

But it was a trip to post-revolution Cuba along with the as-sassination of Malcolm X in 1965 that politicized the then-LeRoi Jones and transformed him into Amiri Baraka. He became a Black Nationalist, a self-proclaimed Marxist, and distanced himself from the a-political Beat Poets, leaving his old life as LeRoi Jones behind him. Besides his name, the biggest change could be seen and heard in his poetry. Baraka started using Jazz and Blues rhythms as the foundation of his writing. He devel-oped a freer, loose, almost musical style in his reads. He would often read over Jazz tunes and write his poems for specific songs. His revolutionary politics were ever present in his writ-ings till the very end of his life.

It’s one thing to read an Amiri Baraka poem, but it was quite another experience to hear Baraka read his work live. I had the chance to see/hear him read in Leimert Park a few years ago, as well as speak with him afterwards. It was an amazing even-ing, one I will never forget. Luckily there are many recordings of Baraka reading his work, so future generations can be in-spired by this influential, creative force.

Baraka had 50 books published, including his 1984 book “The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones.” He was Professor Emeri-tus of African-American Studies at the State University of New York Stony Brook for 20 years. Baraka won numerous awards for his writings and fought many battles as an activist and revo-lutionary.



Social Soul

by Ronald K. Mc Kinley

Man is a social animal
An animal
Organized around madness
Righteousness
Cover for children
And bearers of
Isolation physically
or intellectually
Man/woman become unbalanced
Grouped together to get her
to get him
Assembled to make laws
In session to interpret laws
Elected to enforce laws
All can be perverted
Vigilance made worst by prejudice
Peace on earth good will toward men
A collective prayer is a wonderment
When there is a massed moment
For good
Man can truly be social

Homing in

By bETO Perez

having no ground to retreat
my back up hard against
my home grown presidio,
mask almost all splintered
scattering to the 4 winds
no dark passengers left
I repeatedly rebooted
moved to la Ciudad De
Nuestra Senora La
Virgen De Los Angeles.

Free Venice Beachhead • February 2014 • 9

Whole Life is Black

by Jax Zepnick

Nothing really mattress
When you are strolling down the street
With your tattoos
Covered head to toe
And the art,
That changes weekly--
A free ticket to a gallery
If you’d just open your eyes
And enjoy.
Step on the sand,
Take a sip,
Watch the sun,
Ride a wave,
Ride the pavement,
Ride your life--
And
Escape your life,
Because the blue skies will persist
When your whole life is black
Because Venice Beach will be here
When you need yourself back.

Back Street Life

I lived the backstreet life.
Traveling unmarked roads hidden from view.
Tasting lives lived out of sight
and out of mind.
Being a welcome visitor into the secret spaces
inhabited by rare and dangerous souls.

The backstreets of the cool, dark hours.
The times and places where passion, courage
and inspired lunacy prowl and hunt
and dance.

Where open eyed love is made to the vast glory
Of a universe unfelt by the safe and unknowing
in their beds on main street.

The backstreets are filled with beginnings and
endings.
The middles are for somewhere else.

mt



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Local Coastal Plan to Become Law of Land for Venice – *Continued from page 1*

The good news is that any decisions made by a Local Coastal Plan can be appealed with the Coastal Commission. However, the purpose of creating such a plan would be to reduce the work overload placed on the Coastal Commission, which already has a tough time living up to its mission.

In order for a Venice Local Coastal Plan to be established, the city of L.A. and the Coastal Commission would have to complete the two-step process of Developing and Implementing a Land Use Plan. A previous attempt was made in the late 90s and early 2000s to create a Local Coastal Plan for Venice.

At that time the Coastal Commission rejected the Land Implementation Plan submitted by the city of L.A., following which the city abandoned its quest for a Local Coastal Plan. The city and the Coastal Commission, however, agreed on the first part of the process and developed a certified Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan in 2001. As a matter of fact, that plan is what the Coastal Commission based its denial of OPDs on.

Governor Jerry Brown's latest budget allocated a million dollars in grants to support the establishment of Local Coastal Plans in all coastal zones. The city of L.A. was awarded \$100,000 of that.

Although the consensus seems to be that a Local Coastal Plan is needed for the coastal zone of Venice, which extends West of Lincoln, Venice has been cheated, sold-out and ripped off by the city of L.A. since its annexation in 1926. Based on precedent, L.A. should not be trusted with its own coastal zone, especially in light of Bonin's misguided and misinformed statements regarding parking restrictions in Venice.

It is interesting to note at this time Bonin's message during his speech at the January 21 Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) meeting. He defended the storage container provided for the house-less as a legal necessity to be able to remove "accumulated material belongings."

According to Bonin, he allowed the container to be placed at the paddle courts "because of a court

case, The Lavan Case. There is an attorney who often works for the ACLU...who has a very successful track record suing the city of Los Angeles...she usually kicks the city's ass, to be honest...." His implication was that without the legal necessity to provide storage before clean-up, there would be no storage provided. Two such clean-ups took place on Ocean Front Walk in the month of January alone, conducted by city workers in hazmat outfits escorted by police cars. They removed and hauled to Downtown things like locked bikes, blankets and backpacks.

It is imperative that we do not allow Bonin and the city of L.A. to manipulate the Local Coastal Plan that is in the works for Venice, and work vigilantly to ensure that it confirm with the Coastal Act of 1976 and with the stated missions of the Coastal Commission.

Bonin also stated at the January 21 VNC meeting that he answers all email messages he receives. So go ahead and ask him what he's up to and let him know what you think: mike.bonin@lacity.org

1414 MAIN TOO MUCH FOR LUPC! – *Continued from page 1*

enough. Guzman is petitioning that a moratorium be placed on all SLSs in Venice.

The next agenda item, 1414 Main Street, was a continuation from last month's LUPC meeting. The applicants, Jason Teague and Brian Silveira, were given five minutes to speak on new information to their mixed-use project. In this case, it was the development's proforma, delivered to LUPC at 6 pm. The proforma showed the projected costs of the development, as well as its initial net profit in the first three years: two percent, or approximately \$500,000. Although this may not be much for a developer, it well exceeds the median, annual income of \$56,241 for Los Angeles County residents, according to the most recent Census data.

Teague claimed that Main Street is part of the seven percent of Venice that should be commercially developed. "Abbot Kinney did not design Venice as a sleepy little beach town," he said. He went on to say that Main Street in all cities is the place people go to hang out. Sadly, Mr. Teague seems to have forgotten that in Venice, Main Street was originally Coral Canal. Mr. Kinney had a different idea about "partying", one that included gondola rides, and not parked cars.

Public comment continued on this project, beginning with a 5 minute proposed motion to reject and revise the current design based on community feedback. The speaker, Renata Pompelli, made twelve recommendations. These included reducing the number of stories and height to comply with the VSP; eliminating the ground floor commercial and underground bar/performance area; denying access to the underground parking garage through residential alleys; and making Main Street the front of the complex. She also showed the committee a petition with 933 signatures against the project. At the end, when she asked all in the audience against the project to raise their hands and stand up, the majority of people in the room did.

More individual public comments followed, with the majority expressing views against the development. Michael Wamback succinctly pointed out that the VSP existed to avoid this kind of confrontation and chaos. To go against it would set a precedent. Mark Kleiman claimed the developers were "only doing the bare minimum" for the community by not revealing things easily. Point in case was how the developers delivered their proforma right before the meeting, allowing no one in the community to examine it prior to the meeting.

Jonathon Kaplan called attention to a very important element that no one had publicly addressed: the historic nature of the district. In a letter sent to LUPC prior to the meeting, Kaplan stated that three houses that would be demolished are part of the original canal district. Both 202 and 208 Horizon also appear in Charlie Chaplin's movie, "Kid Auto Race," where he first revealed his famous character, the "Little Tramp". Kaplan is working with the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources. Until the properties' historic value can be assessed properly, Kaplan asked the project not be permitted to go forward.

The few people in favor of the project gave no compelling testimony as to why this megalith should go through. Several people merely commented on the character of Mr. Teague rather than the quality of the project. One supporter, Brad Neil, after applauding Teague for bringing in robotic parking, contradicted himself by adding that if he lived next door to the project, he probably would be pissed off, too.

After the public comments were closed, the developers made a brief rebuttal. Although they were replacing three existing, affordable rental units, the

January 15 LUPC meeting, Oakwood Rec. Gym
Photo By: Krista Scwimmer



rentals on these units could change if the tenants moved out; the price on their new units would be maintained for 30 years. Mr. Teague failed to mention that at least one of the tenants forced out had been living there since the 1970s – hardly an indication of tenant fluctuation. On top of it, the majority of Teague's condominiums would sell for close to \$1,000,000, proving that his intent is to serve the wealthier community. Right before the vote, when asked by one LUPC committee member if he would consider changing the design, Teague said he would not if it meant removing the fourth floor.

Fortunately for the community, Mia Heron, case project manager, made the motion to deny the project. Some of the reasons were: they were asking for too many incentives; the character, mass, and scale of the project did not fit the neighborhood; and they had not proven the need for certain off-menu incentives. The motion passed 7-0-1, with the chairman, Jake Kaufman, abstaining. LUPC's findings will now go to the Venice Neighborhood Council, possibly at their next meeting, Tuesday, February 18.

That night, LUPC also made two other motions on projects. Both the Firestone Project and the AK Boutique Hotel received the green light to go forward. In the case of the AK Hotel, a motion was made to approve the project "based upon compliance with the VCZSP," with nine conditions attached to the motion. The majority of the conditions detail constraints around delivery and loading place and time, as well as parking restrictions related to construction and use. The motion succeeded: 6 in favor, 1 opposing, and 1 abstaining.

Venice is experiencing an unprecedented amount of development. Although development can revitalize a community, we must look deeply at current building projects and ask ourselves if these serve an elite group or our entire community. Interestingly, Abbot Kinney himself did not seek to serve just one class of people. According to Tom Moran, when Kinney was asked by a reporter if he had stopped trying to attract the wealthy, Kinney replied, "Understand, I never had

any idea of making this a resort for rich people. The devil can attend to the rich without assistance."

Whether your home is owned, rented, borrowed or transitory, you, too, have a voice in this matter. Your voice, however, needs to be heard not only at local meetings such as LUPC and VNC, but also at the Los Angeles City level. Let's hold Los Angeles to our specific, coastal plans! Here are some ways in which you can achieve this:

* Read Specific Plans For Venice: You can find a copy of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan (Ordinance No. 172897) at: <http://bit.ly/MIJyqV>

* Read California SB 1818 at: <http://bit.ly/1gvDLx5>
Then, go bug your self-taught legal-savvy friends about its implications.

* Read and respond to "Notices of Hearing" placed on any homes in your neighborhood. Attending these ZA hearings is crucial! Your words are considered legal evidence, but must be heard at the lower level hearings.

* Write to these people and express your unique concerns: Council Member, District 11, Mike Bonin, mike.bonin@lacity.org; Tricia Keane, Planning Director, District 11, tricia.keane@lacity.org; Cecilia Castillo, Del Rey, Venice & Marina Peninsula Field Deputy, cecilia.castilla@lacity.org; Venice Neighborhood Council, info@venicenc.org; and Land Use and Planning Committee, lupc@venicenc.org

* Stay informed about the current, proposed projects by attending the next VNC meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 7 pm, at Westminster Elementary School Auditorium, 1010 Abbot Kinney Boulevard. For 1414 Main, you can stay updated by going to www.veniceagainst1414main.com

* Stay informed of other projects coming through LUPC by attending their meetings, the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 6:45 pm, at Oakwood Recreation Center, 767 California Street

* Send articles and letters to the Beachhead about this issue.

* Notice the beauty of Venice around you. It will make the fight against over-development even more meaningful.

Frank Strasser Reflects the Light and Fun of Venice

By Greta Cobar

It's an inescapable magnetic attraction between Venice and those who have answered their calling towards creativity. Sooner or later, in the realms of time and space, they find each other, and then, as in the case of Frank Strasser, his canvas explodes with color.

"I love the challenge of sitting down with a naked, blank canvas and giving birth to another world," Strasser told the Beachhead.

After visiting nine countries throughout Europe over a few months, Strasser came to Venice in '79 to "do for the Venice Canals something similar to what Monet did for the French landscape," he said.

Drawing inspiration from the European museums and nature itself, Strasser's paintings came to life when he came to Venice. "Venice was and is one of my biggest influences because of its free spirit, the realm of possibilities, the eclectic mix of people, the zest for life, and the fun. Venice is what I exhale as an artist," Strasser said.

Having lived in the canals since '79, it's not surprising that most of his paintings feature the canals with the old-school, small cottages. Some paintings are serene, with just a landscape and maybe a sunset, while others are jam-packed with as many goofy folks as one could fit on a canvas. The Eclectic Avenue piece pictured on the first page, one of his few that does not feature either the canals or the ocean, depicts some of the characters in the mayhem of Venice: hippies and whores, a rollerblader with a snake around her neck, musicians, body-builders, a couple into BDSM, another couple filming porn, Republicans holding a gun, and the ever-present homeless person, amongst many others. The one on the right depicts the serenity of Venice, instead.

"There's always a homeless guy in my paintings – often I include little details to indicate he is a war veteran. Often people fail to realize that the unkempt street dweller they may mock or despise might be someone who started out with a big dream and ended up in disillusion. When it comes to post traumatic stress syndrome, and other side effects of war, the attitude displayed by the very government which desperately "needs you" suddenly denies that you or your symptoms even exist. The prevailing attitude is 'take your troubles somewhere else soldier'," Strasser said.

"I never studied art or painting in any formal way – I have a natural gift for it. I am a student of life, and life is the best art, movie, book, and so on," Strasser told the Beachhead.

Having graduated from Loyola Marymount University with a degree in English literature, Strasser guesses that if he wasn't painting, he would probably be writing more. "I do my best to live without towing the line for the man," he said.

"Being self-taught set me free, and I had to only live up to my desire to infuse as much color and joy onto a canvas as I could. Life inspires me to create more life – for it to be more expansive and fun – I am addicted to fun," Strasser affirmed with a smile.

His run of fun extends over decades, continents as well as various other media of self-expression. His travels have included extended visits to Europe as well as Mexico. His creative gifts include music and writing, in addition to painting. "I've been singing The Doors in Venice for over thirty years. I've always had a strange connection with Jim Morrison – like the first band I ever performed with in high school performed mostly Doors music. I used to hang out at a house where Jim partied. Twice – in two different countries, lead guitarists in bands who had no idea I was a singer approached me and asked me to join them onstage in the next set to sing The Doors," Strasser said.

Stretching from Venice to Mexico and beyond, his musical career encompasses jams with Slavin David and the second coming of a band called The Canaligators, both of whom Strasser still performs with. He also writes original songs and performs solo acoustic gigs now and again.

One of Strasser's songs is a parody (or update) of the classic anti Vietnam war anthem "Feel Like I'm



Fixin' to Die," made famous by Country Joe and the Fish, at Woodstock. Strasser performed the song at one of the first anti war protests against "Operation Iraqi Freedom," in July 2005. The gig was held at the very house Oliver Stone used to film scenes from his movie *The Doors*.

Strasser will display a selection of his fine art prints at Hama Sushi during the months of February and March. The Venice Arts Council is sponsoring the exhibit. Proceeds from all art sales will benefit the Venice Japanese American Memorial Marker. Longtime local photographer Margaret Molloy will also exhibit photographs of Venice. A Happy Hour Reception for the artists will be held Sunday, February 9, 4-6pm at Hama Sushi, 213 Windward Avenue, Venice CA 90291, (310) 396-8783.

You may learn more about Frank Strasser on Facebook at: Frank Strasser - Fine Artist, or by visiting his website at: www.frankstrasserfineart.com

Feel Like I'm Livin' A Lie

By Frank Strasser

Well come on all you red state lads, there's trouble down in old Baghdad
Desert storm was child's play, compared to the middle east today,
We've gotta ear up to nail Saddam, Dubya said he's got an atom bomb.

To find WMDs that's why we stormed Iraq,
So far we ain't found jack, but there's no turning back.
We've got a Patriot Act and Homeland Security,
We've got Shock and Awe and Abu Ghraib,
Peace and freedom and Democracy.

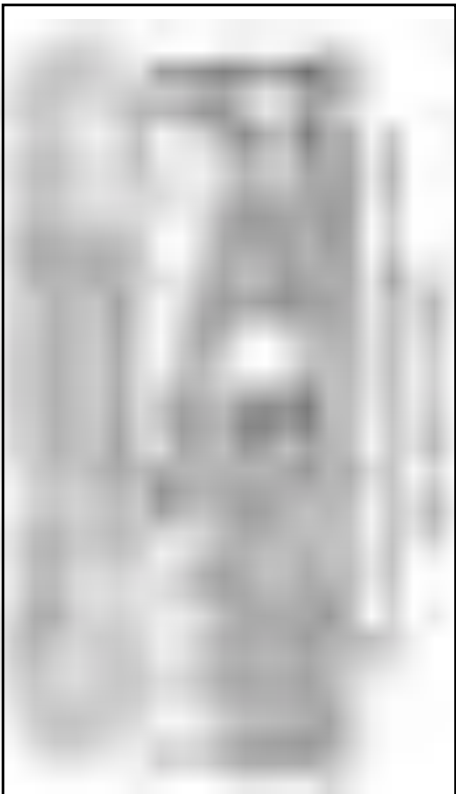
C'mon Dick Cheney move your ass, if there ain't no nukes, there's oil and gas.
So folks get killed yeah war's a bitch, but Halliburton's gettin' rich
And it's worth the risk at any price to name a tanker after Condi Rice.

To find WMDs, that's why we stormed Iraq,
So far we ain't found jack, but there's no turning back.
We've got a Patriot Act and Homeland Security,
We've got Shock and Awe and Abu Ghraib,
Peace and freedom and Democracy.

C'mon you pundits on Fox News, spew your fair and balanced views,
Shout those Commie peace freaks down, before Terrorists overrun your town,
If you truly love democracy fly Old Glory from your SUV.

To find WMDs that's why we'll bomb Iran,
Then on to Syria and Next-In-Line-O-Stan,
We're the world police and God's our right hand man,
We've got a Patriot Act and Homeland Security,
If you truly love democracy fly Old Glory from your SUV.

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PRESENTS

MAX 10

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD @ 7:30pm

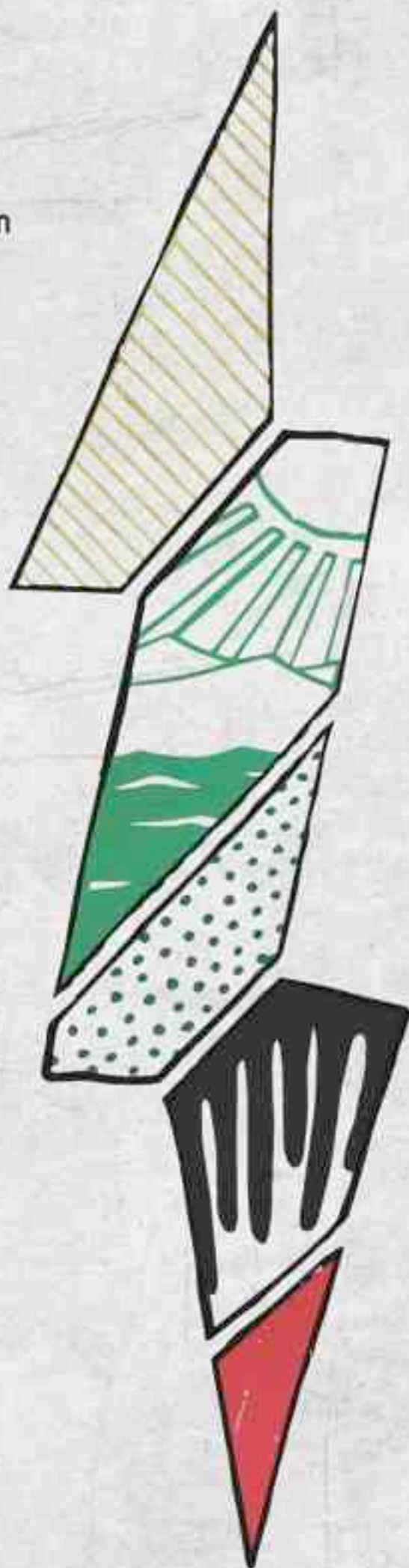
MAX 10 is a place where artists can experiment new ideas. MAX 10 is an un-curated monthly performance laboratory every 1st Monday.

10 Artists
10 Minutes
10 Dollars

February Participating Artists:

Vincent Master Jam Cash
Cellar Door Dance Company
Cheryl Fidelman
Leo Flowers
Scott Hillman
David Javelosa
Christine Jordan
Jaia Lee
M-Theory Dance Company
Ellen Switkes

Afterwards you are invited to a post show reception



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Iphigenia 2.0 by Laurel Tentindo

a short experimental dance piece captured on film and set to Elise Kermani's "post-classical" music.

About High Voltage - A new late night performance series of original contemporary and experimental works in dance, theater, multi-media and music. Each monthly edition presents works that requires minimal technical support, and are no more then 45 minutes in length. In an effort to create new opportunities for both emerging and established L.A. based artists, Performances/Installations/Happenings take place in our large street-level dance studio, in Venice.

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

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www.electriclodge.org
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info.electriclodge@gmail.com

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