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June 2021 #465

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BLACK LIVES MATTER

Will Black Lives Matter this VNC Election?

By Mike Bravo
One hard thing for me during any election season, but particularly elections in the neighborhood of my ancestors, is that it gives me an uncut reminder of how racist America, and in this case Venice, is. Hyper-gaslighting, hyper-coded racism, and hyper-deflection to do anything meaningful that would actually acknowledge and mitigate structural racism on this occupied continent and in this neighborhood. Lately, online, I've been seeing cheap shots against VNC presidential candidate Brian Averill. On the online, hate filled, anonymous profile cesspool that is Nextdoor, I saw a post made about him and VNC VP candidate Alex Nieman. The post had about 5 bullet points suggesting how Averill and Nieman didn't care about community safety just because those gentlemen didn't live up to their tiki torch rage levels, didn't satisfy their bitterness quota for Mike Bonin, or were supportive of their unbridled, unskillful motions and deficient diplomacy with the city that governs them. That Nextdoor post along with the resident coward profiles also tried to pejoratively brush Averill and Nieman with claims of "Defunding the Police," as though it was a stigma. Mind you Defund the Police is a slogan representing the call for reallocation of funds from an already over funded law enforcement

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

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VENICE AND THE VNC ELECTION

By Jon Wolff

This year's Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) election ballot shows a total of seventy-two candidates running for various offices. Some candidates have already served on the VNC and can be judged according to their voting records on a number of issues. A few stand out as having demonstrated strong support for the fight to save the First Baptist Church of Venice.

For over three years now, the activist group Save Venice has worked to reclaim this historical African-American church from being gutted and turned into a private mega-mansion. Save Venice has appreciated their allies on the VNC board. VNC presidential candidate Brian Averill has stood with Save Venice. LUPC Chairperson Alix Gucovsky has also taken the good side. James Robb has been a part of the fight for a long time.

Of the new candidates on the ballot, Jason Sugars, Sergio Perez, Christopher Lee, and Lisa Redmond have all supported the struggle. And Mike

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Max Hubris : Who is Ruining Venice?

Is it the commercial landlords who jack up rents and force our beloved merchants out. Is it the scofflaw residential landlords who harass and evict tenants, so they can make a perfect sale. Is it AIRBNB, who hollowed out the affordable rentals. Is it the Real Estate Professionals who, after slowly buying out the Black community of Oakwood, a community financed by Abbot Kinney for his Black workers who were redlined out of many other areas, and with Venice Neighborhood Council members like Jim Murez, helped and applauded the sale of the cornerstone First Baptist Church of Venice in Oakwood to Jay Penske, whose investment partner is Mohammed Bin Salman, the notorious Saudi despot who ordered the murder of journalist Jamal Kashoggi, in culmination of the GQ era of gentrification in Venice.

Is it people whose home values have increased 350% in 10 years, and then complain about losing home value, ~5% is reported by Zillow last year.

Are the ruiners the global Real Estate Investment Trusts who will buy up any lot at any price because it has been doing better than gold and is being turned into cryptocurrency tokens.

Is it the Snapchat fiasco, where even the city and local landlords supported wholesale evictions so that any possible North Beach property, commercial or residential, was leased or bought by Snapchat, in pursuit of Silicon Beach, the gentrifiers vision of paradise, and in service of Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel's one upance to Venice.

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VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL 2021 ELECTION EDITORIAL

By Jon Wolff

The Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) 2021 election is now underway. The VNC election is a very important event that takes place in Venice every two years. Venice's election is said to have larger voter turnouts than any other neighborhood council election within the city of Los Angeles. And this 2021 election will certainly live up to expectations.

There are a number of candidates running for executive positions on the council, and fifty-one candidates running for a position of at-large community officer. Many of the candidates stand for the People of Venice, and they have a track record of service to the original Community of Venice. Others, however, are in the race to enrich themselves and to further the aims of developers and business interests. The Beachhead is here to help voters separate the Good Guys from the Evildoers.

The May issue of the Beachhead featured a slate of candidates who are reliable and trustworthy on the issues most important to Venetians, such as affordable housing, racial and economic equity, gentrification, and of course homelessness.

The Good Guy slate is as follows:


- President: Brian Averill
- Vice President: Alex Nieman
- Treasurer: Robin Rudisill
- Secretary: Erica Moore
- LUPC Chair: Alix Gucovsky

At-Large Community Officers: Mike Bravo, Sergio Perez, Jason Sugars, Christopher Lee, James Robb, Lisa Redmond, Monique Maion, Steve Williams, Clark Brown, Abby Deen, and Grant Turck


The Bad Guys are also on the VNC ballot this year. Some of the old Bad Guys who have already infested the VNC for far too long are running again. The phlegm ball known as Jim Murez thinks he wants to be president this time. Murez owns that ugly fortress on 810 Main Street that he uses to host events without adequate parking. He's recently dug a basement hole underneath it which curiously resembles a soundproof dungeon for torture parties.

Melissa "24/7" Diner (self-named), Sima Kostovetsky, C.J. Cole, Soledad Ursua, Daffodil Tyminski, and Mehrnoosh Mojallali have harmed Venice for years through their positions on the VNC board and committees, and are now back to do more damage. These females of the gentrifier species have voted for every concrete box building, every


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from the
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The FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD is published monthly by the Beachhead Collective as a vehicle for the people of Venice to communicate their ideas and opinions to the community at large. The Beachhead encourages anyone to submit news stories, articles, letters, photos, poetry or graphics of interest to the Venice community.

The staff reserves the right to make all decisions collectively on material published. There is no editor on the Beachhead. The printing is financed by ads, sustainers and donations. The articles, poetry and art work express the opinions of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Beachhead Collective.

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.

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LETTERS

Dear Beachhead

Twice in a span of two weeks or so, while enjoying an afternoon at a local business on Ocean Front Walkway (OFW) on Venice Beach, I have witnessed extremely dangerous maneuvers by LAPD. In both cases, following interaction with an individual, the officers chose to SPEED down the pedestrian OFW, accelerating hard, skidding on the sandy walk before turning off OFW on to Rose Ave. In the first instance, they were pursuing an individual that had driven his car down OFW. He had stopped his car and LAPD were interacting with him for 10 minutes or so before he made a U-Turn and retraced his OFW route. In the second instance, it seems they cut short their interaction with a homeless person to respond to a call. While I don't know the nature of the call, I cannot believe this dangerous speeding down a crowded pedestrian-only thoroughfare is acceptable police response. Both instances occurred in late afternoon (the beach was crowded). The risk for serious injury under these circumstances is obvious and very real.

John Grazal

Dear folks at the Beach Head

The Beach Cities Car Wash at Lincoln and Venice Blvds has had illegal outdoor advertising surrounding it for the last 4 years. The business has been cited multiple times, yet the owner merely pays the fine and keeps the ads. Moreover, the signs amount to a desecration of the Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument, which is located on the sidewalk directly in front of the advertising. The City Council just revised the ordinance governing such signs, City Code Sec. 14.4.17, and the Beach Cities Car Wash signs remain in violation. This is because the legislation, just like the previous ordinance, requires that the business be actively involved in construction activities, with an active building permit, in order to erect such a “temporary” sign. No construction has taken place there since 2017. This marks the spot where Japanese Americans were forced to gather in early 1942 before being shipped off to remote incarceration centers. Members of the Memorial Committee have remonstrated with Council Member Mike Bonin’s office, and the owner himself. Nothing changes. The signs are illegal and an eyesore. They offend the Memorial. I have attached 2 photos that I took today. I will be glad to discuss this further.

For further information, contact Patrick Frank, President, Scenic Los Angeles: patrick.frank@scenic.org, Len Nguyen, Senior Planning Deputy, Council District 11: len.nguyen@lacity.org, or Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument Committee: www.venicejamm.org

Patrick Frank
(edited for length and clarity)

Dear Beachhead

My name is **Garry**, and I have been a resident of Venice for over 65 years. At present, I run a business called Homeless Enterprise, in which I sell food to the homeless at a discount price. I also feed the homeless free of charge several nights a week. My business is located on 3rd street, between Rose and Sunset. I run this business with my cousin, Spike. Since we’ve been here, we have become part of the homeless community, and we have taken it upon ourselves to clean up 3rd street. So far we have done an amazing job.

The reason for this letter is because I am con-
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You know
you're
from Venice
if/when..

...There were days when you had the beach mostly to yourself.



...If you played on the pipe when you were a kid.



...when you played for the Venice Bulldogs!





"SHARED HOUSING"

By David Busch

Let's be very clear. Being a homeless person in Los Angeles today, and now being told that you must accept "shared housing" or face criminal penalty, is NOT shared housing. It's just L.A.'s latest, horrific, carceral, Orwellian Double Speak.

"Sharing", by definition, is a voluntary act. And therefore, any interpretation of law which would call incarceration of two strangers in a gussied-up tool shed, smaller than even a State prison cell, under "force or threat of force, either express or implied", or any other such State action to so compel a person simply violates not only the U.S. Constitution but also the spirit of "Martin v Boise" which declares that homeless people must be OFFERED an "adequate alternative" to unregulated camping in the informal settlements of their choice, settlements that they resort to by reason of their fundamental human right to "Housing" and not "State Compulsion".

The move by the City of Los Angeles to use the Carter Injunction as a pretext to compel free people to take any form of tool shed incarceration with no guarantee of actual housing fit for free and permanent habitation is simply the City of Los Angeles' latest, disgusting, human-rights-violating attempt to force everybody to continue to live under the outrageous, unsustainable, carceral housing terror of rents and mortgages that are impoverishing this nation's entire working class.

Forcing America's poorest into forced incarceration in tool sheds, or up to six bunks to a bedroom in "shared housing", is just L.A. Democrats' latest move to turn Los Angeles into a Gulag of unaffordability and incarceration by simply refusing to create, zone, and demand by eminent domain, as required, enough affordable housing to keep this city a free, fair, and just community.

VNC Editorial – continued from page 1
corrupt business expansion, and every kill-the-homeless motion on the VNC's agenda for the past term. You as a voter must not, under any circumstance, allow them out of their coffins to feed again on the life force of Venice.

Robert Thibodeau is also returning to prowl the night in search of victims. Thibodeau is the evil architect behind the plans to gut the historical First Baptist Church of Venice and turn it into a private mega-mansion. He must be stopped. Wear a cross, bring garlic, carry a mallet and a wooden stake if you can. But above all, vote against him if you love Venice.

There are some new Bad Guys to vote against too. The most notable is Chie Lunn. She and her first husband moved to Venice two years ago and already she's running for office. She's appeared on AM talk radio to vent about the R.V.s that were on Rose Avenue. Let's make her go back on the radio to announce her own defeat.

And then there's Ben Decker.

Until a couple of months ago, no one had ever heard of Ben Decker. He was never seen at VNC meetings before the pandemic. In the three-and-a-half years that Save Venice has fought to save the First Baptist Church of Venice, he never showed up at the Sunday gatherings. He only came by once after he started his campaign for VNC president, and that was because he was called out.

Decker's full-page color ad in a local newspaper [not the Beachhead] consists of five paragraphs of literary styrofoam, without a single syllable of substance. His terms like "challenges", "healing", "problem-solving", and "solution-oriented" would be great if we knew what issues they referred to. But instead of addressing specific topics, he used the phrases, "rise like a phoenix from the ashes" and "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one single step". It seems that a Magic 8 Ball has more originality than Ben Decker. At a candidates' forum hosted by the East Venice Neighborhood Association (EVNA), Decker mostly parroted what Brian Averill said. Then he added that we need to be "activating our imaginations", whatever that means.

At his recent mini-rally on the beach, Decker held court among a group of his supporters. He wore a red T-shirt displaying his personal campaign

First Baptist Church & VNC – continued from page 1
Bravo has been the greatest champion for the church since the beginning.

There are other candidates, however, who have sought to undermine the efforts of the Save Venice organization. James Murez has spoken at West L.A. Planning Commission hearings against Save Venice's sacred cause. His reputation as a sleazy gentrifier is well-documented. Robert Thibodeau is on the ballot. Thibodeau is the actual architect behind the plans to desecrate the church.

If support for the fight to save the First Baptist Church of Venice seems like a small issue, consider the broader context. The institution of this church was established in Venice over a century ago. The church building served as a central point in the Venice Black Community for generations. To lose it now would show total disregard for Venice Black History.

Understand that the preservation of the church will be a major victory over the forces of gentrification. With the specters of demolition and displacement creeping through Venice daily, this church is the foremost symbol of permanence.

Clearly, a Venice Neighborhood Council with the executives and the majority favoring the church would send a signal to the gentrifiers that the History and Culture of Venice are not for sale. This is a remarkably important issue.

And it's the issue we can all support.

For info go to: www.veniceforall.org
and www.savevenice.ca

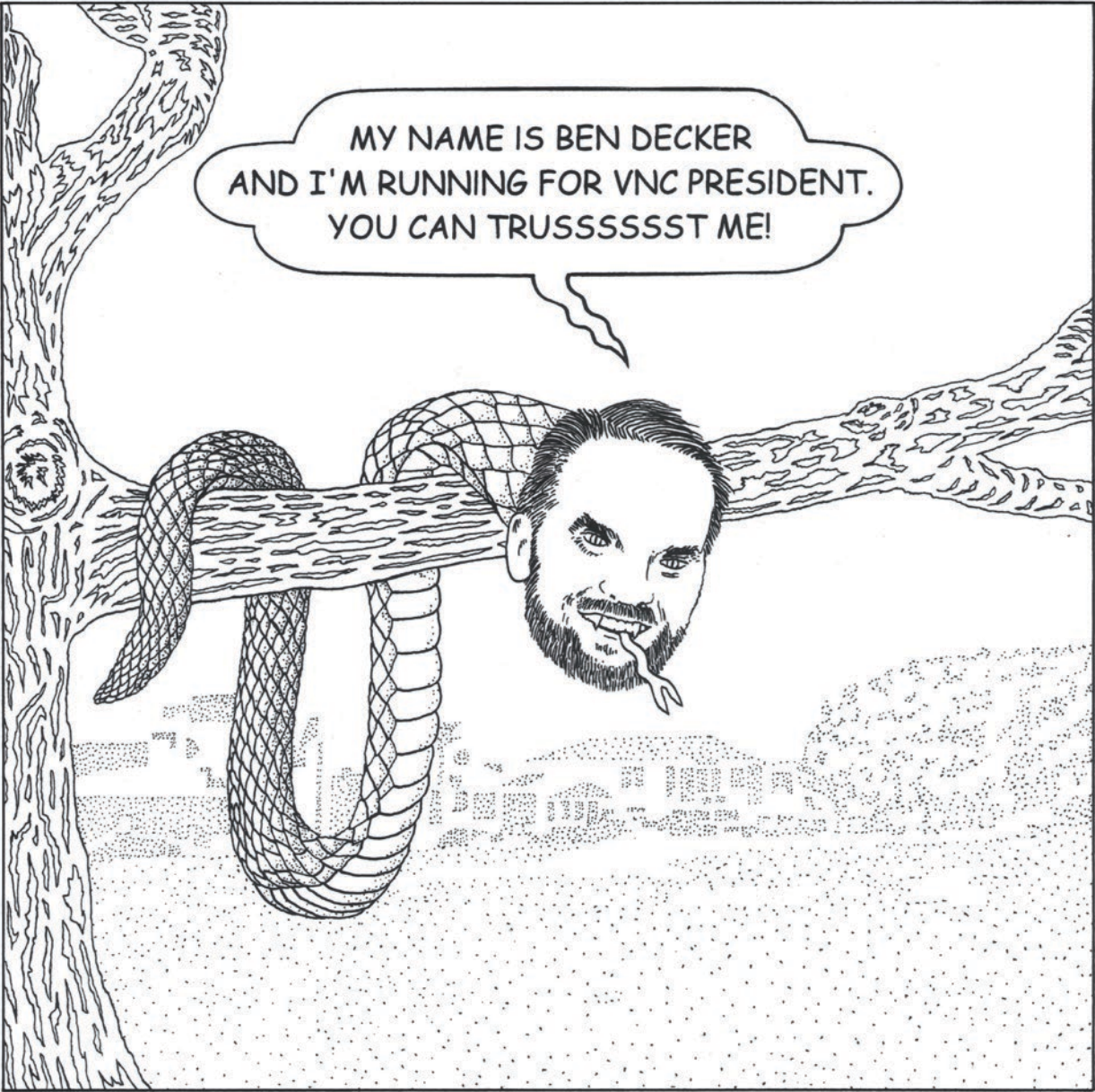
logo as he addressed a circle of emaciated New Age types who looked like rejects from a T-Mobile commercial. He spoke into a microphone but his words weren't amplified; they were only broadcast to the headphones worn by those in his initiates circle. Once again, the cloud of mystery obscured the real Ben Decker.

A bit of research will reveal that Decker is a kind of meditation hoo-doo guru who's been haunting Venice for a few years. He teaches and preaches and writes things that look like books but are really just padded-out pamphlets. One of his meditation guidebooks is filled with half-pages of Deckerisms followed by two pages of blank space for notes where the reader can jot down reflections on the wisdom received from Master Decker. It's mostly empty paper. And trees died for this?

Much of the mystery and lack of substance that characterizes Ben Decker was identified early from conversations with Decker himself. Representatives of the Venice Community told Decker that the VNC election is important to the People of Venice, and that his ambitions would only gain him a lot of very angry Venetians. Venice has waited years for the opportunity to win back the VNC from the gentrifiers and colonizers who have held it till now. Screwing up the election will not work out well for Ben Decker.

Some were willing, at first, to give Decker a chance if he would withdraw from the race for president and just run for an at-large seat. But he didn't listen. Instead, he dodged and obfuscated. And worse. While he was speaking at the EVNA forum about how he would support the fight for the First Baptist Church of Venice, his henchman was desecrating a solemn vigil on the very steps of that church. At the same time that Decker was speaking his empty words, a person closely associated with Decker was shouting and threatening the people who had gathered at the First Baptist Church of Venice to memorialize young lives lost to police violence.

Ben Decker needs to understand that Venice remembers everything. And if there's one thing about Venice that is no mystery, it's this: Venice doesn't like to be lied to.



Letter - Garry – continued from page 2
cerned about my city, and I truly believe that there are those who do not have Venice in their best interest. Let me explain why I say that. Understand this, I am entitled to my own opinion.

Venice use to be a thriving diverse city where we all got along. I can remember when I played sports and spent the night over a white kids house. I can remember when we treated each other with respect. Those days are long gone. We now have the elections coming up to select members to govern our city, and to make decisions that affect us all. Allow me to set the record straight. If you do not agree with what I say, to bad.

I have looked around Venice and I do not like what I see. It seems as though everything is being done for the wealthy and privilege. I see building is at an all time high. Big houses are going up, so are businesses, while the wealthy buy up all the property they can get from minorities. But if I am to keep it real, no one had to sell.

I studied several businesses throughout Venice, and some I don’t understand how they got approved to operate. Let’s take the Bakery on Sunset and 3rd. This Bakery is operating at least 16 hours a day, without any parking. Every day their customers block the street by double parking, parking in the red, parking in the middle of the streets, and literally blocking traffic. How do I know, because I went to the Bakery and complained. I took pictures. My question is, who authorized the opening of this Bakery, and why have you allowed them to operate with no parking? They block traffic every single day.

Lets take the Restaurant on Lincoln and Vernon, where they sell sausages. Again, no parking. Their customers utilize the parking at the swap meet, which is coming to an end. Rather than have their own parking, customer’s are parking up and down Vernon Ave preventing home owners from parking on their own street. Same thing with Baby Blues, they also use the parking lot at the swap meet.

You have allowed businesses to build outdoor patio’s to keep their businesses running. A applaud you for that. You have approved the construction of a hotel that will be located on Abbott Kinney, and run from Westminster to Broadway..

God has already created the world, but he is not going to make, give, or produce anymore land. What we have is what we got. I am a firm believer that when you tare down houses, apartments, or anywhere where people live, you build it back, and you build it back better. All the people that want something built, where are those who want to build affordable housing, low rent housing. Where are those good people who want to make Venice a better place. They can do that by doing what is right.

A lot of people want to be on this council, but who really wants to help Venice shine? I’ve watched a lot of you get on this council and serve yourself, and to hell with the community. I was born here, raised here, and all of my roots are here, starting with that church on the corner of Westminster and 7th street. Oh my god, how Reverend Holmes use to preach. A lot of us in Venice were raised in that church, and it has so much meaning to us. So I ask you, how many of you showed that you cared About the History of Venice when that crook sold our church right from under us? Where were those on the council, and where were those who now want to be on the council? I can’t hear you. I heard Naomi Nightingale. I heard Laddie Williams. I heard Lydia Ponce. I heard Miguel Bravo. I heard Alley Beal and Alix Gucovsky. Most of the candidates name for the council do not mean anything to me, probably because I never heard of them attempting to save our church. If it was the church of Donald Trump, the support would have been overwhelming. Now that’s a nasty thing to say but its true. Don’t get me wrong there were a lot of people fighting, but none of you.

Lets talk about the homeless. What you are about to hear is the truth uncut. Some of you may not agree with me, and that’s because you don’t live

down here, nor have you been in the trenches. I had no idea until I experienced it first hand. You have no idea. Since Spike and I have been down here, we have cleaned up 3rd street. The city could not clean it up because they have to many rules that are out of date. They also have to protect themselves from lawsuits. Let me give you a senerio. A homeless man left his tent and was gone for over a week. On Thursday, clean up day, we went to get rid of the mess he had made. In his tent was jars of urine, bags of feces, maggots, and a bunch of syringes. The city and the homeless advocate told us we needed to post a sign and give that person a week to come claim his property. To me, that was the dumbest thing I ever heard. Everything there to create a health hazard, and were suppose to leave for another week. We got rid of that stuff the same day. We base things on common sense.

The city spent 64,000.000 on putting the homeless in Motels. That program was a complete failure. You cannot uproot the homeless and put them in a motel and expect them to live happily ever after. There’s two problems. First, most of them are mentally screwed up. Second, they are on drugs. A drug addict is not going to follow the rules of a motel and stay inside after 7:00p.m. What happens if he or she wants some drugs? What happens if they start hearing voices? Needless to say, almost all of them ended right back on the streets.

Now you want to run the homeless off the beach. Listen to me. They cannot go any farther west. Meaning, they are coming east, into your neighborhoods. The crime rate is already up. Look, because you are homeless, does not mean you are not a crook. A lot of the homeless are crooks, they steal, rob, etc. Let’s not sugar coat this. I’ve caught a few of them myself. But not all are crooks. A

lot of them have problems. I believe all these people wanting to get on the council should think about this. Let’s build a complex to house the homeless, and within this complex there are Doctors, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Drug Counselors, etc, where they can get treatment where they live. You cannot build your way out of this problem.

For those of you who want to be on the council, don’t get on the council and say, “Lets get rid of the homeless.” If you do, you are now part of the problem. For those of you pushing the homeless into our neighborhood, be careful of what you wish for. Getting the homeless to leave the beach is not going to be that simple.

I’m down in the trenches with the homeless. I feed them almost every day. I clean the streets they live on, Spike and I. We are the ones they come too when someone overdoses on drugs. We are the ones they come to when there is a dispute. They appreciate someone that is really trying to help them. They can spot a fake a mile away. We have a lot of help from real people who really want to help. Those are the people I would like to see on the council. Someone like Big Joe, who comes around and drops off enough food to last a few days. Or the lady who closes her Donut Shop each day and brings all the left over donuts down here. Or my friend Tim who goes to the store and bring \$300.00 worth of Hygiene. These are real people.

In closing, let me say this. For those of you who wish to serve on this council, do so for the right reasons. God is watching.

Garry



I DON’T WANT TO GO BACK TO NORMAL!

(Report from Santa Monica)

By Henry Rosebuds

Everybody had a hard year

“I’ve Got A Feeling” – Beatles

Sitting in bumper-to-bumper the other day, I’m thinking, This is the new abnormal? A return to planet L.A.? For what, for why? To watch heart-breaks continue exploding like dog barks down the block? A blown-away fortress mess of tents, neighbors turned inside out, outside turned out from society?

Fuhgeddaboudit. Over the border, at the demarcation line between Rose Avenue CVS (ransacked in 2020) and Bulletproof Coffee (still stronger than any human needs). Here in San Shamanica, I’m safely under the influence of yak butter and a powder energizing nitro-cold-fusion, baby. Good for six hours of home work-in, Ian Masters, KPFK news at 6 (Actually from KPFA Berkeley now; the LA station canned entire news dept.), PBS NewsHour, Trevor, Colbert, Seth, laughing nightly at a nightmare.

But now there’s dining by the side of a highway. Thank Joe for the \$1400—I should pick up a check— but at a real roadhouse you’re at least a gravel parking lot away from the two-lane. Main Street is so distracting now, I’m afraid my drive-in-take-home adjustment is gonna turn into a drive-by-sideswipe: "Lookout! Lookout!" I’ll shout at the nachos and drunks—a shout out to "Leader of the Pack" that screams how feeble I’ve become.

I just turned 66. Sounds so settled. So 20th century. How to get back to that? Continue gardening? I don’t garden. Continue using the time period for projects like cleaning the apartment. Continue spending more intimate moments doing daily ablutions. (CVS delivers floss!) I enjoyed whiling away the hours, conferring with folks back east. Synchronizing our pipes, our coughs. Ever shroom & zoom? The cool part is typing in the private chat sidebar; it’s like sending notes in class about the other nerds at their desks...

How shall we live? The same way we just did—gardening? (never started one) Learning how to attend a movie again? No texting/talking/pausing to go grab another cupcake. If Netflix is turned on but nobody's home, does it miss any of us?

How can I handle the reality that traffic won’t ever be that way again? Going 90 mph down the 405 because CHP is catching the idiots doing 100. I went to San Diego last week to hug my mother. Apparently other people were heading there, too. Took me four hours. I can’t take the old traffic. If I can’t hear waves crashing nearly a mile away, the Pacific drum circle at dusk, all those crazy birds in the thickets. That’s got to be some kind of red flag, don’t it?

You can keep your new normal old way of living. I’m staying home. Invite in the night-blooming jasmine. Take tea and naps. “Relaxifying,” my friend Giovanni advises. Reading—whoops, another nap. Zooming in Gerry Fialka and his fellow webinarians for wordplay dates, enlighteningly amazed at Joyce and McLuhan—they’re madcap!) Continuing to try and learn time is not just of the essence: time is the essence.

“Feel safe!”(Fialka) Zoom me, baby. I’m here at home for ya.

Max Hubris – continued from page 1

Is it Google moving in in 2011 with the red carpet laid down by Jim Murez, so that they could promote their green image by paying their employees to bicycle to work, which set off the war rents and tripling of rents overnight (all thanks to that 80% tax break they got so that we wound up directly paying for the gentrification of our community).

Is it Venice Suites and a host of other duplicitous hotel developers stripped us of all our truly affordable housing; the illegal Ellis Act evictions and strong arming of long-term low income tenants to move out of their stable housing.

Is it Lincoln Place; the untold number of Mello Act violations, which was supposed to restore our affordable housing supply.

Is it the BID which simply provided a tool for these greedy fucks to siphon millions of dollars into their pockets, simply to use as a legal defense fund for their own nefarious activities.

Was it the 3am LAPD raid (Oct. 2006) to intimidate Black families in Oakwood making them feel unsafe in their own homes.

Was it the vigilantes with their middle of the night fire bombings setting campers on fire, while making it illegal to park on the street at night - these are the fuckers who took people out of their vehicles and threw them on the street corner.

Despite all the dystopian speculative futurism and likely prescient doomsayers, and the many examples from history, we are reaching max hubris.

Is it our NIMBYS just like your NIMBYS who want poor street campers removed but don't want any housing built for them. They curse Carol Sobel for homeless camping when she actually opposes it, and she opposes using the police to just push them somewhere else.

The skyrocketing crime in Venice story, globally viral for a news media that should be covering other stories, indicates to me a media messaging campaign, a meme factory is at work, manufacturing consent...for crackdown. Despite the "skyrocketing crime" meme I am finding video after video of influencer videos walking down venice beach without encountering any danger, and not particularly bothered by the homeless campers. For all the hyperbole it appears generally safe on Venice Beach. CITIZEN app subscribers are afraid to leave the house.This, at the biggest attraction in Los Angeles. Where do all the criminals go? Venice Beach, where Art meets crime

There has always been crime in Venice, and all over LA, yet over the last 30 years it has overall come down to 1/3 of what it was.

You could remove every encampment of poor people and it won't stop crime.Why not? Because Venice Beach is the first or second largest tourist attraction in LA.Any party day in LA crime heads down to Venice Beach to party. Unlocked cars, doors, windows, bikes, all for the taking.What can you do, establish a containment zone, hire Robo-cops?

Black Lives Matter and the VNC – continued from page 1 industrial complex and investing that money into community and social programs (like homelessness solutions and mental health) that address community safety at its root level. Defund the Police is a policy action cry to help address racism and police violence against BIPoC peoples. You know, the perpetuated racism that results in the disproportionate murder of Black and Brown people by police, which in turn sparked nationwide uprisings last year? Yea, that racism.

These people are actually disrespecting a slogan whose goal is to save Black lives from being murdered by police and twisting it into something bad. In case you didn't realize it, that is racist. No need to use the "n word" or use a blatant slur, just infer that "Defund the Police" is something that bad, then sprinkle some "Safe and Clean" on that for the perfect, delicious, coded racism salad loved by all the "not-racist" people in Venice. At any rate, aside from a handful of local activists, Defund the Police type initiatives (read tangible, actionable remedies to racism) are virtually non-existent in Venice policy forums. So, no. Brian and Alex don't support Defund the Police.

Another recent internet happening, presumably associated with lame cheap shots at Brian Averill and Alex Neiman, is the picture of the other VNC Presidential candidate Jim Murez floating around. The picture is of Jim Murez flipping off women at a 2018 West LA Planning Commission hearing where he was supporting the destruction of the First Baptist Church of Venice to the Penske's. You know, Trump supporter and Saudi business partner Jay Penske, yea him. Flipping off women a surprise to you? It shouldn't. He has a record of being misogynistic, most notably at VNC meetings toward other female board members. Some not-racists on the not-racist "Venice (California) Community" Facebook page, aka the page you go to where you can say all the racist and cowardly things you want cause Mike Bravo is banned from there, was seriously saying that it could have been Murez scratching his head. Misogyny enabler anyone? Murez has played lapdog to Jay Penske at every hearing where we fought to protect Black history in Venice. He along with Robert Thibedou and some others have undermined our efforts for racial equity at every turn. It case you missed it, that's another example of racism. Racism even if it's unconscious, is harmful. Most good natured people would correct their racism enacting behaviours if it was brought to their intention. He has had plenty of opportunities to correct his course, yet he has not. These have been conscious decisions on his part to undermine the Black community of Venice. He also has tried to block the Mexican-American Traquero Monument. Mind you there is virtually no public representation Black or Brown people in this community. The little that we do have and try to amplify Murez is always there to block it.

I can go on about his unscrupulous behaviors but I think misogyny and racism points will suffice since they are significant deal breakers for most.. or am I getting ahead of myself? With all the "very fine people" on his slate, here in Venice, and it probably being the yoga capital of Los Angeles, surely all these spiritual nice people wouldn't enable racists or misogynists. I mean, a lot of Venetians were strong Bernie Sanders supporters and his tenets are economic and racial justice. Venetians also rose up with marches in support of George Floyd as well as anti-Trump rally's and protests. Surely they are not hypocrites that would consciously support a racist misogynist ? We shall find out soon. Brian Averill has shown he can work with ALL sectors of the Venice community. Jim Murez has only shown interest in serving the White and Housed population of Venice. Please go reference the candidate forums. Jim Murez has steady undermined the Black and Indigenous communities of Venice while Brian Averill is the only one endorsed by those communities. Whichever Venetians want to continue fighting a growing Black and Brown activist community, dissipate any hopes of unity, and continue to make zero to any progress on issues you profess to want

5 • June 2021 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD solutions for, you will vote for Murez and his "common sense" slate. If you want someone who's going to harmonize the opposites and consider racial and economic equity in the community decision making process and create environment for the most effective and inclusive solutions possible, you will vote for Brian Averill and the 1 Venice slate. After all, you don't enable racism or misogyny, or you do yoga and you're a progressive or a Bernie supporter right? Drum roll please. We shall see this 2021 VNC Election if Black Lives do matter to Venice.



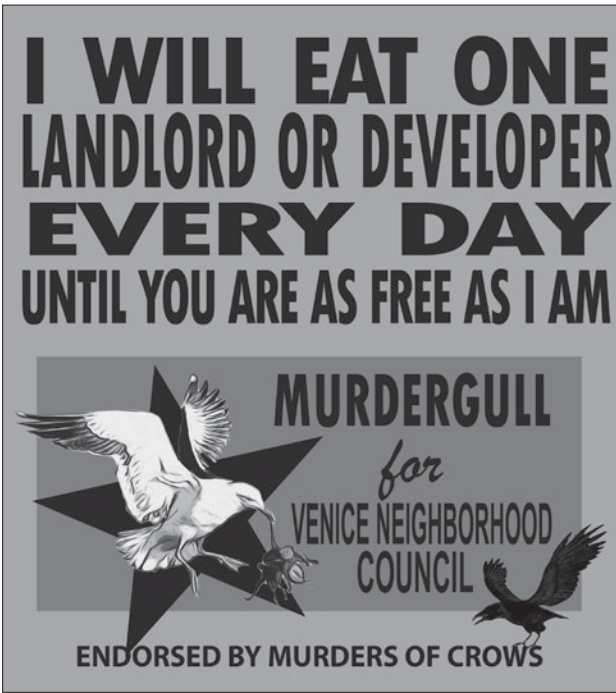
The Venice Mexican American Traquero Monument

A group of Venice Native residents in collaboration with AM Vets Post 2, a West Side American Veterans organization, are determined to have Mexican and Mexican Americans recognized for their contributions to the growth and development of this country, in particular, the West Side of Los Angeles.

Laura Ceballos, who is leading the project, was born and raised in Venice, where her parents established themselves after migrating from Nayarit and Jalisco, Mexico. Her parents raised her to feel pride in her heritage, which led Laura to explore the historical attributes made by Mexicans from her local community. She was also inspired by the Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument. After a few years of research and planning, the committee brought the plan to the Venice Neighborhood Council whom approved the placement of the Venice Mexican American Traquero Monument at the Venice Windward Circle. Now the Traquero monument is ready to go before the LA City Council for approval. Civil Rights Leader and La Reina de Campesinos, Dolores Huerta will be speaking in support of the Venice Mexican American Traquero Monument. The monument will not only honor all Traquero workers that helped construct and maintain the Main Railroad Transportation System and the Pacific Electric Interurban System in Los Angeles, it will also stand as a symbol of recognition for all of the Mexican and Mexican Americans that contributed to the growth of the West Side.

The monument will be a bronze statue of a Traquero on a railroad holding his daughters hand and his son on his shoulders with his wife by his side. The sculpture will be placed inside a round water fountain surrounded by a Mexican style brick pathway. To the right of the fountain, an American flag will be flown on a 25' pole with the Mexican flag flying underneath.

The artist, Jorge Marin, a professional Mexican Sculptor, with an extensive background of over 30 years will be creating the sculpture. His work "Alas de Mexico" has been displayed throughout the world. This monument will show the importance of family roles they played as the workers and their families traveled during the construction of the railroads. The monuments projected date of completion is 2024.



Beyond P.A.R. (Poetry And Radio)
by Gerry Fialka

It is said that poetry is outing your inner dialogue. So maybe radio is turning the public sphere inward. We share affinity with each other through these mediums. We are what we express.

Venice is a whirlwind of interior landscapes and exposed seascapes. We are beyond "par," which is a word that started out meaning "a standard fixed by consent or natural conditions" around 1767. It's 2021, and we can reboot the etymological possibilities of this average word to the "better beyonds." We swirl in the eyes and the ears of Venice cloudbursts. Sense ratio shifting rains supreme. Expand your mind.

Expansion-wise, I am lucky to share information on locals who touch our souls, minds and hearts deeply.

Gail Gordon has lived in Venice and frequented the Boardwalk for many years. We have experienced so many sunsets with the Spontorage and Dudleyville folks, and it always feels so good. Years ago, she buddied up a raggamuffin and helped raise this young man, Shaka Mali Tafari. He has recently produced an engaging radio show on their long-lasting friendship for KCRW entitled "Nice to Meet You Forever." It will be aired live on June 18 at 2:30 PM and will be available digitally for a month.

Rocco Ingala has been providing a safe place for literature and music at Angel City Books & Records for many years. We have conversed epiphanistic philosophies till the cows come home. He just published his new poetry book entitled "Atomic Cafe." To be clear, the location is 218 Pier Ave, Santa Monica, but it's got the Venice vibe. And the book is an engaging collection of song lyrics, poetry and writings on art. It spans over two decades, mirroring the over two decades of his local institution.

They evince Caroline Casey's observation that words are magic, and magic is a willingness to co-operate with everything. Whether it is spoken word heard over the airwaves, or printed word on the page, words evoke more than their meaning.

Shaka's radio show narration is complimented by Gail's recollections in enhancing the connections of two different people. The details are intriguing. Themes of healing and forgiveness arise. With Shaka as her pal, Gail's shares her love of live culture events like theater, ice-skating, movies, the circus, festival of masks, music, the zoo and much more. The enrichment became the lifeblood of freedom for both of them. They nurtured a solid and honest trust. The radio show crystallises this definite sweetness of connecting.

Rocco's book is glowing and the vivid cover gleams sincerity. He took a selfie, then the infamous graphic artist Jean-Francois Podevin beautifully enhanced it. Rocco's vibrancy begs us to see the hidden. He challenges the reader in the poem "Close your eyes." He inquires, "Tell me what you see? . . . Tell me how you see?" These streams of consciousness flow from the personal to the epic. "Romantic Variations" is a six-page poem that feels like gypsy dreams in a William Blake tale. He ponders the function of art and music in a quest for identity and new questions.

The hardcover version includes extra text on the jacket flaps. Rocco writes, "I am free to be honest. . . I can write myself out of here any time I want. I can write myself anyway I want. I can write myself. I can write. And sometimes, the book writes me." This could apply to Shaka's radio show as well. The airwaves broadcast him. We shape our tools, then they shape us.

Rocco and Shaka do not settle just for our commonality. They help us see and hear newness with new eyes and new ears. I am grateful for anyone expanding the possibilities of both "Poetry And Radio." Rocco's book and Shaka's radio show are fine examples how these two mediums can take us beyond the par. Laughtears.com

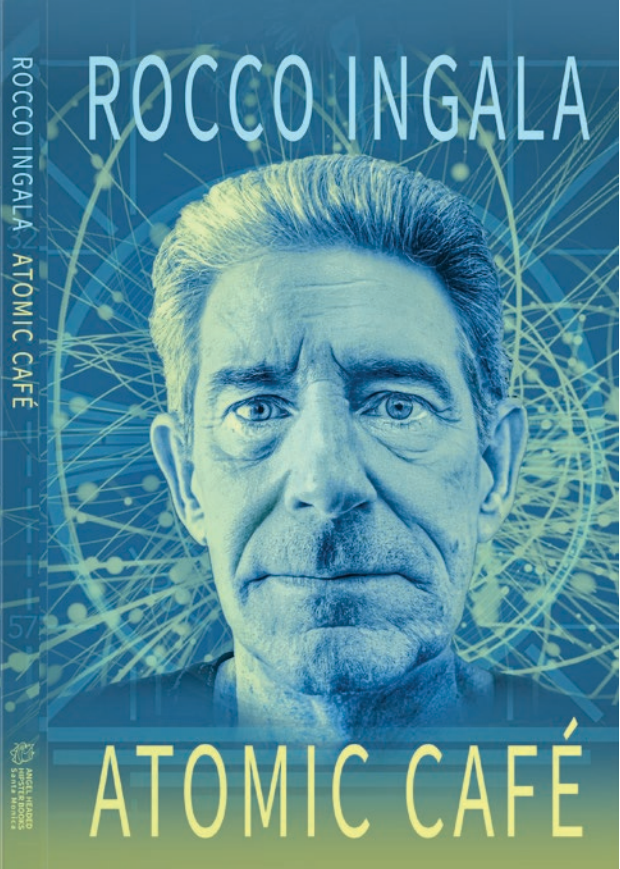
Photos courtesy of Gail & Shaka, Rocco's book cover courtesy of Angel Headed Hipster Books



Meandering
by S.A. Gerber

Comfortably ensconced at the "Ashland Hill " a trendy eatery on Main street. Appropriately named, between Ashland and Hill St., Santa Monica, California. Sipping and scribbling for the moment. .. but I digress. I arrived several hours passed, by way of bus. The old number 8 in fact. The stop is short walking distance from my residence. It can take one either east to Westwood Village, or west, to the land's end. I disembark at Main Street and meander down to Angel City books. (Been a while.) I schmooze with the proprietor, 'Rocko', promising to bring in some of my poetry books. Seeing nothing I "must have", I depart for Venice. An entire "homeless" compound has taken the spots of the former vendors on the Strand. The cruising authorities seem not to take any action. Why should they? These people have nowhere to go. I certainly don t have the answer. I walk as far south as “The Sidewalk Cafe” and tum around. The pungent aroma of “hoot-chi-coo permeates the area ... but you can still be fined for smoking cigarettes. (I love that! Suddenly a bicycle u-tums in front of me and the rider yells You missed

continued on page 8



WHERE DID All THE BLACK PEOPLE GO?

Where did all the Black People Go?

Where am I?

Where did little Washington Blvd. Go?

Where did Abbot Kinney Blvd. come from?

Where are all the Black People?

Where are the Black barbeque joints?

Where are the Black hairdressers?

Where are the 2nd hand shops?

Where is the neighborhood market?

Where is the Black owned liquor store?

Where did all the Black people go?

Where did all the Jews on Venice Beach go?

Where did all the old Jews go?

Where am I?

Where are all the synagogues?

Where is the Jewish bakery?

Where are the kosher butcher shops?

Where are all the delis selling corned beef sandwiches?

Where did all the old Jews go?

Where are all the benches filled with old Jews?

Where are all the little markets and vegetable stores?

Where did all the old Jews go?

Where did all these rich White people come from?

Where did yuppies come to buy up Abbott Kinney Blvd.?

Where did all the expensive restaurants come from?

Where did all the trendy shops come from?

Where did all the new buildings come from?

Where did all the fancy new condos come from?

Where did all the Black and Mexican churches go?

Where did all the poor Blacks and Mexicans go?

Where did old Venice Beach go?

Where did all the old homes and benches go?

Where did the all dot-comers come from?

Where did all the T-shirt and tourist traps come from?

Where did all the homeless come from?

Where did all the expensive bars come from?

Where did all the expensive restaurants come from?

Where did all the poor hippies and old Jews go?

I was born here but now I feel like a stranger in a strange land... marty liboff



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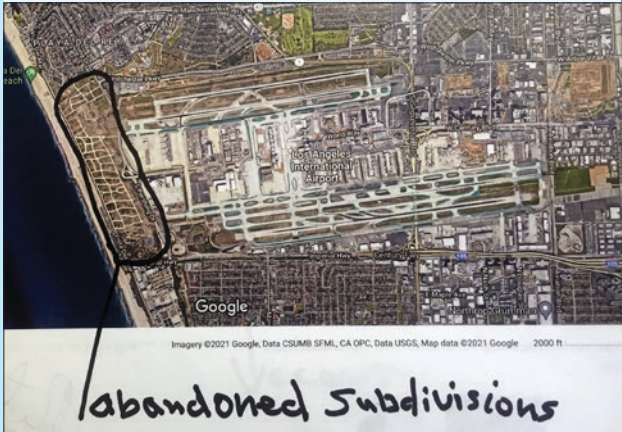
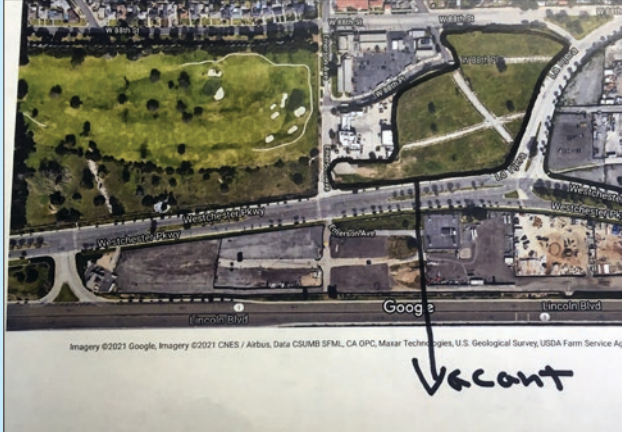
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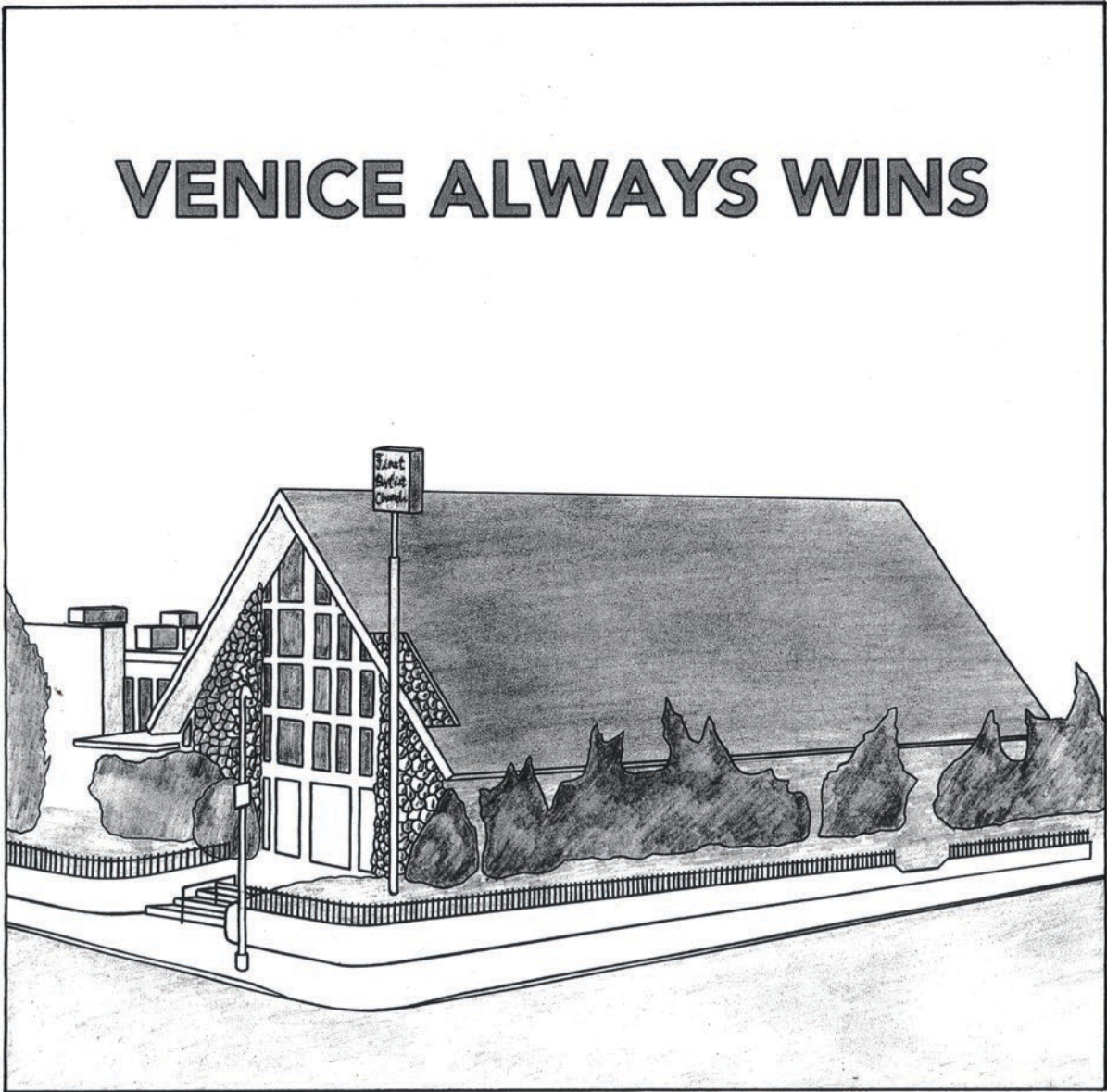
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Vacant LAX Land for Venice Homeless People?

The City owns and LAX manages: (1) an abandoned and cleared subdivision between Westchester Parkway, Vista Del Mar, Imperial and Pershing (Pics 1 and 2), and (2) several acres of vacant land at the intersection of LaTijera and Westchester Parkway (Pics 3 and 4). All this vacant land is in CD11. Venice should request the City to investigate whether this land could be used for temporary housing with Tuff sheds for Venice's homeless. (Pic 5). If that could be done, the City could move the homeless from Ocean Front Walk and the Bridge Home neighborhood to decent, relatively nearby shelter. The city moved people from Rose and Echo Park because it had alternative shelter. Let's work on solutions. Clarkbrown4venice.org.





The Day Chador Is Not Forced
by Majid Naficy

The day will come when my sisters
No longer wear forced chadors.
Let that day be in summer
So that we can go for a picnic.

We will wrap the first chador as a bundle
And carry our goods in it.
We will spread the second as a carpet
And sit down on it.
We will use the third as a dining cloth
And eat our meals around it.

Then I will climb a mulberry tree
And my four unveiled sisters
Will each take a corner of the fourth chador
So that I can shake mulberries down on it.

How delicious it will be to eat mulberries
When my sisters no longer veil.
On that day, chadors return to chests
And when posterity asks about this rite
It finds only mothballed fabrics.

A Poem from Lynette.

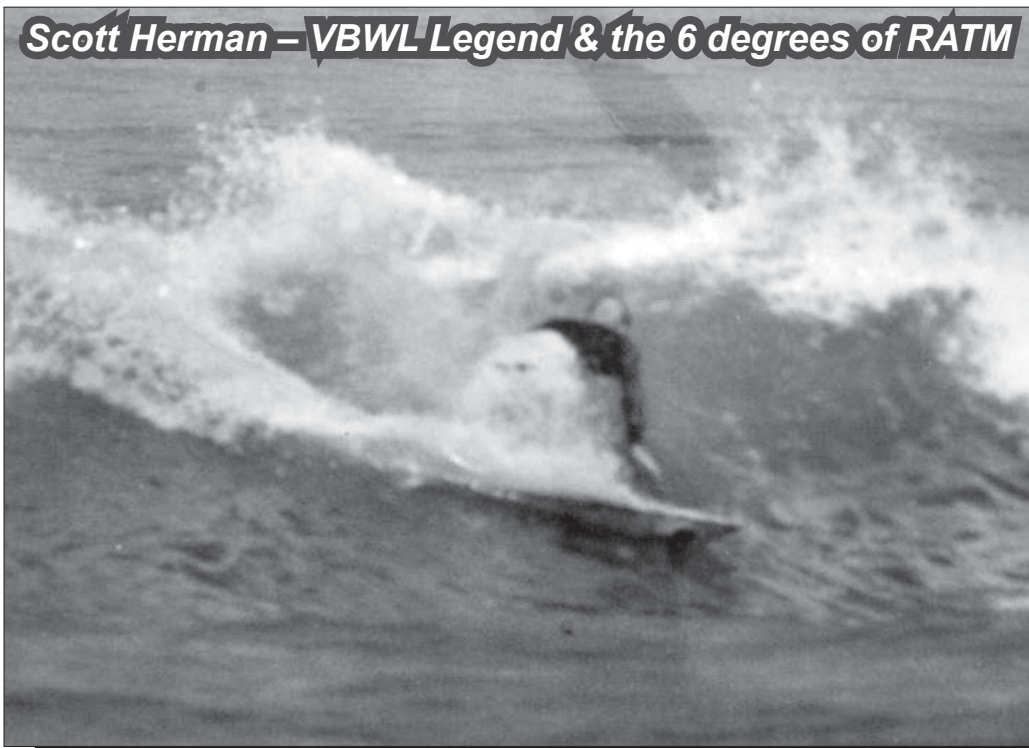
7-19-2020
Day of Anger
"Groceries? No money..." he sighs,
a doomed fate in his pocket,
Eyeing the dark-complexioned man,
a store clerk flinches...
Officer Hatred, always armored,
appears at the door,
Reasoning is useless, hands helplessly
gripping, pleading for forgiveness...
Emotional scream smothered by
the pounding knee of
societal oppression.
Fake \$20.00 bill steals his last breath,
Legions of indignant crowds dressed
in black
overwhelming the quiet streets
of the financially fortunate
and socially privileged,
Yelling, no, -shouting- for
equal justice, so that
death not be the price for protecting
basic human rights!
July 19, 2020



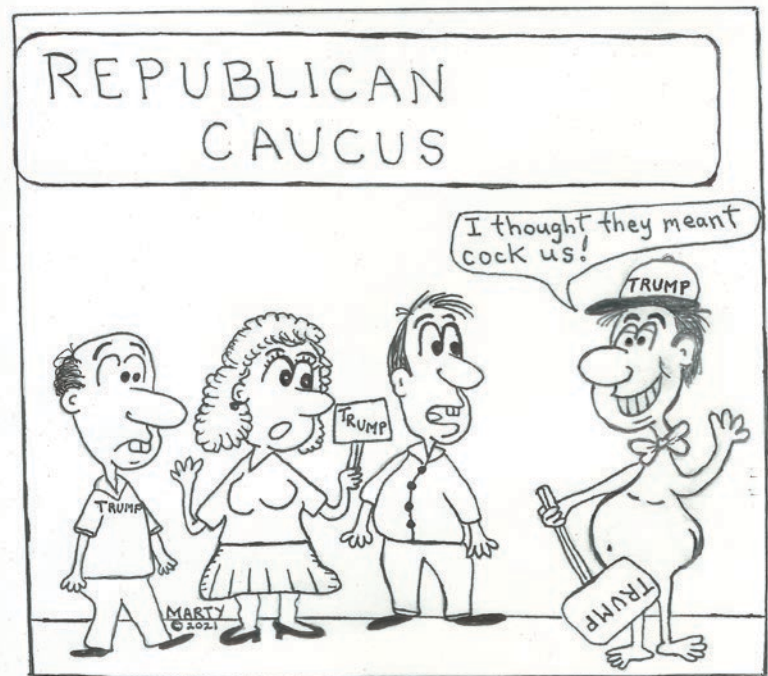
the Zoom today!
It is of
course my fellow
reprobate-intellectual
Gerry F. a local
well-known artist
writer, musician host
and all around Venice bon-vivant*
After dismounting we
walk north and
talk away time.
He fishes for
a current copy
of "Venice Beachhead"
in which he
has an article
complete With an
authentic R.Crumb
cartoon accompanying
A man alerts
us that the
truck is here,
dispensing free food.
Gerry passes on
this information to
the denizen encampment
as we walk
to the truck.
We get two
dinners, two bottles
of water, and
two bags of
fruit to go.
One of these
entrees we give
away immediately to a forlorn kid.
We continue the
"walk and talk"
up the Strand
where Venice morphs
into Santa Monica.
There we say
our farewells while
Gerry gives the
other meal to
a fellow artist
he knows, lying
on the grass.
I head back
up to Main St
and seek refuge
at an outdoor
table at the
afore mentioned
Ashland-Hill Cafe.
Tired from all
this meandering, I
sip tea whilst
scribbling some words.
Getting lost in
the moment, along with all track
of the time,
and having not
a clue of
the bus schedule, I figure I
had better head
toward the stop. My meandering has
turn to malingering as it is
want to do,
and I sit
at the stop,
wondering if I
should ride past
my stop and
malingering a bit,
in Westwood Village. I think again.
Oh well, tomorrow is another day.

* Bon Vivant= Fr. Adj. ---Well Living, A Good
Liver
* R. Crumb= Robert Crumb---A Counter-Culture
Cartoonist.

Scott Herman – VBWL Legend & the 6 degrees of RATM



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by Josh “Bagel” Klassman

Scott’s memorial / wake was on Saturday July 11th 1992. I was 22 years old and the only one from the younger VBWL generation that got up to speak and say something about him. As I made my way up to the podium I saw Juandie (My friend who nicknamed me) and Jose snickering in that “What the fuck does he have to say” kind of a way. I got up there and told a story about this one incredible day in 1984 that Scott and Sarlo battled it out trading off wave after wave on the North Side of the Venice Break Water that only me, Rick Massie, and Rob Perlich got to witness as we were surfing the inside sandbar. We watched them crushing wave after wave on the outside, Allen Sarlo doing his lip bashing and Scott doing his insane laybacks. Scott and I called that day “Dueling Banjos”. After I told that story everyone cheered.

Then I told a funny story about Scott as everyone did that day. Danny Loughlin had gotten his jaw broken by a jealous boyfriend of a girl that liked him. When Scott saw Danny he asked him “What happened?”, Danny said “A girl”, Scott said “Did she give you lock jaw?”. After that story everyone laughed. I went back to go sit down and looked at Juandie and Jose with a huge “Fuck you” kind of a shit eating grin on my face, and watched them go from snickering to dumb-founded.

Later that day a bunch of us went up to Castaic Lake to go see Porno for Pyros play, an up and coming band called Rage Against the Machine who I had never heard, or heard of before that day, was opening for them. PFP had hooked us all up with passes, an unruly mob of people from Venice who were all definitely ready to get our aggressions out after Scott’s wake. Some of us took a mind altering fungi before the gig and when RATM came on we went insane and slammed in the most crazy dusty violent pit and got our aggressions out in such an intense way. It was a day I will never forget, it’s etched into my brain forever.

Scott Hermann (RIP), Venice Break Water,

Venice CA, 1986, Photo- Josh “Bagel” Klassman

PS, Yes Scott made that crazy layback, he always made them.

“Your anger is a gift!!!” -Zack De La Rocha / RATM-



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God watching the 24 hour news cycle and deciding he is an atheist.

THE WAY IT IS
-marty liboff-
This is the Way it is
Things are the way the are
Lost in a Cosmic jizz
Thank your lucky star.
That's just the Way it goes
What is is is what ya get
Nobody knows why or knows
so try not to fret.
Sometimes things go good
Sometime things go bad
Try and do what ya should
And try not to be sad.
Life gives us ups & downs
sickness & health
smiles & frowns
poverty & wealth.
Life ya gotta get used to
Both Heaven & Hell
Try not to be blue
Tomorrow we can never tell.
We never know our lot in Life
Happiness is mostly in our head
Success, Love or horrible strife
But in the End we're all dead.
Enjoy every moment today
We never know our End
So lots of Love we must send
The Future we can't guess or say .
That's just the Way it is...

God!!! “What is love”???

by Don Turner Jr.

There is a door unseen as to what and who lies behind...

Except for God...

There, hidden from view is something meant especially for you, behind a closed door...

The door is slightly open already if you have eyes to see...

As you come home love awaits...

The unseen awaits while only thinking of you...Faithfully...

This love soon will be right at your feet.

What waits exemplifies what the fullness of love is...

God's glorifying love reminds us that the best things in life are worth waiting for...

A reward to come home to...

Who is that I hear?

It is the truth that lies behind the veil of illusion...

“I am your faithful companion for life and a guide back to God...”

“Welcome home...Please, call my name”...

“I am so happy to see you...Please per and hold me...Take me for a walk”...

“Play with me and throw the ball...Do not worry, I will protect you”...

“Let's go to the park...Can I have a treat”?

I will always love you...

I am...your best friend forever...

I am _____ <Sign your dog's name here>



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Thank You – Tony Mason



So I'll be dammed and - DAM! I AM.
by Jason Sugars

My head is throbbing... My hand's heavy, my heart aches...
.
I am - at the easiest of times - a man with a great deal on my mind, weight on my soul... Fire and determination at the tips of my fingers and tongue.
.
I was ONLY JUST BORN. Into a country, a world and a whole, entire HISTORY that has shown me little more than disdain and disregard... sprinkled with insult, injury and evidence that I am reviled, revered, resented, resilient - no matter what I do.
.
I was only just born into the scorn, a crown of nappy thorns, a heart too well-worn and a world that is torn.
.
All due and down to the sin of the beautiful, powerful, loveable skin that I was born in.
.
I can insist and continue persisting - though try as I might, I might well just sit still... or, well - I just might get killed... may just die if I fight, if I cry, if I don't "STOP RESISTING"
.
I have "Friends" that "Love" me... who are showing me their hearts... in words, work and action... and/or a LACK thereof.
.
To be complacent is to be complicit. Silence can be Violence.
.
Trayvon fought back. Ahmaud fought back. Mike fought... You said that is what got them killed.
.
Eric complained, Philandro explained, George exclaimed in - and pleaded in pain... that got them all killed.
.
.
.
I been thinkin'... Maybe if I explain it to them like 5 year olds - Like Dr. Zeus:

... Like to hear it? Here it go'.

[Read this one as if it were "Green Eggs and Ham"]

[Roll-Call in Order of Appearance. Say Their Names.]

..
..
..
Well, I'll be dammed and - dam . . . I am.

They DO NOT LIKE the Man I Am.

..
They DO NOT WANT ME Here - nor There. They DO NOT LIKE ME - They don't care.

..
They DO NOT LIKE ME on their streets... [Ahmaud]
- With Tea or Skittle Sweets to Eat. [Trayvon]
They DO NOT LIKE ME when I Run... [Mike]
- Or with my locked and licensed Gun. [Philandro]

..
They DO NOT LOVE US if they did...
- They would not choke us out for cigs. [Eric]
Or shoot our children in the Park. [Tamir]
... We're DYING 'cause our skin's too dark.

..
They kill us while we beg and plead. [Floyd]
- Then hate us when we take a knee... [Colin]
Or won't pretend to love their song -
- That brags on how they've done us wrong.

..
They do not like us fast asleep... [Breonna]
- They come to shoot us - wrapped in sheets.

*Ruinaton 1/6/2021
Glint of sunlight on red steel
As righteous black-gloved hand
Wields fire extinguisher
Weapon against blue eagle
Battle banner of lone snake flaps
Grey boots tread on defenders of the Capitol
Scent of musk & ashes, saltpeter
Amid shouts of "Stop the Steal"
Truncheons crash on storied gates & windows
Brazen as stone silent glare of Hitler youth
Scaling walls, sticks & stones,
Ugly names hurled
Michigan Militia Jess calls Black cop
Another-fuckin'-igger
White faces contort
Enflamed with ass-backwards righteousness
Twisted passion belching 1776 gas
Rough knuckles bruise
Perfect, floating, shining, soap bubble
Hope of democracy pops, burst, shattered
Would-be zip tie theocracy
Stretches Constitution's bonds & bans
Inscribed on hemp, our supremacy is diversity
Muskets be damned, manifest west ocean spray
That ribbon of highway
Rising notes, chords, verses
Voices of free women & men sing,
This Land Is My Land
Going against Woody's wood grain
Whose guitar kills fascists
As we see 81 million paper ballots
Flutter over D.C.
No assurance, no insurance
No protection from redneck rebel insurrection
In the red orange sunset glow, we know
Our masked blue wave took them by storm
Washed out orange stain & paramilitary treachery
Matchstick over torch
Reigniting liberty with accountability
Inoculating arms
Standing shoulder to shoulder
Affirming that Black Lives Matter
Triumph of George Floyd
Washing through Washington, cleansing our plazas
Flying fiery rainbow flags
Ol' Cryin' Chief's silhouette
On side panel of Jeep Cherokee
Sick 'n' tired o' waitin' for a Good year.*

-- Hal Bogotch

No playing games in our own house... [Ata-tiana]
- or eating ice cream on our couch. [Both-am]

..
They DO NOT WANT US here nor there.
- They'll come and kill us anywhere.

..
They kill us if we dare fight back...
- Shot Down for Being Brown or Black.
And if we run when they attack... [Walter]
- We drop with bullets in our backs.

..
They DO NOT LIKE US - We don't care...
- We only ask them to be fair. [Martin]
To Love us or just let us be...
- Not kill us so we can't be free. [Malcolm]

..
So I'll be dammed and - DAM! I AM.
- and all for being who I am.

..
..
..
I wonder where my friends will fall -
- When they finally come to kill us all.

11 • June 2021 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

I'M ALIVE! marty liboff

I'm alive! I'm alive! I'm still alive!

Why have the gods let me survive?

All the shit I've been through
pain, depression, being blue.

Somehow I've kept goin
wherever the winds are blowin.

People have done me wrong
I've learned to keep singin my song.

I've crashed and been down
thought I'd already be underground.

Accidents and near death I've seen
dangerous places I've been.

I've been in scary car crashes
and in crazy drug bashes.

Been beaten on the ground
lost & thought I'd never be found.

With a burning fever I was sick
thought I'd die quick.

Shot at by a gang
ducked when I heard bang, bang.

In a hospital I lay
thought I'd pass away.

Been kicked in the head
thought I'd be dead.

Nearly shot and clubbed by cops
so many unwarranted traffic stops.

Almost drowned in the sea
had a bad reaction to a sting from a bee.

Nearly stabbed with a knife
life can have so much strife.

So many close calls
accidents, sicknesses and falls.

Thought of suicide to end it all
but decided to be happy & have a ball.

For some reason the gods left me here
while I've lost so many who were dear.

For our dead loved ones we grieve
but for a better tomorrow we must believe.

We repair, heal and move on
love, honor and remember those gone.

We've all had our tragedy
the faces of drama- sadness and comedy.

So much danger and fear
it's a miracle we're still here.

Life can be meaningful or not
so try and give it all you've got.

I feel blessed every day
for any moment the Reaper we must pay.

So on earth I keep walkin along
with kindness & love and singin my song...

I'm alive! I'm still here!

Let's smoke a joint & have a beer!



Hoagies to locals, aka The Great Western Steak and Hoagie Company



by Enyaj Pitchford.

Interviewing Sergia Perez about his business, his childhood in Venice, and his current campaign running for the Venice Neighborhood Council, has been a true pleasure. He is obviously a hardworking , local businessman. His business, known locally as Hoagies, is an institution in Venice; and there are two fine vegetarian options as well. During our time, which he claimed as his day off, he was working serving customers. Many times I heard them remark about how they were from out of town and remember this place as a kid and are so happy it’s still here. Yes, Sergio kept the place open during the pandemic, despite the risk, despite the precautions necessary. He has a strong work ethic and sense of his community, and that kept him going through all the setbacks. He and his family are the backbone of building up the local community. So long, that he remembers when tumbleweeds would come down Lincoln Blvd! Maybe that’s what inspired his “Cow-boy” Wild West alter ego; down to the Stensons!

Sergio Perez came here with his mother from Mexico City to visit his father who had settled in Venice a few years earlier. He took them to DisneyLand, and then they were hooked and never looked back! This was the place of their dreams. For a spell they lived with their Uncle in the ‘hood’ of Venice on Indiana, but very shortly after, they got their own place on Westminster . Eventually they moved into the community hub of Lincoln Place, where Sergio and his two older sisters enjoyed a lovely life with their many neighbors and friends. They felt safe and part of a greater community circle

Sergio’s Uncle worked at ‘Hoagies’ in the 70’s and helped his dad get a job there in ‘83. They worked hard and in ‘99 the owner sold it to his dad. His Uncle opened up another joint in North Hollywood, which is still rocking, called the “Philadelphia Bell Company: Steaks and Hoagies.” His dad is now semi-retired, but still holds onto ownership of the business, as it’s always been his great pride and joy! His one regret is being too busy to learn English properly and not understand all the love and praise lavished on him by his customers. But Sergio has always been near his parents to translate.

When Sergio was eight years old and Pete Wilson became governor, The Republican started separating families and wielding fear in Latino communities. That’s when Sergio needed to occupy his mother when she went shopping. At least then there was some pity for a mother when her child was near and she was less likely to be separated from her family while they awaited their green card. He had to live in constant fear whenever she needed to buy anything. He remembers rehearsing in his mind each time what he would say to the cops if they tried to take his mother away. “It was just like Anne

Frank; you had to hide; you kept the place dark at night to not let anyone from outside the community see you or draw suspicion to you on account of your race. “His mom started only shopping at the bodega and immigrant markets to be safe. He helped his parents read their immigration forms and bank statements too; and endured many tense visits to the immigration offices.

While he enjoyed his local community, when he was in 4th and 5th grade, there were a series of drive-by shootings and some students got hit at Mark Twain elementary school. This was back in 94-95; racial tensions began to mount so high that his sisters started getting harassed and his father went to the Santa Monica school board to petition to go to their district for the safety of his children. This being granted, he and his sisters finished school at SMMUSD and went from Lincoln Middle School to Santa Monica High School. He felt very supported by the district and felt he had greater opportunities available to him because of it. Before, in Venice, because of the systemic racism and brutality of the



police, Latinos and Blacks were not protected by the police, and were continually harassed and criminalized. He explains that “This is what led to those victimized to take matters into their own hands, and the gangs were formed. You felt like the world white people occupied was not open to you. You could either be a criminal or join a gang”. But now empowered by a good education, and a safe school environment, he felt the world had opened for him. Sergio even finished two years of Santa Monica College in communications and hospitality, but school was not his destiny. And in his family, with their strong work ethic, he knew that his choices were either school or work. Sergio learned young that you can work hard and be rich or you can work just as hard and be poor but hard work made you an honest and contributing member of your community. His dad is and always will be his biggest hero; ‘he has big shoes for me to fill.’ He says it was amazing how he kept the family together, always with food and a roof over their head and managed to

keep a smile on his face.

When 2000 came around, the developers came after their safe community haven of Lincoln Place Apartments. Three hundred families were evicted from their low income and moderate priced housing. It was the largest eviction in Los Angeles history. His father gathered the support of local businesses to help him provide meals to the hundreds of families that wound up living in the parking lot at Ross. What a terrible ordeal and shameful episode of Venice history! Fortunately his family had saved enough to buy a home and had the collateral of owning a business. But Venice, like the whole Westside, had a secret code of not allowing black and Latino ownership. So, even though they had more of a deposit than required, plus had ownership of a successful business, they were unable to buy locally. Instead they bought a home in Inglewood.

“ Our parents had a dream and were able to realize a lot of it, but we are only left with a high interest scheme to a dream that is always out of our reach.” He goes on to say “ People don’t seem to realize it; they feel secure with ownership, like it validates their existence but all they get is debt and interest rates building up that debt. They don’t understand what they’re buying into.” It makes me think how Pink Floyd said it best: “With, without, and who’ll deny that’s what the fighting’s all about.”

He also talked about how tired he is of the corporations complaining about people getting benefits and not wanting to come back to work. “Just raise the minimum wage and treat them like human beings and they’ll want to come back!” He also scoffs at the idea of billionaires and agrees that there should be a cap on how much a man can make and a basic income and shelter safety net for those struggling at the bottom. “No child should feel the uncertainty of homelessness!”

Sergio Perez is a true hardworking Venice local who loves his city. He has been raised to serve his community. When 2001 came, so did 9/11 which again hit the community hard. His family

organized toy drives, food drives and raised funds through car washes to help the locals with their medical and funeral bills. Sergio says “People need to understand that to be rich is to be rich within yourself and to enrich the community. That’s what you need for your own mental stability.” He is running with the VENICEFORALL.ORG campaign with his friend Mike Bravo who is a fifth generation Venetian of Indigenous ancestry. Sergio says he hears a lot of people running for council with big claims but when you peel off their layers, just like an onion, they begin to smell. “They talk about the houseless but they never engage with them . They never feed or even speak to a homeless person. Yet they are full of opinions about them, how?” I ask them “What have you done for the community?”

But what could they have done since they aren’t even from our community? They come here to change and mold it into their vision without any regard for the rich, diverse history that came before them.” Our community has always had homeless people and was able to care for them without help from the city.” Now we have all these new people without any sense of our community, displacing the community with high rents. We get a few dollars from the City of LA, like giving two dollars to a houseless person on a street corner, and they expect that suddenly they can turn their life around.

Sergio Perez is a man with a plan; plus he has the tenacity to get it done. He discussed with Mike Bravo of the **VENICE FORALL.ORG** slate about his mission to transform the VNC into a community advisory board that accurately reflects the diversity of Venice for generations to come. He wishes people to “understand the myth we embody by living in Venice.”