

# Venice, Rise Against Over-Development!

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P.O. BOX 2, VENICE, CA. 90294 • www.venicebeachhead.org • free@venicebeachhead.org • 310-827-2329

## Nightmare On 1414 Main Street



By Krista Schwimmer

There is a storm brewing in Venice, blown in by the winds of change. Some say these winds originated from a statement made in Gentleman's Quarterly, calling Abbot Kinney Boulevard the coolest street in the United States. Some say these winds arose when the titan, Google, landed in town. Wherever they come from, these winds of change mean business. Big business. Consider this one statistic: At the most recent Land Use and Planning Committee meeting (LUPC), acting chairman, Jim Murez, stated that although Venice is only 1% of Los Angeles, LUPC is reviewing 19% of all city permits.

One of these proposed developments is being called 1414 Main Street. A development team that includes Brian Silveria and Jason Teague scooped up five parcels for this project: 202 Horizon, 208 Horizon, 1422 Main, 1414 Main, and 1410 Main. Although the Main Street side of the project is in a commercial zone, the lots extend back into quiet, residential neighborhoods that are quintessentially Venice. In fact, according to the LA County Tax Assessor website, two of these homes were built in 1911 and 1912.

The proposed development is the following: a 4-story high, 26 unit condominium complex that would include two restaurants, a retail space, a public event space, rooftop decks, and a 3-story, subterranean, 242-space parking garage with a robotic system. The number of parking spaces alone, according to the developers themselves, is 40% above code. At first glance, this amount of parking would seem to

be the answer to Venetians' prayers. At least, that is what the developers would like the public to believe. There are two problems with this idea: one, there is no indication that the parking would be free, even for employees; and two, the development would add more cars, people, and traffic into an already congested area. On top of it all, the entrance to the parking structure would be through the narrow alley behind that links Horizon Avenue and Market Street, not through Main Street.

The height of the development, too, would exceed the  
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Above: Proposed over-development for 1414 Main St. Below: Current occupancy at 1414 Main St.

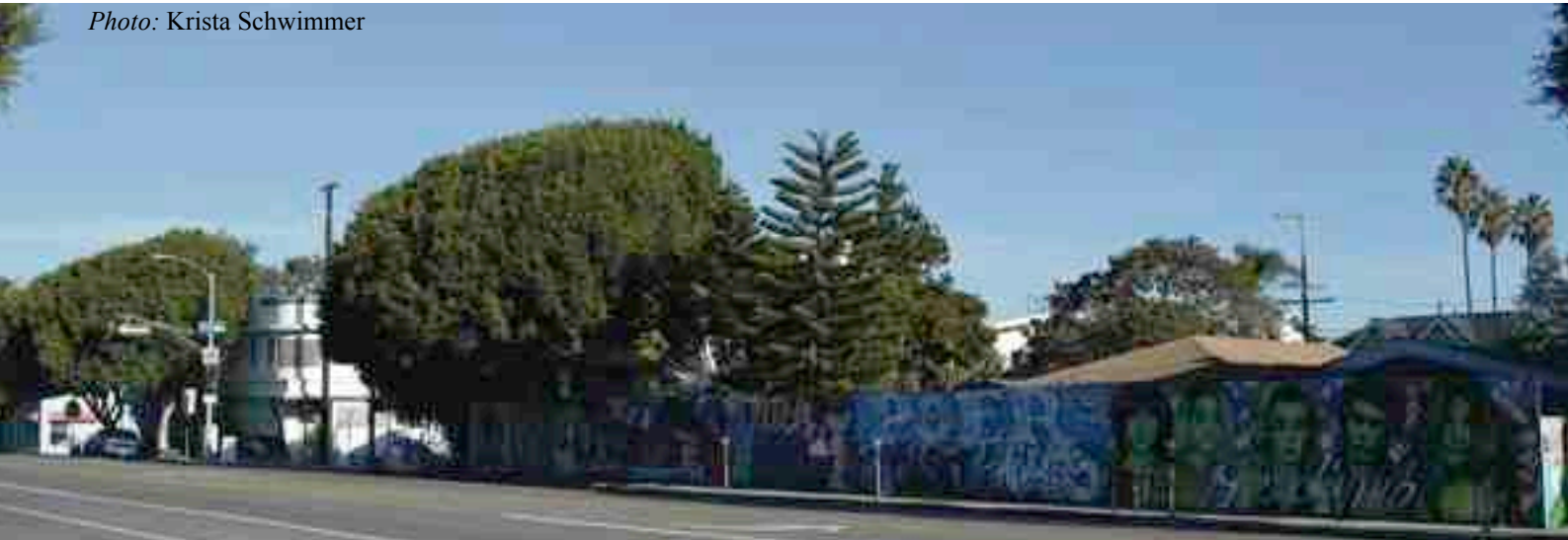


Photo: Krista Schwimmer

## Monstrosity Hotel Proposed Across from Westminster School

By Holly Mosher

On December 18 I attended my first ever Land and Planning Use Meeting in Venice. I was there because I had heard about the proposed hotel that developers want to put up directly across the street from Westminster Elementary School on Abbot Kinney. When I realized that the hotel I'd been hearing rumblings about on Abbot Kinney was going to be across the street from a school, I had to attend. When I was five, I had been hit by a car in front of a public library and the town I grew up in then installed a yellow flashing light where I had been hit, to get traffic to slow down. I also was concerned by the transient nature of a hotel and how people with ill intent can easily stay at the hotel and prey on children.

I wrote to a friend who is a librarian at an elementary school in Santa Monica and she agreed with my concerns saying, "I completely agree with you. Nothing about putting a hotel across from a school feels right. Having worked at a hotel myself I have seen how even a nice hotel can attract some sketchy people. My other concern would be the increase in traffic. Even on our fairly quiet section of San Vicente I have seen some close calls. I imagine that with a hotel you would get more drunk drivers, impatient

taxi drivers, and out of towners who are lost and confused driving by the school. The idea of this alone makes me nervous. If this proposal was happening across from my school, I would fight it and I can guarantee so would every other faculty member and parent at our school."

The first item on the agenda at the meeting was for the proposed Firestone Walker Brew/Pub on Washington and I was impressed that the Land and Planning Use Board seemed very concerned with what the immediate neighbors to the location felt about what was being proposed. So when it came time to talk about the proximity of the hotel to the elementary school, I was surprised to find out that there has not been a town hall meeting at Westminster Elementary to find out how the parents and faculty felt about the hotel. I doubt most of the parents and faculty even know about the proposed hotel.

I began an email chain with the developers voicing my concern and they assured me they have been in dialogue with the school. Interestingly, they mentioned that one of them had been a supporter of the school and they had been talking with administration and the endowment committee. As the developer made those two points I wondered if they were put-

ting the financial interest of the school ahead of the safety interest of the children.

Last week a friend told me she was shaken up a bit because she was driving down Abbot Kinney and looking at a restaurant while driving and accidentally bumped the car in front of her. Imagine how it will be with all the out of towners who will be just trying to figure traffic out. I'm a person who is great with directions, but it took me several years to really get a gist of all the streets in Venice. The way they all criss-cross around Abbot Kinney will only create confused drivers or people paying more attention to their smartphones than to kids crossing the street. And the developers mentioned trying to make Electric a part time one way street will only add to the confusion.

Marta Every spoke up during the comment section and mentioned how the hotel would bring 700 new car trips to Abbot Kinney each day. And there are only 160 parking spaces, while the developers' own estimates say that the hotel complex will employ 160 people, but that's not even including guests or an additional space for a café. The hotel developers seem to think that all their guests will arrive in taxis, but as someone who manages a rental property for tourists

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Beachhead Collective Staff:

Anne Alvarez, Anthony Castillo, Greta Cobar, Don Geagan, Mary Getlein, CJ Gronner, Ronald McKinley, Alice Stek.

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Mail: P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294.  
Email: free@venicebeachhead.org  
Web: www.venicebeachhead.org  
Twitter: twitter.com/VeniceBeachhead

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Dear Pardee Properties:

Please stop tearing down beautiful craftsman homes and putting up these monster structures that cut off our sunshine,air and beach breezes. Think about where you live and if you would like a huge structure to be built and cut off the light and air for you. I ask you, if this is your way of forcing the old Venice home owners to sell their properties? I see that you state on your web site that you give back to the community? Will you please let your gift be that you remodel the old craftsmen homes? This would be the best gift in the world to Venice, lets keep Venice, Venice and keep our community a community, it would be greatly appreciated by many of us who are watching the quaintness of Venice be destroyed and your name seems to the name Pardee properties that is profiting from it.

Peace,  
Laddie Williams, Jataun Valentine, Lydia Ponce,  
Fam Anderson



Dear Beachhead:

It was very disheartening to see Anjelica Huston turning on the switch to light our Venice Sign in its traditional red and green for the holidays. Such irony as she was lighting a piece of valuable Venetian history, while her husband, Robert Graham, could not construct a studio that could possibly retain Abbot Kinney’s historical columns and his promenade. These destroyed columns were copied from St Mark’s Plaza in Venice, Italy, the city on which Kinney modeled his Renaissance City in Southern California. Those columns should have been declared historical long ago and never been allowed to be removed. I abhor this worship of celebrities and their subsequent courting of them, over what little of Venetian history remains. The celebrities will come and go; our history needs to be zealously protected.

To add to the insult, incredibly, Ms. Huston was more interested in talking about her book, than in the spirit of the ceremony. She mentioned it three times before posing for photos with Councilmember Bonin.

May I say to the Councilmember as well as to the Venice Chamber of Commerce, that here in Venice, there are thousands of ‘celebrities’ to choose from who work tirelessly as volunteers to better their lives and the lives of others in our community. Perhaps next year, we might consider one.

Laura Shepard Townsend

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Thanks for your generous donations!

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El Huarique - A Hidden Gem On The Boardwalk Culinary Scene

The aptly named, El Huarique - Peruvian for "Hole in the wall" - is hard to find but well worth it. Located INSIDE the food court at 1301 Ocean Front Walk (X street Westminster) this rockin' little spot dishes up delicious Peruvian style cuisine at very reasonable prices.

Talk about reasonable - their signature dish is the very popular rotisserie chicken, 1/4 of a succulent roasted bird with salad and rice all for the princely sum of \$4.99. Many other gourmet dishes can be found on the menu, including ceviche de pescado, done in authentic Peruvian style herbs and spices.

Owner/Chef, Ernesto Guitierrez, was born in Lima where his Mother cooked meals in her kitchen to help bring in some extra money. This is where Ernesto learned to love cooking. When he moved to America in 2010, he started the Inka Deli next door to Big Daddy's on the OFW, but (Gee, what a shock) after the lease was up, the landlord priced him out of the location.

Now Guitierrez has opened the fabulous El Huarique, cooking up delicious Peruvian cuisine at very affordable prices. You'll sit at a counter - it's not fancy, but the smiling faces of Ernesto and his aide de camp, Milo, as they prepare your meal, make it a pleasure to dine there (or you can take out, or get delivery if local).

So you will have to look hard to find this little jewel of an eatery on the Ocean Front Walk, but just go on inside the food court at 1301 OFW and dig in. You will not regret it!

- B. Meade

1720 Lincoln Blvd, @ Superba, Venice  
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# Starbucks Brings Jim Crow to Venice

By Brian Connolly

I ran up the sidewalk to the Starbucks on Navy & Main near Venice Beach, California. It was still dark out at 6:10 AM, but I had to get to my new job with the Salvation Army. I'd been sleeping on the sidewalk nearby for the last few months, homeless. I'd lost my job through no fault of my own at the height of the great recession. Inside, I put my huge double sleeping-bag pack under the table where I usually sat. Though a straight-A from the University of Delaware, I definitely "looked homeless." I walked up to the counter and ordered my usual sausage sandwich, grande coffee and LA times when the new manager there, a white girl called Rebecca informed me that my status as a Starbucks customer had changed. She told me that because of a "hygiene issue" that from now on I would be buying their products there but that I had to immediately leave the store – I could no longer sit with the rest of the patrons. Time stopped. She was not reserving the right to refuse service – she was making my patronage of a Starbucks restaurant conditional as condescendingly and tritely as if she was explaining to "colored" at the counter at Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960 that that was "just the way it is."

Though I'm white, from an affluent family, a highly educated and articulate Phi Beta Kappa because I "looked homeless" she tried to inform me that

I and other "homeless" individuals would be adhering to this Jim Crow-style condition in the future. It was how things were going to be when I returned and was starting right away – I could buy Starbucks, Inc. product, but I had to immediately leave.

The Jim Crow laws were racial segregation laws enacted in the U.S. between 1876 and 1965. Most of them were overruled by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Laws such as: blacks couldn't drink from the same water fountains as whites, blacks had curfews, that blacks could spend their money in "white" restaurants, but there'd be conditions such as they had to enter through the back door or they could order to-go, but they couldn't actually sit with the other patrons. Some of the most hated, blatantly racist, adhorent laws ever enacted – and Rebecca the manager of a Starbucks on the Venice/Santa Monica border was using the same reasoning to clear the "homeless looking" people from her store.

I'd never experienced discrimination before personally in my life, never, but there was only one word for what I began experiencing from that moment on. Rage. Burning, seething, caustic rage. I refused her "conditions" and went down the street to the other Starbucks and spoke to the manager there, a young Latino girl, as nice as could be. When I explained the conditions that Rebecca had stated earlier, she was flabbergasted. Refuse service, sure, but

to tell someone that their money was good but that after they paid that they weren't a full customer? With most "homeless looking" people actually being people of color what could be more racist, more discriminatory. Flash back to 1960 in North Carolina. The similar dynamic was in play back then as Rebecca was trying to initiate in 2013. White restaurants definitely wanted blacks' money. Blacks might constitute 30% or 40% of a small restaurant's revenue, just like the homeless make up a great deal of business in this equation – but with Jim Crow there were always "the conditions."

Enter Starbucks, Inc. – under analogous pressures due to the crimes of the banks, the homeless population of LA and other cities has swollen to crises proportions. When you're homeless you learn the faces of who's homeless from the homeless centers and churches. You see them "out in the world" later in the day and maybe they look homeless – sometimes not. Many live out of their cars. The first thing I began noticing after I became homeless myself was just how many people at the library – and at inexpensive restaurants like Starbucks – were homeless. The homeless are big business to Starbucks, Inc., but there is NEVER an excuse to bring back second-class status to any American under such circumstances. Refuse service, sure.

Refuse dignity to any human being, never. Occupy!

## TO STORE and/or TO DISCARD: That is the Question for Venice

By Laura Shepard Townsend

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, L.A. City Council-member Mike Bonin stated in a letter to the Venice Neighborhood Council that he is authorizing a voluntary storage program for those participating in the emergency winter shelter program

I would say it is about time since up to now all unattended belongings have been routinely confiscated and discarded by L.A. This includes bed rolls and all personal effects. As an example of this, one morning on the beach below Rose Avenue, I watched as a small, beautiful shrine was dismantled and thrown in the back of an L.A. Parks and Beaches pick-up truck.

The shrine had been carefully constructed by a houseless man as a private, sacred island of beauty for his simple bedroll where he slept at night. It was made up of artfully arranged objects. There were candles and books; neatly bound sheets of his poetry; driftwood festooned with colored cloth and beads, and bright bits of beach glass placed into mosaics on the sand.

I found out later that the man had left to play his saxophone on the boardwalk to earn his daily keep. That's when the L.A. County beach cleaning division struck, driving up in a blue pick-up. Men made quick work of throwing everything into black plastic bags. They seemed to be in a hurry, probably, I thought, because they had many shrines to dispose of that day. I asked the one who seemed to be in charge what he thought he was doing; couldn't he see what all this had meant to someone?

Somewhat sorrowfully he told me that there was a law that all personal effects that were found "abandoned" after 6 AM each day were to be collected and discarded. His supervisor patrolled the beach to ensure everything was cleared.

I found out where the main trash yard was for the Venice Beach cleanup and climbed up the side to take a look. There was the usual beach trash: beer bottles, Styrofoam, rotting seaweed etc., but there were also books; bedrolls and clothing; shoes and hats and photographs in frames; all the small possessions of people trying to make a hard life bearable. Anyone seeing this would know something was very wrong. And three years ago, the houseless were given a very "Merry Christmas"! As they lined up for their Christmas meal, the City of Los Angeles swooped in and carted away everything they owned.

As a result of these continual and flagrant violations of the civil rights of the houseless, the City of Los Angeles was sued in Lavan vs. the City of Los Angeles. When the City of Los Angeles lost, they appealed, but a panel of the U.S. 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the court order. They ruled that the personal possessions of the houseless left for a short time on city sidewalks may be taken only if the possessions pose an immediate threat to public safety or health or constitute criminal evidence. And this applies not just to L.A., but to all U.S. cities.

Now because of this law suit, bureaucratic wheels are lurching into motion. In his letter to the VNC, Councilmember Bonin stated that he has had to make "tough decisions" to try and balance the needs



Above: Last year's storage container, by the Pacific police substation. It was available only during the month of February.

of the houseless with the needs of his citizenry. So as I already stated, he is authorizing the voluntary storage program for those participating in the emergency winter shelter program. But he is also "instructing the City crews to conduct regular and comprehensive clean-ups of materials on our streets and sidewalks".

Ok, let's address the first point. The Westside Winter Shelter Program, contracted by the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Houseless Services Authority (LAHSA), will provide temporary shelter at night for the houseless. Operating December 1, 2013 to March 1, 2014, shuttles will pick up at 6 p.m. bound for the National Guard Armory at the VA, returning at 6 a.m. the next morning. There is obviously a need – 129 people were housed for the first three nights. But here is the rub: in order for people to be sheltered, they are not allowed to take more than they can carry onto the shuttle. This is where the storage bins come in.

As Councilperson Bonin stated in his letter, the check-in program must be voluntary, "to protect the city legally, and that we need to demonstrate to the courts that we are giving people a chance to store their belongings before we tell them that we may remove them". He asked the Department of Recreation and Parks to allow VCHC, the Venice Community Housing Corporation, to use an existing container next to the paddle tennis courts, but he added that he would gladly entertain an alternative location – "if the Venice Neighborhood Council, after public process, recommends one". Thus, a major portion of the December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the VNC was for the discussion and vote on alternative locations. Representing CD 11 was Cecilia Castillo, Field Deputy and Debbie Dyer Harris, District Director.

The criteria for suggestions of locations for storage were the following:

- The location must be large enough to accommodate an 8X20 ft. shipping container and room for individuals to queue up to use the facility.
- The location should be large and convenient enough to accommodate pick-up and drop off of individuals being bused to the Emergency Winter Shelter in WLA.

- The location should be near Venice Beach where many of the houseless congregate.

- The location should be a city facility or one where any rental charges will be minimal since no funds for renting a facility have been identified.

The suggestions already on the table were:

1. Paddle Tennis Court storage bin.
2. City parking lot between North and South Venice Blvd. next to Pacific near the lot's canal bridge.
3. Metro Bus Yard at Main between Sunset and Thornton Place.

When the Attendees at the VNC Meeting were asked for other suggestions, here was what was proposed and added:

4. St. Joseph's Center
5. Venice Community Housing Corp.
6. First Baptist Church
7. Westminster Senior Center
8. Centennial Park

After a short discussion of the positives for each location, the audience was polled. Out of 42 votes, 21 people voted for the First Baptist Church since Bishop Allen is very willing to place the container in the church parking lot, and currently provides four meals per week, as well as other services to the houseless.

The second winning location was the currently unoccupied Westminster Senior Center, with 13 votes (out of 42 votes cast). Among the supporters for the Senior Center as a location was Steve Clare, Executive Director for VCHC, who enumerated the many pluses: storage could be housed inside (with toilet facilities) rather than just a storage bin outside; it is owned and operated by L.A.; the center is not too close to residents. Steve Clare also felt that it could be easily administered and perhaps transitioned to a permanent staff with volunteers to offer more services to those in need in the community. (The Venice Community Housing Corporation and a team of dedicated volunteers has already agreed to operate the voluntary program for the duration of the winter shelter program.)

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# Santa Monica Airport has been a bad neighbor, but change is in the air

By Laura Silagi

The latest is that the city of Santa Monica is suing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to establish the city’s right to control the future use of the Santa Monica Airport (SMO) property after the 1984 agreement with the FAA is terminated in July of 2015. The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Los Angeles, asks the court to declare that the City holds clear title to the land. And, it challenges the FAA's claim that the City must continue to operate the Airport indefinitely, even after contracts establishing the City's Airport obligations expire.

In the meantime groups of mostly Santa Monica residents have begun an airport to park movement. On December 17, 2013, the Venice Neighborhood Council voted to support a park use of the land if the airport is closed. A park in place of the airport brings all kinds of possibilities to mind. The conversion of an airport to park is not a new idea. It has been accomplished in many places around the world, closest to home at Crissy Field in San Francisco, Meadowlark Park in East Long Beach, and Mile Square Regional Park in Fountain Valley.

A huge park in place of SMO could be up to one-third the size of New York’s Central Park, and the gem of Santa Monica, with playing fields, walking and biking paths, picnic areas, natural habitats, water features, and quiet places for contemplation. It would provide much needed urban park space while providing art studios and other cultural amenities. Such a creation would have a very low negative impact on its Los Angeles (Venice, Mar Vista, West Los Angeles) neighbors, and best of all, we could all use it. Now all that remains is for Santa Monica to win its lawsuit and for their city council to vote for this use of the land

So far many organizations are supporting this idea and the support is growing both in Santa Monica and Los Angeles. Check out Airport2Park.org for their latest upcoming activities and get involved.

**What has been the negative impact of the Santa Monica Airport?** The World Health organization recently declared air pollution to be a carcinogen.

As jets idle and take off, they propel ultra-fine particles into the neighborhood to the east of the airport, making it one of the most polluted areas of Los Angeles, and on Santa Ana condition days, when the planes take off to the west, this pollution is propelled into Venice. The Los Angeles Times on December 13, 2013 discussed this situation in an article titled “Big disparities in air pollution detected in L. A. neighborhoods.” The article references a recent UCLA study: “The North Westdale neighborhood of Mar Vista, (just east of SMO at Bundy,) is heavily impacted by activities at Santa Monica Airport... It has possibly the highest concentrations of ultra-fine particles in Los Angeles area. Exposures to these pollutants has been linked to asthma, heart attacks, strokes, low birth weights, pre-term births...”



While ultra-fine particles present health problems, so does lead. All propeller planes use leaded fuel. Take-offs, landings, and practice techniques, such as “Touch and Goes,” by propeller planes spew leaded fuel over our homes and schools. Leaded fuel has been illegal in automobile fuel for thirty years, but not in aviation fuel for propeller planes. Lead ingestion is cumulative, and causes significant risks to humans, especially to the developing brains of children. Brain damage, impaired behavioral outcomes, central nervous system damage, and impaired neurological development are all outcomes of lead poisoning.

**Noise pollution** from propeller planes plagues our area. Plane noise is above the ambient noise level. Noise above the ambient level affects learning abilities in children, and increases stress and stress-related diseases in everyone. Noise pollution leads to hearing loss, psychological distress and learned helplessness, as noted in a 2010 UCLA Pediatric Study entitled “The Santa Monica Airport Health Impact Assessment.”

**Safety and Security:** Accidents from planes using SMO happen with frequency, averaging about one every six months and have had a 50 percent fatality rate. Eighty-four accidents have been reported since 1982, according to a list compiled from the NTSB database by Zina Josephs of Santa Monica.

In terms of security, the Santa Monica police department’s Airport Services Unit is responsible for providing uniformed patrols and enforcement activities related to municipal code violations at the Santa Monica Airport. Their work has been shown to be inadequate, as exemplified by the finding of drugs on board planes flown out of Santa Monica. At SMO, people and luggage are not routinely searched as they are at larger airports. SMO thus poses a security issue, as weak security policy could lead to other security breaches, crashes and even allow SMO to become a gateway for future terrorist attacks.

**Sustainability:** SMO contributes to climate change because these small, mostly recreational and executive aircrafts are an extremely inefficient way to travel. A few people aboard an aircraft create more pollution proportionately to the many people traveling aboard a large craft. SMO also dispenses fuel. Millions of gallons of fuel are pumped annually from there, adding to pollution.

Who uses and benefits from the airport? There are only about 310 registered pilots in all of Santa Monica. SMO is maintained for a relative few, and has been subsidized by the city of Santa Monica. This raises the question of **who is this airport really serving and at what cost to the public’s health and safety?**

**Fairness:** In order to relieve residents of Santa Monica from the negative effects of propeller planes flying over their homes, the City of Santa Monica has a policy called the “Fly

Neighborly Program,” which “highly recommends” that all prop planes fly south over Venice on take-off, and when flying pattern loops, continue east over Mar Vista and West L.A. This is not an F.A.A. policy, it is a Santa Monica policy that protects most of its citizens, and shunts pollution to Los Angeles residents. The city of Santa Monica also has worked with the F.A.A. to instruct all jet planes and propeller instrument flight airplanes to depart over Venice. Santa Monica’s refusal to agree to allow departures to the north over Santa Monica means that there is insufficient space to separate LAX and SMO traffic when departing over Venice. This causes airplanes to idle on the ground waiting to be cleared for departure.

**Politicians:** At the April 2013 symposium on the airport, sponsored by the Venice Neighborhood Council’s Santa Monica Airport Committee, politicians all spoke of the negative impacts this airport has on Venice in particular. Los Angeles Councilman Mike Bonin and California State Senator Ted Lieu have said the airport should be closed. U.S. Congressman Henry Waxman said he would support the will of the people. Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer spoke of getting involved in the effort to mitigate the negative impacts of the airport on Los Angeles citizens. We need to ask them to be concrete as to how they will help.

In all, the Santa Monica airport is no longer a safe place for Santa Monica and its Los Angeles neighbors. The area’s population is dense; there is no buffer zone between the residents and the airport. In 2008, the FAA allowed the airport to use the shorter runway, which is not long enough for Category C and D (larger, faster jets), which now use it.

The negative impacts cannot be mitigated. “*Land Use is a Health Issue*,” said Dr. Richard Jackson, School of Public Health, U.C.L.A. This land could be put to a truly healthy use, like a park.

## WHY I PREFER GANGSTERS OVER YUPPIES

By Rene Kraus

My buddies and I have been meeting every morning at the local coffee house, from what I can remember, since the mid 90s.

It’s a good way to start your day.

Most of the time we discuss world affairs for 20 minutes a pop, before we move on to one of the most talked about topics....the old days versus the new days.

What I call gangsters vs. yuppies.

These days some of my friends are mesmerized by the huge number of good looking chicks. That goes for the New Days....

The only problem is... they don’t care much about a bunch of crusties (old guys) sitting on the bench.

“Good Morning”, is met with no interest. Glued to their iPhone screens, there is NO Smile for you today buddy.

So there goes the argument for the New Days.

And that brings me to why I like gangsters better than yuppies!

First of all you knew the guys, they were your neighbors. If you respected them and didn’t stick your nose in their business, try to pick up on their girlfriends and left their families alone, you had no problems from them. They would never try to take away your livelihood or evict you, nothing like that.

Well, the yuppies, knowingly or not, hand in hand with developers, are dislodging you.

Their money and cluelessness are a perfect match. Knowingly or not, they are going for the jugu-

lar. They are buying the cool Venice Vibe but the problem is, they do not know much about it.

Just walk around Venice to see the atrocities being built.

I see an absolute disregard for the 108-year-old community of Venice.

In fact, the Venice Neighborhood Land Use and Planning Committee is allowing it by rubber-stamping building projects all day long. They are not Venetians, nor do they care about Venice.

When the gangsters were numerous here, the developers would not cross Lincoln Blvd. Even the cops wouldn’t come after sunset. Now they have to protect the yuppies, I guess, from the homeless.

So, if you feel just a little bit like me, please sign the petition....and say no to box development, small lot subdivisions, blocking our views, moving our people out, and ruining our community: [bitly.com/1ixg333](http://bitly.com/1ixg333).



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# Police Selectively Enforcing Vending Ordinance on OFW

By Timothy Trygg

Municipal code LAMC 42.15 was established to stop the selling of commercial items on Ocean Front Walk (OFW) so that there would be more space for the artists and the stores would have less competition. Venice has been known for its free speech zones, musicians, jewelry makers/wire wrappers for years. Since the beginning of time jewelry has been considered an art-form, and most prestigious, well-established art museums worldwide have jewelry pieces on display.

Selling jewelry on OFW was made illegal under LAMC 42.15, code which does not include jewelry in the definition of art. Quoting a price for your jewelry is punishable by a fine, and a second offense can result in a misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine or your arrest and confiscation of your property.

In fact, LAMC 42.15 is so broad that it has banned the selling of hula hoops on OFW. Do you think that selling a hand-made hula hoop should be considered a crime? My friend Jennifer Jenson has been given three tickets, and was grabbed by her wrists, very aggressively, by LAPD cops, for being hesitant to sign the ticket. She had to go to the doctor because of her injuries.

Several other items that have been sold in Venice for years were banned by LAMC 42.15. For example, wrapping someone's hair is now illegal. I was given a ticket three months ago for selling a bracelet I made. The cops warned me that jewelry is illegal, and proceeded to go around the corner and spy on me until I made a transaction and served me with a ticket.

On December 15 the LAPD used undercover officers to entrap and record people without their knowledge. I was approached by an undercover officer, who asked the price of an item. I quoted him a price for an item I made, and as he walked away I was surrounded by three officers. They began to photograph me and my jewelry without telling me what they were doing. I asked officer Skinner what was going on. She told me to go and stand over there, for I was getting detained. She proceeded to record the entire conversation.

Venetians, why are we tolerating this police misconduct and our First Amendment rights to freedom



Above: Jennifer Jenson and one of her unique, hand-made-on-the-spot hula hoops, OFW

of speech and freedom of expression being trampled right in front of our eyes?

I am an artist, jewelry maker, poet, and peace maker. I moved here in 2000, and Venice has helped me to grow as an artist. Venice helped me to simply be me. I am an artist/poet who just wants to be free.

Municipal code LAMC 42.15 is so broad that it has banned tilting your umbrella to protect yourself from the sun. It has banned jewelry and all other hand-made items that do not fit into the code's own, original definition of art. Some white-collar people sat in a downtown L.A. board room and wrote LAMC 42.15 while being totally oblivious to Venice and what we are all about.

Native American Indians are being fined for making hand-made crafts that they've been making since long before the Europeans showed up. So why are there so many made-in-China dream catchers being sold on OFW? Why was I targeted for my hand-made jewelry and not the vendor next to me selling dream catchers from China and the guy on the other side of me accepting signatures for a new banking system? How much did he get paid per signature collected?

The LAPD cops, left to their own devices, will continue their selective enforcement of LAMC 42.15. Some artists selling their hand-made objects are being prosecuted, while others bringing made-in-China stuff from the downtown alley are left alone. Do we have to file yet another lawsuit to yet again try to stop police misconduct on OFW?

## Emergency Services: Enabling Life

By Peggy Lee Kennedy

There has been an upsurge of homeless deaths reported this winter, especially with the recent cold snap we had in November and December. There should be distress and horror regarding this happening here in Los Angeles, but not surprise. Los Angeles has for years carried the shame of being the Homeless Capital of the United States. And, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), the population of homeless people being sheltered in Los Angeles (16.7 percent) is the lowest percentage being sheltered by any major city.

In a NCH study of Los Angeles County homeless deaths, occurring from January 1, 2000 to May 28, 2007 and solely based on information provided by the LA County Coroner's office, the total deaths were 2,815. Of this number 1,277 were in the City of Los Angeles (Venice is part of Los Angeles City so there is no separate number in the study), 154 were in Long Beach, 111 in Santa Monica, 55 in Pasadena, and 48 in Hollywood. The leading known causes of death were cardiovascular.

In another, more recently published 11 year study of homeless deaths in Sacramento County, by the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness, a reported 501 people died as "transient" or without a permanent address (according to the Sacramento County Coroner). About 77 percent of the deceased 501 spent time in the county jail.

Bob Erlenbusch of the Coalition to End Homelessness is calling for creating safe places for homeless people to stay, places for them to receive care; where homeless people can live with basic facilities and without police interference.

Can there be a popular movement for this in Los Angeles? The endless cycle of criminalization and incarceration of homeless people is a well-funded city effort, with the Safer City Initiative in Skid Row and the Homeless Task Forces in Venice. Law enforcement is no solution and can cause severe stress to those already suffering. It's just cruel, inhumane and unnecessary.

Of course housing is the solution to homelessness, but Los Angeles is providing temporary shelter

Until we repeal 85.02, which makes it illegal to sleep in a vehicle, the only two options are to put a mattress on top of



to but 16.7 percent of its homeless population - hello! The lack of affordable housing is yet another hall of shame horror to be awarded to Los Angeles. No one knows or is keeping any real records of the loss of affordable housing occurring in Los Angeles. Lack of affordable housing is a major cause of homelessness.

Recently I reviewed an amendment to the small lot subdivision ordinance being done by the Los Angeles City Planning Department. The claim was that it will now be more convenient for developers to process the permits. The small lot subdivision is a tool for developers to make money by removing older, more affordable housing, splitting the lot, building to the edge of the new lots, and selling new mini-mansions to the more wealthy people moving in Venice. This is a glaring example of how our city is just on the wrong side to ending homelessness.

There is hope. It's the people. Around 700 people came to demonstrate in Hollywood against a LeBonge motion that would restrict feeding homeless people in



public. A large group of people came out on Christmas day to serve homeless people on Venice Beach this year. A volunteer (mostly Occupy Venice people) effort is staffing a place for homeless people to store their items so they can go in to the temporary Winter Shelter program. And it looks there may be a favorable outcome to the 9th Circuit case re-

garding the Los Angeles City law (85.02) making it illegal to live in a vehicle. Venice may even succeed in opposing the small lot subdivision crisis. Who knows.

All very hopeful and a good time for the people to make the city move in a more positive direction.

Until the City and County of Los Angeles becomes accountable for the required affordable housing to solve homelessness - instead of being more accountable to the profit of developers instead of using the city budget on law enforcement as if it's some kind of a solution to poverty - we will remain in this vicious cycle.

Until then, in order to save lives, we must oppose the cruel and inhumane treatment of unhoused people while providing emergency services on the streets where many people have been forced.

While we are at it, let's start a new conversation about getting some safe places for homeless or vehicle housed people to be legally.

Those are solutions to homelessness and to less people dying on our streets.



Roger Houston



Venice's Finest Poets Reading at  
Beachhead's 45th Birthday Celebration

December 1,  
2013

Beyond  
Baroque

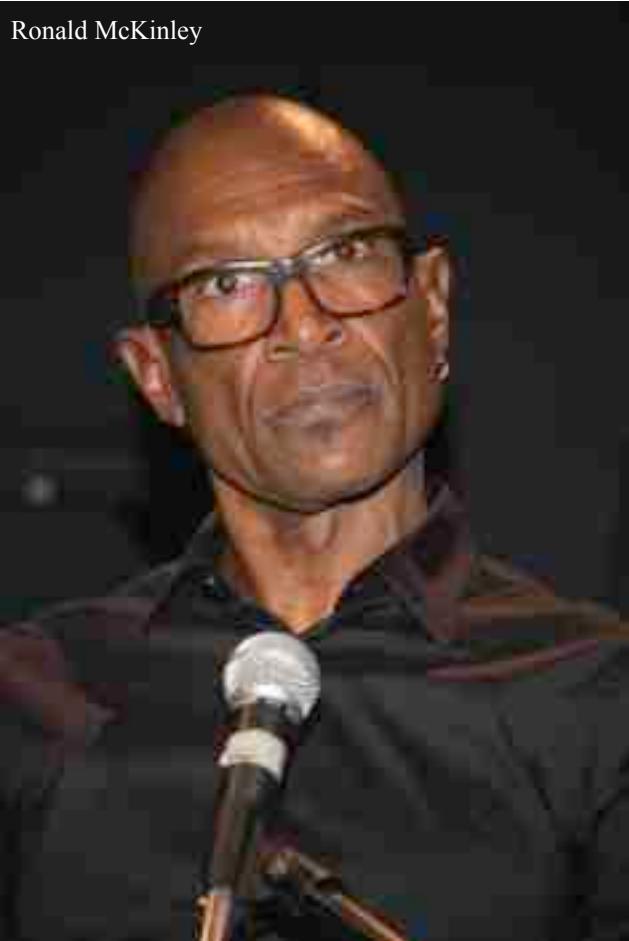
Hillary Kaye



Tina Catalina Corcoran



Ronald McKinley



**Suffer**

By Ronald McKinley

Am I to hurt all the time?  
The beginning and ending.  
Is it an unchecked line?  
One point leading to another.  
Why is it so?  
No magic elixir to cure me.  
No thought or process to find me.  
Some idea to trick me.  
This unpleasant moodful thing.  
Held together by need and fear.  
Want is far  
from me.  
Caught held captive  
wound after wound  
none healing fully  
before another.  
No chemical could stay this.  
Most deep reflection brings more pain.  
This path I resist.  
I will not walk that way  
before the echo of the last foot fall  
fades.  
I return to the same vista.  
I could empty my lungs  
all would be the same.  
Come apart and see  
nothing but pieces.  
Motion does not give way  
to movement.  
Placement will not  
for a place with space for all to be.  
Doors I fear barriers  
to enlightenment.  
My feet are cold  
no longer warmed  
by the combustion  
of true life fire.  
I wrap my arms around my torso.  
An act of love and loss.  
I know there is only one way  
not feel pain.  
I don't go there.  
I will try to work with what I have.  
The world will move  
If I will.  
The world will move  
If I do not.  
All is not lost  
only misplaced.

All photos on this page: John Decindis

Pegarty Long



**How Far?**

By Tina Catalina Corcoran  
December 1, 2013

How Far?  
Would I Go –  
for Five Minutes of Fame?  
How Far?  
Would I Go –  
To Whisper Your Name...  
How Far?  
Would I Go –  
To See You Again?  
How Far? How Far? Would I Go?  
How Far?  
Would I Fly –  
To Be By Your Side?  
How Far?  
Would I Fly –  
To Hold You and Cry...  
How Far?  
Would I Fly –  
How Hard Would I Cry?  
How Far? How Far? Would I Fly?  
How Far?  
Would I Run –  
When I Hear the Wolf Call?  
How Far?  
Would I Run –  
How Hard Would I Fall?  
How Far?  
Would I Run –  
Makes No Sense At All...  
How Far? Would I Run – When You Call?

Krista Schwimmer



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**The Heroic Age of Venice**  
(After Virgil)

By Jim Smith

Justice for the people I sing, who forced by fate  
to abandon their homes and flee  
the vast wasteland of mediocrity  
Now filled with haughty puritans of unrelenting hate,  
  
Expelled and exiled, they came to the Venice shore  
O Muse! what adventures each may claim  
In their native lands, now turned against them  
Let them tell their tales  
We will listen for a hundred years

They flocked to our quiet haven  
which sheltered and healed the damage  
to those who just wanted to be left alone  
But even here, the fearful guards of propriety  
Hounded and harassed the holy men and women  
Who could not still their creative daemons.  
In small cafes and on the broad beach  
They cried out their laments against unfair existence  
In a land that valued wealth not wisdom

The poets shouted: "Stop this madness  
I will not be a part of it.  
Leave me be in tranquil Venice  
Y'll not have me for your war machine"  
They jailed our bards, Stuart and Frankie  
But it only made their words stronger  
They and Tony, John and later Philomene  
said, "This Venice you shall not have.  
It belongs to the Lady. Beware!

And many more gathered to defend sacred Venice  
They rallied around the Haags - John and Anna  
from far off Roma, worthy successors of Aeneas  
who long ago also came from far away  
to fight for freedom for his people.  
And soon they were joined by the quiet architect  
Rick Davidson and Carol of two names, Berman and Fondiller,  
Jane Gordon, Maryjane, Mary Lou, Marvenna and so many more  
who rallied for a Venice with freedom to love and create

They rose in the thousands from the cafes and bungalows  
to fight for fair Venice's survival, struggling to throw off the yoke  
of landlords evil as marauders who have no thought except for pillage  
The people marched, again and again  
to save their homes, to stop a freeway, to protect their canals  
and always for freedom, a concept their enemies could not grasp  
Our heroes said there must be peace, in Vietnam and Venice  
and all of us must be equal to live and love side by side.  
We will not sleep until the killing stops, they said,  
so all can live free of fear.  
But, the black shirts came to sweep the people from the beach  
to stop the poetry and the music that soothed and enlightened so.

In 1967, a piece of Venice spread across the state  
to bring Peace and Freedom to all who were awake.  
"This is good," said John Haag, "but how do we spread the word?  
Here at home, the barbarians from the city are at the gates.  
They intend to destroy all that is good and just  
for they hate that which is different and denies their profits."

How to let our people know?  
Our heroes debated long and hard.  
Some said we must have a radio station to be heard.  
But most agreed that it was a newspaper  
that must be made to serve the community  
and be its voice.  
John answered: "We have made a beachhead in our town,  
Like the one in Normandie, but this time for peace not war  
Let us inform our readers what precious things we've made  
Our poetry, our art, our comradeship, our gentleness and hope  
Truly a beachhead in a land that needs it badly."

Long did they labor those dark nights of November 68.  
But on December First, our heroes gave birth at last.  
The Free Venice Beachhead - 10,000 strong  
proclaimed for all to see, "this paper is a poem."  
Freedom and truth are our watchwords  
and let the chips fall where they may.  
And through the years, hundreds more joined in  
to add their Beachheads to the growing pile -  
three million - and even more - copies since 68!

When did our heroic age end, you ask?  
We will tell you when it does!  
Forty years have come and gone  
Many heroes have fallen, but others rise up to take their places  
We struggle still, for freedom and just to be left in peace.  
The outcome is far from certain, but we are determined  
We shall not fail to heed the call  
We shall be human until we fall.

We will thrive so long as beloved Venice  
is truly a beachhead, a beacon upon the land  
for all those who value a beach more than a bank  
and friendship more than commerce.  
And we will know our community is strong,  
its people well and loving.  
as long as the seagulls sing Chee Wha Wha  
and our treasured Beachhead is surviving still.



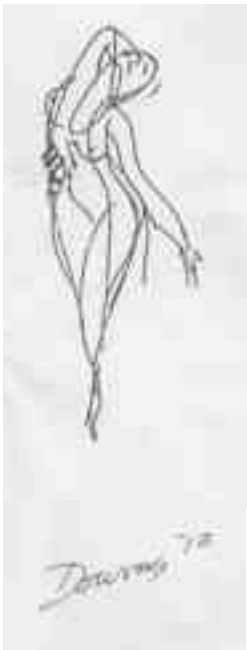
Jim Smith



Pano Douvos

**Red High Heels**  
By Pano Douvos

My little bird  
You bring sustenance  
In your mouth  
  
My little dolphin  
Aching beauty in  
Your taut body  
  
Flying leaping  
My heart matches  
Your gyrations  
  
A salmon run  
Of unerring aim  
Returns to you and me  
  
Endlessly  
Your naked self  
In red high heels  
  
A salmon in shoes  
Whatever it takes



**The River**

(singing)  
Shall we gather at the river  
The beautiful, the beautiful river  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the Throne of God  
  
and all my friends are at the river  
all my old dead friends  
who I miss so much  
and they're waving to me, across the river  
they got there and they're waiting for me  
I only have to go a little bit further  
and then I'll be dancing and singing  
and I won't struggle and I won't curse  
I'll be gathering with the saints at the river  
just like the song says  
and we'll all be happy and joyous  
and we won't be sad or mad or discriminated  
against  
and there won't be no rich or poor  
and all the poets will be there  
speaking in tongues  
and we will all understand them  
  
(singing)  
and freedom is coming, freedom is coming  
freedom is coming, freedom is coming  
and we all shout:  
oh yes I know  
oh yes I know  
oh yes I know  
oh yes I know  
freedom is coming!  
and then I wake up.  
  
- Mary Getlein



Karl Abrams



# Bonin, Supervisors Support Ballona Wetlands

By John Davis

Two items appeared on the December 17 agenda at the Board of Supervisors.

First, Don Knabe, a Republican whose district includes Marina del Rey and the Ballona Wetlands backed off his motion to oppose renaming an existing roadway the “Ballona Highway,” as proposed by Los Angeles City Councilperson Mike Bonin, a Democrat, who values the existing freshwater wetlands.

There were a lot of people wearing green shirts that read, “DON’T BULLDOZE BALLONA” at the hearing. They spoke of the value of promoting the natural beauty of the State Ecological Reserve by naming a local highway after it. The public criticized Knabe for backward thinking, like his predecessor from the 1950s, Burton Chase, who claimed the wetlands were a “mosquito infested swamp,” in an attempt to diminish the obvious ecological value of a thriving coastal freshwater wetland.

When one speaker claimed Knabe was downplaying the value of Ballona because the county Dpt. Of Public Works, without any public input and without the knowledge of the other supervisors, applied for a 408 Flood Control Permit from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Los Angeles District, in the spring of 2013. The project would bulldoze the entire Ecological Reserve and turn it into a retention basin for upstream point-source polluters. The people would then pay to dredge the toxic sediments on a regular basis, rather than stopping the upstream polluters from doing it in the first place.

Knabe, in a very animated way, lurched in his leather chair and put his hands in the air as if to surrender, then withdrew his thoughtless motion.

The preservationists were there for another item too. It regarded the county’s inclusion of the Ballona Wetlands in a motion that would require the taxpayers to foot the bill for the massive project. The revenues



would then be provided to the USACE to use for the project.

The public objected to paying for a flood control project at Ballona because an effective project was already built by the USACE under the U.S. Rivers and Harbors Act of 1941 and improved by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1954. And, it has worked for 70 years without fail. The new proposal would slow the velocity of the floodwaters down before discharging into the sea and bring them closer to homes and infrastructure. And, given the rise of sea level associated with global warming, inviting the ocean closer to homes and infrastructure is backward thinking. Rather than offering protection, the project invites catastrophic flooding from storm surges and periodic large storms. When taken in conjunction with astronomical high tides, the

project opens the floodgates onto homes and businesses.

The public also objected to the widespread destruction and killing of wildlife that would occur as wetlands were dredged and filled. And, the course of Ballona Creek would be bent to slow the discharge of storm waters to the sea.

Existing plans show high seawalls would be constructed along Fiji Way, Lincoln, and Jefferson Blvd. that would block scenic views now enjoyed by millions of people, including tourists that generate capital for local businesses. The ten-year duration of the project and the impacts from air, noise, soil, and water pollution were brought to the attention of the Supervisors, as was increased traffic congestion. Knabe disappeared for the second item and left it to three Democrats and one Republican, Mike Antonovich, to decide.

Much to the happiness of preservationists, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (for Venice) quizzed county staff about why Ballona was in the proposed item. Staff proffered no answer that satisfied. Then he asked them if removing Ballona would have any impact. Both staff members stated that removing Ballona would have absolutely no effect on the motion. Republican Antonovich then suggested that we make these people happy and remove Ballona, if it did not affect the item.

Then, the staff commented that it would have an effect, contradicting their prior statements. When pressed by Yaroslavsky, they could not explain themselves. The Supervisor then asked them, if he waited a few more minutes, would they come up with another, different answer. He was not happy. When Mark Ridley-Thomas, another Democrat, asked exactly what California Environmental Quality Act process the county would implement for the project, there were no answers. This is because the county does not intend to implement CEQA. The Department of Public Works wants to let another agency conduct the environmental review over the County Flood Control District, with no legal authority. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has already announced it will act as Lead Agency for CEQA purposes, not only for the Ecological Preserve it administers, but also for the Ballona Creek Flood Control Channel, which is the exclusive jurisdiction of the County of Los Angeles. So, Ridley-Thomas caught the county staff trying to pull the wool over his eyes.

But Yaroslavsky, Ridley-Thomas, Gloria Molina, and Bonin all came through for Ballona, demanding that staff come back with answers next time. Yaroslavsky moved the item to be continued until January 7, it was seconded by Ridley-Thomas, and passed with no dissenting vote.

Los Angeles City Councilperson Bonin did nature a solid with his action to memorialize the value of the Ballona Wetlands, which promotes awareness of this immensely important public asset.

Low level County staffers and the State Department of Fish and Wildlife have been engaged in a stealth marketing campaign, trying to paint the wiping out of the Ballona Ecological Reserve as a “restoration”. However, the people are beginning to understand the truth now, and they want to protect the last vestiges of coastal freshwater wetlands in California.

See: Stealth Flood Control Project -Venice Beachhead 1/2012: [bit.ly/1dXNGW0](http://bit.ly/1dXNGW0).

## The Sun Is Coming Back

By Eric Ahlberg

It’s been a fascinating year. Yes good things have happened, so let’s step right into the New Year, on our lovely shiny cloud of progressive optimism.

Behold the ambitions of the social activist, storming the gate of heaven, and the gates of hell, Wall Street.

I have two friends running for California Governor, Cindy Sheehan and Luis Rodriguez. Cindy Sheehan is running with the Peace and Freedom Party, which is running a signature campaign to get Cindy on the ballot. Cindy is an internationally renowned peace and social justice activist.

Luis Rodriguez has been endorsed by the Green Party. He is an author, poet, and activist who I’ve known and respected for 40 years. Check him out.

The Peace and Freedom Party was founded in Venice, and, through the support of activists all across California, was able to mount a registration drive to get on the ballot in the late 60’s. It should be clear now that the Democratic Party is not representing us. With Obama’s failure to close Guantanamo, drone bombings, and NSA surveillance, with Jerry Brown’s support of fracking and privatization of prisons, with Democrats like Jane Harman having supported the Iraq war, it should be clear that Democrats are neo-liberal fools, and that they are fooling you.

California’s open primary system means that there are no party-specific primaries for public office anymore. So you can register for the Peace and Freedom Party and it will not affect in any way the candidates you can vote for. “Grow or Die” is the most basic and



Political cartoon by Khalil Bendib

universal principle in behavior and evolution and social change.

Edward Snowden exposed the US Government’s illegal surveillance of domestic and foreign communications. Done deal, years ago. The nations of the world can see that even they have no secrets from the NSA. Their Internet infrastructure is riddled with backdoors installed by the NSA, at the factory or intercepted in shipping. There is no privacy on the Internet. There is a giant cloud of exhibitionism and voyeurism. This giant blob is informing and expanding the reach of our minds, and there are international struggles for freedom of information. Humanity is coping with a new vision of itself, having your friends, your community, and the entire world in your pocket, in your desktop, in your bed.

Then Bill Moyers calls for an overthrow, because when poor people have nothing, they have nothing to lose.



# Google's Ghetto by the Sea

By Theo Kirkham-Lewitt

Back and forth on her low-ride beach cruiser bicycle, wearing a black *Suicidal Tendencies* band t-shirt, dark Ray Ban shades and blood-red lipstick, she pops out against a background of the now tame Abbot Kinney Boulevard. “F.U. GQ! Get out of our city!” Tamara shouts repeatedly as she continually passes by the Party’s entrance. Her partner in protest, with a blue Mohawk over an otherwise bald head and a black shirt that reads, in a white gothic font, “I hate Venice...because of you,” detonates punk rock tunes from a small boom box. Their elderly comrade, wearing a floral print kimono, bobbed grey hair dyed blindingly purple, holds a sign reading, “Venice, The People’s Beach.” Amongst an array of picket signs held by a militantly diverse crowd of long-time Venice residents, GQ magazine’s team of systematically styled representatives stand at attention, arms crossed, hair gelled, matching shirts reading “GQHQ,” projecting an overall aura of disinterest in the growing boycott around them.

The fenced off party held in the parking lot of Brandelli’s Brig, a once rough and tumble bar that attracted Venice’s rather surly crowd, had been transformed into a tidy display of fashion and ‘culture.’ Equipped with a photo booth resembling that of a red carpet and a skateboard ramp attended to by young, manicured men whose image seemed more in line with a Hollister brand advertisement than Venice’s bristly skateboarding past, GQ Magazine’s party on Abbot Kinney Boulevard manifested a change in physical form. The partygoers, a trendy crowd of recent Venice transplants, clashed tremendously with the protest going on just on mere steps away.

Abbot Kinney, the roughly mile-long commercial Boulevard that stretches between Venice Boulevard and Main Street, sacrificially accepted the blunt force of Venice’s transformation, often referred to as the street’s ‘renaissance’. Gentrification seems more fitting. One of the few prominent commercial streets along Venice’s coastal regions, Abbot Kinney acted as a cross section, one in which storeowners, restaurateurs, gallery owners, and their patrons came into close proximity with the neighborhood that rears the boulevard to the east, Oakwood. Abbot Kinney’s close vicinity with Oakwood, a neighborhood central to the once considerable amount of the gang activity in Venice, created a tension between the sundry residents. While ‘tension’ tends to take on a negative connotation, it took partial responsibility in defining Venice as a whole for quite some time. Creative people of all types flocked to Venice in part because of this very cultural friction. While nearby suburbs lacked tension, Venice had abundance, and thus, had its identity.

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, GQ magazine decided to throw a party to celebrate the boulevard’s rise to its current position upon the regal thrown of LA’s hip social scene. As a follow up to an article they published in April of 2012, GQ announced that it planned to “take over” what they had called “the coolest block in America,” for a (pretentious) day of “style.” November 16<sup>th</sup> (1850) also marks the birthday of Mr. Abbot Kinney, the developer and conservationist that founded Venice beach in 1905. GQ’s celebration seemed, however, to focus more on the “coolness” of the once turbulent boulevard, rather than celebrate the historical relevance of the day, a subtle, albeit, perhaps unintentional, slap in the face to those residents who have called Venice home for a lifetime.

I grew up on Dudley Avenue, one of the many ‘walk-streets’ in the area, a microcosm of the surrounding three square miles that once endearingly embraced a title, “Ghetto by the Sea,” a melting pot within melting pots. As a young kid who wanted nothing more than to surf all morning and skate all day, the backdrop of my daily life seemed exclusively of ‘the street’. Pre-sunrise commutes down the iconic Venice boardwalk, surfboard in hand, bled into countless hours clattering up and down the walk-street with the other neighborhood kids.

First-name basis conversations with the local homeless men and women were the norm. Pick up games of basketball with the gypsies’ kids from down the block happened weekly. Altercations between seedy hooded men and women in front of the crack house at 58 Dudley Ave kept us on our toes. The neighbors’ urban chicken-coup provided hours of entertainment. The Phoenix house, a drug rehab cen-



Above: Ocean Front Walk, 1972. Notice there are no vendors.

Photo: Richard Mann

ter a few steps around the corner, added its own array of unstable characters to the circus, while across the street, Eric Clapton’s modern mansion stood obtrudingly amongst the surrounding cottages and stucco apartment buildings. Across the street from my 1907-built home, a successful entertainment lawyer lived next door to Katherine Hardwick, Hollywood director most well known for *Thirteen* and the first *Twilight* movie. A quick glance up my street, across the perpendiculars of Pacific Avenue and Main Street, and the iconic Frank Geary designed “binocular building” dominated the horizon. Assuming the weather was favorable, floods of tourists wedged themselves into the mix of street vendors and vagrants, as if they were the excessive grout between lines of deteriorating bricks.

In the midst of this charming chaos, the neighborhood kids went about their daily non-routine, Dudley Avenue as their playground. Of course we had some loose supervision. My dad, an independent film producer, often watched us skate, occasionally accompanied by his old friend Eddie Bunker, a former two-decade-long inmate at San Quentin Penitentiary turned writer, who would humorously point out to my dad which houses on the block he had boosted in his former life. Apparently he had hit them all. Our once-drug dealing neighbor served as another source of supervision. Always home, he ceaselessly kept at least one protective eye on us, the other eye on his ‘business’. In the event that Crazy Mary, a local schizophrenic homeless woman that frequented our neighborhood, decided to venture up onto our urban playground, screaming indecipherable nonsense, our adolescent games of tag suddenly became training. She scared the living crap out of us, and would send us hopping over my home’s short fence, darting onto my porch quicker than a ‘crack head’ could put flame to pipe. To us, it was an exhilarating, and admittedly horrifying, game. My parents and older sister (of 4 years) would always laugh in retrospect at the time she got her dress stuck on the fence in attempt to run from an approaching Mary, frantically running in place as she gained no ground. Too young to remember this incident for myself, it became that of a wives’ tale to me, *The Legend of Mary and the Dress*.

The luxury of a living on this “walk street” meant that all of the interaction and people-watching unfolded without the interruption of passing cars; our very own concrete park. Perhaps if we had lived on one of the more popular commuter streets like Pacific, Rose, or near Abbot Kinney Boulevard, we would have noticed all of the fancy cars that were becoming more and more common over the last near-

decade. Fumes of change began seeping through the cracks of our wonderfully confused community. Sure, our contemporary “Ghetto by the Sea” remains by the sea, but the “Ghetto” qualities that made the community exciting have since faded to near extinction.

Upon this stage of both sub-cultural confrontation and coexistence, creative people of all types found inspiration. Steadfast in their devotion to non-normative society, the beatniks adopted Venice as a Mecca. Here, they drew inspiration from the surrounding street culture and the accessibility of narcotics. Throughout the seventies and beyond, Venice became known as one of the most hardcore, localized hubs of surf and skate culture to date, germinating yet another subset of social rejects. Venice’s history of providing room and board for hoards of culturally deviant castaways certainly left its mark on the small beachside city. While the beatniks may have faded, relics of their era persist. One glance at either the beachside parking lots or residential side streets, and the curious visitor would have been hard pressed to miss the bearded men in their florally cloaked trailer homes, throwbacks to the city’s fading past. The lack of these vehicular floral orchestrations both literally and metaphorically marks a sad end to the vibrancy of Venice’s identity, its shift towards ‘the ordinary’.

Over the course of the last dozen years or so, Venice’s reputation of cultural eclecticism has fallen below a matter of fact, and crept closer and closer towards the realm of myth. Many Venetians attribute much of their present disillusionment to Google, who, in November of 2011, moved roughly 450 engineers into the space at the Frank Geary Binocular building, simultaneously taking over the two surrounding buildings. While the move may have only taken place recently, the surrounding community began experiencing a shift in character months in advance, as the number of high-end restaurants and designer boutiques began to inflate at an alarming rate. Rose Avenue, a commercial street less than a block away from Google’s new headquarters seemed to mutate the fastest. In what felt like an overnight occurrence, condo complexes were erected, along with a string of cafes serving up ten-dollar juices and five-dollar coffees a la *Café Gratitude*. To a devout foodie, the flash flood of fine dining was a blessing. The obvious alignment towards an incoming upper social class of technological entrepreneurs, on the other hand, made me nauseous.

In an article published on *LA Currents* in May of this year, Tasbeeh Herwees illuminates the opinions of a handful of longtime Venice residents, including those

— Continued on page 10



# RIP Nelson Mandela: July 18, 1918 – December 5, 2013



23:59 Thursday, December 5th, 2013, Adullam  
..... Mandela has gone home. Back to the source.  
Apparently, his life has run its course. Was showing  
symptoms of advancing age, Some caused by  
his lost years, locked in a cage. Retained a time-  
less stubbornness through out. Right up to his last  
moment. Here, I note How he was flexible, a  
listener. His patience learned when was a pris-  
oner. Devotion to the cause would cast a vote.  
His shoulders to the wall. Stood tall, no doubt.  
Contributed to history's bright page. His wisdom  
would approach an ancient sage. But he has taken  
leave, back to the source. Let's celebrate the man  
who held his course ..... Roger Houston

“A good head and good heart are always a formidable  
combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue  
or pen, then you have something very special.”  
– Nelson Mandela

Left: Street poster by political/satirical artist Robbie Conal  
Photo: CJ Gronner

## I Envy You, South Africa!

I envy you,  
South Africa!  
Your child became a father  
-Brave, wise and kind-  
Whose first message,  
After he came among the people  
From behind prison bars,  
Was “I am not a prophet  
And everybody is the master  
Of her or his destiny.”

Alas!  
A man with a turban  
Became my master  
Who called himself the deputy of God  
And sent thousands of Iran’s children  
To firing squads.

Today  
You bury Madiba  
In his birthplace  
And I say farewell to him  
In exile.

December 5, 2013  
Majid Naficy

## – Continued from page 3: TO STORE and/or TO DISCARD That is the Question for Venice

The VNC took a vote: 8 representatives voted for  
the Senior Center; 3 for the First Baptist Church.  
These recommendations will go in to Councilmember  
Bonin’s office for consideration.

But remember Councilmember Bonin’s letter  
contained his other directive -- **the clean-up** -- to  
keep the streets and sidewalks of Venice blight free  
while attempting to protect the City of Los Angeles  
legally.

These clean-ups will not only be conducted in  
regular sweeps, but will also occur if there is a com-  
plaint about rubbish. Then an investigation will ensue  
with the instigation of ‘procedures’ called the ‘Warn,  
Bag, Tag and Store’ Program, already begun (suppos-  
edly successfully) in Downtown LA.

After their investigation of the ‘blight’, city crews  
can and will remove materials after giving a posted  
72-hour warning. As a note, since Lavan vs. the City  
of L.A. put no time limits on when the possessions of

the houseless could be removed, it seems that the  
City of Los Angeles is back on track for another law-  
suit.

The 72-hour posted warnings are to be placed  
close to the items deemed rubbish. If the property is  
not removed, city workers, specially trained for the  
‘Warn, Bag, Tag and Store’ program, will first take  
photographs before bagging and tagging the items.  
Another notice will be left in its place so that if the  
owner returns, he/she can call the number on the no-  
tice. The City of LA will store the items downtown  
for 90 days before disposal. If the owner requests the  
objects be returned, the City will then supposedly  
deliver and return the items.

Of course, one question is how would a house-  
less person ‘call’ the city number listed on the warn-  
ing. With the non-existence of public phones (or if  
they do exist, they don’t work) how does a houseless  
person call a long distance (213 area code) number?

District Director Debbie  
Dyner Harris suggested  
the houseless person  
might call 311, the main  
number for the city  
which would not be long  
distance. Hopefully, the  
notice left as a warning  
will include ‘call 311’ as  
a contact number, since I  
don’t remember ‘311’  
unless reminded online.

It is mandatory that  
the Venetian community  
monitor the actions of  
the City of Los Angeles  
since even the *L.A.*

*Times* has noted that Los  
Angeles has historically  
solved the houseless  
‘problems’ with the  
LAPD, rather than with  
social programs. Steve  
Clare wrote in *City  
Watch*, “the City should  
expand and extend the  
winter shelter program  
year round, and immedi-  
ately provide safe and  
legal places for house-  
less people to sleep and  
park vehicles they sleep  
in overnight – with sani-  
tary facilities close by.”

Ah, but does this  
not approach sanity  
based on compassion?  
And is Los Angeles go-  
ing to be serious about  
addressing these ‘prob-  
lems’ conscientiously?

## – Continued from page 9: Google’s Ghetto by the Sea

held by Deborah Lashever, member of Occupy Venice  
as well as a small local business owner. She recalls  
that Google said “that they were moving to Venice  
because they really like the culture...so I don’t under-  
stand why they want to wreck it.” As Tamara, one of  
the more vocal protesters from the GQHQ protest  
points out, “they wanted to make it a community and  
make it part of our community, but they’re not.  
They’re totally separating themselves. They literally  
look at us like we’re the scum of the earth, but we’re  
the artists! We’re the ones that made [Venice] what it  
is!” While expressing her thoughts, Tamara’s frustra-  
tion became increasingly visible as she noticed her  
ex-landlord hanging out at the GQ event. Recently  
evicted due to drastic increases in rent, Tamara, and  
many residents in a similar situation, take the changes  
in Venice’s character very personally.

Despite all of the changes brought forth by the  
rushed gentrification of the once coastal ghetto, and  
the apparent death of a city’s soul, oddly enough, ten-  
sion, that ever-defining trait, lives on. Whereas the  
past embraced a tension between art and crime, con-  
crete and sand, both the present and foreseeable future  
seem to have adopted a new, perhaps more ubiquitous  
alteration, one that exists between economic and so-  
cial classes. Perhaps more accessible to the observing  
outsider, this archetypal tension follows suit with Ven-  
ice’s shift towards becoming increasingly palatable to  
the masses. Having lived in Venice for just over  
twenty years, I’m disturbed at how quickly I have  
been assigned a sense of displacement towards my  
own city. While Venice will always be my home, I  
may have to dig increasingly deeper into my memory  
to regain the sense of place that once defined my  
home experience. Timothy Leary sightings replaced  
by glimpses of Robert Downy Jr., and artists replaced  
by trust-funders, the old kind of Venetians roll with  
the punches, still the early rounds of a steep uphill  
battle for ownership; Venice’s new form of turf war-  
fare.

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– Continued from page 1: **Monstrosity Hotel Proposed Across from Westminster School**

in Venice for the past four and a half years, I've only had one group arrive without a car.

I was also concerned by the transient nature of a hotel, which would allow anyone to stay there, including sex offenders - not to mention that hotels are places of prostitution. Megan's Law doesn't allow sex offenders to stay within a quarter mile of a school, and even though the law may not have a stipulation for hotels, it's up to us, the community, to do our best to make schools a safe space. We should be careful and make sure the entire community discusses and can weigh in on the idea of having a hotel adjacent to an elementary school before it is too late. On January 11th, I am going to be facilitating a discussion on this issue at the UN Women Safe Cities LA Assembly at 606 Wilshire Blvd. between 11am-4pm. If you would like to learn more about making Los Angeles a safe city for women and girls, please attend so we can discuss this matter more fully.

I also hope that the school has the good sense to call a full assembly for all parents and faculty, to discuss the idea of a hotel and how it would affect the school. If you are a concerned parent or know people with kids at the school, please ask the Westminster Elementary School Administration to host a town hall for all the parents and faculty. I also suggest you write to the Land and Planning Commission (LAPC) Board and the Venice Neighborhood Council to voice your concerns. And don't delay, decisions may be made at the next LAPC meeting on January 15th and the full VNC Board on January 21st.

Please send your email to the following addresses: Board@VeniceNC.org, lupc@VeniceNC.org, mike.bonin@lacity.org, tricia.kane@lacity.org, veniceforchange@gmail.com

**The project's address is 1033 S Abbott Kinney Blvd, Venice, CA 90291: It must be included at the top of any correspondence.**



Above: December 18 Land Use and Planning Commission meeting.

Photo: Krista Schwimmer



Rendering of proposed hotel on Abbot Kinney Blvd., as seen from Electric Ave. If only Electric Ave were that wide. Notice the entrance and exit off of Electric.

– Continued from page 1: **Nightmare On 1414 Main Street**

normal allowance by 11 feet. In order to qualify for the variance of height and density, Teague and company are depending on California State Law 1818, the Affordable Housing Law. Because they are including 4 low-income units that make up 20% of their total residential units, they are allowed to ask for variances. Ironically, in order to build the complex in the first place, they had to relocate existing tenants from low-income buildings already there in order to tear down the housing itself. One family had been living there since the 1970's. Despite the massiveness of the development, this proposal really only adds one low income unit, something contrary to local sentiments. In a public, written rebuttal to Jason Teague, Rick Garvey calls this a "brazenly select interpretation" of this law, as well as an attempt "to hoodwink everybody into believing he and his partners have a lawful right to height and density bonuses which not only spit in the face of the Venice Specific Plan but are solely intended for residential projects."

At the most recent LUPC meeting on December 18th, a standing-room-only crowd of people were at last allowed to make public comments on this project. From a community presentation made by residents directly living in the shadow of 1414 Main, it became clear that there are many legitimate concerns about the development. Using a slide show of the surrounding neighborhood, Irv Katz showed why this project does not comply with the Venice Specific Plan, and thus, does not belong in Venice. In the VSP, the words, "mass, scale, and character," are like a mantra to ward off demons of development. In one paragraph alone, they are used 12 times! His slide show alone reflected how out of character, out of scale, and overly massive the proposed development is.

Another presenter spoke to the design problems. For one thing, the floor area ratio, or "FAR" for 1414 Main would be 2.4:1 rather than the 2:1 FAR allowed by Affordable Housing Incentives. There was also the 46 feet height of the building being way out of scale with the existing context. She explained in detail, too, just why the project would exceed required setbacks at the residential levels by a wide margin.

The last two presenters in the group presentation focused on the problems associated with construction in the alleyway. According to their presentation, this area has a high water table and is known as a liquefaction zone. Single residences nearby are consis-

tently denied basements for this very reason. There was also concern for how emergency vehicles would get through during and after construction. Both men presenting called for a serious, environmental impact study to be done before even considering digging. The presenters ran out of time before completing their presentation to LUPC. Still, what they did present was precise, powerful, and even unnerving.

Despite the fact that local neighborhoods are vehemently against 1414 Main, the developers have a kind of laissez-faire attitude to the community. One homeowner on Horizon Avenue was told he could move if he did not like the development. At the LUPC meeting, the community learned that the only concessions the applicants are currently willing to make are to remove roof access vestibules, (not the 4th floor), turn the parking garage pedestrian entrance towards the building interior, and widen the alley from 15 feet to 22.5 feet. They have also openly challenged if Venice even HAS a unique character, saying it needs to evolve. So unique is Venice that in Mark Cramer's book, "Funky Town USA", Venice was ranked 3rd out of 55 of America's "best alternative, eclectic, irreverent and visionary places in the country."

Of course, downplaying the uniqueness of Venice, along with its history, may actually be a tactic the developers are consciously using. Consider, for instance, the area that 1414 Main seeks to disrupt: it is none other than where the original Abbot Kinney canals were built. In an article this year, Nathan Masters wrote about these "Lost Canals": Cabrillo Canal, now Cabrillo Avenue; Aldebaran Canal, now Market Street; Coral Canal, now Main Street; Venus Canal; now San Juan Avenue; Grand Canal, now Grand Avenue. And, of course, there is also the traffic circle that was originally a lagoon. Should the Venice community, then, allow developers in who scoff at their history? Or rather, should the community seek ways to preserve what little is left of Venice's unique origins?

Once more, the winds of change are here in Venice. What will these changes bring? Megalithic structures that purport to reflect community needs? Restaurants instead of roofs? More cars and drunken people peeing in our alleyways? Or will these same winds, instead, finally arouse the spirits of the land itself, shaking its inhabitants to the core to really look at their deep values?

Let's not let the development bullies of the world define our community. As denizens of Venice, let's join forces and determine what changes reflect the entire community's needs and values, as well as incorporate the rich history that makes Venice a place where both inhabitants and visitors wish to stay. In the words of Aragon summoning the Ghost army to battle, "What say you?"

### Stand Up Against 1414 Main!

1. Follow the cause at this website: [www.veniceagainst1414main.com](http://www.veniceagainst1414main.com)
2. Sign both of these petitions: [chn.ge/1kcMHsy](http://chn.ge/1kcMHsy) and [chn.ge/1ixg332](http://chn.ge/1ixg332)
1. Attend the next LUPC meeting on Wednesday, January 15th, 6:45 pm, at the Oakwood Rec Ctr
2. Write LUPC, the California Coastal Commission, VNC, Councilman Mike Bonin and tell them your concerns
3. Stage a protest in front of 1414 Main Street
4. Look into preserving this area by making it a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) (<http://www.preservation.lacity.org/hpoz>)
5. Talk to neighbors and friends about this project
6. Read more about the history of Venice!

bETO's views of the Dec. 4th Venice Land Use meeting.

tinsel, Petitions, and Tears (must they be so ugly?)

the art of falling apart or rising together.

finding a reason to live on your Sister, Brother, Mother Earth.

not all my fault but I took my eyes off the prize after razorwire constructions like grains of salt at the beach concretized our sacred flower beds to make visitor parking,

before I realized that committees just collect&reject our dreams of saving what little is left and right of our homes by the sea.



Kathy Leonardo



Erica Snowlake



Juan Alcala



Jim Smith introducing the Beachhead Collective - from L to R: Alice Stek, Karl Abrams, Anne Alvarez, Ron McKinley, Mary Getlein, Greta Cobar, CJ Gronner, Anthony Castillo



Entertainment and Good Times  
Beachhead's 45th  
Birthday Celebration  
December 1, 2013  
Beyond Baroque

Suzy Williams



L to R: Steve Weisberg, Sam Clay, Suzy Williams, Merritt Evan Raff, Eric Ahlberg



Petr Hromadko and Mitch Montrose



Greg Cruz



Monae Hromadko

