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P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA. 90294 • [www.venicebeachhead.org](http://www.venicebeachhead.org) • [free@venicebeachhead.org](mailto:free@venicebeachhead.org) • 424 645-7358

# FREE VENICE SINCE 1968 BEACHHEAD

Support  
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Journalism

July 2021 #466



## 2021 VNC Election Results Debrief

Aka. Black Lives Don't Matter in Venice

by Mike Bravo

2021 Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) Elections results at [vog.news/vncresults2021](http://vog.news/vncresults2021). The results are bad but not horrible. It's a notch or two better than the VNC scenario of the past two boards. I was hoping it would be at least a 50/50 situation. I would've been good with that because even gentrifiers need a voice, otherwise it just creates more dynamic for fighting that ultimately reduces the efficacy and purpose of the neighborhood council. But alas, here we are again with another gentrifier (verb), anti-racial equity dominated board.

The good news is that, while there's still majority gentrification interests, there is a handful of good board members. Aside from myself we have Jason

*continued on page 8*

## ARE YOU HUNGRY? FREE FOOD AT VENICE BEACH

(times and places occasionally change)

\*Hope for the Hearts of the Homeless- Pam & Joel and friends. Coffee, pastries, sandwiches. Thursday 9am. north Ocean Front Walk near Ozone. Sunday by the pagoda near the beach, south of Rose Ave.

\*You Matter with Michael and friends- Tue. & Thur. Around 11am. Hotdogs, burgers, fruit, snacks. north Ocean Front Walk near Ozone Ave. also Sat. around 8:30am near Windward Ave.

\*Oasis Network Inc. with Dan & friends- various groceries, bread, fruit, vegetables. Sat. & Sun. around 9am. Ocean Front Walk by Dudley Ave.

\*Venice Equity Alliance- fruit & vegetables. Wed. 12:45pm. 132 Brooks Ave.

\*St. Joseph Center- their clients, To-Go Meals. M-F 9:30am-12pm. 663 Rose Ave. Also weekly food if you register at (310)396-6468 ext.313

\* St. Mark Church Free Food Pantry  
Every Saturday from 11am to 1pm  
940 Coeur d'Alene Ave, Venice 90291 (entrance Garfield Av) Vegetables, fruits and other food items. No registration needed. Drive-thru and walk-in options. Call St. Mark Parish at 310-821-5058 or email us at [loavesandfishes@stmarkvenice.com](mailto:loavesandfishes@stmarkvenice.com)

:(These organizations all need your donations and help): THANKS

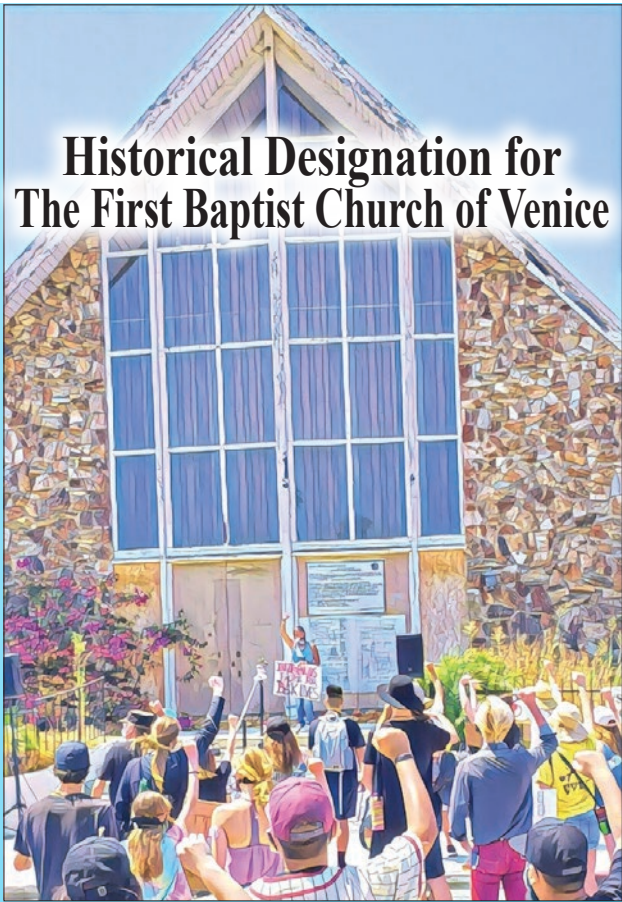
## Venice Community Housing - An Interview with Becky Dennison

By Enyay Pitchford

It was an honor to spend time talking to Becky Dennison, who has worked at VCH, the Venice Community Housing Corporation for the past 5 ½ years. She is sharp with a quick intelligence and is fully committed to her cause, her job. She plays a crucial role in the Herculean task of providing shelter to those in need. Yet, Venice continues to lose local apartments to AirBnB and condominium conversions, as well as the loss of many rent stabilized units. All the while facing growing animosity against the homeless and blatant criminalization of the impoverished.

Some of the false narrative comes from misconceptions, but most comes from deliberate lies spread to fit their false narrative. People have lost the gift of communication. They don't set out with the intention of getting to know anyone who lives on the street, only to judge them and repeat what they've heard about them. And a lot of the reactionary behavior of the homeless, wouldn't happen "if you treat people kindly" says Becky. We both lamented about how we've heard the same story said at the anti homeless meetings. Some well dressed housewife will pretend to cry while she talks about how a homeless man exposed himself in front of her little girl when they went out for a walk outside their home. You can press them for facts, but you won't get any. Just a narrative you've heard many times, given by a particular group of property owners. What's interesting is that I've lived here more than half my life and have never heard of anyone having that experience except at these meetings. I saw a woman, who was homeless for over thirty years, pull down her pants and poop in the street on Rose in broad daylight over ten years ago. Not easy to forget for sure. But what's amazing, is that I saw this woman all cleaned up with makeup on while buying a few food items at Coopportunity lately. The difference in that woman is simply "shelter." And what a world of difference it makes.

*continued on page 3*



By Jon Wolff


For nearly four years, the activist group Save Venice has worked to save the First Baptist Church of Venice. This multi-generational African-American church in the heart of Venice was sold fraudulently to private owners who wanted to turn it into a mega-mansion. Save Venice has fought tirelessly to reclaim this sacred site for the Community of Venice.

On June 3, 2021 Save Venice Board Member Dr. Naomi Nightingale made a presentation to the Cultural Heritage Commission of the City of Los Angeles, as part of the application process for historical designation of the church. This is the second time Save Venice has applied to the Commission. The first attempt a couple of years ago was unsuccessful. This time, Save Venice had allies. L.A. City Council Member Mike Bonin came out in favor of the recommendation. Previously, Bonin hadn't supported the fight for the church but, at this hearing, he spoke of the importance of the First Baptist Church of Venice and he stood on the side of his Venice constituents.

The commissioners heard the presentation and initially recommended only the church building itself for historical designation but denied the same for the adjacent lots. Dr. Nightingale and Venice Activists Laddie Williams, Margaret Molloy, and Eileen Archibald provided vital information to the Commission about the history of the site. The lots had belonged to Arthur Reese, the Venice co-founder and personal friend of Abbot Kinney, and had been deeded to the church. The lots are part of the church's history. The commissioners realized the significance of the church building and the lots, and supported recommendation for all.

This issue will soon go before the L.A. City Planning and Land Use Management Committee, and then on to the whole L.A. City Council for approval. You can be a part of the victory for the First Baptist Church of Venice by writing letters of support and by staying up-to-date with [www.savevenice.ca](http://www.savevenice.ca).

  
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To submit material, include your name and telephone number. Anonymous material will not be printed, but your name will be withheld on request. No payment is made for material used.

**Mail:** P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294.  
**Email:** free@venicebeachhead.org  
**Web:** www.venicebeachhead.org

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# LETTERS

Dear Beachhead

All the talk at City Hall today somehow blames the Unhoused for the lack of affordable housing and shelter, --yet today the ONLY motion on the agenda is to criminalize us homeless. They criminalize us --for their inaction.

We have 27,000 people on our streets who can provide ada access on at least one side of every encampment location, but they want to pit the disabled housed against the unhoused --rather than take emergency action to bring down catastrophic rents and housing costs in LA.

We homeless are being used as political scapegoats for a city council that has no plans to make housing affordable --and stem the tide of rising homelessness.

But every plan to criminalize and place us in regulated domestic prison camps --for their crime.

Of serving only greedy capitalist developers.

They search all over Southern California for 200 units of "housing" for the most-scapegoated homeless in L.A. --those of us in Venice. Where are the 26,800 OTHER units of housing coming from?

They think we don't have a human right to refuse carceral imprisonment, in revolving "shelter and short-term carceral hotel stays" --for the next DECADE while nearly everyone in LA is now stuck waiting for ANY affordable HOUSING?

And meanwhile rightly refuse -- to be told, "go to this jail --thinly disguised as a 'shared' toolshed --prison camp?" - David Lilly

## Houseless Being Evicted From the Ocean Front Walk

by Marty Liboff

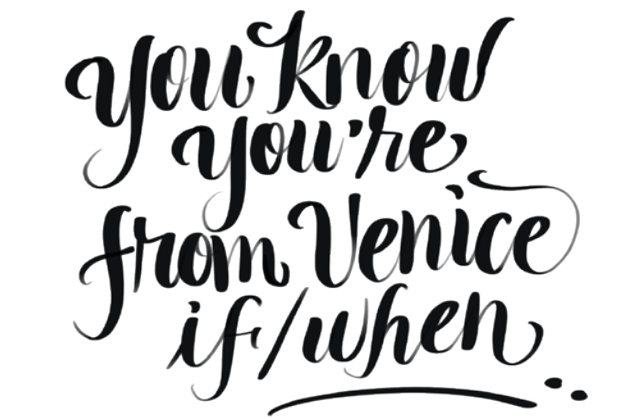
The L.A. Parks and Recreation Dept. has been evicting the houseless at Venice Beach. With the help of the Sanitation Dept. and LAPD they are enforcing their old ban on camping in parks after the park closes. Many of the houseless tents have been already moved or trashed.

Parks & Rec. have been going around to the encampments and posting no camping notices. They say if their stuff is not moved it can be trashed. They have been going with garbage trucks and trashing much of the belongings. A few things are being bagged and put in storage for 90 days and they can be claimed.

This cleanup is going in phases a couple blocks at a time. They started by Windward Ave and are working north. Quite a lot of people have already been displaced. Saint Joseph's and LAHSA (LA Housing) have been going around and offering shelters and some lucky ones have gotten a hotel or motel room for 60-90 days. However some have refused shelters that they refer to as “soft jails” or “concentration camps”. Many have just moved a little away from Venice Beach. Santa Monica has reported a sharp rise in houseless since the exodus began. Parks & Recreation thinks they can clear the beach within 2 weeks or less. Just in time for the summer tourist season.

This coincides with the LA City Council voting to renew their ban on camping on city streets. It will go for another vote soon. They are going back to the old rules against camping on streets except from night time until 6a.m. And not being by schools, churches and blocking driveways, etc.

There has been relatively no opposition from homeless advocates and the houseless to Parks & Rec. suddenly kicking people off the Ocean Front Walk. The Venice Justice Committee has been tailing the Parks & Rec. and police and documenting what is happening. Peggy from VJC is very brave. A few houseless have become unhinged by being kicked out and then Parks & Rec. call the cops. A few have been cuffed and arrested. A couple peo-



## Sexual Harassment Allegations Against Jim Murez

By Jon Wolff

Jim Murez was recently elected president of the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC). Murez has been a board member of the VNC for years, and he's even been the chair of the Transportation and Safety Committee of the VNC. So the following revelations about Murez should alarm all Venice residents, regardless of any political differences that anyone might have.

Jim Murez is also the manager of the Venice Farmers Market that meets weekly on Venice Boulevard in Venice. Disturbing accusations about Murez have come to the attention of the Free Venice Beachhead.

It has been alleged that a series of incidents from late 2020 through early 2021 occurred at the Farmers Market involving sexual harassment by Jim Murez. Repeated inappropriate comments and unwanted flirting by Murez created a stressful, unprofessional, and unsafe environment. His behavior was described as disgusting, disrespectful, and insulting. Murez's attempts to form a relationship with a married woman were considered especially egregious because he himself is married.

It has been reported that a letter was sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture that outlined Jim Murez's pattern of sexual harassment, nepotism, abuse of power, and racism. A number of women have spoken out about Murez. Some have preferred to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation. But a few have decided that they can no longer remain silent.

Women have expressed shock and horror upon hearing of Jim Murez's candidacy for VNC president. They feel that his behavior is toxic and detrimental to the progress of Venice. If it is proven that Murez committed these acts of sexual harassment while he was a VNC board member, then clearly he should not be VNC president.

The women who have made these claims about Murez have gone out on a limb to have their voices heard. Their allegations must be investigated and not just ignored. They deserve the support of everyone in Venice. And others who have been victimized by Jim Murez should be encouraged to speak up.

ple were crying as the police ticketed them or their stuff was being taken. On the other hand some local NIMBYS who own expensive property nearby and some business owners are rejoicing.

This comes after there has been a battle over jurisdiction of the beach by the Sheriff, Councilman Bonin and LAPD. Now Parks & Recreation has stepped in to actually enforce their no camping ban. Some years back the beach side of the Ocean Front Walk was declared a “park” and was put under the Parks and Recreation.

More units are being built in the past six years than were created during the past two decades, thanks to the work of the VCH and another non affiliate Tom Safrah Associates. Homelessness has grown so rapidly , that the situation has become glaring to most and it created a momentous demand to get things done. Yet the need keeps growing, as closing of businesses left many out of work, factories continually going overseas, displacing many low skilled workers without any higher education, and the ever increasing rents, left many with no place to go. People make false reports about Venice taking the brunt of the homeless but that’s not true. I spoke to a Skid Row Preacher who told me skid row was once one square block and now consists of fourteen square blocks. That’s a huge leap in size! Besides, this is a national issue, and even a global problem that has been building up since the eighties. So big, that the once invisible problem has reached a tipping point where it is now clearly visible for all to see, spread across the horizon of the Venice Beach Ocean Front Walk.

The need for change is inevitable , but what kind of change is the issue. False narratives are very popular and complicate the situation. The criminalization of the poor is always the first go. Remember that is how our stats ran up to 1 in 3 young black men in California spend some time in jail? This is the kind of stats that follow criminalization of a group of people. This narrative is pushed by those who own homes here and are “inconvenienced” and “bothered” by having to witness the reality of those who didn’t climb their golden ladder of “buying in at the right time”, or inheriting the family home or luck out in divorce or simply take the job that paid the most, regardless of its effects on their psyche or the planet and some just lucked out. Yet somehow, with all that blessing and abundance,they cannot find compassion, and refuse to share the boardwalk with the “undesirables” and feel they have the right to weaponize the police against those less fortunate than themselves. It’s a pathetic state of affairs, because, as Becky has witnessed “ these same people who complain about the problems of the homeless also complain about the solution to the homeless problem, that is, building more affordable apartments”. They welcome the political circus of the bully opportunists like Sheriff Villanueva “rolling into town and pushing people around because he can,” decries Becky. “His tactics are cruel and against all civil and human rights.” Simply unconscionable! Besides, it’s just a big show of arrests of people who will be out in a day or so. Only their problems will worsen. There was a court case head-

ed by the Civil Liberties Union that showed how the costs of the police, their gear, the judicial system , the jails, the ambulances were wasting millions of dollars of taxpayers money and could have put each homeless person at the Hilton Hotel for that same amount of expenditure. The case was thrown out by a judge before it could be tried, but then , what happened when COVID rolled into town? Those hotels were full of homeless people!. How ironic, indeed!

Yet hotels are just temporary solutions to a problem of pandemic proportions. We need more shelters and until we get them it is crucial, especially in the time of COVID,” to keep the areas clean, provide showers and access to clean , supplied bathrooms until the needs for homes are met”, says Becky.. People just need to share the public space with the whole public, not just those of their choosing. Just because one owns a home, they don’t own the beach; it’s public land. Who chose them to be judges and executioners, I wonder?

The VCH, despite all the work they do to create permanent solutions, also takes time to keep an eye on what is happening in the streets around them. VCH has hosted the “Venice Citation Clinic” run by the Venice Justice Committee to help combat some of the expensive criminalization tactics used by the police. They hope for a better relationship with the VNC, Venice Neighborhood Council, which has only represented the wealthy homeowners and hasn’t done anything in years to represent the long-time residents, the low income and diversity which is essentially what Venice is known for. We both are rooting for Mike Bravo, long time resident, Indigenous, and newly elected council member, to be able to exert his very intelligent and inside experience and open the conversation to be more inclusive at their meetings.

This year, in December, they hope to house people in the 35 units they are building on Rose ave. They owned the land and had their office there. Now they will have an office within the new structure they are building. They had to work with the state and coastal commissions to strike a deal to help alleviate some issues to allow the project to go forward. In August, they will begin a restoration project they’ve been approved for and add two additional units (accessory dwelling units,ADU)to a seven unit complex on Venice Blvd, off Marion. This project of one and two bedroom bungalows will be set aside for families experiencing homelessness .And they plan on preserving the courtyard. Kudos to the VCH for their hard work and best of luck in all their future endeavors for being Way Showers for the solution to this troubling state of affairs!

## Mike Hall, Venice local, was murdered and his spirit left the physical world June 25, 2021

Peggy Lee Kennedy

Mike Hall, a 49 year-old Venice local, was murdered on Dudley hill next to the Venice Boardwalk June 25. He was previously living in a vehicle by Electric and Venice Bl. His RV got towed and he came to the boardwalk because he heard people were getting housing from there.

A man street named Midget Mike, who is short and not technically a dwarf, allegedly murdered Mike Hall because he was jealous and violent. He was abusing his girlfriend and Mike Hall was either protecting her and/or possibly hooking up with her.

According to the community, Midget Mike has assaulted people before, but because they were homeless the cops didn’t do anything.

What is a deeply sick part of the story is how the mainstream news trucks came around the same time as Mark Ryadic, to capitalize and promote his anti-homeless agenda.

The news happily interviewed Ryadic while Mike Hall’s grieving sister, Devon Thomas, was there and clearly in shock.

The rumor is that I harassed the news. But if telling them how awful that was is being dishonestly described as harassment, then so be it. I could have verbally disrupted those heartless, disgusting interviews. But I did not.

A beautiful spontaneous prayer by other community people temporarily did disrupt them, but they just moved to get Ryadic without hearing those Amens to asking God for housing.

Shelter is being offered on the Boardwalk just to remove people from a contested area, that is why Mike Hall was even there. That is some hard truth that everyone needs to hear.

I suspect that’s one reason so many new, clearly mentally ill people are appearing on the boardwalk. Someone or some agency may hope they will get help.

The other option is they are just trying to add to the visual negatively and dumping folks.

Oh, and now an army of Urban Alchemy employees have been added to march up and down the Boardwalk. Funny (not) how the stated reasons of having unarmed mental health providers does not match up with the fact that they do not seem to be connecting with the people who need help the most.

Which all pretty much tells a short story of how fucked up things are.

That is if you leave out the outrageous criminalization being dished out in citations by LAPD, and the Sheriff using crazy large numbers of deputies in tactical gear saying they are homeless outreach.

Not to mention the issues creating homelessness and how the real solution of permanent housing is not being legitimately being addressed.

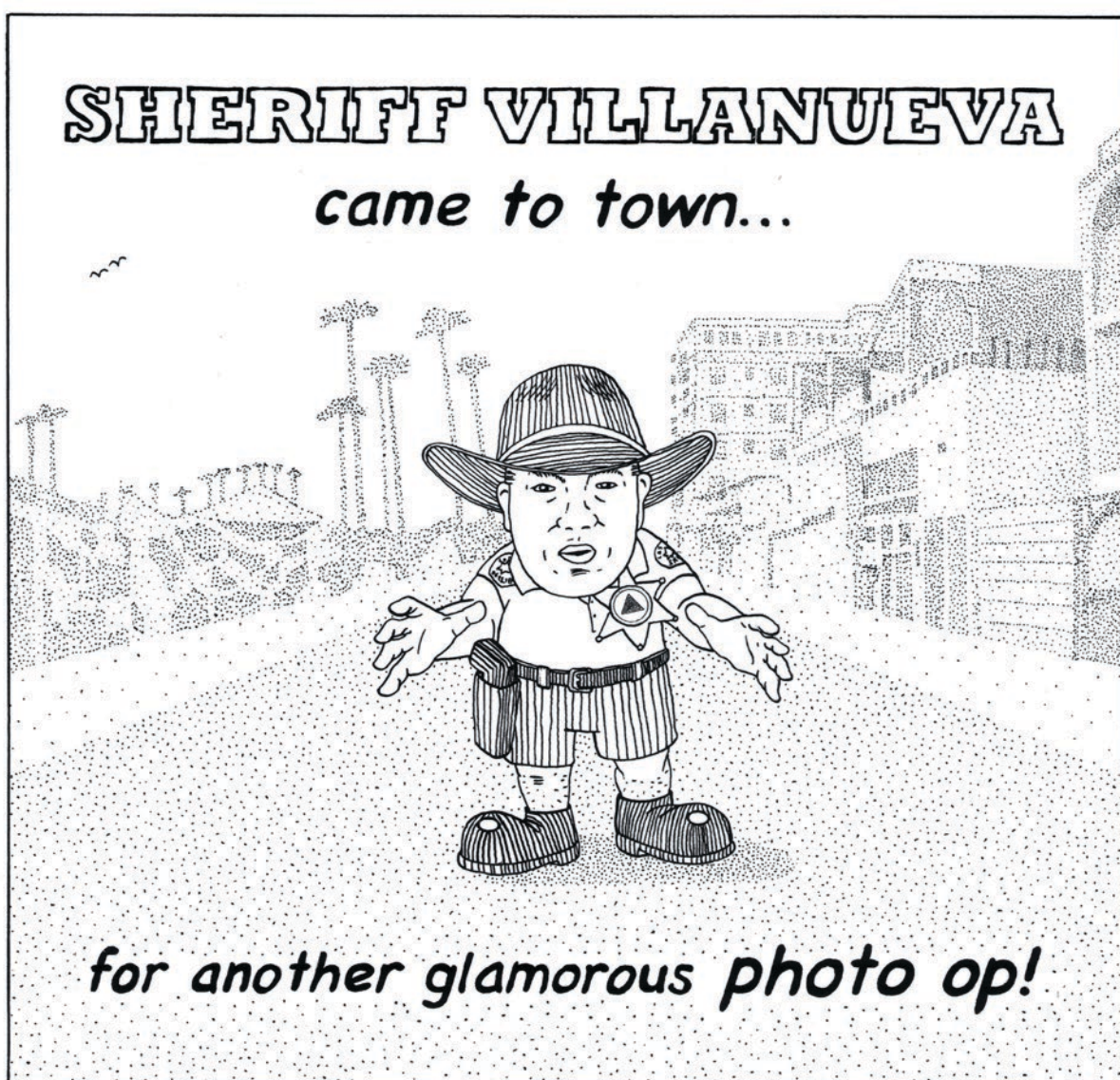
But, since you have read this far, let’s deconstruct the issues a bit more.

Venice was once a racially and ethnically diverse working class and low-income area. Through a series of corrupt, illegal developments and some might argue zoning changes, the area has been re-built primarily for affluent people. Although there are fluctuations in property values, the trend is always increasing.

Then there have been gang injunctions, code enforcement, nuisance laws used to take properties, and multi-agency law enforcement crack downs – all targeting the Black community of Venice – that have drastically changed the demographics. Though we still have some strong holds of families that go back generations.

There have been houseless people in Venice my entire life. When I was a teenager and a young adult in the 70’s the difference between a homeowner, a renter, and a van dweller were not so big. Property was not that expensive.

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# Nature Boy in Venice

by Gerry Fialka

“Nature Boy,” one of the greatest songs ever written, was composed by Eden Ahbez, who hung out in Venice for a while in the 1950s and ‘60s. He slept in friends’ backyards, including behind the Blue House, the bungalow at 523 Ocean Front Walk & Sunset Avenue. It was built in 1901 and has housed pot shops and Snapchat offices in recent years. Currently Adam displays his flower arrangements on the steps. Bill Mitchell used to rent a room there in the ‘60s for ten dollars a week.

“Nature Boy” is timeless. Listen to the varied/heartwarming versions by Nat “King” Cole, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, John Coltrane, Sarah Vaughan, Grace Slick, Big Star, David Bowie, and Lady Gaga. LA’s music hero Preston Smith met and sang his version for Eden, who highly complimented Preston.

I recently interviewed Brian Chidester for my Youtube series Concerned Netizen. See and hear it at <https://www.youtube.com/user/clintonthegek>. Brian has researched Eden Ahbez for over two decades now and recently produced the lost Ahbez album “Dharmaland.” He is an amazing “creative historian and a conjurer of lost worlds.” I was fortunate to have him present engaging events at Sponto Gallery years ago. He delves deep into transformation of humanity for the good of all and evokes the positiveness of the Venice community.

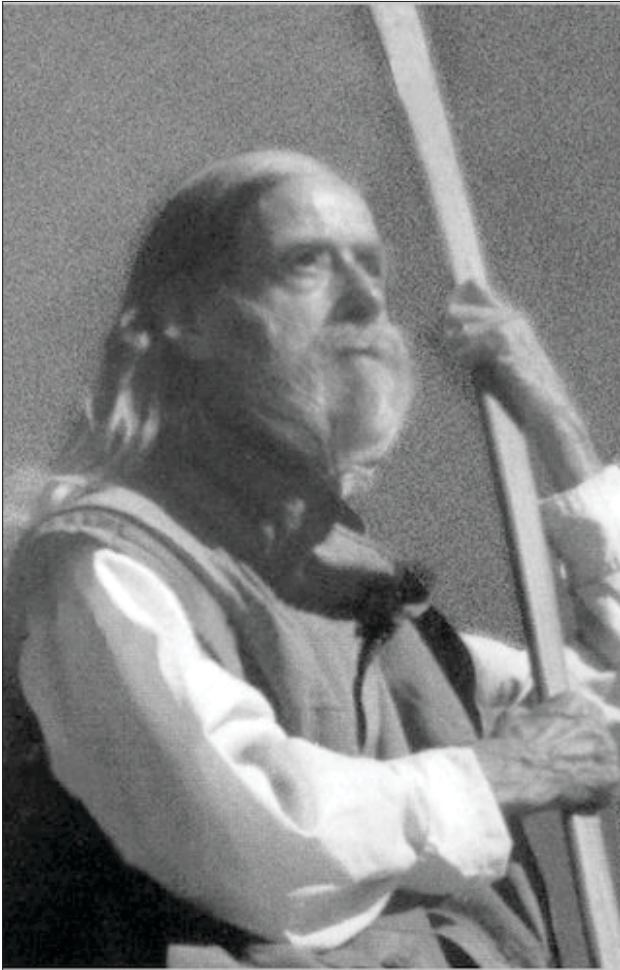
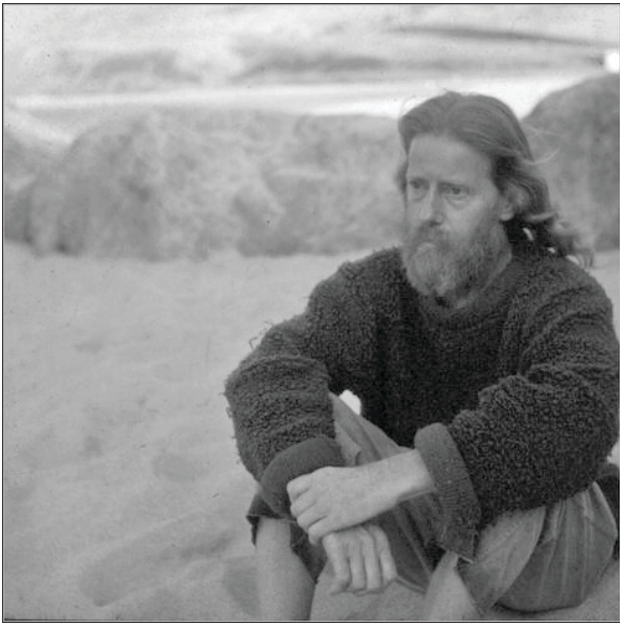
Brian has contributed the following regarding Ahbez:

Before there was “Nomadland” there was Eden Ahbez’s “Dharmaland.” He was the original van-dweller/freight train hopping hippie who for a time in the 1940s lived under the Hollywood Sign. He also lived in Topanga, Venice Beach, and in the caves around Palm Springs around that time. His song “Nature Boy” (1948) and proto-concept album “Eden’s Island” (1960) were both harbingers of the flower-power movement, and “Dharmaland” was written by Ahbez as the follow-up to “Eden’s Island.” It was intended as another song-suite/imaginary utopia by the artist, but because “Eden’s Island” failed to sell more than a hundred copies in 1960, and because Ahbez’s wife Anna contracted bone cancer then, the project never got past the sheet music stage.

Fast-forward sixty years and the “Dharmaland” sheet music was recovered by me at the Library of Congress and then subsequently recorded for the first time ever by the Swedish exotica quintet Ixtahuele. They not only orchestrated Ahbez’s original songs, now available on Subliminal Sounds Records, but also used his handmade drums and hard-carved flute on the album, as well as nine of his friends and former collaborators as guests. It was my great honor to produce this album and to bring Ahbez’s lost masterpiece back to life.

He was, as Gerry wrote, living in Venice around the time he wrote these songs, and he even stored his marimba at the home of singer/actress Myra Cohn who performed vocals on a 1963 recording of his titled “Monterey.” She and her daughter lived in a bungalow on Ocean Front Walk and Ahbez would stay with them from time to time, after his wife died, and also out on the beach in a sleeping bag. (He told other friends that he preferred to sleep in “the big room.”) He also played regular live gigs at the Venice West Cafe and Gas House in the sixties and even wrote a song about the latter in which its best lyric states: “Money isn’t everything and time isn’t real/What is important is the way that you feel.”

In this time of runaway capitalism, of pending ecological catastrophe, and of harassment towards minorities and the poor (both in Venice and all over this fair country), the voice of one of the original progenitors of universal love, equality, and conservation has returned like the echo of a lost pagan god. Indeed, Ahbez’s music reminds us that nature can still be our greatest teacher, and that “the greatest thing you’ll ever learn is just to love and be



loved in return.”

Big thanks to Brian Chidester for his dedication. For more info on Eden Ahbez music and films, visit: [www.edenahbez.com](http://www.edenahbez.com)

# AFRICAN AMERICANS DECLARED EMANCIPATED – AGAIN

Naomi Nightingale, PhD

Social Justice Activist, Save Venice Community Organization.

Celebrated by many African Americans since June 19, 1865, Juneteenth began in Texas as the day the news was received, two years later, that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed enslaved Black people free as of January 1, 1863. On June 17, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, 46th President of the United States of America, signed legislation declaring June 19th the newest national holiday in our country.

It was jubilation again; the celebration and acknowledgment of freedom, equality, and humanity for Black people but this time in 2021 all Americans are afforded the privilege to celebrate.

President Biden said, in part, “Great nations don’t ignore the most painful chapters of their past. Great nations confront them. We come to terms with them.”

It is not by legislative action or Presidential Proclamation that we come to terms with our painful past. – our history unequivocally demonstrates this; otherwise, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1865 would have been the standing and successful rule of law that directed the future of African Americans in this county. It did not.

Succeeding laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1866 which was written to protect the civil rights of people of African descent born in or brought to the United States, failed to fulfill its promise of protection of equality and life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

No such guarantees were enforced by Constitutional Amendment 13, ratified in 1865 which reiterated the abolishment of slavery – just in case the Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Lincoln and General Order No. 3 was not clear in freeing enslaved people of African descent.

History has proved that the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution has failed African Americans for decades in disproportionate numbers as the United States has the highest number of incarcerated people in the world, most of whom are African Americans and other people of color. The 14th Amendment declared that all persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens and shall not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law or equal protection of the law.

The 15th Amendment of the United States prohibits the federal government and each state from denying a citizen the right to vote. Currently, 23 of the 50 states in this country have numerous legislative actions pending or approved to suppress voting in their states. These suppression efforts typically impact African Americans, other people of color, poor people and persons who are likely to vote for democratic candidates.

The overt and unapologetic effort to suppress the right and access to voting by states makes the 15th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 near null in their effect unless the federal Department of Justice in the Biden Administration can strengthen the application of these laws.

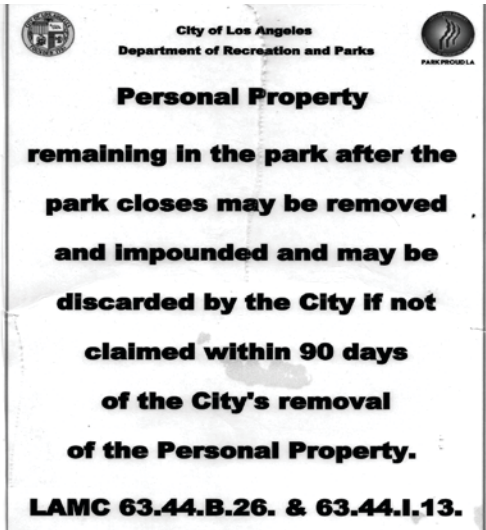
Yes, let us celebrate Juneteenth and the declaration of this date as a national holiday. Let us be jubilant that yet another acknowledgment of the humanity and the significance of African Americans to the history and wealth of these United States contributions is historically noted.

But let us not forget the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the rules of laws since then that have not fully lived up to their promises. We must keep in mind that we have miles to go in our pursuit of life, liberty, equality, and inhumanity; and, with justice as the light that guides our way, we will arrive.

Coastal zone areas of CD 11 and CD 15 are also

Appreciatively, Margaret Molloy

Peggy Lee Kennedy





Arnold Springer

(A Remembrance)  
by Chuck Bloomquist

So many memories of Arnie—my last and best one: he’d dropped by recently and I had the chance to tell him that I thought his book on Venice history was exquisite; that it was so beautiful—a work of art. I told him that it was his legacy. Little did I know. We will miss him: all three generations of this family.

Terry Bloomquist

We met in the early 1960s through a mutual interest in local politics he much more so than I. We both started families he and Jytte with Yuri; Terry and I with six before the decade was finished.

His activism involved opposing various developments in Venice including testimony before the Coastal Commission and filing lawsuits against developers.

In 1977 when Carol Fondiller and Linda Lucks were throwing in the towel in their almost single-handed efforts to keep the Beachhead alive, Arnie called an “Up for Grabs” meeting at his home to see if there was enough interest in the community to continue publishing the paper. Since I was recovering from a hip replacement operation and since I loved newspapers and knew Arnie, I decided to check it out.

To my surprise there were about 25 interested persons most of whom signed up for the next meeting. Attendance dropped at that and subsequent meetings until after a few months the Beachhead collective was down to about eight hard-core members. This group kept the paper going for years and published the largest single issue of The Free Venice Beachhead to mark its 100th consecutive issue.

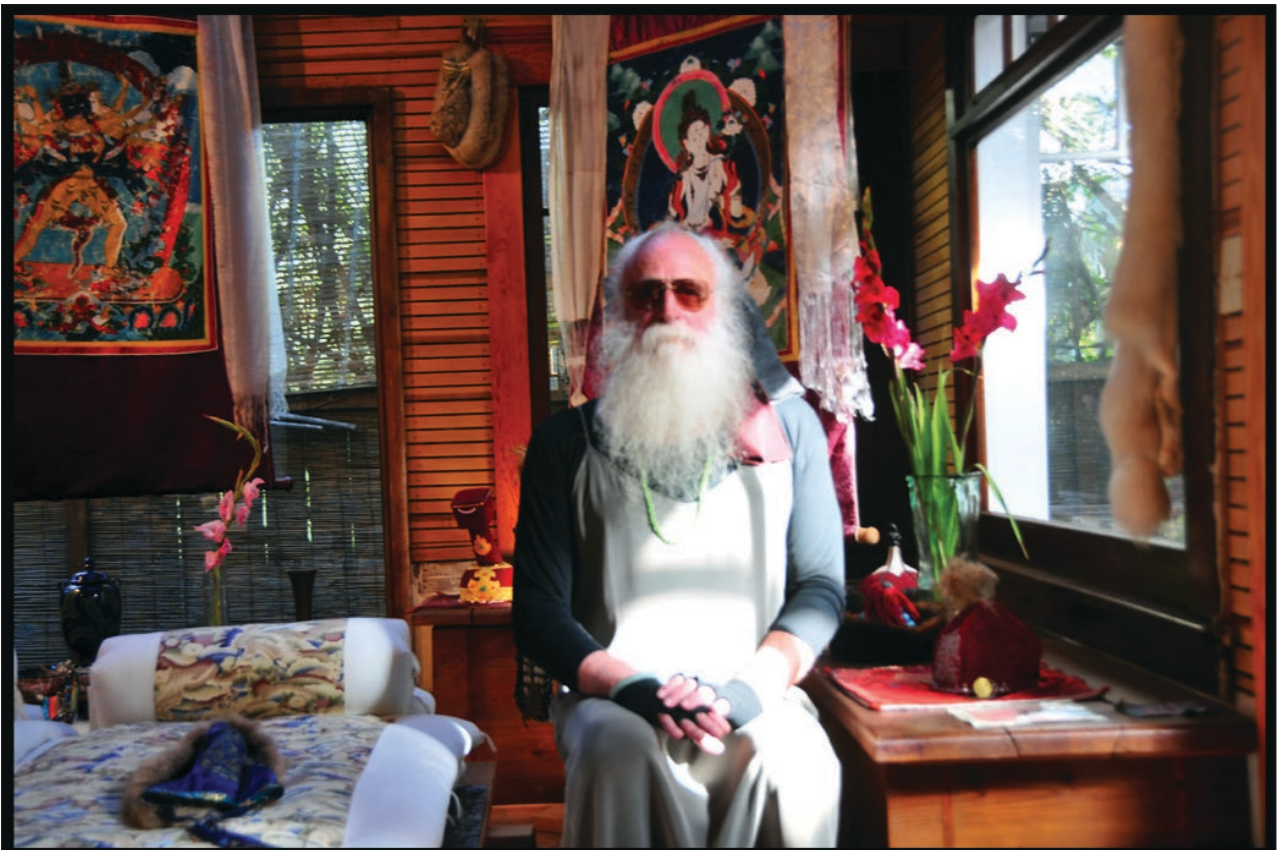
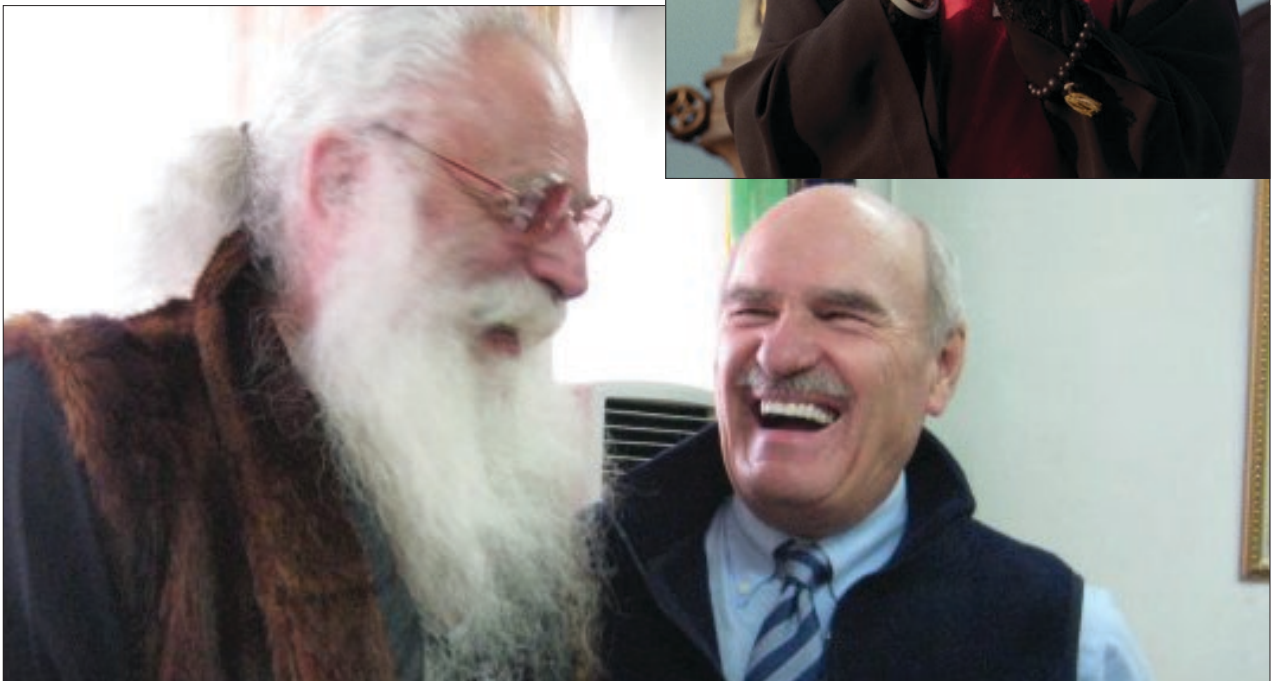
During my tenure at the Beachhead the Free Venice Astronomy Club was formed to ease admittance to the reservation-only campsites at Joshua Tree National Monument. In addition to viewing the clear night sky through my 13-inch Dobsonian telescope Arnie would regale us all with old labor-movement songs such as “I Dreamt I Saw Joe Hill Last Night”. At one of our sessions, I pointed out the planet Mars to the gathering; most were mildly interested but quickly returned to the campfire after viewing it for a few seconds. Arnie observed it for several minutes and then told me he found it to be quite profound. The FVAC lasted for 25 years meeting twice a year around the Spring and Fall equinoxes and involving numerous members of the Venice community.

Arnie also led collective members in several annual wine making efforts the results of which were labeled “Free Venice Free Flow”. The resultant wines were barely worth the effort but the camaraderie in making them was priceless.

In 1986 Arnie and others in Venice strongly supported Ruth Galanter’s run against Pat Russell for the Los Angeles City Council; a seat which Ruth won and held for 15 years.

In parallel with this political and community activism Arnold earned a PhD in history at UCLA encompassing Russian History, European

*continued on page 8*





### Arnold Springer & Fred Dewey

by Gerry Fialka

We die with the dying  
See, they depart,  
And we go with them  
See, they return  
and bring us with them

- excerpt from T.S. Eliot, 4 Quartets

I know nothing  
I live in the Eternal

- George Santayna

Arnold Springer and Fred Dewey are turning heads in heaven. We will miss their stalwart Venice presence. They both helped preserve our history, nurture the arts, stimulate new thinking and spread love. Their spirits live in Venice and keep us fresh and diverse.

FRED DEWEY - I always cherished long discussions with Fred Dewey, writer, teacher, editor/publisher, former director of Beyond Baroque. He was/is a very good friend. My long interview with him at the Unurban is in the UCSB archive. When it is catalogued and available to be heard, I will let you know. I was honored when Fred wrote: “My interview with Fialka was both a rollicking journey into the heart of deep thought and some sort of hard core, cosmic tennis match. He uses quotes to spur new thought more than old thought. It was truly ‘far out.’ I am grateful.” And, right back at you, Fred. I am grateful to you. I appreciate all you taught me over the years. Sharing lots of laffs, too.

Many years ago, when I first asked him about Suzy Williams possibly playing a concert at Beyond Baroque, he said that she already plays all over the place. This rejection became a redirection. I turned the breakdown into a break through. It made me brainstorm the birth of THE LIT SHOW, which celebrates its 16th annual show in the fall. I devised a musical event that emphasizes the venue’s forte. She does songs that were written by poets and authors, like Dorothy Parker, who wrote a song that Billie Holiday sang. Tennessee Williams wrote a song that Marlon Brando sang as a rambling troubadour in The

*continued on page 8*



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### 2020: The Year Covid Killed Capitalism

It took a Pandemic to show that capitalism was done for at long last. It's still with us, but only as a zombie. Soon, even that illusion will be gone. We'll all be better off.

James R Smith - Jun 26

#### Women Lead the Way

I still remember that Venice Jazz place, The Lincoln, that we went to on March 8, 2020. That was at the end of the olden days. We were already living on borrowed time. Even so, the joint was jumpin'. We had to squeeze together on benches and booths. So many of our friends from the Venice hood were there. They all wanted to shake hands, hug, kiss, share a doobie, whisper secrets. What a night!

I was euphoric. Yet, that virus from China gnawed at me. It swept into New York and Seattle before we knew it. Not a chance we could escape it. Oh well, enjoy life while you can.

My head had cleared by the next morning. I knew I had to act fast if I wanted to outlive the virus.

At the time, I was sharing an apartment in the heart of Venice with a woman who was a tour guide for visitors from around the world. What could be a worse job in a pandemic? Not only that, but she brought them by our apartment to show them how bohemians lived.

Did I tell you I was famous? In Venice, that is. Any Venetian who has been around for a few years knows me. Outside of Venice, nobody knows me. I'm telling you about my fame, because it meant that there was a steady stream of people coming by the pad to hang out.

I told Barb I was leaving. She knew I had to go. I texted my 50 closest friends that I was on my way to a safer place. By mid-day, everyone was scared, and numb. The virus was in L.A. I threw some clothes together. Packed my computer (a writer's best friend), and headed out the next morning.

#### One Step Ahead of Covid-19

Fortunately, I had a destination. I was heading north to be with my daughter, and her partner, in a small town in Oregon (no one will find me there). I drove until I got sleepy, then pulled into a roadside rest stop and got some precious sleep. The next afternoon, I had arrived.

I greeted Jennifer and Paul, and crept up the stairs to my room. There I stayed, more or less, from March through October.

#### COVID-19

Did I get bored? oh my god, did I? The world was changing outside the house, and here I was reading books and watching Netflix. There must be some small thing I could do to help change the world in a good way.

Then I got an email from Matt. “I’m quitting my job and doing all my writing on Substack,” he said. What the hell is Substack, I thought? Turns out, it’s a writer’s dream come true. World wide reach, of course, and you can write whatever you want. No

*continued on page 10*



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Arnold Springer — continued from page 6  
Intellectual History, Methodology and Philosophy of History, including Local History. He also traveled extensively to Russia, China, Japan and Mongolia among other exotic destinations. While he was in Mongolia, a country he loved, his attorney, Debra Bowen, informed him that he had won a suit against a Marina del Rey developer involving a substantial sum of money. On his return to Venice in 1990, he established the Ulan Bator Foundation.

Arnie’s own words as modified slightly by me for this article are as follows: “I thought I had been blessed with good fortune by my visit to Mongolia and also blessed by my good fortune for living in Venice and working on behalf of the community. Consequently, it was intended and stated in the original UBF founding documents that I would give back not only to Mongolia but to Venice for the good fortune of living here, and that I would accomplish this by producing and publishing a credible and accessible history of this place.”

From this promise two projects were established.

The first was the Venice History Project, which ultimately resulted in four “books” consisting of more than 1500 pages of over-sized text grouped into 28 “volumes” each covering a different aspect of life in Venice from Amusements to Art; from Agriculture to Aviation and a concluding volume containing materials for a biography of Abbot Kinney.

The second was centered on Mongolia. Although not versed in health matters, Arnold noted the plight of the children, especially the austerity and bleakness of the Children’s Hospital in Ulan Bator. As Scott Martelle noted in a 1997 article in the LA Times on Arnie’s project in Mongolia “The Maternal and Child Health Center is a vast and dank 800-bed complex that is clean, but rugged.” Arnold felt that he could do something and thought of bringing the predicament to the wider awareness of Americans through arranging tours and visits from the US. How could they not be enthralled by the collusion of culture, history and needs of the children.

He made contact with Richard MacKenzie MD, a Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at USC and Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles who suggested a program centered around service, education, facility improvement, fulfillment of family and children’s needs and development of research, an initiative that became known as the California-Mongolia Medical Program (Ca-MMP).

This project would work in collaboration with the Mongolian Ministry of Health, and Medical School. After an initial visit with a core health team to do a needs assessment in 1994, the Ulan Bator Foundation launched its medical initiative - a program that would enable Mongolia to leap over many of the medical problems solved in the 20th century in the Western world, allowing Mongolia to arrive squarely in the 21st. Arnie very much wanted to blend his Venice activism with his energy in Mongolia, something that was reflected in his writings, his home decor and his hospitality.

Mongolia had moved Arnie not only because of its primitive simplicity, its Buddhist way of life, its friendliness and acceptance of differences but the embedded intrigue of Russian historical influence.

The Ca-MMP continues to this day, now in its 25th year. The physical structure of the Hospital has been greatly improved now housing a children’s oncology unit, modern surgical rooms, neonatal and pediatric ICU’s, kidney dialysis along with much state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment and a network of telemedicine with consultative links across the country and to the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles. Although Arnie’s leadership and the Ulan Bator Foundation was not responsible for all the advances that occurred, it provided the stimulus for change, the vision for what is possible and the models for bringing it to reality. Arnie reminded the physician leadership of Ca-MMP, that any sustainable and culturally sensitive solution must reflect Mongolian sensibilities.

VNC ELECTION — continued from page 1  
Sugars, Alley Bean, Alix G, and Jim Robb. There are other notable mentions probably, but appearance and lip service does not cut it. Show us your votes and we’ll show your values and how you are either helping dismantle or reinforce the further de facto segregation (aka death) of this historically diverse neighborhood.

Many were surprised that Brian Averill lost, as well as most of the 1 Venice slate and the Venice for All effort. I won’t go into detail but will point out some rough factors. The gentrification oriented parties in Venice are moreso a monolith than Venice’s “progressive” parties. It was very similar to the vote splitting in the 2016 VNC election where there was a division of the “left” leaning factions. While the vote dissipation of 2016 election seemed due to lack of communication and organization, the 2021 election division centered around the Reese-Davidson project.

In my opinion the key left leaning factions could have humbled themselves a notch to unite under an equity and racial justice banner for this one election— now we have to deal with Jim Murez. It also seemed that the racial/economic justice and equity centered tenets we were centering for candidates of Venice for All were very new to such commitments. I wouldn’t say reluctance but perhaps cautious and unfamiliar. It’s understood that race and accountability for social disparities can be touchy topics, especially in a community that seems to have gotten very comfortable with not acknowledging or consciously working to amend the manifestations of systemic racism in our community.

One thing we can be certain of is that the segregationist contingent of the neighborhood is determined to do what they do. If there ever was an example it is their dedicated votes to elect Jim Murez. Yea, anti-Black, anti-equity, well known misogynist, woman bully Jim Murez. As per my last expression, it is clear that despite all the lip service and Black Lives Matter proclamations residents wore on their sleeves the past year, the majority of the active community in Venice really doesn’t care about Black Lives. I always leave space in my heart for gentry to steer themselves better but as you can see it’s another disappointment.

Despite Jason and myself being surrounded by segregation destinationed board members the mere presence of our native Ventian presence and intelligence will be a lot for them to reckon with. As far as I’m concerned they are the ones outnumbered and in for a rough ride. Most of the people elected were running on the premise that they are somehow going to oust Mike Bonin. Hilarious. One trick ponies with no long term purpose in their hearts but to “Recall Bonin.” On the becoming side there are a few people on the board who, while maybe not being identifiably progressive, could be respectable middle ground players that will soften the impact of the lost cases we do have on the board.

A reminder that Venice Neighborhood Council is only advisory to L.A. City Council. While there’s no real power to create policy, if skillfully worked it can be a useful tool for affecting local and city policies. We need to encourage ourselves and others of quality integrity to join VNC committees and partake in public comments and such. Hopefully now that we have strong Venice Natives on the VNC board as well as probably the most Black and Brown representatives in general since I don’t know when, we will inspire more marginalized and disenchanting people to re-engage with the council. Please check out the L.A. Taco interview I did (vog.news/mb-lataco) as well as stay tuned on my website Bravo4Venice.com for additional info and analysis on this Venice election as well as upcoming call-to-actions.

—V—

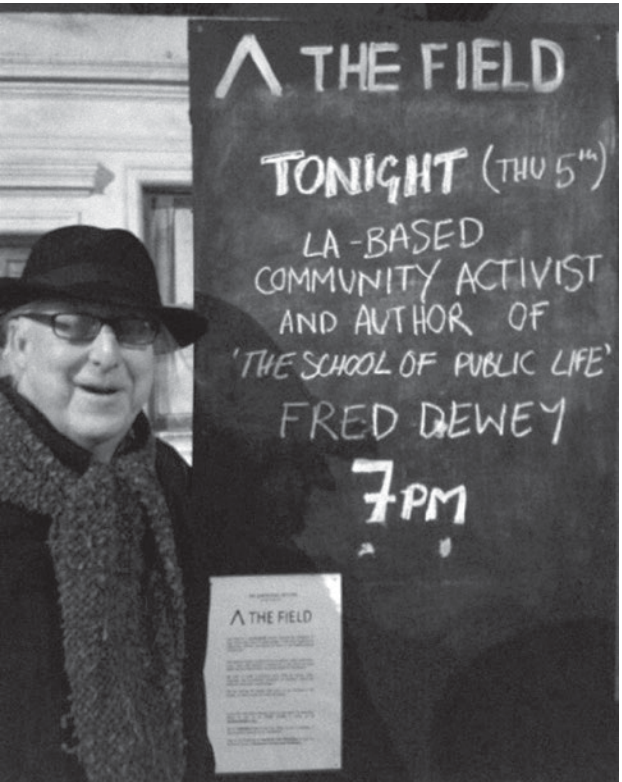
As the Venetian environment has changed over the years, many of our old friends and neighbors have moved to “greener pastures”. Arnold and I agreed, over lunch, that we would only leave Venice by being carried out “toes up”. As in so many things, Arnold has once again led the way for me.



Venice Neighborhood Council At Large Community Officer, and Free Venice Beachhead writer Mike Bravo

Arnold and Fred — continued from page 7  
Fugitive Kind. Lonely House was written by Kurt Weill and Langston Hughes. Jack Kerouac & Allen Ginsberg wrote Pull My Daisy with musician David Amram. The LIT SHOW was born thanks to Fred Dewey.

When Sponto died, 7 Dudley Cinema needed a new home. I first started showing films at Beyond Baroque because Fred Dewey supported our experimental and political curation. During the discussion after the screening of Mary Jordan’s documentary of iconic artist Jack Smith, Fred said that Jonas Mekas was CIA. Most would consider that ridiculous, but



Fred knew Jonas and that whole NY underground cinema scene. So think again, I found Fred’s idea to be grounds for further research. Consider “HOW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IGNORED AVANT GARDE FILM” - This is the title of a chapter from the book Hollywood and The Culture Elite by Peter Decherney. “Nelson Rockefeller supposedly once told Franz Kline (‘jokingly’) that the only reason collectors bought art was to keep artists from becoming revolutionaries. For a while in the sixties this strategy stopped working.” - Lucy Lippard. Examine the book Who Paid the Piper – The CIA and the Cultural Cold War by Frances Stonor Saunders, who explores CIA connections with the Abstract Expressionist movement. Fred was even going to teach class on Marshall McLuhan in Pasadena at the ArtCenter College of Design. Fred was a deep thinker and resonated with a McLuhan quip: “The avant garde no longer exists. It’s the media themselves.” Fred’s passion was being inclusive and open to all people, new metaphors, and new questions - the big picture.

Fred was always helping raise awareness. I wrote about Fred’s book The School of Public Life in my essay- <http://www.othercinema.com/otherzine/sticks-and-stones-may-break-your-bones-but-film-will-never-hurt-you/> (“The rise of cinema echoed the rise of ... global, uprooting of people and world.”).

continued on page 9

He studied Hannah Arendt, who stated, “Political questions are far too serious to be left to the politicians.” Just last year, Fred organized the post-Rodney-King-uprising Neighborhood Councils Movement in Los Angeles. He talked with Pete Davis and workshop participants about Hannah Arendt’s understanding of the political and (re)locating power on July 2, 2020. Search youtube for “Power & Place: The School of Public Life” - Fred Dewey, Pete Davis - Eutopia Workshop. You can experience Fred’s enthusiasm for deep thinking.

Dorang Pineda wrote a thorough obit in the LA Times 6-9-21: “Fred’s idea was that Beyond Baroque could become a kind of public, active, vibrant countermodel to Hollywood and the art world,” which he considered a “colonization of the imagination,” said artist Jeremiah Day. Dewey believed Beyond Baroque could be the heart of “an active, poetic engagement with our real human condition.

And indeed it was.” And still is, due to many, especially Fred Dewey.

More from the LA Times: “He believed in art and poetry and painting,” said artist Lucas Reiner. “He believed that artists and people could really make a difference in the world. Part of his mission was to help empower people.” . . . “People are more willing to talk ... when they’re sharing something deeply meaningful with each other,” Dewey said at the time. “That’s why poetry becomes the foundation of a new kind of dialogue.”

Check out the Fred Dewey interview in Beachhead #310 - August 2007

“Fred made sure Beyond Baroque benefited all Venetians.” - Sweet William, whose memoir on the 60’s is due soon, entitled “JFK & RFK Made Me Do It: 1960-1968” by Sweet William (c) 2021 Peace Corps Writers.

Drawing on two decades of interventions in politics and culture, Fred Dewey’s 2014 book “The School of Public Life” records the author’s efforts to revive and rethink public space from Los Angeles to Berlin and beyond. Drawing on manifestoes, lectures, letters and experimental texts, the book chronicles one person’s efforts to secure a space for public reality, culture, appearance and power. From helping to found neighborhood councils in Los Angeles to directing Beyond Baroque, a public space for poetry, art, sound work, publishing and debate, featuring discussions of the 1992 LA riots, Black Mountain College and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Dewey recounts a lived experience of self-government face to face with the rise of manufactured reality and an unknown political history. How can we answer the falsehoods of economics, parties and a new slavery of constructed powerlessness? Working from the examples of Hannah Arendt, poet Charles Olson, writer John Berger, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King,

Heartbroken to learn of the passing this week for Rhonda Meister, the former longtime executive director of St. Joseph Center in Venice.

For decades, Rhonda was sort of the Mother Teresa of Venice. I first met her in the mid-90s, when she was mid-way through her 25-year tenure at St. Joe's. She started as a caseworker and rose to lead the organization, growing it in size and capacity while grounding it a mission of service to those most in need. One of her lasting legacies is Bread & Roses Cafe, which offers hot, freshly prepared meals to unhoused residents in an inviting, restaurant-style space. In 2007, a year before she retired, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recognized Rhonda's lifetime of service by naming her their Public Citizen of the Year for her "advocacy on behalf of low-income children and families and those individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness."

Kevin McCardle, chair of the agency's board, said it best: "If you look up the word "compassion" in the dictionary, you will find Rhonda's picture."

Jr. and others, Dewey’s account of life experiences and thinking, public gesture proposes a new kind of school, one powerful enough to address all our conditions-a school for the people and their life.--Alcalay Ammiel “Bomb Magazine”

Thank you FRED! - Gerry Fialka, Laughtears.com  
+++++

FRED DEWEY - Here’s more recollections:  
Richard Modiano: The lease with the City for Beyond Baroque’s occupation of the Old Venice City Hall was up for renewal in 2008, and Fred was determined not to yield any more space in the building to L.A. Theater Works. There was a meeting scheduled where both BB and LATW would make their cases before Bill Rosendahl who then represented CD 11. Fred asked me and Amelie Frank to attend the meeting in our capacities as officers of BB (Amelie was Secretary and I was Treasurer.) Before going to Bill’s West L.A. office we had a powwow at Cafe 50s and strategized. At the meeting we arrived only with our good intentions and Fred’s determination. Jerry Manpearl was there to provide legal counsel, and Suzanne Thompson was also present to lend a voice in BB’s favor. LATW’s representatives were armed with a slick brochure describing all the physical improvements they would make in the building, even illustrated with an architectural rendering. We saw this and Fred paled, gathered his strength and made a heartfelt argument in favor of keeping BB in the building without giving up any more space to LATW; Jerry sealed the deal in BB’s favor by pointing out that Beyond Baroque had years of serving the local community (a condition of the lease) that LATW couldn’t match. The synergy that Fred ignited with his obvious commitment to Beyond Baroque and the community it served and Jerry zeroing in on the heart of the matter -- community service -- won the day. I saw Fred at his finest that day.

Mary Jane: Fred!! Beyond Baroque (founded and run by for decades, among his litany of stellar accomplishments, THE George Drury Smith, in 1968) may have saved his life for the many years he worked with it, and he did love it! He also even, dare i, more joyously, fell in love with THE Philomene Long, and her GLORIOUS works. She of the BEATS and the TEMPLE of MAN ( the temple is within you!) artists!!!

++++  
ARNOLD SPRINGER - I presented a special Venice History event at Sponto Gallery many years ago with Arnold Springer. He was a professor of Russian History, European Intellectual History, Methodology and Philosophy of History. He always was delving deep into Local Venice History. His video tape collection and printed matter at CSULB Library’s Special Collections is essential for our community. I had an amazing afternoon riding in Arnold’s jeep. He insisted that I go to his college and prescreen the film Venice, California: Feeding the Sparrows by Feeding the Horses, coproduced by Peter Kaufner and Moritz Borman, who worked alot with Oliver Stone. I already knew that I would show it, but enjoyed the adventure. Spending hours in conversation, we actually bonded as friends. I appreciate his eccentricities, and down-to-earthness. His dedication to the community inspires me. Thank you Arnold - Gerry Fialka

Frank Lutz and Linda Albertano: Dear Arnie, what a great person you were, and still are in our way of thinking. We’ve known you since 1970 when we were all together on Wavecrest and Breeze Avenues in Venice. You and Jutta, Gary and Cydnee, and others in our group of interesting friends. You were always vital with energy and fun to talk to, even as the years went by. Seems I just spoke to you at the Post Office a couple of weeks ago, Arnie. We will miss you a lot now that you have passed on to your next dwelling, and I am happy to say that your spirit will stay alive with us.

LJ Albertano: I often saw Arnold, bearded and pony-tailed, in his elegant full-length Mongolian gowns, robes, earrings, bracelets and pendants at the Post Office or Whole Foods or simply walking down Speedway, and I’d be instantly transported to a more enchanted place and time. He travelled often to Mongolia. Ulan Bator is the sister-city of Venice,

9 • July 2021 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD  
and, as I think about Arnie now, I wonder if he had something to do with that. His home was an oasis of peace and serenity. Among his works of art was a vast collection of Mongolian headwear prominently displayed. He was an ardent fan of Venice and created outstanding works of history on her behalf. We have lost a great intellect and a unique individual who perfectly represented the spirit of our community.

Mary Jane: Arnold! He, of quite privileges that fed his perfect integration of Academia for his non-profit, yet fully career profitized via his Professor Life. His paper back, large book of Venice details from other compilations and his recent Huge Hard Bound Book, also of compilations are of importance For References of Venice History, here, as it also fulfils his, dare i say, exceedingly full ego of his nonprofit promotions ! His, also fully includes the years of work by his litanies of classes/students at Long Beach State! The Library has the early one and should have the new one, also, 2020!

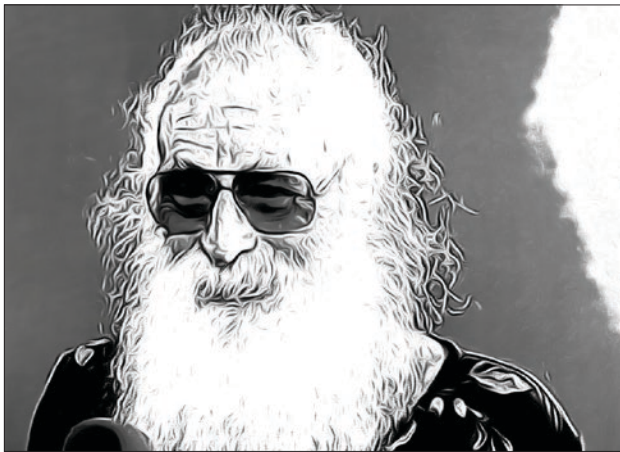
Carolyn Rios: I met Arnold Springer in the late 70’s during the Hay day of the Venice Town Council. the Venice Town Hall was radical, combustible and the most fascinating group of people I had ever met.

Most of them including Arnold were part of the Free Venice Beachhead collective. I wrote several articles about the VOP food coop, and about the coming commercial exploitation of children’s sexuality.

In all these years Arnold always talked TO me, listen TO me. He always respected my voice and my opinion. I got to know him better after I retired and got involved in the Venice Neighborhood Council in 2006. In particular, I used him for advice and explanation so that I could make good choices when voting on LUPC items.

He was the master stroke when we were brainstorming at the Oakwood Rec Center about something we could do to try to bring the different elements of the Oakwood neighborhood together. We knew we needed music and food to get people together. He is the one who said. “let’s close off 7th Avenue and have a block party.” That comment got our committee formed, and 6 months later, in August of 2007 we had our first Oakwood Community BBQ festival. 350 people showed up from all segments of the community for music from Venice locals, a pot luck, a BBQ cook off, and lots of raffle winners for local stores and restaurants.This was a tremendous success which eventually grew to 1300 people the year of Carmeggedon when everyone was virtually stuck in Venice. I was always grateful for Arnold’s simple thoughtful inspiration and his constant support of our efforts.

Arnold finally retired from teaching maybe 10 years ago, and I retired from any political activity. but we kept bumping into each other at Ralph’s and would have long impromptu conversations in the produce department. Also in classic Venice fashion, His jacked up Red truck was very noticeable and he drives down my street to get just about anywhere. I wave, he honks, but frequently he just pulls over, and we just talk for 10-15 minutes. I will sincerely miss these conversations as they were not necessarily about Venice, or politics. we just talked about our life, our aging, our joy to be in the world and living in Venice.I will miss you sorely Venice. I honor and thank you for your years of devoted service to Venice. Much love, Carolyn Rios



*Covid Killed Capitalism— continued from page 7*  
one is going to censure it. Yeah, sure, for how long, I thought? And you can make money just by doing what you love, writing. That part doesn’t work so well for me. I love to give it away.

It’s Time for the Left Coast side of the story.

So, I launched a “news site,” called The Left Coast on March 21, 2020, and haven’t been censored yet. Except, self-censored. I’ve refrained from using bad words (mostly), or blasting those idiots who wanted to open up prematurely, and help covid kill a lot of people. And, I’ve avoided saying that people who are too paranoid to get vaccinated need counseling.

I was happy that I could do something, when on May 25, George Floyd was publicly and brutally murdered. Millions marched, and I typed. Actually, it was millions upon millions who marched if you count all the cities, large and small, multiplied by day after day of huge marches and rallies.

In the beginning of the pandemic, capitalism showed it was exhausted, and should be consigned to the history books, when it couldn’t produce any masks for people, and not even enough for front line health workers. People were dying in droves, and perhaps wouldn’t have if they had some basic protections against the virus.

Then late-stage capitalism failed utterly in coming to terms with police brutality, especially murders, and the naked racism that should have died more than a hundred years ago.

Oh yes, kind words were spoken, and promises were made. Meanwhile, the death toll of Black men and women continued to rise. And now, according to the London Telegram, “A British high street retailer has decided what the world needs to promote equality is George Floyd-inspired pants.”

Lately, there is a backlash against Critical Race Theory, which examines how racism pervades every

nook and cranny of our society, and how it infects all of us. What’s wrong with simply talking about prejudice. How can we accept a campaign to stop anyone from even talking about racism. How sad is that?

On the other hand, the Black Lives Matter marches attracted all kinds of people to the cause, including whites, Latinx, Asians, Native Americans and people of mixed ethnicity and genders. This shows that all is not lost and that unity of the working class is possible.

Racism, because of skin color and ethnicity, only began with the rise of capitalism, and it will end if we come together.

How Do We Know Capitalism Is Dead?

Capitalism doesn’t die like people do. It’s a long slide from living, to zombie, to dead as a door nail. We’re in the zombie phase right now, and like scary zombies in movies, it can be a very dangerous place to be.

I wrote last year about the multiple crises that confront us. If zombie capitalism cannot confront these crises (it can’t), then other forces in society will step forward. Let us hope that it is not the fascists, the secret police or the military. Rather, we need a peaceful revolution of the majority of the population who opt for a better world of equality, freedom and abundance for all.

It’s time for people of good will to tackle these crises before they drown us:

Unfortunately, a majority of corporations and super-wealthy entrepreneurs are just playing us. They are not going to do what it takes to stop either racism or climate change. Profits come first, not the environment.

We need a decent standard of living for all, no matter what their skills or family backgrounds. During the Pandemic, as many as 30 million people didn’t have jobs. Today, it’s at least 10 million. It is becoming harder all the time to establish low levels of unemployment. This is because of low pay, ever increasing automation, and a growing resistance from workers to accept poor conditions and boring jobs.

Black Lives Matter protests have mostly hit a stone wall. Cops keep on killing Blacks, while politicians don’t want to reform or reduce funding of police forces. Other militant tactics must be employed across the country to shake things up.

The Atomic Doomsday Clock is 100 seconds to midnight. That is too close to thermonuclear war for anyone to sleep well at night.

The Income Gap is destroying us. In 2018, the top 20 percent of the U.S. population received 52 percent of all income. During the Pandemic (March 2020 - Jan. 2021), billionaire wealth increased by \$1.138 trillion.

And now there’s a vaccine crisis, with the rich and upper middle classes of the world getting protection while the poor have no access to a vaccine.

Don’t expect zombie capitalism or its befuddled or bought politicians to be able to save us from any of these crises.

It’s up to us. Always has been.

P.S. I’m alive and still writing. Hooray!

"Mottos to Live By"

submitted by Bill Kuhns via Eric McLuhan

Out of my mind. Back in five minutes.

Forget the Joneses, I keep up with the Simpsons.

The more people I meet, the more I like my dog.

Born free... taxed to death.

Laugh alone and the world thinks you're an idiot.

Rehab is for quitters.

Sometimes I wake up grumpy. Other times I let her sleep.

Work is for people who don't know how to fish.

I don't suffer from insanity. I enjoy every minute of it.

Hard work has a future payoff. Laziness pays off now.

Don't vote: it only encourages them.

In the land of the blind the one-eyed man is a raving lunatic.

Be nice to your kids. They'll choose your nursing home.

Some people are only alive because it is illegal to kill.

IRS: We've got what it takes to take what you've got.,

We are born naked, wet, and hungry. Then things get worse.

Friends help you move. Real friends help you move bodies.

Very funny, Scotty, now beam down my clothes.

Ever stop to think and forget to start again?

Why is "abbreviation" such a long word?

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some don't have film.

When the chips are down, the buffalo is empty. Seen it all, done it all, can't remember most of it.

Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.

I feel like I'm diagonally parked in a parallel universe.

He's not dead. He's electroencephalographically challenged.

I wonder how much deeper the ocean would be without sponges.

Honk if you love peace and quiet.

Despite the cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?

Back up my hard drive? How do I put it in reverse?

Nothing is fool-proof to a sufficiently talented fool.

I just got lost in thoughtr It was unfamiliar territory.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

A day without sunshine is like, you know, night.

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say will

be misquoted, then used against you.

She's always late. Her ancestors arrived on the June Flower.

On the other hand, you have different fingers.

All generalizations are false.

I brake for no apparent reason.

He who laughs last thinks slowest.

We have enough Youth; how about a Fountain of Smart?

Lottery: a tax on people who are bad at math.

It IS as bad as you think -- they ARE out to get you.

Auntie Em: Hate you, hate Kansas. Taking the dog. - Dorothy

Time is what keeps everything from happening at once.

I love cats.... they taste just like chicken.

Tony Mason - Manager



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By John R. Haag

Dreams tend to turn real in flint  
shadows and squint sunshine at morning  
when the promising young men appear  
slack jawed and drunk with unsleep and boredom:  
the young girls - how often young - are type  
tip tapping at bright lighted desks escaping,  
waking, some other kind of whoredom.

Between warm sheets shaded against morning  
and  
subway trains grinding through catacombs  
between their stained exit stairs and the dark  
entrancings of offices, dim moneycombs, their day  
falls on us as carrion.

Beyond the inner door  
alone by the seven extensioned telephone  
sits stiff with coffee and cigar  
whose odor we tremble at  
the black jawed expense accounted beast of play.  
Lower your hung over eyes  
lest voices touch your inner ears  
amid the jangling of alarms and signals.  
(The princess and the witch is there  
borne in a swivel chair; eraser  
dust highlights her hair.)

And dreams?  
Why?  
dreams are everyone's:  
and Edison will light your way  
and Ford will get you there.

**Let’s fire your ass.  
Let’s kick you out on the street.  
We’ll charge for every drop of water  
And make fresh air a treat.**

**Let’s raise all the prices  
and lower your pay.**

**Hey buddy, the cost-of-living  
has just priced you out of the market.  
It’s nothing personal  
That’s how we do it today.**

**Let’s give the banks billions.  
And for you, a kick in the pants.  
Don’t forget, this mess all started  
because you wanted a home of your own.**

**So don’t give us crap about Wall Street.  
We know the alley where you sleep.**

**-James R Smith**

The Father of Fathers  
Twenty-One Poems for My Father

Four.

Three Gifts

by  
Majid Naficy

One day my father called us and said.  
“I have three gifts for you.  
A red heart, an hourglass, and...”  
Oh God, I don’t remember the other one.

Mehdy took the heart  
Opened its two halves  
And touched their trembling strings.

I took the hourglass  
And along its white sands  
I fell from one half to the other  
Asking myself.  
“What can be done in three minutes?”

And Sa’id  
At age ten went to Paris  
For heart surgery  
And at age twenty-nine  
He was executed in Tehran.

I remember him.  
He had red cheeks  
And strong hands.

March 4, 1994

Sa’id Naficy (1954-82)

“Daily Lives”  
by Gail Hester

Empty homes are daily  
as daily funerals for our young  
Distribution of drugs is daily  
As gang violence on the streets  
As the daily birth of a newborn  
Empty schools are daily  
As empty minds and darkened spirits  
Life is daily  
But death is the end



The Father of Fathers  
Twenty-One Poems for My Father

One.  
Sword at the Ablution Pool

by  
Majid Naficy

There is a sword in this house  
Which Father says is a souvenir  
From the time of his service.  
I saw it at the sanctuary of the ablution pool  
And thought that it was a harmless emblem  
On the rich green banner of Allah.

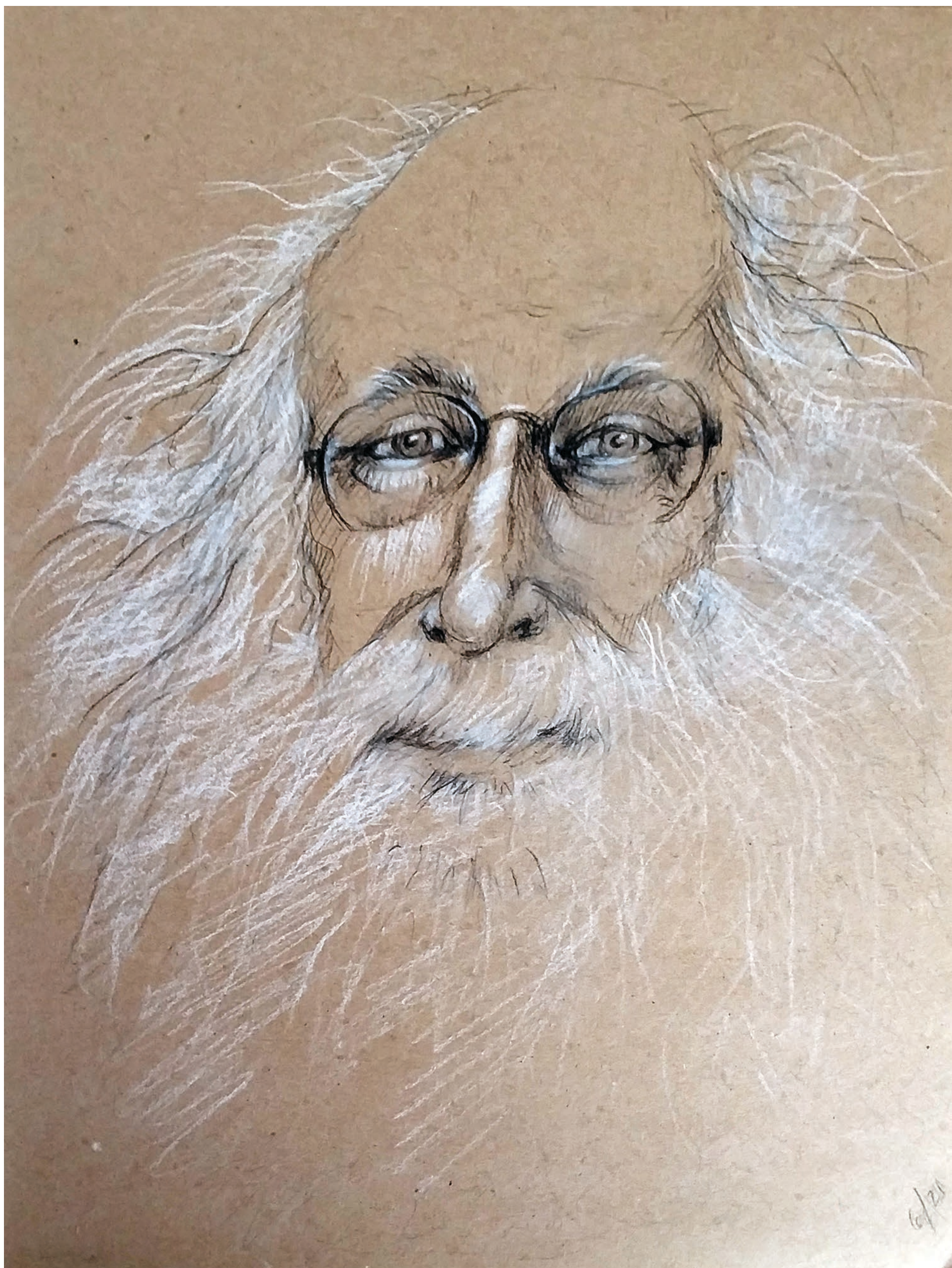
One evening when breaking the fast  
We went downstairs to the ablution room.  
It was a holy Night of Power.\*  
The little fountain was whispering to itself.  
Father performed ablution at the pool  
stood toward the House of God  
And pressed his forehead to the prayer seal.  
I stood before the boiling samovar  
And the dining cloth which displayed  
The plate of fried walnuts and dates,  
And the dish of basil and mint with bread.  
A godly vapor was rising  
From the cup of hot sugar water  
Ready to pass through his parched lips,  
And a hymn of brotherhood could be heard  
As he was chanting verses  
From his prayer book.  
His eyes were shining from abstinence  
And everything he looked at  
He would mesmerize.  
I surrendered myself to all this beauty.  
If my prayers were heard that night  
What more could I have desired  
Than this open cloth of happiness?  
Then, against my will  
I laid my head on his lap  
And went to sleep with a heavenly dream.

Suddenly, the naked sword came to life  
A holy warrior fast and clever  
Whirled it around  
In an unending dance  
And from the edge of his long robe  
An army of the faithful rose up.  
The soothing murmur of the samovar  
Turned into fearful cries of holy raids;  
The rich colored tea, to blood;  
And the lustful pieces of date,  
To the people’s living hearts.  
In this great clamor  
I recognized Father’s voice  
Shouting at this time.  
“Fight in the name of Allah!  
Fight in the name of Allah!”  
I trembled  
And my dream was over.  
Leaning against the velvet cushion  
Father seemed to be asleep.  
I took a date and left him alone  
In his nightmare.

At this ablution pool  
There hangs a sword.  
Father says it is a souvenir  
From the time of his service.

January 4, 1987

\*- A night or nights in the fasting month of Rama-  
dan in which prayers are heard.



Arnold Springer  
1939-2021

drawing by Emily Winters