

# Happy International Women’s Day!

## Venice Community Activist Whose Story Goes Back to Abbot Kinney: Jataun Valentine

By Greta Cobar

March 8 marks the 103rd anniversary of International Women’s Day, and it is with great honor that the Beachhead spotlights Jataun Valentine: a political activist, volunteer, ever-present member of our community whose family tree goes back to the days of Abbot Kinney.

**Jataun:** Irwin Tabor, Abbot Kinney’s chauffeur, was my grandmother’s brother. In September it will be 99 years since my family came to Venice from Louisiana. My grandmother Jenny Tabor Henry was the last one to come. At that time my mother Hazel Petty was eleven. My grandfather Alphonse Joseph Henry and his siblings were children of slaves. In Louisiana he was a fisherman, and here he became the first Black cement contractor. He laid the cement on Rose, Main, and did a lot of the work close to the beach. At that time it was mostly bare land, with dirt streets. They traveled by horse and carriage, and it would take three to four hours just to get to Sawtelle.

**Beachhead:** What made them decide to move over here?

**Jataun:** When Abbot Kinney started to do the canals, there was a lot of stuff to do. My cousin Arthur Reese was the first to come to Venice. Kinney found out that he had a knack for decorating – some people are born with some talent. He started doing decorations for balls, and because he worked there our family could use the pools and baths that Blacks were not allowed to use at that time.

**BH:** Abbot Kinney must have really appreciated the Tabor family – he willed his house to Irwin Tabor.

**Jataun:** Yes, and it had to be separated into three pieces and moved from where the new post office is now to 6th and Santa Clara, because Blacks couldn’t live so close to the beach at that time. It stayed in my family until 1989 – now it has new owners, but it’s still there.

**BH:** You’ve been around Venice longer than anyone else I know.

**Jataun:** I’m 77 years old now, born and raised in Venice. I went to St. Clemens School as a child, it was where St. Joseph’s is now. Then I went to Saint Monica’s for High School, it was a Catholic private school. In 1925, when my family first moved into this house, the KKK lived on the street. They would burn the cross on their front lawns.

**BH:** Did they harass your family?

**Jataun:** Yes, and the way the police dealt with it, they told my family to walk up and down the street with empty guns. Which they did, I just don’t believe that the guns were empty. Anyways, it worked. Some moved away, and the ones that stayed became good neighbors.

**BH:** How was Venice different back in the day?

**Jataun:** It was really quiet. Venice wasn’t all that well known. People always came to the beach, but not in the residential areas. People didn’t have to lock their doors like they do now, and there were lots of empty lots on the street. Back then everybody knew everybody else, now you don’t. People move in and out. But I still make a point to know the people on my block. But with these high illegal fences now you can’t even see your neighbors anymore – it’s like a fortress, not like a community. These new houses look like bunkers.

**BH:** I see you around at most community meetings. You even came to Long Beach to fight Overnight Parking Districts in June.

**Jataun:** I really care about what’s happening around. Right now I’m totally against that hotel they’re trying to put on Abbot Kinney. They shouldn’t put a hotel in front of a school, because it brings out the bad elements, like alcohol and drugs. The school opens its doors for other things, like meetings, and you don’t know who is going in there. They can find another place for the hotel.

**BH:** Ya, over-development is taking over Venice as we speak.

**Jataun:** It’s five houses across from me – a big thing going up – it says “single family house”, but there are six parking spots on the property. What would they need that much parking for? We should’ve received notice of the proposed development, to go and say something at the Land Planning meeting, but we didn’t.

**BH:** It’s a common grievance around Venice that the neighbors are not being notified of new developments. What was there before?

**Jataun:** Twenty-five years ago it was a vacant apartment building, and they were cooking PCP, it was a miracle, because the whole building exploded, but nobody got hurt. It was an empty lot from then until a year ago, when it was sold.

**BH:** There are a lot of those big single-family box-like houses going up all around Venice now.

**Jataun:** Yes, frankly on every street. Here in Venice we’ve always had a cool ocean breeze – with these high-rises we’re gonna lose it. When people sell, the developers come in.

**BH:** Yes. Who would have known?

**Jataun:** Pearl White did. She lived down the street, passed ten years ago. She said: ‘it’s gonna change.’ Nobody believed her. People called her ‘crazy’ and ‘silly’, but what she predicted happened: the gentrification. She used to say that most of the families we went to school with would be selling when the property would be high. She said that all of a sudden it’s gonna be high. She also said that it’s gonna go even higher after all the pioneer families sell.

– Continued on page 11



Dolores Huerta  
© 1999 Barbara Carrasco  
Serigraph  
Courtesy: Center for the Study of Political Graphics  
On view, Pasadena Museum of California Art, until April 20

“There are so many icons of men, and icons of women painted by men, that I wanted (as a woman) to create an iconic image of Dolores to recognize her as an equal of Cesar Chavez and, historically, the most important negotiator for the United Farm Workers.”

– Barbara Carrasco

“Dolores Huerta is a labor organizer, human rights activist, feminist, and considered to be the most important Chicana activist of our time. Carrasco symbolically selected the colors: yellow ocher for Dolores’ face to represent sunshine, the essence of energy; a rose-colored blouse to symbolize her femininity and gentleness, combined with her unwavering support of women; and, finally, to recognize Dolores’ lifelong commitment to farmworkers, Carrasco selected a background of mint green to illustrate growing plants, agriculture and life itself.” – Carol Wells, long-time Venice resident, Founder and Executive Director, Center for the Study of Political Graphics

## Interview of Mary Getlein

By Mary Getlein

**Beachhead:** How did you become a poet?

**Mary Getlein:** I don’t know – I just started writing things. I spent a lot of time watching poets perform at the church in Ocean Park. Then I met FrancEye Smith and watched her perform her poems – and she blew me away. Picture this: an old lady with long white hair, wearing these baggy pants and blouses, getting up before an audience and blowing them away. She definitely caught my attention. She had a beard of long white hairs, which she cultivated and she obviously “did not give a fuck” and I could definitely relate to that. You get to a certain age as a woman and realize you have to start telling the truth about things, because you’re tired of participating in the lies this country is addicted to.

– Continued on page 8





Beachhead Collective Staff:

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

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Mail: P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294.

Email: free@venicebeachhead.org

Web: www.venicebeachhead.org

Twitter: twitter.com/VeniceBeachhead

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Dear Venice Beachhead,

My name is Nelson Schwartz. I live one block west of Lincoln in Venice. The February Venice Beachhead has a letter from Bill Worden in support of the Santa Monica Airport. His letter is almost identical to the letter he sent to the Santa Monica Daily Press which was printed on November 15, 2013. That letter was entitled, "Santa Monica Airport poses no significant threat".

As a Venice resident, I find it objectionable that the southbound planes that leave Santa Monica Airport turn left and fly directly over the block where I reside but the northbound planes turn right only after they reach the Pacific Ocean. This way, the rich white people who live north of Montana Ave in Santa Monica are not disturbed.

Nelson Schwartz

Dear Beachhead,

Hey Beachhead and fellow Venetians, Have you seen the pro-AK Hotel flier currently littering the neighborhood? It's a hoot! Each of their responses to their own questions is more nebulous empty evasive nothingness than the one before. I figured they would have the chudspah to use such words as "philanthropic" and "for the benefit of the community." Bingo! It states that they are "...committing to establishing a philanthropic program that will benefit the Venice community." Yeah, me too. Mr. Abrams, you're fooling no one. Just call it what it is: a monument to selfish egotistical greed at its capitalistic best. You want to shove this hotel down our throats and you want us to click on "like"? Your kind of philanthropy is killing the golden goose. How hard is that to understand?

Viva La Beachhead,  
Gene Mendez

Dear Beachhead,

Thank you for the very entertaining book review of the Venice Arts Council book "Art Tiles at Venice Beach, a Graphic History: 1904 - 2001" by Eric Ahlberg. I would like to add that the reason for publishing this book is a fund raiser with the proceeds to keep the wonderful images of these unique tiles into perpetuity, and to repair and preserve the tiles and the benches that house them. The tiles are very sturdy but the cement structure of the benches is deteriorating. Three benches have been removed by Recreation and Parks (RAP) due to the benches deteriorating, four of the tiles are missing and two are saved encased in cement. The four missing tiles are being reproduced by the original artists, Noel Oshoff and Tamie Smith with a grant from the Venice Neighborhood Council. The soft cover books are available for \$20 each. Your donation for this book will help to maintain this unique history of Venice Books will be available in mid March at Small Wc Books and other local places to be announced. The will also be a series of book signings at local venu to be announced. Orders may also be placed by email: emilywinters@verizon.net.

Emily Winters



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dr\_bobbs@hotmail.com



Dear Beachhead,

Kudos for Marty Liboff's poem, the Venice Primer. He totally encapsulated the essence of Venice at this present time! I laughed so hard, almost to tears!

Thanks for printing it.  
Suzanne Verdal

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# Google Is Trying to Bring Its Evil to Venice

By Greta Cobar

The pace and scale of the current over-development in Venice is unprecedented. Most such construction projects are in violation of the California Coastal Act, the Venice Specific Plan, and our right to due process.

Over the last two years 82 construction projects in Venice were approved by the city of Los Angeles and the California Coastal Commission under de minimis waivers, which by definition are trivial, or too small to be concerned with. The Venice Specific Plan states that if a single family residence demolition is granted under such a waiver, the new construction must be less than ten percent larger than the demolition – but more often than not the new construction has huge size differences, far above the ten percent increase.

Just days before the February 13 Coastal Commission meeting in Pismo Beach a piece of paper buried in a cactus plant was noticed at Rose and Hampton announcing Google's proposed development of the building at 320 Hampton. The city of L.A. had approved it under a de minimis waiver, and it was slated for approval by the Coastal Commission on February 13.

"The public has a right to participate in decisions regarding coastal planning or development, and the widest opportunity should be provided for this participation," according to the Coastal Act, Sec. 30006. By not informing the community and not holding a public meeting regarding its proposed development, Google's project is in violation of the Coastal Act and in violation of the public's right to due process.

In spite of the unnoticeable notice in the wrong location, the vehement Venice community caught on to Google's manipulative request, and community activist Ivonne Guzman traveled 170 miles to the February 13 Coastal Commission meeting in Pismo Beach. A 19-page document listing the 82 mis-labeled de minimis waivers granted over the previous two years was presented, accompanied by letters asking the Commission to deny the February waiver requests for Venice and cease granting waivers to the City of L.A. for Venice.

Google's proposed new development wasn't even on the agenda of the February 13 Coastal Commission meeting, and they were going to simply include it in the Director's Report as a de minimis waiver, not even as a consent calendar item. It was removed before the meeting even started.

Construction that destroys the historical, unique community character of the Venice Coastal Zone is in direct violation of Coastal Act Sec. 30624.7. One of the many such examples is the proposed demolition of the 1922 California craftsman bungalow on 848 Milwood and its replacement with a much larger, taller and uglier building. It was slated for approval at the February 13 meeting in the same batch as the Google development, but similarly was postponed just before the meeting.

"This (Google) project was approved without the discretionary review, community input, or analysis of the cumulative effects of the building's expansion," according to a February 11 letter sent to the Coastal Commission by Linda Lucks, Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) President. In that same letter she notes that the proposed expansion is a 19 percent increase to the dwelling, and therefore it does not qualify for a de minimis waiver, which is valid for a ten percent increase or less.

"To permit a 19 percent expansion in square footage for this parcel without a Coastal Development Permit is a violation of the Coastal Act," according to Lucks's letter to the the Coastal Commission.

"No public hearings have been held by the City on this major expansion project by the property lessee, Google, Venice's largest employer. A parking deficit of over 150 spaces will substantially impact public coastal access to Venice Beach, three blocks from the project," according to a February 11 letter sent to the Coastal Commission by Ken Alpern, Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Council District 11 Neighborhood Empowerment Congress.

In response to the overwhelming rate of over-development, community members formed the Venice Coalition to Preserve Unique Community Character (C-PUCC) with the intent to "oppose the demolition and destruction of the unique community of Venice, including protecting low income people and housing, protecting green space and animal habitat, protecting historic/small scale buildings."

The first meeting of the C-PUCC took place on February 22 at the First Baptist Church, and about 50 concerned residents participated. The overwhelming message in the room was the public's upheaval



about their exclusion from the decision-making process regarding development, due to lack of public meetings and lack of proper notifications regarding the proposed developments.

Historically, residents in the area surrounding a proposed new development were notified in writing and in advance, so that they were able to voice their concerns. Currently the individual notification process of the neighbors surrounding a proposed development is not taking place. Instead, the developer or owner is trusted to post a letter-size paper notice somewhere on the property ten days prior to the monthly Coastal Commission meeting, which meets at a different place in the state each month. If the neighbors are lucky enough to see the notice, there is no information given as to what to do. Out of the 82 de minimis waivers approved over the last two years, there was only one objection letter. Now you know why – because nobody knew about them.

"We need to get rid of the VSO, the Venice Sign-Off," said Sue Kaplan. Although the Venice Specific Plan does not allow the waivers or the types of developments that have been built as result of those waivers, the city of L.A. signs off on most applications under the VSO, or Venice Sign-Off, which was instituted in 2001 and is not appealable.

Those present at the C-PUCC meeting also felt that the Venice Neighborhood Council is not listening to the community – especially in regards to approving the hotel proposed for Abbot Kinney Blvd. Participants agreed that the VNC should re-consider the vote. The main concerns regarding the hotel were its proximity to Westminster Elementary School.

"The hotel developers are giving money to the children now attending Westminster school – that's why the parents and the principal are not opposing it – but once these students graduate, the next ones won't get a dime and there's nothing they can do to change what's already there," said Lydia Ponce, community activist and parent volunteer at Venice High School.

The VNC can re-consider a vote and re-take it in the event that a Board member changes his or her position, and decides to vote No instead of Yes. Those VNC Board members who voted Yes (Jake Kaufman, Matt Kline, Tom Elliott, Marisa Solomon, Sevan Gerard, Scot Kramarich, Erin Sullivan-Ward, Max Sloan, Cynthia Rogers) on the hotel are urged to re-consider their decision and re-vote No in order to reflect the overwhelming wishes of the community.

"We have something worth preserving," Ivonne Guzman, community activist and Reach for the Top Director, said at the C-PUCC meeting.

"Venice is the only place on the coast where black and brown people can live. Waivers are given as if there is little or no impact – but there is a huge, cumulative impact. Our unique community character is threatened, and what are we going to end up with? LUPC (Land Use and Planning Committee) is systematically approving everything, and VNC is rubber-stamping LUPC's decisions. We need to stop approving everything, and focus on long-term planning instead," Guzman said in a phone conversation with the Beachhead.

"Ainsworth acts like he's making money off these developments," said Peggy Lee Kennedy,



Left and above: Google's proposed development notice, inside a fence and a plant. Photos: Peggy Lee Kennedy

community activist and Food Not Bombs volunteer in a phone conversation with the Beachhead.

Jack Ainsworth is the staff Deputy Director of the California Coastal Commission, and although he only makes recommendations to the voting Board members, his advice is taken at face value when public participation is lacking. For example, when the city of L.A. wanted to establish Overnight Parking Districts (OPDs) in Venice, Ainsworth advised the Board members to approve the motion. And they most likely would have, had we not shown up in Long Beach on June 13 in mass numbers and verbally opposed the proposal during seven hours of public testimony with three minutes allowed per person.

"Public pressure works," Kennedy told the Beachhead.

The next Coastal Commission meeting takes place March 12 in Long Beach, and Venetians are urged to attend and voice their concerns during the opening public comment section.

Following the Coastal Commission's February 13 decision to table Google's request for a de minimis waiver for its development at 320 Hampton, Google decided to hold the public meeting that should have taken place before the city of L.A. approved the waiver and before it was presented to the Coastal Commission.

Google's public meeting took place on March 1 at their Binocular building on Main St. with about 75 people in the room. Jim Murrez of LUPC facilitated the meeting, at times not allowing certain individuals to finish talking, at times steering the subject of conversation, overall controlling the meeting. For example, he shut down Mark Lipman when he said that "we are prepared to organize with the community to oppose you and your project."

Thomas Williams, Site Director, was Google's spokesperson, and was accompanied on stage by Denise Zacky Popoch, Senior Project Manager for Gensler, the firm that is scheduled to complete the remodel at 320 Hampton.

The overall theme of the meeting was that the public's questions were not answered, and concerned residents were time and time again met with: "that is not my area of expertise, you would have to ask someone else about that."

Nobody in the audience seemed to be a supporter of Google's expansion in Venice, with gentrification being the common concern. Faced with all the opposition and the endless list of complaints, Murrez stated: "This construction permit will not change the world." Williams said: "I didn't realize how complicated Venice was."

When asked why Google provides everything for their employees, from a haircut to all meals in-house, not encouraging them to support local businesses, Williams said: "We've been going out sometimes, on Rose and Abbot Kinney." Ya, and look what happened to those two streets!

When asked about the growth prospects for the company, Williams said: "I would be unhappy if in five years Google will have more than 1500 employees in Venice." When asked what the Google employees actually do in their Venice cubicles, Williams vaguely answered that they have a chrome team that helps build the chrome glasses, a search knowledge team and a group that works on youtube.

Over-development is the single most threatening factor to our life-as-we-know-it here in Venice. With most projects being in violation of the Venice Specific Plan, the California Coastal Act and our right to due process, we can stop them by becoming involved, speaking up and attending meetings. You can get in touch with the C-PUCC by emailing [vcpucc@wiggimail.com](mailto:vcpucc@wiggimail.com).



# Why is a Land Use and Planning Committee member facilitating Google's proposed development meeting?

By Mark Lipman

I attended the outreach meeting at Google on March 1 on their proposed expansion to 320 Hampton, and a few serious questions were raised that need answers.

First, it was brought up that the permits for this project have already been approved by the city's Planning Department, which leads one to wonder, why are public hearings on this taking place only AFTER the permit has been approved?

Secondly, it is very concerning that the Venice Neighborhood Council's Land Use and Planning Committee would be facilitating Google's public outreach meeting - and that the VNC rep - unelected Jim Murrez, would be cutting off the public's questions and concerns directed to Google - because he alone decided that questions were not relevant.

This leads to some very serious ethical and procedural questions about the city's and the VNC's possible collusion with Google to expedite an agenda that does not have the proper input from the community.

Please note that there were MANY people in the audience yesterday who raised concerns over Google's larger impact to our community that must be addressed before any expansion can go forward and I'm calling on the VNC and the City Council as community leaders to take the necessary steps to hold transparent public inquiries into these concerns before any permitting is approved.

Additionally, on a positive note, due to the overwhelming concern in the room over the gentrification aspects of Google's impact, as well as their larger connections to Google's participation in ALEC (funding of Climate Change denial, and right-wing legislative agendas), and their collection, storage and sharing of our personal information, I was able to get the Google representative to agree to hold a public meeting to address these concerns within 60 days.

As this is now on the table, I would ask the City Council and the VNC to ensure that the permitting for the project at 320 Hampton be delayed until at least this public meeting can occur and a Community Benefit Agreement can be reached with Google.

## Nightmare on 1414 Main Street To Be Heard At Next VNC Meeting!

By Krista Schwimmer

The fight against Jason Teague and his nightmare, colossal development, called 1414 Main Street, is not over. Mark your calendars for what will no doubt be another community record turnout. The LUPC motion, **rejecting** the project, will be put to vote at the next Venice Neighborhood Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 18, 7 pm to 10:30 pm, at Westminster Elementary School Auditorium.

Your voice matters! At the January VNC meeting this year, Tom Donovan, a member of the West LA Planning Commission at the time, told the community that "citizen testimony is evidence" legally. The testimony, however, must be heard at lower level hearings.

For more information about fighting 1414 main, go to [www.veniceagainst1414main.com](http://www.veniceagainst1414main.com).



Photo: Greta Cobar

Above: From R to L: Jim Murrez controlling the meeting; Thomas Williams; Denise Zacky Popoch

## VNC Fails to Represent Venice

By Eric Ahlberg

Well we are into another round of "The Death Of Venice". This toxic paradigm is renewed every time a craftsman bungalow is torn down and replaced with an ugly box, every time an artist is evicted and then faces a market rent of \$3900.00 for a 2bdr in Lincoln Place, and every time the VNC falls for a developer's carefully crafted response to a community's concerns about negative impacts. Sweet talking entrepreneurs blowing mitigations in your ear, selling you doom like the Wolves of Wall Street.

Sweet puppies these VNC volunteers, willing to sacrifice the density, traffic congestion, construction noise, excavation trucking, parking. Excavations are always good for the neighborhood, exporting the funky to dumps so that shiny new things can take their place, and removing earth to make space for cars to park. Ever hear of Love Canal, I don't mean that porn producer on Linnie, I mean that dioxin wasteland created by the Gas Plant very similar to the one that was on the site of the Chiat-Day Building, now the Google offices. The excavation of the Chiat-Day site in Venice required trucking the dioxin laden soil out and required the site to be covered with tarps and watered down constantly to prevent the pollutant laden soil

from blowing into the neighborhood. We hope the hotel developers have drilled core samples because they are only a few blocks from the Chiat-Day site. Venice was a toxic wasteland after the oil industry was done with it. Much of this hides underground, demons unleashed with each excavation.

Now you can bet some checks were written after the Hotel passed the VNC. Community approval processes are an extreme pain for developers, so they get professional help, lobbyists, behind the scenes they meet and plan out their strategy. From a Zillow perspective every lot has a \$ number and a zoning and a community to overcome. They must overcome basic logic. More people = more traffic + less parking. Hand waving is required. Property is property but construction finance profit is proportional to square footage, and occupancy. Real estate development is the lifeblood of international finance, where speculative projects can change hands several times by the time anybody moves in, and the aftermath is buried in a fund. It brings more money and people into the community, but, is that what we want? Finance and Paychecks vs Provincialism. If you want your community greener, and with less traffic, prevent these projects.

## 758 Sunset Avenue Project: Twice Defeated - But the Fox Still Circles the Hen house

By Krista Schwimmer

The voices of Venice are many and diverse. In the recent years of gentrification, however, they have often been stifled or unheard. There are times, however, when a single voice delivers the sentiment of all those voices not being heard. At the February 5<sup>th</sup>, Land Use and Planning Committee meeting, Lydia Ponce, longtime activist, did just that.

Pointing to the seven generations of Venetians in the back corner of the room, largely of African-American and Native American descent, Ponce began by saying how the gentrification ruining Venice did not benefit these families. She called for a moratorium on the destruction in Venice. She asked why no one on LUPC was dedicating him or herself to going after more affordable housing. She claimed "it's like putting the fox in the hen house!"

On the agenda that night was 758 Sunset Avenue, a proposed Small Lot Subdivision with three homes and six car parking. After a presentation from the applicant, and an interactive, public comment period, the chair, Jake Kaufman, made a motion to deny this project based on the following grounds: less than 7%

of homes in that area are similar in size; the project would decrease the density of affordable units in the area; the lot coverage was excessive; and, there would have to be guest parking, according to the VSP.

The motion not only passed LUPC that night, but easily passed at the monthly February meeting of the VNC, where the applicant himself, arrived too late to even argue for his development.

At the end of her public comment, Lydia told LUPC that "maybe you're not individually responsible, but know this: I'm going to be praying tonight that my ancestors meet up with yours and whisper in your ear and clean your conscience and do something for the people who were here originally from six generations back and before that - the Tongva."

For those two nights, her prayers were answered. Let's join the ancestors in the next round and help preserve Sunset Avenue. For more information about ongoing developments on this project, and many others, go to Venice Community Unity Coalition at [www.facebook.com/groups/2VCUC/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/2VCUC/)

## 320 Sunset Development

By Greta Cobar

Another development project approved by the Land Use and Planning Committee that does not seem to reflect the wishes of the community is headed to the Venice Neighborhood Council for a vote by the Board. It is located at 320 Sunset, right across the street from Google's proposed development at 320 Hampton.

A restaurant seeking a permit for a full line of alcoholic beverages is proposed. Currently there are no other restaurants or bars on that street. Predominantly residential, with artist studios and a few offices, the character of the block will be changed by the proposed development. With no parking spaces provided by the proposed new restaurant, it is a matter of certainty that the surrounding residents' parking problems will be exasperated.

Another undesirable effect of this development is that it will set the pace for change in the area. The gentrification factor will kick in, real estate prices will rise, and the surrounding artist community will be driven out. This will be a most unfortunate effect, as the studios on that block are a huge part of the artistic heartbeat of Venice. That short block is the center of the ArtBlock, Art Walk and it hosts dozens of art shows and art parties per year. Obviously the proposed development is not set to cater to the artistic community that lives and works there, nor the art lovers who visit.



# Abbot Kinney Boutique Hotel: the Devil You Know

By Krista Schwimmer

During a period in America's history, when families and individuals are still reeling from the loss of homes, when the economy has not fully recovered, and the divide between the rich and the poor is still growing, a major hotel development project along Abbot Kinney Boulevard was narrowly given the green light by the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC). After months of meetings, of fliers posted on doorways by those for and against, this block long, 67 room boutique hotel, led by developer Dan Abrams, is yet another step closer to becoming a reality. If built, however, will this hotel be good for the locals, as its proponents claim, drawing more tourist business and providing local jobs? Or will it simply be a disaster, opening the door to untold other, mega developments?

At the February monthly VNC meeting, a record crowd of about 300 people came out to address just these issues. After the chair, Linda Lucks, secluded herself, handing the reins over to Vice President, Mark Salzburg, Dan Abrams, along with the architect on the project, David Hertz, once again presented their case. Abrams stated that the inspiration for the hotel was Venice itself, promising to show case artists, to be good to employees, and to the surrounding neighbors. Hertz quickly took the crowd through the project again: the 67 rooms that could expand into 85; the 42 % of open, ground floor space that would allow people to walk through; the preservation of the current businesses there, as well as their actual facades. He said that building a hotel there would have less impact on traffic than any other kind of development. He also said they were in the process of doing a detailed pedestrian study. According to Hertz, character, mass and scale are "subjective and complex issues." He ended by saying that the neighbors are supportive of the project.

Marta Evry then gave a fifteen minute presentation opposing the project. Evry made six major arguments against it: incomplete and misleading information on the developer's part; violation of the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan (VCZSP); the setting of dangerous precedents; unresolved parking issues; "significant, hard, unresolved traffic problems"; and public safety concerns for both the neighbors and the Westminster School across from the proposed hotel. Contrary to what Hertz stated earlier that evening, Marta argued that both the VCZSP and Venice Coastal Land Use Plan DOES specifically address what mass, scale, and character are. They are all "defined by measuring proposed projects against the existing neighborhoods themselves." The AK hotel would exceed all other projects due to its 69,477 square feet and eight lot consolidation. "No one will raise a family" in these hotel rooms, she said in protest against calling this a mixed use project. In a moment of levity, Evry showed a slide of a horse painted like a zebra, saying, "Painting stripes on a horse does not make it a zebra!"

After Marta's presentation, Mark Salzberg stated that because Marta had given a fifteen minute presentation against the proposal, he would now allow fifteen minutes of comments in favor of it. Protests rang out, causing the chair to exclaim, "everyone is not going to be heard" tonight. After the fifteen minutes,



Above: Standing-room-only February 17 VNC meeting

Photo: Krista Schwimmer

he would then alternate comments against and for the motion. In light of the fact that the developer had already given a fifteen minute presentation first, the decision to give fifteen more minutes to their side seemed hardly fair. It was a night, however, where fairness would be questioned more than once!

Robin Murez, who once had her sculpture garden on Abbot Kinney, began the arguments in favor of the motion to approve the project. Like others, she called it a tourist attraction; and, like others, she trusts the work of David Hertz. She stated that for the past twenty years, locals have not supported the businesses on Abbot Kinney – she could attest to that. So, she thought the hotel fit with the people who were coming to the Boulevard. Others also expressed that the developers have not only been listening to the community, but have made changes in response to them.

Once comments opened up to those opposed to the project, however, it was evident that much of the community is not only against the project, even revised, but vehemently so. One man said it would "overwhelm the neighborhood" and be "a disaster". Both Tibby Rothman and Caroline Rios were concerned that consolidating eight lots would set a long term precedent. Sue Kaplan, Chair of the Mass, Scale and Character Ad Hoc Committee, stated the FAR would be a 200% increase, and that their shadow studies were not accurate.

Mark Kleiman reported on a Town Hall meeting at the Westminster School which had been attended by LUPC member, Robin Rudisill. Rudisill said that dozens of parents told her they had never heard about the proposed hotel. Kleiman called LUPC to task,

saying that "the chair of LUPC has not complied with a Public Records Request" for either the hotel or for another development project, 1414 Main Street, making him question what else the the LUPC Chair could be keeping from the VNC or from the people.

The motion to approve the project passed: 9 in favor, 7 opposing, and 1 abstaining. Those that did vote against it often reflected the concerns of the community, one member saying "we could end up with a hotel corridor."

The battle is far from over. The city has still yet to weigh in on this boutique hotel. Although the developer and the architect have worked with the community over 16 months, there are still unanswered questions. Where will employees that work there actually live, considering no one is building any affordable housing? What about other projects in surrounding cities, such as Santa Monica, in relationship to this one? How will traffic be impacted when considered as a whole? Is this a time in our nation that we should be building boutique hotels with spas instead of providing homes for those being continually pushed out of that market?

During the public comment time, Luke Jones, a supporter of the project, said "better the devil you know." I ask you, Venice, do you agree? Abbot Kinney was a romantic dreamer. Although much of Venice has changed since its inception, let's continue building Venice from the seeds of vision, not of fear. Let's all of us dig even deeper and come up with a vision of Venice that is more reflective of the spirit of Venice – a spirit that includes more than excludes; a spirit that reflects the intentions Kinney had for this community.



Above: Mardi Gras Parade, March 1, Ocean Front Walk

L to R, clockwise: group picture; Bradley Bobbs and Suzy Williams in matching outfits; Todd von Hoffmann and Theo von Hoffman, King and Queen of the parade; woman with hula hoop

Group photo: Andrew Goetze; All other photos: Ray Rae [www.rayraepix.com](http://www.rayraepix.com)





# Return of Sponto and Return of It Came from Venice

March 1-15, 9 Dudley, Curated by Gerry Fialka



Top to Bottom, Left to Right: Black Shoe Polish - by Greta Cobar; Geneva Simmons next to her artwork - by Kathy Leonardo; La.Marche - by Greta Cobar; Barbara Mastej and Cosmo next to Barbara's painting of Cosmo - by Kathy Leonardo; Midwinter Twilight Dream painted by Sean Boyce; Hillary Kaye next to her artwork - by Pegarty Long; Crowd photo - by Eric Ahlberg; Dougo Smith's artwork - by Eric Ahlberg; Vincent Digaetano next to his artwork - by Greta Cobar.





Above: High surf that eventually caused the closure of the Venice pier, March 1

Photo: Steve Christensen



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THE OTHER VENICE FILM FESTIVAL





# Interview of Mary Getlein

-continued from page 1

**BH:** *What would those lies be?*

**MG:** Oh you know – “ask not what this country can do for you, ask what you can do for this country” – quote by JFK (like go to war?). He was shot and killed so they turned him into a martyr. But if he had lived, one of those days someone would have written a book that would have exposed some raw truth about him, instead.

**BH:** *Such as?*

**MG:** Oh, you know, Marilyn Monroe's death, please? His involvement with having round-the-clock girls coming in and out of the White House, to service his out of control sex drive. Drugs? All the deals he had going . . . Corruption at the top. His ties to the Mafia, war machine, Cuba? Lie #2 – go to college and get a good job. If you can't it's your fault, you're a loser – Capitalism! Our society tells us all these lies and expects us to live by them, and if we can't, because just maybe all the cards are stacked against us, then they call us losers – it's all your fault.

**BH:** *Let's get back to poetry.*

**MG:** OK.

**BH:** *So who were your favorite poets when you were a child? Were you an avid reader?*

**MG:** Oh yes, my head was always in a book. I loved to read because it was such an escape. I would get lost in books and take on the attributes of the books and try them out. I would try out the vocabulary of the books and freak out my older sister, using new swear words she hadn't heard of yet.

**BH:** *Did school help you to write poetry?*

**MG:** No, school basically shut me down. School made me feel really stupid. I think I was dyslexic. I couldn't concentrate. I was bored out of mind, pretty much. Just sleepwalked through school. You know Philomene Long said: a poet is someone who looks up at the sky a lot – watches the clouds a lot. That's me – I've spent years in Venice, sitting on a bench and staring at the horizon of the ocean.

**BH:** *How many years have you lived here?*

**MG:** Since 1972. Forty-two years.

**BH:** *So you've seen a lot of changes.*

**MG:** Yup – but I love Venice. Venice is my spiritual home. It's the first place I really felt was my home. And it will be my last. I love this place.

**BH:** *Your favorite poems as a child?*

**MG:** Emily Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson, A.A.Milne – I loved the Pooh stories. The usuals in an American Lit book. Then when I was a teenager I discovered Jack Kerouac – I read all his books. I loved how he got a forest ranger job and was trying to figure out how to live as cheaply as possible, so he could work on his books. At one point he was living on peanut butter and lettuce, and wine, of course. So then I moved on to the beat poets – loved them. I loved jazz – I was 17 and I was probably smarter then, than I am now in some ways. It was before I got involved in drugs and alcohol. So I was more myself. After drugs and alcohol, I had to get sober and deal with the wreckage of my past and it was hard. Plus I had a little girl to raise. But it all worked out. Now she is 28, I am 62, and we are closer than we have ever been. It's all good. Anyway, I came to poetry late in the game. I started writing poetry in 2006. I came home from cleaning FrancEye's apartment and I sat down, and wrote a poem about her and her place. Basically the poem wrote itself. And it was very strange, it had never happened to me before, writing a poem. And I mailed it into the Beachhead. And they published it! So that's how I got into poetry.

Poetry, for me, is a postcard from your heart. For me, I have to mull over things, and think about them, and maybe a few lines will come to me and then I'll think about them some more, and add something . . . Other times, the thing just writes itself. These are usually pretty good. It like bursts through the everyday shit – you know, like writing a grocery list and all of a sudden you start writing about something else.

**BH:** *Do you still read a lot?*

**MG:** Yup, still read a lot. I ride my bike around Venice and find free books in the Free Library boxes outside people's houses. It's so cool. You can read them and take them back. I learn a lot from novels, other poets, also detective stories. I used to read a lot of depressing books, but now I'm trying to find funny books, which help. I'm kind of tired of being depressed. The more you laugh, the more you can laugh.

**BH:** *You were homeless for how many years?*

**MG:** I was homeless from 1976 to 1984, plus here and there. I lived on the streets and will never forget it. You learn a LOT – anyway, I know a lot of people who are homeless and I regard them as my good friends. In 2006 I used to host meals down on the boardwalk and even though it's been a long time, people still remember that. And I remember it too. It was fun and it felt good to do something concrete. I had to give it up, but other people are doing it now, so it's all good.

**BH:** *How do you like being part of the Beachhead?*

**MG:** Oh, I really like it. It feels good to be a part of something and everyone on the staff has a good sense of humor, so there is a lot of laughter shared at the meetings. I was distributing Beachheads one day at Ralphs, and this weird guy came up to me and asked: “You're not one of those 'do-gooders' are you?” And I said, “Yeah, I hope so.” I went home and thought about it, and realized I should have said, “so, what? I should be a do-badder?” I mean, we are putting out the alternative view to what's happening in Venice today.

Real estate is the engine that drives this town. It always has. When I got here it was a hippie paradise. Rents were super low and no one wanted to live here. But the ocean was here, there was a lot of music here, people were into “doing their thing,” whatever that was. It was like going to the circus, everyday.

We know times have changed. But we are looking at the “human rights” side of a story. We are asking to have people treated with respect. Homeless people are not helped as much as they could be. The police are very mean to homeless people and actually drive people crazy. It's very hard to be homeless and out on the street. People should try it sometime. If you spent one night out there, and watched how the police treat someone who basically has nothing – it would change your whole view of it. Be cold, be hungry, be scared for one cold night and see what it's like.

**BH:** *What is a poet?*

**MG:** In the olden days of Greece, poets were paid by the government, or sponsored by rich people. Poets were respected and didn't have to slave away at a day job and come home and try to write. Poets were oracles, telling people things that were going to come true. Poets were story tellers and people loved stories. Poetry is one of the arts, and most poets are struggling. Poets tell the story of life, the things in your life that are beautiful, and ugly, and happy, and sad.

**BH:** *“This paper is a poem.” What does that mean?*

**MG:** It means that the Beachhead prints poems, respects poems and holds poets in high regard. This paper is a poem, just like the sky is a poem. The poem and the sky are gifts and we



Above: Mary Getlein reading poetry, December 1, 2013, Beyond Baroque

Photo: Margaret Molloy

receive them with love and joy. When people send us their poems, we receive them with respect and we try to be respectful of all writers.

**BH:** *Thank you.*

**MG:** No, thank you –

## Franceye, Again

(Reprinted from the August 2011 Beachhead)

I thought I saw Franceye on the #3 bus.  
I was at Venice and Lincoln,  
going home  
Hey! I wanted to shout –  
Franceye –  
I'm writing poems now, like you –  
She goes – yeah, I know, it's fun, huh?  
just relax and let it happen –  
like they used to say about rape –  
They thought that was funny or something –  
– and I went in a bookstore yesterday –  
by the AERO Theatre  
and there was no computer in the whole place  
and they were talking books, Franceye –  
It ain't over yet –  
People still talk about books –  
“told you so, didn't I?”, she said  
just try to enjoy it –  
relax and poems will come right down to you  
yeah, you're a loner and you don't talk so much –  
but you're thinking all the time –  
and remember the universal answer to any annoying question –  
SO WHAT?  
don't take any wooden nickels, kid  
but where are you going Franceye?  
I'm off to see the Wizard –  
I'm chasing the Light, just like I did when I was  
Alive –  
just do what suits you –  
and the hell with the rest of it –  
She was gone –  
and I was on my way home.  
–Mary Getlein

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Venice, 2014

It's bad enough - the air quality in California  
All this construction -  
gives local children asthma, dirty air  
pollutants in the air, huge trucks going by,  
Destroying our heritage - the funky old homes of Venice  
rolled over by greedy developers  
turning Venice into a series of concrete boxes -  
all the boxes look the same -  
no room for children, birds, air, sunsets  
All that counts is money money money  
relentless capitalism -  
Once it's gone, it's gone  
You are bulldozing our dreams  
living in a funky little sea-town  
where you can wear a slip and pajamas  
and it doesn't matter to anyone  
Don't let the homogenization happen  
we are already surrounded by yuppies  
who are so anxious to look alike, walk alike, talk alike  
A big producer moves in,  
took our post office and made it his private office,  
right down the street from his empire,  
a huge site is scheduled, a huge condo complex.  
These guys are hand-in-hand with each other  
Greedy capitalists come here to destroy, not create  
Destroy our cultural heritage, our history  
Destroy Abbot Kinney's dream of a playground  
for ALL, not just people with obscene amounts  
of money.  
Instead of a minimum wage, what about a maximum  
wage? You can only earn so much and then you  
have to use the rest of it to distribute income for  
The rest of us?  
We are not greedy developers -  
We don't know them -  
We want to live here,  
We were here first - before us were Beatniks:  
poet-people, artists, singers, musicians,  
people arrested for pornography when painting nudes  
people beat up by the cops for belly-dancing  
people arrested for singing after 6:00 pm in the winter  
This is our home  
This is an investment of time and love and memories  
We love this place -  
go find another place to bulldoze into a pile of dirt  
we're not having it here -  
we're sick of your "smile in our faces, stab us in the back"  
Things can be changed -  
it's not over yet -  
please don't tell me it's over  
we need this place for our souls  
for our children and our children's children  
don't tell me it's going to be a "used-to-be"  
That we'll have to show our children  
pictures of how it "used-to-be"  
and there is no wonderland here for them  
no magic places to run for free, for fun  
Don't let this happen, Venetians!  
We have to get together and fight this  
We have to stand tall and fight this  
We have to fight this, for our hearts and souls  
for our brothers and sisters  
the people still living here  
and the people who used to live here  
before they got evicted from their homes.

– Mary Getlein

Venice Nights

Venice nights  
Life's sweet delights  
Spinning carnival lights  
Cool jaded moon  
Soft golden sand  
We walk hand in hand  
We walk onto the promise land  
Hear the drums  
When the time comes  
follow the sound  
Watch the mystics whirl around  
Light our camp fire  
snuggle up beneath the moon  
Flames dance from the campfire  
Young nights spent on the beach  
Amongst the stars and your eluding speech  
The bongos play  
We are birds of prey  
We are youth at play

– Savannah B. Nolan

Epitaph

By Humberto Gómez Sequeira-HuGóS

Here lie desire and frustration,  
sparks generated by the same fire,  
which turned into words of ire,  
without senseful concatenation,  
when pleasure expired on the pyre  
that the wind blew into desolation.

Necessity

The girl grew up by necessity.  
She grew strong by necessity.  
She grew wise by necessity.  
She grew old, and no one ever  
thought about what a strong, wise,  
woman she had become.  
So she has to go unappreciated  
by necessity.

– Hillary Kaye

Remembering Amnesia

How words can scarce describe  
Why she was left to hide.  
Like pearl inside the shell  
Rubbed squarely, years of Hell!  
The portion large  
When hopes were small,  
I fought the cause  
Or none at all.  
My art sort a religion  
Put dreams away  
To boxes of forgetfulness  
O Clown of God!  
But then, momentous knowing  
Won't stop the tears from flowing,  
While so many gathered 'round  
To watch me falling to the ground.  
Then melon came to holly  
When Jupiter came to calley,  
Dancing circles round the drumming  
As Jesus, Krishna, did the humming.  
Come down from your cross  
You twit with gravitas,  
Hurrying up to wait  
Spending life for some mistake!  
Oh God! Forgive the sinning  
For you alone, knows where I've been.  
The childish whims, the plunging grief.  
As time does pass, bring on relief!  
I told myself to lighten up  
While pouring coffee in the cup.

– Suzanne Verdal

VENICE DRUMBEATS

Abraham beats his Drum  
His heartbeat drumming,drumming...  
A rainbow of Musicians  
A sunshine of instruments drumming,drumming...  
Singers singing,singing...  
Guitars,flutes,tambourines  
Abraham drumming,drumming...  
Vibrational Echo  
Through time and Space  
Music drumming,drumming...  
Back to our Roots  
Our heartbeats beating,beating....  
To remember and Feel  
Even for the moment ticking,ticking...  
Between the drumbeats beating,beating...  
A rainbow of souls drumming,drumming...  
Universal Love beating,beating...  
Abraham drumming,drumming.

– Marty Liboff

My Happiness Has Wings

My happiness overflows its boundaries  
Silencing my ever haunting deadness  
I will let myself enjoy this moment  
I feel I have wings to fly  
And by them I ambush evil schemes  
My love as wild as the wind  
Flowing from the south  
Bringing the warmth of the sun  
I close my eyes and travel  
The compassions of grace and mercy  
Surround my poor nature  
I will lift my hands to praise  
Oh, the joys that fill my heart  
Are better than lustful gold  
Spread like butter on hillsides  
Song birds singing a heart's tune  
Remembered in my memory  
Softly strummed on the strings  
That stretch across my heart  
A vast corridor of passage  
Lined with art on the walls  
A stone floor covered with  
An ornate carpet leading  
Into the horizon, white  
My journey takes its course

- James Stone

Free Venice Beachhead • March 2014 • 9

1 Wanda

"wear desperation like a birthmark  
it's too late to die young  
and too early to die in my sleep"

your writer bursts laugh-blips  
through startled lips  
his cocoon status breached

W. Coleman controls the game  
captain of all just repeat  
captain on land and sea

wins swift with wicked change-up  
they couldn't see em coming  
get your head out

she smokes one past the bastard  
leaving him "shivering and kicking  
down to the ass bone"

the strongest word-hurler Wanda  
great performer immensely on target

voted MVP Most Valuable Poet  
glides erotic across the stage while

we pick up her trophy for her  
she being out of town right now

– Pano Douvos

You Can't Play Music There

By Ronald K. Mc Kinley  
  
You can't play music there  
Only in your designated square  
You can't sit there  
Someone might see you think that they are free  
You can't make love there  
That is obscene  
Show your passion  
To be seen  
The Po-Po said it's after sunset, sometimes before  
You can't play it's a crime  
Guitar and Drums weapons to be held in check  
You can't leave your backpack there  
with everything you own  
it might get stolen by some statute  
You can't sleep there  
Or there  
Or anywhere  
You can't drink there  
It's the Law  
The store can sell it  
There logic and reason ends  
Just regulation and decree  
Yes this is America  
If you have the capital  
Funds to have fun  
You can play your music  
In your studio  
You can smoke at home  
In your smoking jacket  
Make love in your vault  
Atop your dough  
Make a movie anytime, anywhere  
leave your discords for the poor  
Once a year declare peace and love  
Keeping true freedom from their door

Dudley Avenue Pagoda

Under a Morrison moon  
Chemical cowboys  
Voodoo gearshift  
The hourglass of life  
Fierce angels  
Soulmining  
The edge of ruin  
  
- B. Meade





Dear Beachhead,

Mr. Davis is confused. The Bay Foundation is a nonprofit environmental group in good standing. Our revenue is from grants and private donations. We are audited annually by a reputable firm and the IRS posts our annual nonprofit filings, along with all other nonprofit groups in the country. We have completed every grant we have received and accounted for every dollar spent, without fail, and have produced excellent results for state agencies, the federal EPA and the communities in which we've worked. Many of those grant products---from greenway plans and kelp restoration to award-winning rain garden and rain barrel projects--are available on our website, [www.santamonicaabay.org](http://www.santamonicaabay.org).

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission is a small non-regulatory state agency whose job is to convene stakeholders of Santa Monica Bay so that we can work together for the good of the Bay. Restoring coastal wetlands where they have been lost or damaged, as at Ballona, is an extremely important part of repairing our coastal environment and protecting people and wildlife from development and climate change impacts. Public access to open space, with trails and educational features, is another critical element of our work along the coast.

There are a lot of problems with wetlands, but Ballona is special because we have an opportunity to do something positive now at a place that is in an unnatural state and really needs repair. A lot of wildlife has been displaced by trash, pollution and construction, and our goal is to get it back to a healthy place for all to enjoy.

The misleading and baseless statements in this editorial are obvious attempts to take the focus off an important job: undoing the damage we humans have inflicted on the Ballona Wetlands, and making it a place of beauty where people and wildlife can flourish. State agencies are creating a range of project proposals that will show what is possible at Ballona, and will present them to the public sometime this year for review. It's a long process, but it's a big job, and patience is warranted. It has taken us 100 years to degrade this wetlands to the point where it desperately needs our help, and it will take a few years and a lot of hard work to make it healthy again. I hope the Venice residents will work with us and all the stakeholders for a healthy, thriving Ballona Wetlands.

Shelley Luce, D.Env.  
Executive Director  
The Bay Foundation and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation

## Open Letter to Councilman Mike Bonin

By Mark Lipman

As you have stated on several occasion, homelessness is a very important issue that you want to help find a solution to. To that, I would like to bring to your attention that today, a friend (who I shall not name) and long time Venice resident has become homeless and tonight will spend his first night on the streets. His situation came about through no fault of his own, but rather due to systemic flaws in our government. In short, he was made homeless due to yet another 5% rent increase.

As you may know, Los Angeles is the only city in the entire country to maintain a mandated minimum 3% rent increase every single year. That, along with "pass down" laws, which allow landlords to pass down utility hikes to their tenants, has meant that for the past several years the tenants of Los Angeles have had to face 5% increases in their rent with no relief in sight. Rents are already too damn high and we're just expected to pay more and more and more, until we can no longer afford it and wind up on the streets.

Ask any doctor and they will tell you, if you want to save the patient, you must first stop the bleeding. Likewise, if you want to solve homelessness, you must first stop the hemorrhaging of bodies onto the streets.

Over the years, we have seen the City Council reject, time and again, a rent freeze for Los Angeles, with renters and landlords sided up against each other in council chambers. This is not a question of tenant versus landlord, but rather that both groups are being made victims of a system that profits over dividing us, while relentlessly impoverishing us all through incremental measures.

It is wrong for our populace to be expected to pay higher rents and higher fees every single year, while the directors of DWP cash in on extravagant salaries and benefits, and city officials feed at the public troth. It is wrong that the price of our water should be doubled in order for the governor to siphon off our precious water supply (during the worst drought on record) to the oil and gas industry, in the guise of trying to save the Bay Delta, while making Los Angeles rate payers flip the bill. It is wrong that we are all nickled and dimed into poverty at every turn, while all the fat at the very top goes unchecked.

To halt this, I am calling on you, as an ally and as the most progressing voice on the City Council, to stand up and take the lead in correcting this situation. Eliminate the 3% floor on rent increases, stop the fee hikes for our basic services and freeze the rents, so that finally we can stop and catch our breath and reverse the epidemic of homelessness that is plaguing Los Angeles.

Secondly, as I'm sure you are also aware, on January 18th, a coalition of groups and individuals held a "sleep out" at Windward Circle in Venice, to rally public support for a Homeless Bill of Rights. In response, and I'm sure very coincidentally, yesterday, the LAPD started posting "No Trespassing" at Windward Circle and began issuing tickets.

It would appear that suddenly, out of the blue, Windward Circle is no longer "public property" but under the jurisdiction of Waste Management. How Orwellian! Suddenly, when a space for public gathering becomes too inconvenient for the powers that be, it is "discovered" that the space "is, and always has been" closed to the public. This is an outrage. This is exactly what the city did to Ocean Front Walk (in violation of the California Constitution and the Coastal Act) when over-night it implemented a curfew. It is the same thing the City Council did when the public, under the constitutionally protected rights of Freedom of Assembly, became too much of a nuisance on the lawn of City Hall. And it is what our city government does every single time the citizens stand up and demand answers.

This strong arm behavior by our government – the criminalization of our basic civil and human rights – will in no means shut down dissent. It will only make us louder and ask more questions.

So, as your constituent, I ask you, What are you going to do about it?



# Response to Shelly Luce

By John Davis

Dr. Shelly Luce replied to an article written in the February Beachhead. It questioned her role as the Executive Director of a State Agency and her association with a private business that employs her.

Rather than responding to specific issues presented in the February Beachhead, Luce speaks to the subjective merits of her employer, then goes on to demonize Ballona Wetlands.

A point-by-point response is in order. First, she begins with an invalid argument form called an, "Argumentum ad Hominem", whereby she attacks the character or circumstances of an individual who is advancing a statement or argument instead of trying to disprove the truth of the statement or the soundness of the argument.

From (<http://philosophy.lander.edu/logic/person.html>).

Second, the Beachhead has no editors.

And, Luce failed to respond in regard to her financial disclosures to the State she claims to represent, as Executive Director of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, SMRBC.

Ms. Luce filed a From 700 statement for 2013 with the State Fair Political Practices Commission.

The filings help identify and prevent conflicts of interest. Financial disclosures by those who represent the public are required. Disclosures of income from investments, real property, income, loans and business positions must be made to the public.

In 2013 Luce signed a Form 700 claiming she has no reportable interests on any IRS schedule.

In 2012 she also signed an IRS Tax Form 990 for the business she works for. On page 7, this document reveals Luce was the business's top earner at \$122,000.

Luce failed to report her business position as Executive Director of a private business to the State, and income from her employer shown on the IRS Form 990.

This begs the question of a conflict of interest for Dr. Luce. If she was paid by a private business as the IRS form indicates, why wasn't it reported to the State as well? The people have a right to know.

Then the question remains, can Dr. Luce lawfully act as Executive Director of a State Agency, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission?

State law allows the Agency to appoint an Executive Director. The records of the Agency demonstrate Ms. Luce was never appointed.

On the State Form 700 discussed above, the date she assumed office as Executive Director is left blank.

California Public Resources Code (PRC) 30988.2(a) requires the State to provide administrative services, such as that of an Executive Director. Luce works for a private business, not the State, yet claims to be the Executive Director of the SMRBC, a State Agency.

In an obvious attempt to dodge the law, in 2012 members of the SMRBC, the State Agency, with now Assemblyman Richard Bloom as its Chair, entered into an agreement with the business Luce works for. It was signed by Bloom, who was also a Board Member of the same private business at the time. That agreement does not appear to be consistent with California law.

It says the business Luce works for can also provide administrative services, to the State Commission, like an Executive Director, without citing to any legal authority to do so. That is because none exists.

There is only one legal way for the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission to authorize an Executive Director: by appointment. Shelly Luce was never appointed to be Executive Director and the minutes of SMRBC validate that fact.

Luce believes she has unlimited powers to represent the State and to obligate it to financial agreements with the United States Army without ever disclosing her actions to the State Agency she claims to represent.

One signed agreement obligated the State to provide about two million dollars in money or in kind work to the Army for an environmental process started at Ballona in 2005. Then, in 2012, Luce signed a letter on behalf of the State Agency asking the Army to withdraw from the same environmental process. The State Agency did not know it was involved because Luce never disclosed her actions, as the minutes of the meetings show.

The people and the State itself were left in the dark on this very important matter of money and the environment at Ballona.

Then, there is the website representing the business that Luce works for. Ms. Luce employs a private email address from [santamonicaabay.org](mailto:santamonicaabay.org), where she purports to do the business of the State without a public trace. Some of those emails have been obtained from the Army in a Freedom of Information Act request and demonstrate how the dealing of public matters is occurring on a private email network without public access.

The business Luce works for was incorporated as the Santa Monica Bay Restoration FOUNDATION. That same business is using a new name on its site, The Bay Foundation (TBF). It is still the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation. If you click on the donate button the true business name can be found.

To justify bulldozing the wetlands Luce demonizes the values of Ballona, as it exists today. She says Ballona is in an "unnatural state" and that Ballona, "really needs repair", due to "construction" and "trash". The further claim is that we humans have inflicted the damage. Her stated dream is "to make it a place of beauty where people and wildlife can flourish". Luce goes on, Ballona "desperately needs our help".

Her dream is our nightmare. The proposed preferred alternative is to bulldoze all of the wetlands and change the course of Ballona Creek to deposit all of the trash and pollutants coming from upstream Los Angeles into a one big man-made toilet bowl that would be dug out of our valued wetlands. And if that is not insane enough, the proposal to construct a multi-story private dog and cat kennel with a parking lot for 250 cars on top of the ecological preserve just adds insult to injury. Another multi-story parking garage is proposed over existing habitat next to Marina del Rey. This flood control project is masquerading as a "wetlands restoration". It proposes to raise large berms and to build view-blocking levees along Fiji Way, Lincoln and Jefferson Blvds, letting the ocean come closer to threaten homes and business. It is projected to take about ten years, which will include more construction traffic, noise, air, and water pollution and cost \$100++ million dollars.

How Dr. Shelly Luce can see the destruction of a major wetland and estuary as making it, "a place of beauty where people and wildlife can flourish"? That is simply a fallacy to obfuscate the truth.

Dr. Luce, I am asking you to respond to these issues if you can. I am sure the Beachhead would publish any response in the April edition.



# Women of Character, Courage and Commitment

By Krista Schwimmer

As part of March's "Women's History Month", the National Women's History Project (NWHF) has announced as its theme for 2014: "women of character, courage, and commitment."

There are many ways to honor such women. My favorite way is by reading their stories – through novels, biographies, poetry, and more. Having worked in bookstores for years, I have collected a diverse group of books by and about women, many of which I have not had time to read yet. So, I rummaged through my library to see what I could find to celebrate this theme. My first pick is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar." Plath, along with Anne Sexton, deeply influenced me in my twenties when I found myself still coping with deep loss. Although many judge these two confessional writers more by their suicides than their ground breaking works, I have continued to admire them for their shattering works, as well as their obvious commitment to their craft.

Having delved a bit more into community politics recently, my next pick is a book I bought a few years ago at Small World Books. (They always do a wonderful job showcasing a variety of women-themed books in March.) The book is called "Is Journalism Worth Dying For?" by Anna Politkovskaya. A special correspondent for the Russian newspaper *Novaya gazeta*, this journalist received many awards before her murder in Moscow on October 7, 2006. In a similar vein, I have also begun to read, "I Am Malala: the Girl Who Stood Up For Education," written by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb. I am sure many of you know of this amazing, courageous young girl who was shot in the head by the Taliban in 2012 for fighting for girls' education. Luckily, however, she survived to inspire us all!

The next books I pulled out, I have already read – I simply wanted to hold them again! Since I was young, I have also looked for women physically courageous. My interest in the ocean led me to two fascinating women. The first, Sylvia Earle, ranks up there with Jacques Cousteau. A marine biologist, deep sea diver, and ocean activist, Earle was a pioneer in her field. Did you know, for instance, that in 1970, she and a team of female aquanauts lived underwater for two weeks? I highly recommend Earle's book, "Sea Change," if you want to read more about her. My second favorite aquatic woman is Lynne Cox, a long distance ocean swimmer who, at fourteen, swam the twenty-six miles from Catalina Island to the California mainland. And that was just a start! The book I have, "Swimming to Antarctica", recounts her one mile swim to this icy region without a wet suit.

As March also celebrates "International Women's Day," I have pulled from my crowded shelves an inter-



esting looking history book I bought year's ago, at the Bodhi Tree Used Bookstore for just \$8.50. This 580 page book, "A Century of Women: the History of Women in Britain and the United States," by Sheila Rowbotham looks quite daunting! The little bit I have read so far, however, tells me it is quite readable, with delightful black and white illustrations, as well as a sixty-five page list of the biographies of the women included in her history.

Looking back at my list, I realize that I may need to balance my reading with a little levity. Luckily, I found just the book for that! How can any woman resist, "Hell Hath No Fury: Women's Letters from the End of the Affair," edited by Anna Holmes? This well-researched book is a collection of real and fictional letters from women across the centuries. Divided into sections such as "The Tell-Off", "The Dear John", and "The Goodbye Letter," this book makes me wish I had written more letters to the men who broke my heart when I was young.

To my delight, there are so many books from my own library that fit this year's theme. Books about magical women such as Dion Fortune, who single-

handily shaped the Western Occult Movement or Marie Laveau, Voodoo Queen extraordinaire who still influences people from her New Orleans' grave; biographies of women writers such as Mary Shelley, the creator of one of the most iconic monsters, Frankenstein, and Anna Akhmatova, the tremendous Russian poet who lived and wrote under the shadow of Stalin-ism; and stunning art books by such icons as the surrealist, Frieda Kahlo, and the visionary painter, Susan Seddon Boulet. One month is simply not enough time to explore the lives of women of character, courage and commitment! I may have to extend it to a year!

And so, without further ado, I must return to the books calling to me. Luckily, my husband accepts my bookish ways. I wish you all a wonderful month celebrating the lives of women, in whatever way suits your soul. May you find women who inspire in you to be even more than you ever dreamed you could be – no matter what your age, your race, your religion, or your economics. And for all of you girls and women out there – may you, too, become women of character, courage, and commitment.

## Venice Community Activist Whose Story Goes Back to Abbot Kinney: Jataun Valentine

– continued from page 1

**BH:** How have the attitudes towards women changed over time?

**Jataun:** Young people don't have any respect for women. I volunteer for people with Brail – I've been doing it for fourteen years. We used to help a blind person when the light changed, now the young people act like they don't even notice. They don't have any respect for women now – they used to never use foul language in front of you, but now it's part of what everyone says, it's part of their vocabulary. When I was coming up nobody said that. Women used to be respected – now they're just an object.

**BH:** What other organizations are you involved with?

**Jataun:** I volunteer for Venice Community Housing Corporation as the vice-president of the Board, and I'm also involved with POWER, People Organized for West Side Renewal. Anything that can be improved in Venice, I train leaders to go out and organize to do it.

**BH:** We're not giving up on our efforts to preserve the character of our community.

**Jataun:** It just takes a group of people – numbers count. That's how we won a lot of things. Anything can be stopped, you just gotta keep at it. People think: 'oh, that's just the way it is,' but it's not. We've had defeats and victories, and I believe that hotel can be stopped. They need to find a suitable place to put it – not near a school.

**BH:** Has it been hard to deal with the defeats?

**Jataun:** I just take things the way they go – there's no use to being depressed – it's not gonna get me anywhere. When someone at a meeting has a different point of view, I don't hold a grudge. They got their view, I got mine. I learned that from Pearl White and my mother.

*Just as we were wrapping up the interview, Jataun's sister Winola Smith, known as Jackie, walked in and chimed in.*

**Winola:** There's money down here now. Old money don't like new money – they're fighting. Houses used to be \$20,000 – now they're a million or two. It's basically the lot they're after. Venice is right between Santa Monica and the Marina, and look what happened there. When they built the first two high-rises and hotels in the Marina or Santa Monica they said that's all there's gonna be. But if you put one, you're gonna get the rest.

*Well, this has been a most entertaining and educational interview for me. Thank you for welcoming me into your home and enlightening me with your personal history of Venice over the last century.*



Above: Jataun Valentine in her garden

Photo: Greta Cobar

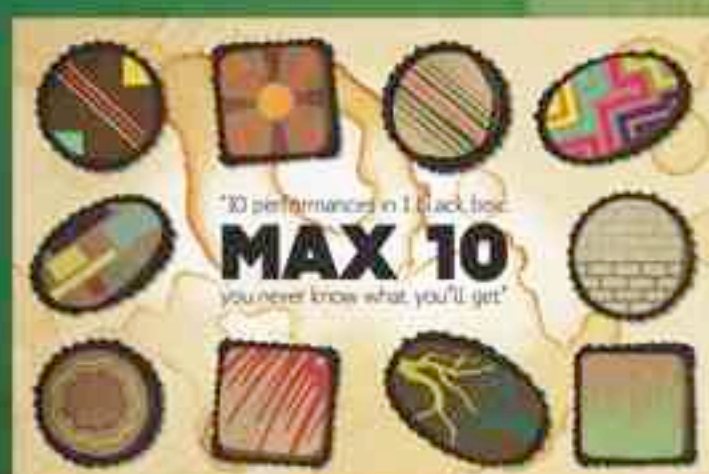




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## March 3rd

### Ultra-Experimental Variety Show & Performance Lab

7:30pm \$10

New Works by:

Joseph Culp, Noelle Andressen, Fred Cassidy  
Lauri Fraser, Nicole Strafaci, Nicole McLaren  
Maggie Light, Jenny Hodges, Valerie Scott  
& April Mabry

Join us for post show reception!

Make yourself at home!



## March 7th

A New Late Night Performance Series

**1st Friday of Every Month!**

ADMISSION IS FREE after 9pm

Genevieve Carson ~ Dance

Angelina Labate ~ Movement Theater

Honey Almazar ~ Dance

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