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November 2003

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PHONES: 396-0811 or 399-8685

**What can be done about Lincoln Blvd.? –See page 3**

**Workers fight back for their health care –See page 7**



Photo by Jim Smith



Photo by Vessy Mink

## Who's Murdering the Women of Juarez?

Earlier this year, Venetians became aware of the mass murders of women in Juarez through a shocking exhibit held at SPARC (Social and Public Art Resources Center) on Venice Blvd. Here is an exclusive on-the-scene update from local journalist Javier Rodriguez.

By Javier Rodriguez H.

In the first of its kind, on October 11 to 13 a Congressional delegation headed by Representative Hilda Solis of the 32nd District, landed in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico for a three day investigation of the massive murders of young Mexican women. Accompanied by Chicago's Congressman Luis Gutierrez and Texas Congressmen Silvestre Reyes and Ciro Rodriguez, the four US legislators met with mothers of the victims, non governmental organizations (NGOs), popular organizations, Mexican officials and journalists.

The fact finding mission arrived on the heels of an Amnesty International Human Rights report titled "Intolerable Killings." Additionally a week before their arrival, the Vicente Fox administration assigned 700 more federales to protect the city against crime.

The event was sponsored and organized by the Washington office on Latin America (WOLA), Latin America Working Group (LAWG) and the Mexico Solidarity Network, three progressive lobbying national organizations, all based in the US Capital. The delegation also included documentary producer Lourdes Portillo and UC Regent and labor leader Dolores Huerta.

–continued on page 4

## The Perfect Fire

By Mike Davis

The sun is an eerie orange orb, like the eye of a hideous jack-o-lantern. The fire on the flank of Otay Mountain, which straddles the Mexican border, generates a huge whitish-grey mushroom plume. It is a rather sublime sight, like Vesuvius in eruption. Meanwhile the black sky rains ash from incinerated national forests and dream homes.

It may be the fire of the century in Southern California. By brunch on Sunday eight separate fires were raging out of control, and the two largest had merged into a single forty-mile-long red wall. The megalopolis's emergency resources have been stretched to the breaking point and California's National Guard reinforcements are 10,000 miles away in Iraq. Panic is creeping into the on-the-spot television reports from scores of chaotic fire scenes.

Fourteen deaths have already been reported in San Bernardino and San Diego counties, and nearly 1000 homes have been destroyed. More than 100,000 suburbanites have been evacuated, triple as many as during the great Arizona fire of 2002 or the Canberra (Australia) holocaust last January. Tens of thousands of others have their cars packed with family pets and mementos. We're all waiting to flee. There is no containment, and infernal fire weather is predicted to last through Tuesday.

It is, of course, the right time of the year for the end of the world.

Just before Halloween, the pressure differential between the Colorado Plateau and Southern California begins to generate the infamous Santa

–continued on page 8



## STOLEN: Free Public Parking in Venice

By Peggy Lee Kennedy

Parking is such a big deal in Venice. O.K., maybe not if you live in a gated community or live in a house with a multiple car garage and a large driveway, but for the rest of us living in Venice – parking is a BIG DEAL. The homeless in Venice are being targeted constantly with 72-hour parking tickets, other unnecessary ticketing, and progressively more restrictive parking. But until restrictive street signs came to my block I really didn't know how much this affects Venice residents that need public parking.

Last month the public street parking was suddenly removed across from the Venice apartments where I have lived for the past 14 years. I created a complaint petition and my neighbors were eager to sign. In fact, some almost ripped it out of my hands to sign. A not so prompt response from City Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski's Senior Field Deputy, Sandy Kievman, explained that the posting of the signs came at the request of LAPD. " Since there are no homes on that side of the street, and LAPD and the Dept. of Transportation did not see anything

–continued on page 8

Beachhead's  
35th anniversary  
coming next month  
– see page 4

# LETTERS – send letters to:

Email: Beachhead, POB 644,  
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The collective staff of the

## BEACHHEAD COLLECTIVE:

A Clover, Carol Fondiller, Hillary Kaye, Peggy Lee Kennedy, Yolanda Miranda, Calvin Moss, Lydia Poncé, Jim Smith, Alice Stek, Suzy Williams

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.

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bits

– by the Slumgoddess

\*Pen: Antique Term for Word Processor or Computer

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## No Lottery on the Ocean Front

Dear Beachhead: There is a lottery being proposed for Venice Beach. I am not sure who would be affected by this lottery but I, along with many hundreds of other vendors, artists, tarot readers, political activists and freakazoids would like to know because we have the feeling is all of us. I would especially like to know if this recently elected progressive council might be willing to look into this and possibly inform the rest of us about this proposed lottery, not to mention getting more involved to help us stop such a move by the City of Los Angeles. I believe I inquired about this to one of the progressive councilors recently and they had no idea. I hope that has changed by now since this 'proposed lottery' from what rumor has it, could go into effect on October 1st.

A few weeks back there was a petition circulated on Venice Beach asking for support or rejection of this lottery business. There was one person who signed supporting the lottery. NO ONE WANTS THIS LOTTERY. My understanding also is that they are using a lottery in the Bay Area as a model, the only one I know of being on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, actually, where I have been set up for the past 12 years until my partner and I moved here last year.

As a political activist, I never participated in the lottery because free speech simply cannot be regulated. Anyway, the lottery system there in Berkeley has been going on since the late 70's. It was implemented because too many people wanting to set up could not seem to agree cooperatively on space allotments. Eventually, the vendors themselves asked for this lottery regulation and the City of Berkeley obliged. I don't know the intricate details but I do know who the main organizer of this lottery system was and he is still there in Berkeley, a good friend, actually.

The major difference in Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley and the Venice Beach scene is in area. Venice Beach seems to run about a mile or more. Telegraph Avenue's artisans/vendors covers 4 city blocks - only three of those are heavily utilized - and only in the summer. A once-a-year Christmas faire pretty much saturates the entire four blocks and the street is even shut down for booths. There is a side street that runs up towards Peoples Park that is also utilized during this faire - and once a year for the Peoples Park Anniversary celebration.

Another difference is that Telegraph Avenue is on a city street and artists/vendors can unload their booths right at their allotted space - something not highly probable on Venice Beach, UNLESS the city were to allow vehicles in at 9am and out by 10am for unloading and at the end of the day there would also have to be a set time for people to get their vehicles in and load their crafts and leave. This looks highly unlikely considering the large number of public passersby on Venice Beach all day until late in the evening. It might be accomplished with traffic control but doubtful.

Anyway, that's just the short of it, I am quite vigorously opposed to such a lottery, especially since the attempt to implement this lottery is being taken on by the city of Los Angeles without any artist's/vendor's/activist's feedback/participation/design etc. My bet is that between the people who set up and the established inhouse businesses that oppose this lottery there is probably an immense tax base benefitting the city as well. This is great power source for those of us, that is all of us, to also remind the city about before they start making radical changes like this lottery without speaking with all of us about it first - and in a most congenial manner. So far that communication has NOT happened and until it does, I say no thank you, we'll pass!

Lastly, I say that if the city of Los Angeles tries to shove this unwanted lottery down our throats, get out the protest signs. If you would like to get on an alert list that can inform you of what actions to take in response to this unwanted lottery, send me an email at [jvance@riseup.net](mailto:jvance@riseup.net) with the word NO LOTTERY in the subject line. If you would just like to be part of an organizing group to help stop this lottery, send an email as well and just put the word 'organizer' in the subject line. I would also add that if a lottery is so unwanted, then people that feel they need a physical confrontation to retain their space need to rethink that attitude and start being more cooperative and sharing. It may be 'first come, first serve', but no one should own a specific space permanently - be fair - share! That seems to be the main reason they are trying to use to justify this unwanted lottery. Let's not allow that to happen. Let's ALL work together to say NO LOTTERY!!! NO WAY!!!

Peace with justice for all, Abridging my civil liberties is an 'act of terrorism!' There's a terrorist behind every BUSH!

*john vance*, editor <[jvance@riseup.net](mailto:jvance@riseup.net)>  
Peoples Bark News Berkeley  
[pbnerkeley-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:pbnerkeley-subscribe@lists.riseup.net)  
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## FOR THE RECORD

It can now be revealed that the "predator" monkey on the cover of last month's Beachhead is the 4' by 4' canvas mache creation of Deborah Bird, who studied mask-making in Italy and Bali. You can visit the monkey (along with a giant green frog face) at the alley juncture of Milwood and Electric Courts.

## Picket Line

Dear Beachhead: I can not cross the picket line because I think it sends the wrong message. When it comes to healthcare, you should definitely stand behind people. It is not about money, that's really a serious issue. Most of these people have families and themselves to support. Healthcare is an important thing. I think by crossing the picket line you send the wrong message. The message is that people are expendable. I don't think that helps anyone. I don't want to be a part of sending that message because if I was to fight for this, if it was me on the picket line, I would want people behind me.

That is why I couldn't take or even consider the job. It was too close to me. I know there is a possibility that I could be standing out there fighting for that in my life time. I don't want to see people sending my bosses the message that I'm not important.

*Lucky Leyva*  
18 year Venice resident

## Wrong Number

Hi, Last Monday night, in front of Abotts Pizza, me and my girlfriend had the wonderful opportunity to meet one of the key, if not the key person responsible for getting the paper out. I think her name was something like Tiby, she had dark hair and mentioned that she was a bit hard of hearing.

Anyway, she kindly agreed to send me the articles that ran regarding the surf localism issue in Venice. Thank-You for your great little paper!!

*Sydney*

## Classes for Youth

We are long time resident of Venice and also the CFO and CEO of Webb-Landers Unlimited, (parent company of Tech Team Computer Learning Center (TTCLC) and The Young Producers Club (YPC).

TTCLC has been in operation for eight years at the Vera Davis Center on 6th and California. This class is for the community and at risk youth and teaches computer configuration and repair. Computer Based training in office applications is also available at TTCLC using all the popular software being used in office's today.

The Goal: To help the students learn and trade and get find employment, and to teach those with PC's at home to maintain their own computers without costly technicians. We've had great outcomes with this class.

YPC is a new addition to Webb-Landers at two months old. The purpose of this class is to teach music production using digital music software and to lay tracks on top of it. This class targets youth from 13-25 focusing on the 18 to 25, range those most at risk of doing hard time, and challenges their musical abilities.

The Goal: To unleash the musical talent in Venice that is so abundant, and perhaps get someone signed to a label or create their own label. A lot to chew, but we both have big mouths. :)

–Lois Webb and Vicki Landers



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## Neighborhood Council fills vacancies, supports Ralphs workers, opposes Patriotic Act

Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council held its most productive meeting ever on Oct. 22 at the Oakwood Recreation Center.

At its Board meeting last night, the GRVNC appointed Sheila Bernard as president to replace Tisha Bedrosian who resigned last month. Bernard said in her acceptance talk that she planned to have a short tenure since she supported a proposed bylaws change that would eliminate the office of president in favor of a rotating chairperson of the Board.

The Board also voted in Paul Ryan to fill the vacant position of Government Relations Officer, and Jatun Valentine to fill another vacant position as the Oakwood Representative.

New committee appointments included Lydia Poncé and Sabrina Venskus for the Land Use and Planning Committee, and Jim Smith as chair of the Bylaws Committee.

In other action, the Board voted to:

- Support the Venice Ralphs workers who had been locked-out by their employer in retaliation for their union striking Vons Markets. For more information, see <[www.saveourhealthcare.org](http://www.saveourhealthcare.org)> and <[www.friendsoflabor.com](http://www.friendsoflabor.com)>. A collection for the workers was taken up before the Board adjourned.
- Support the resolution introduced in the Los Angeles City Council in support of civil liberties and against the Patriotic Act. Stakeholder John Davis told the Board that since the Patriotic Act went into effect that he had not used the Venice public library because the Act allows the FBI to check on what books are being read by library patrons.

The lights were turned out at 10:30 PM, before the Board could consider the mega-project at Lincoln and California, called Lincoln Center. The Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) had approved key elements of the project, Oct. 6, including a zoning change, in spite of opposition from almost all of the 100-odd community members watching the show. The Board did issue a statement that LUPC decisions had no weight until approved by the Board.

Lincoln Center and other agenda items will be carried over to the next Board meeting, tentatively scheduled for 7 PM, Thursday, Nov. 6 at the Oakwood Recreation Center, 767 California Ave.

This meeting is in addition to a schedule of Executive Committee and Board meetings that has been proposed. The schedule calls for Executive Committee meetings to be held on the third Monday of the month and Board meetings to be held on the fourth Monday of the month, both sets of meetings will be held at the Vera Davis McClendon Center.

General Membership meetings will be held on Dec. 10, March 10 and June 12 or 13. The June meeting will be the election meeting where 11 Board members will be elected. The General Membership meetings will be held at various locations in Venice.

— Jim Smith

### Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council Meeting Schedule

All meetings at 7 PM, unless noted.

- **Board Meeting** – Thursday, Nov. 6, Oakwood Recreation Center, 767 California Ave.
- **Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC)** – Monday Nov. 3, Boys' and Girls' Club, 2232 Lincoln Bl.
- **Budget Committee** – Thursday, Nov. 13, Vera Davis McClendon Center, 610 California Ave.
- **Executive Committee** – Monday, Nov. 17, Vera Davis McClendon Center, 610 California Ave.

## Thinkin' about Lincoln

—An interview

with Jack Prichett and Barbara Milliken

By Sheila Bernard

Through our town of sharp contrasts, I walked over to see Jack and Barbara, twelve-year Venice residents. Lincoln, as always, was crowded with four lanes-worth of people in a hurry. But two blocks from Lincoln, the noise faded to tranquility as I entered the pedestrian-only "walk streets."

The yard outside the house was a colorful medley of flowers, vegetable garden, and art works. The décor inside was elegant-rustic. Jack and Barbara, both lifetime members of the Sierra Club and avid backpackers, chronicle the beauty of nature, Jack through photography and Barbara through painting.

In addition they are documenting the beauty of their walk street and the neighbors who live there by compiling a book of photos and biographic material. "We feel privileged to live in Venice," Barbara says. "We belong here."

I first met Jack and Barbara at a planning meeting for Envision Venice, a community planning workshop that will take place on November 15th.

The Envision Venice workshop has been endorsed by Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council.

Participating urban planners, architects and sponsors include: Venice Community Coalition, Pugh + Scarpa Architecture, Reich Architecture and Urban Design, local merchants and the Venice Community Housing Corp.

The workshop, led by community planners and architects, will focus on growth and development along Lincoln Boulevard between Venice Boulevard and the Santa Monica boundary (see box below).

The event is sponsored by the Venice Community Coalition, a citizens' group formed earlier this year. Venice residents, neighborhood organizations, business groups, and city officials will participate. The goal: to ensure that growth and development along Lincoln Boulevard reflect, respect and enhance the historic and artistic qualities of Venice.

Jack heads up publicity for Envision Venice, drawing on his experience as a former media relations and communications manager for a large company. Barbara, an attorney specializing in civil litigation related to contracts and employment, chairs community outreach. The volunteer effort is nothing new: Both have contributed many unpaid hours in Venice, Jack as a precinct worker in a number of political campaigns, and Barbara as a legal observer for the National Lawyers Guild seeking to protect First Amendment rights. Both have served for years as volunteers for the Venice Art Walk.

So how did Jack and Barbara find their way to the planning committee for Envision Venice? "Los Angeles is ideal for incorporating some of the best features of European cities--shade trees, cafes, mixed residential and commercial use, and wide sidewalks hosting a vibrant public life," says Jack. "That's quite an ambitious stretch for Lincoln Boulevard as it is today, but the transformation can only occur if we start to work by planning for it. Envision Venice offers the people of Venice a chance to create a dream and take a hand in creating the future of our city." Barbara adds her recollection of Paris and European cities where

one can meet, converse and engage with neighbors, friends and even strangers amid a lively street life.

I ask whether they think designing Lincoln is controversial. Barbara responds, "I think everyone agrees that what we have now on Lincoln is not what anyone really wants. The boulevard needs to be changed and renovated. This event lets us dream about how we want to transform Lincoln; those dreams can lead to real changes in our neighborhood."

What do they think of rail on Lincoln? "I don't know if there's enough room, or what the logistics would be," Jack says. "I do know that rail once traversed the city, and was removed. I'm sure that better public transportation provides the way out of a car-driven culture. We have to make it easier for people to leave their cars at home." Jack describes how the public transit system in San Diego, which he has watched with interest, brings people into downtown from all over the area.

I ask them whether the workshop can arrive at a united vision for Lincoln. "The more points of view we have at this event, the better," Jack answers. "We are directing our outreach to the entire Venice community; we want to get the full spectrum of viewpoints and ideas." The workshop will result in a report to catalyze city officials to begin preparation of a Community Design Overlay, or CDO, for Lincoln Boulevard. A CDO is a tool used by the planning department, which ensures that development will embody the community's values, preserve existing desirable qualities, and result in new qualities that will improve the physical environment.

Barbara sums up the benefits that she hopes will flow from Envision Venice: "We, as citizens, can become proactive toward development, rather than reactive. Do we want to see continuing unstructured and unplanned development? Do we want future development to just happen? I don't think we do. Instead, we want to be involved in the planning process. We want a community where everyone, all ethnic groups and all income levels, can share a lively and interesting public life."

## Envision Venice Workshop

Saturday, November 15, 2003

9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

United Methodist Church,  
1020 Victoria (corner of Lincoln Blvd.)  
Venice

Light lunch provided.

Space is limited. Register by phoning  
310.285.8001 or emailing  
[envisionvenice@yahoo.com](mailto:envisionvenice@yahoo.com).

More information at  
[www.envisionvenice.org](http://www.envisionvenice.org)



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## December's Child: Beachhead turns 35 next month

Next month will be the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Free Venice Beachhead! You hold in your hands the 269th edition of this community endeavor.

The December issue, in addition to covering the current happenings in Venice, will take a look back over those 35 years. We'd like you to be part of this retrospective.

Please write down something that you've experienced in Venice, anything from two sentences to 800 words will do. Mail or email it to us by Nov. 20. See the masthead for our addresses.

### In addition, can you answer any of these questions?

- \* Who's the oldest person in Venice?
- \* Who's lived here the longest?
- \* Were you born in Venice (not in a Santa Monica hospital)?
- \* Who's the most significant person in Venice history (excluding Abbot Kinney), and why?
- \* What was it like in Venice in the 1930s? 40s? 50s? 60? (if you were here)

- \* When was the Golden Age of Venice?
- \* What's the best form of government for Venice?
- \* Who is your favorite Venice poet? Venice singer? Venice painter? Venice plumber?
- \* What's your favorite book about Venice (or set in Venice)? Why?
- \* And most importantly, how has the Beachhead influenced your life?

P.S. Please consider taking out an advertisement or becoming a Beachhead Sustainer (\$100/yr - payments accepted), so that we can print more pages.

## Murders in Juarez

– continued from Page 1

The international encounter labored with a packed agenda primarily composed of closed meetings and visits to dramatic and spectacular sites where dead bodies have been unearthed. Also a sobering tour to Colonia Anapra, a hilly and extremely poor neighborhood at the edge of the city, next to the area where many of the bodies have been found. There, the delegates learned first hand of the sub human social and dangerous living conditions of many of Juarez's maquiladora workers. They lack sufficient basic services such as water, drainage, clinics, schools, absolutely little if any public lighting, transportation and police protection. The delegates and the throng of local and international media could not locate any of the federal policemen in Anapra or any of the poor colonias of Juarez

According to Amnesty International's recent report of August 2003 and presented there in Juarez by Amnesty's Secretary General Irene Khan, since 1993 there's been a total of 270 murders as well as 500 hundred disappeared women that are missing in Juarez and Chihuahua City. The report identifies patterns in the sexual murders and also an institutional negation for an effective governmental response on the part of all agencies involved in the defense of the citizenry including the governor of Chihuahua and unbelievably President Vicente Fox is quoted in the report denying the patterns and stating the murders are an isolated phenomena. The report also concludes that the basis of the murders lies in societal gender based discrimination, a lax investigation of the murders and disappearances and a lack of inadequate protection and prevention programs. The official attitude is to blame the victim.

There is also a pattern of brutal intimidation and violent actions of the Mexican police against the victim's families including murdering an attorney. However, it has not stopped the families. Most experts assert and point to the persistent struggle of the women and their quest for justice as the inspiration for the international uproar against the Mexican government.

The stories told by the mothers are many. Consuelo Valenzuela sitting with a picture of her young daughter told me, "my daughter Julieta disappeared as she came out of her high school. The Chihuahua authorities have not looked for her. They don't help at all. We came here to ask for support and for pressure on the authorities. Our daughters were not frivolous as the governor says. They did not lead a double life. My

daughter was studious. Se la robaron (She was kidnapped). Another mother, Mrs. Venegas said- why does this happen only to the poor and the daughters of laborers? There is a lot of wickedness in the powerful. What can one do against the powerful, the drug traffickers"?

Then there is the case of Veronica Rivera Martinez. She was arrested, beaten and tortured and then left for dead buried under rocks, but survived. She described and named her assailants. One of them Jorge Garcia A., State Judicial Police Comandante, and three police assistants known as "madrinas." They were never charged. Norma Andrade, a mother who this week will be on Christina's national television program asserted that there are many instances of police involvement confirmed. She stated candidly, "I believe that police are also used to transport and get rid of the bodies."

As far as the killers and their motives there are several theories. Throughout my stay, I rode with and talked to Martin Alferes a lot. He is a long time free lance camera man for the major networks in the region. He told me that he had received delicate information on an American and a Greek who came to Juarez twice a year and they were both buyers of snuff videos. That is sexual and entertainment murder shot on video for the American and European markets.

Additionally he implicated the police as the abductors. He commented that as a long time correspondent, he and the rest of the Juarez's reporters with radio scanners have listened to all kinds of police calls and complaints but never about a woman's abduction. His conclusion seemed to be logical. Who would notice if they thought a detention was taking place.

Lastly on this subject, a shoeshine man, who has followed the killings closely, poignantly stated that when the Juarez police see a car traveling through dark isolated neighborhoods in the middle of the night their modus operandi is to immediately stop the vehicle. This is the time when the bodies are allegedly transported to the outskirts of the city. However,

none have ever been stopped!

At the final Press conference Laurie Freeman of WOLA declared, "We will continue our focus and return to this city. This is not just a three day visit and then nothing. We want this problem to be included as part of the agenda for the next session of the Bi-national meeting between the two countries."

Cong. Hilda Solis, visibly emotional at times, emphatically stated "we listened to the affected families. We learned about their suffering and pain. The deaths of the women of Ciudad Juarez and other cities in Mexico is one of the problems that we in Mexico and the U.S. share jointly. We will ask that the next binational convention on Nov. 17 include this topic. We will also ask the Organization of American States and the U.N. to participate as mediators on the DNA tests. The families and the women are the true heroes. They have brought us together."

Congressman Silvestre Reyes added, "There is an apparent lack of trust by the parents of the victims in the police agencies". That's putting it mildly. As this reporter confirmed, in Juarez and El Paso - vox populi - clearly points to the police.



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# Most Still Don't Recall

By Gonzalo Santos

The gubernatorial recall election just held in California is in many ways a textbook example of the "social construction of reality," among other things sociology teaches us.

Entire forests were felled to print stories that attributed the whole thing to a "voter revolt," from the very beginning but especially after the results were in. But, it turns out that only one in five eligible voters in California voted for the recall; and, by the way, only one in six chose "The Governator." The rest of the "eligibles," an overwhelming majority, either voted against the recall or didn't bother to vote (see table & graph below). Millions more - the "ineligibles" - just watched, if at all. Altogether, only one in ten California residents voted to recall the governor.

Some "revolt."

Still, most people today harbor the false impression that a huge popular rebellion decisively dumped Davis and chose Schwarzenegger, whether they supported that or not. What is fascinating is how all the actors involved - the media, the state agencies in charge of elections, the political parties, and the candidates - embraced this myth for quite different reasons.

Apart from those who actually won (republicans, the no-tax populists, the usual business cronies, etc.), many anti-recall folks hoped to reduce the potential for political chaos by immediately containing and giving finality to an event that clearly threatened the traditional rules of the game; others turned quickly to celebrate a supposedly revitalized democracy (and with a Hollywood celebrity, no less!) to bring back some luster and legitimacy into California - even national - politics.

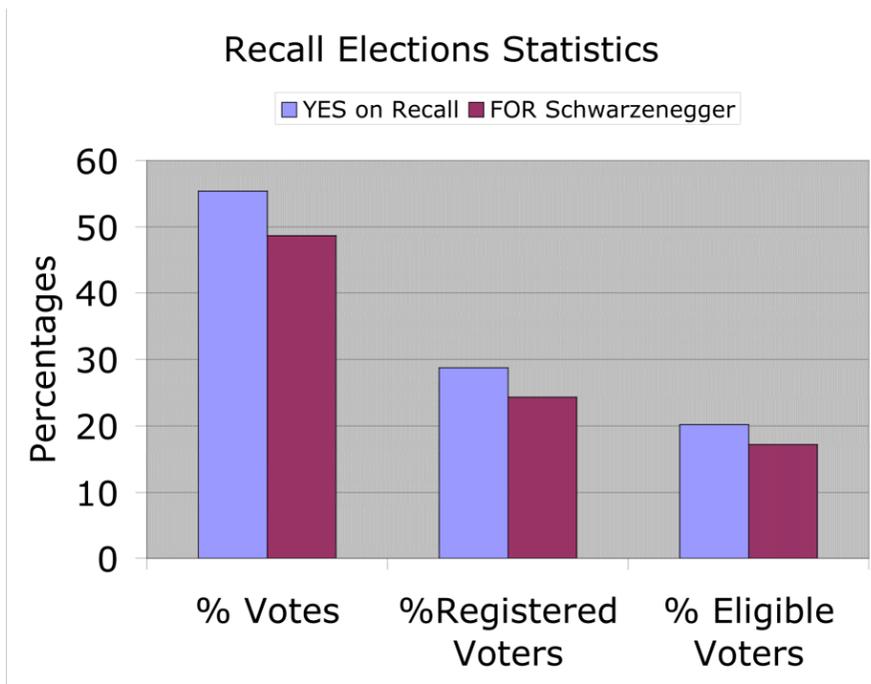
Many others who are aware of the difficulties ahead sought to placate or channel palpable popular discontent via flattery of the electorate and now make solemn vows that they will heed the new mighty popular "mandate;" they hope in this way to enhance governability and gain political cover from those millions of working class families that will suffer the most from the draconian social cut-backs soon to be passed with little dissent in the name of newly-found fiscal discipline; others are desperate enough and will-

ing enough to buy anything at this dismal point in state politics that promises to "fix Sacramento" and yield positive economic results. Etc., etc., etc..

All understandable, even worthy reasons, to be sure; worthy enough to make the mass rebellion fantasy be proclaimed as "real" by our political/media elites and the rest of us to uncritically accept it as such. It is our collective whistling in the dark.

The real rebellion against, and indictment of, today's California/U.S. political system, though, lie silently - even subconsciously - in the persistent, steadily rising abstentionist (boycott) rates that reduce these sort of events - even the Bush-Gore debacle in 2000 - to essentially fixed (as in pre-arranged and staged) tempests in a broken teapot. A made-for-TV movie. The California recall smacks now, after so many supposedly populist propositions (equally pre-manufactured) Californians have gone through in the last 3 decades since Prop. 13, as "The Perfect Storm, Part IX: The Terminator Meets ToastMan."

Though these fictive pseudo mass events are very real in their consequences, and are meant to be entertaining and soothing to many, there is an eerie lack of Establishment connect with (and concern for) the absence of well over half of the



ISSUE	% Cast Votes	% Registered Voters	% Eligible Voters
YES on Recall	55.4	28.7	20.2
FOR Schwarzenegger	48.7	24.3	17.2

domestic population - by far the most hurt and upset - in the political process; save, you guessed it, a few movies that still entertain us more than mobilize us, like Warren Beatty's 1998 "Bullworth." This is consistent with the blasé ways the U.S. elites seems to be discounting world opinion these days. They do so, on both counts, largely indulging in self-serving fantasies that many more of us end up embracing at our peril. Some social constructions, after all, do collapse.

Stay tuned for the 2004 presidential (or gubernatorial) election results, brought to you by -- we interrupt this program to inform you that in Iraq (or East L.A.) just minutes ago ...

*Gonzalo Santos is a professor of Sociology at Cal State, Bakersfield, and a frequent visitor to Venice.*

## Long love the Coop

*(The Venice-Ocean Park Food Cooperative closed its doors in October after 25 years of operation.)*

By Eric Ahlberg

I loved those VOP coop parties with some local gang of peace musicians creating a groove. I met my ex-wife over a Coop Tofutti Machine and we soon created our own coop.

The most important action we can take is to listen. It's already so hard to reconcile the conflicting voices, sometimes you've worked so hard on something and then somebody comes along and tells you you are all wrong, righteous agendas with shaded facts, whose loaded agenda is next? Is anybody really right around here?

### I ain't in it for the money.

I never believed I'd get better prices out of a Coop. Belonging to the Coop meant belonging to larger group of like minded activists and artists working for a more cooperative world.

### Cooperation and Business.

Cooperation promises to free us from undesirable commercial manipulations, of our most precious sustenance; to free us from like toxic pesticides, GMOs, and junk food marketing. Tell it to the landlord, the DWP, the suppliers, and the investors. So many gave and so many took. Ross Moster arguably gave the most, his gentleness and resources sustaining the Coop for years.

### Storefronts are expensive.

Monthly sales were \$21,000 (\$700 a day), minus rent and electric (\$5,000), minus cost of goods, minus insurance, taxes, repairs, spoilage, debt and payroll (\$2500).

Small businesses with more than 50 vendors are tough to manage. That's approximately 50 percent overhead before you get any product.

Economically the coop never rose above a money pit. Many gave so generously to keep it going, the board and members were burnt out, and it was left to the workers to make it go. They hoped that the debt and high overhead could be overcome if the economic engine could be pumped up. Too often I would go in and ask for stuff I bought last week, and it would never get restocked.

Debt gridlock? Over expectations for underpaid managers?

Some felt that VOP was more real than Coopportunity, like Coopportunity had lost it's soul in the profitable slickness it had become. VOP stayed funky Venice for sure, too funky I guess. Coop people from all over the world would stop in because Coops are generally good places to get plugged into the local alterna-

tive community.

It's curious to me that Vons, Ralphs, and Albertsons are all the same corporation now. Computerized retailing enhancing the tendency of Capital toward Monopoly, via rationalization of the back office.

Some who were involved want to set up a buying club. Nutrition Warehouse bought up most of the physical assets and is planning to setup a natural food store just a couple of block North of Brooks on Lincoln.

The Coop is dead, Cooperation lives on.

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# Rally for Ralphs Workers

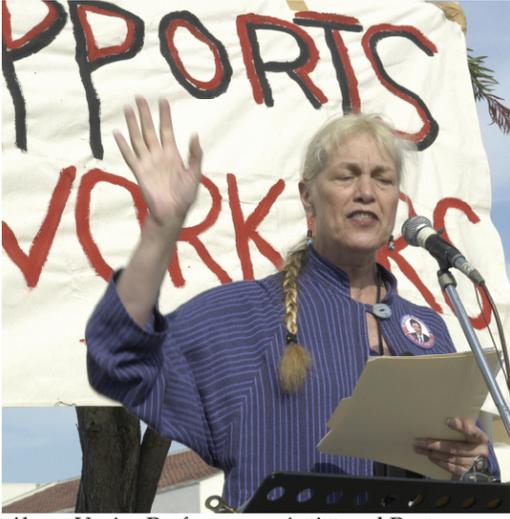


Photo by Gary Leonard

Above: Venice Performance Artist and Poet Linda Albertano.

Below: Democratic Presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich hugs Venice Peace and Freedom Party leader, Yolanda Miranda



Photo by Gary Leonard

**For more information:**  
[www.saveourhealthcare.org](http://www.saveourhealthcare.org)  
[www.friendsoflabor.com](http://www.friendsoflabor.com)

Several hundred Venetians and others gathered, Oct. 18, to show their support of the Ralphs workers who have been locked out by their employer, Kroger. The crowd heard an array of speakers, including Dennis Kucinich, Ed Asner, Mimi Kennedy and union leaders and strikers.

Several speakers pointed out that there were many stores providing local alternatives to crossing the picket line including: Smart & Final, 99 Cents Store, Gelsons, numerous health food stores, the Friday farmers market next to the Venice Library and the Sunday farmers market on Main St. in Ocean Park.

All the speakers and performers were terrific. Union leader Richard Cowan said that the union had wanted to give people alternatives by only striking Vons, but that Ralphs and Albertsons had immediately locked-out their employees. Local 1442 President Mike Straeter warned that it could be a long strike. "The corporations want a war," he said.

The Ralphs is the only centrally located supermarket that is convenient to most of Venice. Safeway pulled out of three stores in Venice at various times, including at the Windward Circle, Washington Square and at Rose and Lincoln.

**DON'T BUY FROM SCABS**

## Workers won't lose their homes

On Oct. 30, the AFL-CIO established a new fund, called "Hold the Line for America's Health Care," that will be used to aid workers facing emergency financial situations, such as evictions or defaulting on mortgages.

The new emergency fund for grocery workers is in addition to the modest strike benefits they now receive from their union, the United Food and Commercial Workers. Those benefits range from \$200 to \$300 a week. The national union is contributing \$100 per worker per week, with local unions picking up the rest.

## CORPORATE GREED VS. HUMAN NEED

### UFCW Statement on Southern California Supermarket Bargaining

In early October, Southern California supermarket workers voted on a contract offer from three of the largest supermarket operators in the country.

They have been confronted with a stark choice: give up health care benefits for not only themselves and their families, but also, for future generations of supermarket workers.

In unprecedented numbers, Southern California supermarket workers turned out to vote and sent a clear message: we will fight for affordable health care.

They delivered a mandate to their union that they will strike, if needed, to save health care for their families and strike to save health care coverage for the next generation of workers.

These workers are heroes. They are willing to make the sacrifice to take up the fight to save health care.

This is a fight for all Southern California workers. It is a fight for all supermarket workers—union and non-union—here and across the country because if these three supersize, super-profitable, supermarket chains can cut benefits here, then every worker is at risk.

The UFCW announced on October 11, workers would strike one of the supermarket chains. We would have limited our job action to a single chain, to limit the inconvenience to our customers.

We asked the employers to also respect our customers and not to take retaliatory action against workers through a lock out. There should have been no lock out.

After all, the customers are the ones that we depend on for our jobs and the companies for their profits.

We made every effort to avoid a strike but, workers will not give up on health care. We are not asking for more, we are asking to keep the benefits that we have.

Employers' profits have risen 10 times faster than their hourly contribution to worker health care. Their profits overall have gone up 91 percent since 1998.

We have contained health care cost. The increased costs for health care for these employers have been significantly below the national average.

This is a battle between corporate greed and human need and, we are asking our communities to stand with us. We are your friends and your neighbors. We serve you everyday in your local supermarket. We ask for your support.

If the supermarket giants win, Southern California loses. These companies would drain over 328 million dollars a year from Southern California because when they cut health care for workers, they rip off California.

The 1.4 million member United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) is America's neighborhood union representing workers in neighborhood grocery stores across the country. UFCW puts dinner on the table for America's families with members working in meatpacking and food processing. UFCW gives a voice to care with representation for nurses, medical technicians and nursing home workers.



After a stirring speech by Dennis Kucinich, the crowd marched past the Ralphs and down Lincoln before returning the rally site.

Channel 7, the AP and several newspapers and film crews covered the event. The AP story ran in 60 newspapers nationwide.

The speakers included (in order of presentation):

Jim Smith (MC); Bill and Clabe and Marjorie (musicians); DeDe McCreary (Ralphs worker and picket captain); Mike Straeter - President, United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1442; Richard Cowan (Secretary-Treasurer of UFCW 1442); Ed Asner (Movie and TV star); Linda Albertano (Venice poet and performance artist); Francisco Letelier (Venice visual artist and poet); Yolanda Miranda (Co-chair, Venice Peace and Freedom); Mimi Kennedy (Plays Abby on Dharma & Greg TV show); Dennis Kucinich (Candidate for the Democratic Nomination for President); Jatun Valentine (Oakwood Seniors' Representative); The Smiling Minks - Vessy Mink and Suzy Williams; Francisca Cortez (Farmworker, Taco Bell Boycott Campaign)

## The Scab

by Jack London, (1876-1916)

*After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, and the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which he made a scab.*

*A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a water brain, a combination backbone of jelly and glue.*

*Where others have hearts, he carries a tumor of rotten principles.*

*When a scab comes down the street, men turn their backs and angels weep in heaven, and the devil shuts the gates of hell to keep him out.*

*No man (or woman) has a right to scab so long as there is a pool of water to drown his carcass in, or a rope long enough to hang his body with.*

*Judas was a gentleman compared with a scab. For betraying his master, he had character enough to hang himself. A scab has not.*

*Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.*

*Judas sold his Savior for thirty pieces of silver.*

*Benedict Arnold sold his country for a promise of a commission in the British army.*

*The scab sells his birthright, country, his wife, his children and his fellowmen for an unfulfilled promise from his employer.*

*Esau was a traitor to himself; Judas was a traitor to his God; Benedict Arnold was a traitor to his country.*

*A scab is a traitor to his God, his country, his family and his class.*



Photo by Gary Leonard



## Question: What's behind the grocery strike? Answer: Corporate Greed.

By Jim Smith

The rest of this article is simply elaboration on that simple point. Things started going downhill for working people in the 1970s. It was in the 70s that the standard of living, the value of a paycheck, was at its all time high. By the late 70s, a wave of plant closings shook the L.A. area, inflation undermined the value of a dollar (and drove Jimmy Carter from the White House), the homeless started reappearing for the first time since the Great Depression, corporations started looking overseas to make a buck and Wall Street started calling the shots down to the factory level. At that point, the current supermarket and MTA strikes became inevitable.

You can bundle all of the economic changes together, tie a ribbon around them, and call it neoliberalism. That's a big word for most Americans, who are economic whizzes if they can balance a checkbook, but in most of the world it's a household term, and a hated one.

Neoliberalism means a return to the economic liberalism of Adam Smith (an old English guy who wrote "The Wealth of Nations," 200 years ago). He's mostly known for writing that the market place should be unfettered by government restrictions, such as restrictions on trade, child labor, unions, minimum wage, pensions, etc.

Economic liberalism and neoliberalism has nothing at all to do with political liberalism. Most political liberals oppose neoliberalism, and want some sort of government intervention to even the playing field between rich and poor.

Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has: shifted manufacturing from the U.S. to low-wage countries around the world by legalizing pillage with trade treaties such as NAFTA, GATT, WTO and the upcoming FTAA; destroyed much of the local industries and agriculture in those countries, forcing millions to migrate to the U.S.; created bigger and bigger merged corporations at a fantastic rate (because of this merger-mania, California is no longer headquarters to most of its biggest businesses including BofA, Chevron, ARCO, etc); created intense pressure on corporate management to serve the whims of Wall Street by busting unions, driving down wages

and taking away health benefits.

The struggle of grocery workers to resist this juggernaut is highly visible because 70,000 people on strike or locked-out of their jobs by the stores, but it otherwise follows a pattern familiar to labor negotiators. The management strategy is usually to come at the unions with so many take away demands that the workers sometimes feel victorious if they repel half of them.

The attack on the workers at Ralphs (owned by Kroger), Vons (owned by Safeway) and Albertsons include a two-tier wage system which would allow new hires to be paid much less than current employees. In a few years, everyone is making the lower wage since workers being paid on the higher wage tier would be harassed out of their jobs by management. The new workers also would not receive much in the way of health or pension benefits.

The two-tier proposal ploy is actually quite clever for management. Many workers will think, "I'll still get my pay and benefits, so why should I fight for those who haven't even been hired yet?" Demands for cuts in pension benefits likewise cause a division between older and younger workers, who don't ever think about retirement (except maybe winning the Lotto).

Divide and conquer is a long-held practice by employers. The 19th Century Robber Baron, Henry Frick, reported boasted that he could "hire half the working class to kill the other half."

While the MTA mechanics work for a "public" agency, they might as well be employed by a corporation. The MTA began behaving like a corporation years ago, when it built its "Taj Mahal" palace near Union Station, compensated its executives at corporate pay rates and treated its workers - and bus riders - as annoyances, at best. The mechanics faced the same situation as the grocery workers when it came to saving their health care - strike or surrender.

Health care has also been a source of friction in labor negotiations since the 70s when the insurance companies began to understand that tremendous profits could be made off people's illnesses. Blue Cross went from non-profit to for-profit. Kaiser began cutting costs, and services, in order to compete with new, bare-bones (pardon the terminology) HMOs. Monthly premiums

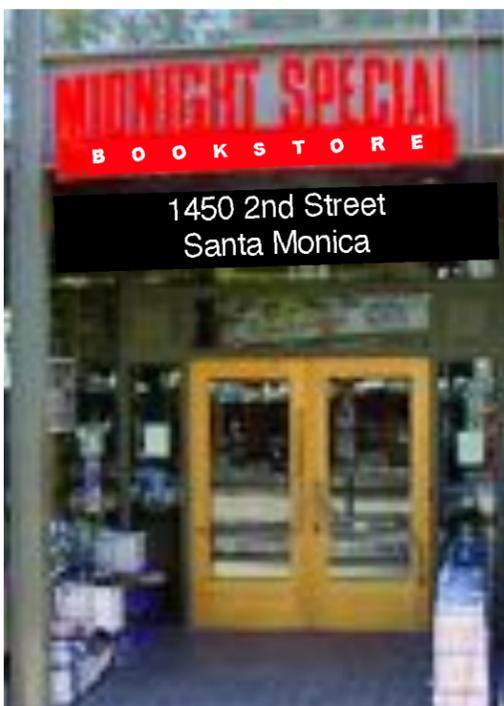
began to skyrocket as did deductibles and co-payments.

Today in California, 7 million people have no medical insurance at all. Millions more have lousy health plans that cause people to choose between paying the rent or seeing a doctor. This is a choice that the members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, and MTA workers, don't want to be forced into. They would prefer to walk the picket line rather than put their family's health in jeopardy.

Whether or not grocery workers have good health care that allows them to visit a doctor when they feel ill, should be a concern for all of us. Do we really want people who are handling our food to be unable to seek medical care when they come down with something? If anyone should be able to visit a doctor for free, it should be grocery, restaurant and fast-food workers. Sadly, most of them are not able to do so.

There is a simple solution to the health care scandal. Just take the insurance companies out of the loop, and everyone can have quality health care. Such a solution is called a single-payer plan. There is a bill in the State Senate, SB 921 - The Healthcare for All Californians Act, sponsored by Sheila Kuehl of Santa Monica, which would cover all of us - every Californian - with high quality health care. The state government, not the insurance corporations, would handle the paperwork. Amazingly, says Kuehl, this miracle could be accomplished without any new spending for health care. Simply by consolidating money that is already being spent on health care, the system could be adequately funded.

Such a system has been in place in Canada for years. When Canadian unions and management bargain, health care is not even an issue. No one in Canada is walking the street, or walking a picket line, without health care. Civilized countries around the world provide universal health care coverage. Even third-world Cuba has a top-notch health care system for everyone. They've done this with a fraction of the wealth of the U.S. because they've made health care a priority (No wonder Bush doesn't want Americans visiting the island). Shame on the U.S. And shame on us in California if we don't demand that SB 921 becomes law. Corporate greed has got to go!



Striking mechanics keep vigil at the Venice MTA yard, Sunset and Main streets.



## MTA yard closing after 98 years

The bus yard that once housed the old Red Cars when Venice was connected with Los Angeles by trolley, has been traded by the MTA for a lot at Jefferson and Rodeo avenues. That lot is owned by Venice Art Lofts, which is building

condominiums across the street. The strikers say the MTA is planning to spend \$8 million on the new lot, although it will not pay for their health care.

There is no word yet what use will be made of the Venice lot. Neighbors have suggested either parking or affordable housing, or both.

## STOLEN Parking

– continued from Page One

there except motor homes and cars for sale, they felt that it was appropriate to post the signs." My neighbors and I all park there and certainly will dispute the validity of that statement. Those mischievous Venice LAPD, where will they stop?

I decided to take an inventory of the street signs being put up in Venice that appear to be directed at homeless people and, although not complete, I wanted to share with Venice how our public parking is being stolen from us sign-by-sign and block-by-block. This does not just affect the homeless. This is about public parking for all of us here in Venice. (Maybe we'll be offered some nice pay parking instead in City lots or railroad property.)

There are some Venice newcomers that think people are homeless because they just want to be or think that poorer Venice residents should move to make way for the "beautiful people," but if you believe in civil liberties you should question the motives of these street signs.

Laws, ordinances and regulations shouldn't be used to target people based on economic status. Street laws are supposed to be about public street safety, not about getting rid of the homeless. Shame, shame. Also, LA City housing laws shouldn't be used to remove older tenants. Poverty is what needs to be outlawed, not poor people.

Anyway, below is the list I've come up with so far. I especially like the anti-homeless street signs that are put up right in front of a church. Another favorite of mine are the ones meant to keep tall vehicles from blocking stop signs, but they are put up in the middle of a block with no stop signs.

If you have any new signs to add to this list, please email them to [HumanRights@freevenice.org](mailto:HumanRights@freevenice.org) or mail them to P.O. Box 2881, Venice CA 90294.

### Washington Blvd. – from Palawan to Mildred Ave

(Tow Away – No Parking from 10PM to 6AM Nightly)

### Harbor Street - from Wilson to Clark Ave

(No Parking from 8PM to 6AM Nightly)

### Mildred Ave. – from Washington to Boone Ave.

(Tow Away – No Parking from 10PM to 6AM Nightly)

### Hampton Dr. – from Brooks to Rose Ave

(No Parking 2AM to 4AM)

### 3rd St – from Rose Ave to Sunset

(No Parking 2AM to 4AM)

### Sunset Ave - from 4th to 5th Street

(4 hour parking only)

### Vernon Ave – from 4th to 5th Street

(4 hour parking only)

### 4th Street – from Vernon to Sunset

(2 hour parking only)

**Venice Bl. North – from Meade Pl to Victoria Ave.** The street block directly in front of the First Lutheran Church (No Parking 2AM – 4AM Nightly) - see photo.



**Venice Bl. North – from Electric Ave. to Abbot Kinney** (No Parking from 10PM to 5AM nightly)

**Electric Ave – from Venice Bl. to Superba**, east side of street, no stop signs (No Parking Vehicles Over 6 ft. High <—>)

**Electric Ave. – from Palms Bl to Milwood Ave.**

east side of street, sign right in the middle of block, no stop signs (No Parking Vehicles Over 6 ft. High <—>)

**Electric Ave. – from Milwood to California** west side of street, sign right in the middle of block, no stop signs, next to parking lot (No Parking Vehicles Over 6 ft. High <—>)



As a result, huge plantations of old, highly flammable brush accumulate along the peripheries and in the interstices of new, sprawled-out suburbs. Since the devastating 1993 fires, tens of thousands of new homes have pushed their way into the furthest recesses of Southern California's coastal and inland fire-belts. Each new homeowner, moreover, expects heroic levels of protection from underfunded county and state fire agencies.

Fire, as a result, is politically ironic. Right now, as I watch San Diego's wealthiest new suburb, Scripps Ranch, in flames, I recall the Schwarzenegger fund-raising parties hosted there a few weeks ago. This was an epicenter of the recent recall and gilded voices roared to the skies against the oppression of an out-of-control public sector. Now Arnold's wealthy supporters are screaming for fire engines, and "big government" is the only thing standing between their \$3 million homes and the ash pile.

Halloween fires, of course, burn shacks as well as mansions, but Republicans tend to disproportionately concentrate themselves in the wrong altitudes and ecologies. Indeed it is striking to what extent the current fire map (Rancho Cucamonga, north Fontana, La Verne, Simi Valley, Vista, Ramona, Eucalyptus Hills, Scripps Ranch, and so on) recapitulates geographic patterns of heaviest voter support for the recall.

The fires also cruelly illuminate the new governor's essential dilemma: how to service simultaneous middle-class demands for reduced spending and more public services. The white-flight gated suburbs insist on impossible standards of fire protection, but refuse to pay either higher insurance premiums (fire insurance in California is "cross-subsidized" by all homeowners) or higher property taxes. Even a Hollywood superhero will have difficulty squaring that circle.

Mike Davis is the author of *City of Quartz*, *Ecology of Fear*, and most recently, *Dead Cities: and Other Tales*. Printed courtesy of Mike Davis and <[www.tomdispatch.com](http://www.tomdispatch.com)>.

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## The Perfect Fire

– continued from Page One

Ana winds. A spark in their path becomes a blowtorch.

Exactly a decade ago, between Oct. 26 and Nov. 7, firestorms fanned by Santa Anas destroyed more than a thousand homes in Pasadena, Malibu, and Laguna Beach. In the last century, nearly half the great Southern California fires have occurred in October.

This time climate, ecology, and stupid urbanization have conspired to create the ingredients for one of the most perfect firestorms in history. Experts have seen it coming for months.

First of all, there is an extraordinary supply of perfectly cured, tinder-dry fuel. The weather year, 2001-02, was the driest in the history of Southern California. Here in San Diego we had only 3 inches of rain. (The average is about 11 inches). Then last winter it rained just hard enough to sprout dense thickets of new underbrush (a.k.a. fire starter), all of which have now been desiccated for months.

Meanwhile in the local mountains, an epic drought, which may be an expression of global warming, opened the way to a bark beetle infestation which has already killed or is killing 90% of Southern California's pine forests. Last month, scientists grimly told members of

Congress at a special hearing at Lake Arrowhead that "it is too late to save the San Bernardino National Forest." Arrowhead and other famous mountain resorts, they predicted, would soon "look like any treeless suburb of Los Angeles."

These dead forests represent an almost apocalyptic hazard to more than 100,000 mountain and foothill residents, many of whom depend on a single, narrow road for their fire escape. Earlier this year, San Bernardino county officials, despairing of the ability to evacuate all their mountain hamlets by highway, proposed a bizarre last-ditch plan to huddle residents on boats in the middle of Arrowhead and Big Bear lakes.

Now the San Bernardinians are an inferno, along with tens of thousand acres of chaparral-covered hillsides in neighboring counties. As always during Halloween fire seasons, there is hysteria about arson. Invisible hands may have purposely ignited several of the current firestorms. Indeed, in Santa Ana weather like this, one maniac on a motorcycle with a cigarette lighter can burn down half the world.

This is a specter against which grand inquisitors and wars against terrorism are powerless to protect us. Moreover, many fire scientists dismiss "ignition" -- whether natural, accidental, or deliberate -- as a relatively trivial factor in their equations. They study wildfire as an inevitable result of the accumulation of fuel mass. Given fuel, "fire happens."

The best preventive measure, of course, is to return to the native-Californian practice of regular, small-scale burning of old brush and chaparral. This is now textbook policy, but the suburbanization of the fire terrain makes it almost impossible to implement it on any adequate scale. Homeowners despise the temporary pollution of "controlled burns" and local officials fear the legal consequences of escaped fires.

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By Linda J. Albertano

The Statue of Liberty is weeping. Long has she lifted her welcoming torch for the tired, the poor, and all who yearn for one honeyed breath of freedom. Now she's seen the golden door slam hard on your weary fingers. What will she say? Look up! Look up!

Don't let them crush you, my lovely ones, whose ancestors spoke in tongues of all the world! In language as brilliant as chips of ice melting in the air! Don't let them crush your children, my Rainbow Warriors! You're welcome here! And your noble sons and daughters.

You've come with dreams shining as the seas that brought you. Dreams of living in friendship together. Friendship eternal as the sun is bright. Friendship as long as rivers shall run. From the green and sacred forests of the Seneca Tribes to the luminous, wind-ruffled waters of Chief Seattle's land, we native-born and foreign-born have bent our backs as though into the long oars of a magnificent ship. Ours are the labors that have created one nation for all! Not one nation for some. But one nation for all.

And those who labor longest and hardest among us bring comforts, large and small into our lives. Without which, the entire spinning globe would be thrown into chaos. Your hard work brings the greatest good to the greatest number of beings!

Imagine...

A world without grocery workers... bitter and barren.  
A world without bus drivers... bitter and barren.  
A world without truckers... bitter and barren.  
Food servers, sanitation workers, janitors...

We need you! Desperately. You've added more value to our lives than all the golf-playing heads of corporations ever could!

We cherish you! And your families!! We pray for your good health and for the righteous and equitable fruits you deserve to harvest when you're retired from service. We're here to stand with you! To see that you receive more than a pocket watch and a Christmas ham at the end of your labors.

If we let them rob you today, they'll rob us tomorrow.

Look up!  
The Statue of Liberty is standing even taller. Her lamp burns more brightly for you!

Look up!  
We're standing shoulder-to-shoulder. And look how brightly the lamp of justice is shining upon you!

Look up!  
We're standing shoulder-to-shoulder. The Statue of Liberty is smiling!

Look up! Look up!  
We're standing shoulder-to-shoulder!

## My Hands

By Francisco Letelier

You will not remember my name,  
you will not think of me.  
I will pass among you without a face  
but my hands  
Mis manos,  
they have touched you.

The day I came into the world  
other things took up the news,  
tongues were busy, eyes were filled  
but not with what I was.

My hands touched you  
worked my bones for years  
invisible to the unaided eye.  
You will not remember my face,  
But I remember you.

My name is Juan, is John, is Mary  
mi nombre es Maria, Carlos, Bill,  
Guillermo  
I walk,  
I ride the bus  
I pick up cans.  
My name is Mark,  
my name is carved into the hard places  
so many would rather avoid.  
I travel far and work long hours.  
You will not read about my children or  
my dreams.

Still,  
I am the future here  
I am the road home.

But you will not remember my name.  
My hands will touch you  
all the things which shine for you  
were made by hands like mine,

My face is blurred  
faceless in the crowd of those  
they tell us are not the real ones.  
We do not matter.  
We are invisible.  
Others hold the keys to what will be.

My hands will touch you  
and you will feel me  
if I am gone  
In my silence loud noises will rise  
and the days will claim my name.

Mi nombre es futuro  
my name is futuro.  
Y no se puede escapar  
cannot escape the  
labor of my arms.  
What we have built  
Tambien se caera  
can fall  
easily.  
I remember you, my hands touch you  
work my bones for years.  
All the things which shine for you  
were made by hands like mine.

when i believe in what i doubt  
a whole new meaning comes about  
the sky is bluer than when it's not  
when i realize just what ive got

so when i m tired and full of grays  
when right is lost and left is craze  
the cars are ugly and spitting out  
the quiet death of a fragment heart  
resolving what is clear and sound  
we are all part of underground

to each illusion summers spot  
of gross intentions habits not  
the frosty snow on hills clearmound  
forgotton not the soul of sound

-Vessy Mink

## Elegy for Tony Scibella

i got yr message tony  
when i tried to e-mail  
philomene coupla days  
ago & the power went  
out.  
damn! i shoulda known  
right away, man.  
u were on my mind.  
i wuz tellin' philomene  
about some lines i  
wrote.  
had to do with the  
passing of poets & how  
they don't die but just  
step out of their  
paint-spattered jeans  
leaving their spirits to  
prowl the promenade  
market st to dudley ave  
for us to see strollin'  
there if we looked close.  
damn t. i wuz going to  
see u when i came to  
venice in february.  
but the Lady wuz waitin'  
i know & She always  
meant more to u than  
anything.  
u learned to love Her  
like stuart did.  
i envy u that.  
of yr passing s.a.  
griffin said u "embraced  
the Lady."  
beat zen understatement.  
u leaped into Her arms.  
rest u well there t.  
upon Her ample breasts.  
rest.

- Bill Fleeman

(Venice Beat Poet Tony Scibella died  
of a heart attack on Oct. 28.)

# POETRY

## Iraqi Mourning

By Hillary Kaye

America armed and ready for  
war

exploding with the possibility of  
ruin

reigning on.

Too strong, it is possible you  
know to be too strong.

Hands and arms and legs a  
body of force and forces of bru-  
tality

waging its way.

Is it onward and is it upward and  
is it straight

Seeming more every minute to  
be narrow.

Filling the world, eating the same  
death on the same white bread

and if it is so nutritious why are  
the people starving for some-  
thing they can not find

or haven't even heard of.

If the voice could reach the peo-  
ple

if somehow out of the bloody sky  
like rain pouring down,

if out of this hard dark cold win-  
ter night

someone appeared and wanted  
to say something to you,

would you hear it, would you be  
able to recognize the voice.

There was a man, was it Christ  
or Martin Luther King, was his  
name Malcom X or Che Guevara

and in the back, in the last row  
someone walked in and knew so  
well the fate of what is good.

But still this one lone voice  
speaks out and is remembered  
as a relic.

A fight to the death has already  
happened and will again.

## THE FRUIT GALLERY

Healthy Food, Art &amp; Vibes

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(Right Off the Venice Boardwalk)  
Venice, California 90291

Open 8am-7pm / 7 Days  
Call 310/452-3034



# S.A.T.I.

## The Search For Any Terrestrial Intelligence

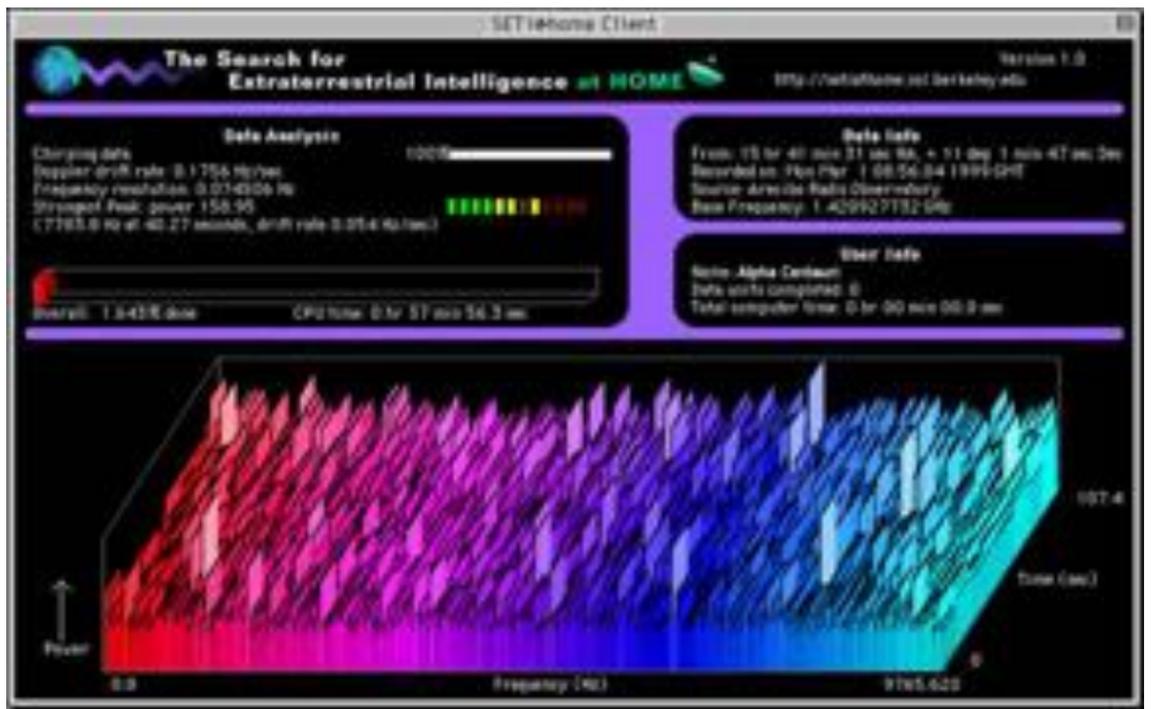
By Cary Shulman

SETI the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, has been scanning the universe for radio signals from civilizations in outer space. Below is the screensaver image sent to volunteers who offer up down time on their home computers to help with the massive computations involved in the search.

The universe is a vast place to pore over, but scientists have calculated the heavens should be filled with countless civilizations thousands or even millions of years more advanced than us. And the way technology accelerates they should be able more than able to make themselves heard. The scientists, with the help of their amateur volunteers, have heard not so much as a squeak. A sky filled with advanced civilizations and nothing but silence. This phenomenon has been referred to as "The Great Silence" and is quite a paradox, first noted by the famous physicist Enrico Fermi. Various theories have been advanced as explanations. But to us there is only one that rings true...

No one who thinks like us survives.

Given that our kind doesn't last long enough in the universe for good conversation, it makes sense to us to shift the search from extraterrestrial intelligence to that of almost equally rare terrestrial intelligence. Over the years there have been rumors of such contacts being made, but none has passed careful scrutiny. It's a daunting a task we agree, but we believe still worth the effort given the prognosis for our future evidenced in the heavens. Your help would be appreciated. There isn't much time left so let's fire up those silicon chips and get cracking.



## REFORM THE WIZARDS OF INJUSTICE

In the natural world, the order of life takes on a strange and unusual pattern. Scientific evolution, along with religious and spiritual creation stories, is full of amazing tales. Darwin's island and the human genome project have led to modern understanding and the ability to manipulate nature. Cloning and the manipulation of genes have created new forms of life. Science has also taken us into the realm of weather manipulation with the use of electronics such as the controversial HAARP project in Alaska. This scientific wizardry can fire a high-energy stream, heating and expanding the upper atmosphere, changing weather patterns. The system can also be used for behavior modification in animals and humans.

Global communications has created a worldwide network of cell towers, satellites and surveillance technologies. Global Positioning Systems send cruise missiles – costing millions of dollars a pop – slamming into distant targets guided by satellites. Airborne vehicles whirr and howl over the cities piercing the night with searchlights and sensors.

Modern day dungeons rise up in urban and remote rural areas with new phrases describing them, with names like Supermax and Skeleton Bay where the inmates exist in high-tech lockdown year in and year out. Mental health experts tell us that most of the inmates become mentally ill after living in these cold, alien high-tech gulags.

Police agencies cloak their activities by using encrypted digital communications (No more listening in for you news people, scanner buffs, or Hams). Lethal tech-

nologies have been developed that can harass and incapacitate unarmed protesters (Example: a microwave crowd control device that induces a burning sensation causing its victims to flee.).

A robotized world where computers monitor the entire electromagnetic spectrum and all that breathes is now possible. Technologies exist that can shadow any vehicle that moves in a large city, remotely photographing its license plates. This secretive artificial world intrudes upon the individual in an everyday fashion and human rights become phony contrivances of the Big Brother state.

Two million people have been imprisoned in the United States of which more than one million of these for non-violent drug offenses. The court system has become a cruel sham that convicts without compassion, acting like a feudalistic bunch of non-human police, judges and attorneys who punish with chaotic relish. Bear witness to corrupt, politically-warped trials of Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier. These two political activists were convicted in trials where the police concocted and fabricated evidence in a brutal, sinister fashion.

The recent conviction of Tommy Chong, the side-splittingly brilliant counter-culture funny man shocked us all. His so-called crime was selling a bong over the internet. The judge and his crew of life-lynchers must have had to drugs themselves to sleep after that day of injustice. We can go on with the countless stories of the homeless being beaten and thrown in jail and then lost in the prison population. The young and brilliant creator of RaiseTheFist.com, Sherman Austin, is a recent addition to the roster of the nations penal colonies. He has received the award of one year in prison and a long probation for a link on his website.

This world of artificial injustice dissects and convicts us under the watchful eye of the elite policia. An ever-expanding global lockdown that was envisioned and predicted by our great sci-fi writers like Phil K. Dick and George Orwell is here today. This system should be dismantled and reconstructed with real justice put in its place. Let us protect the beauty of the individual in our community and bring evenhanded justice home to good old planet earth. May the Humans in their High Towers break down the walls of this global militarized prison.

– The Peace Wizard of Venice

# Eviction Defense Network



Providing low cost legal assistance to tenants.

1605 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 510  
213/572-3650

Hours:

M-F 9AM to 7PM (no appointment needed)  
Saturday 10AM to 4PM (by appointment only)

The Eviction Defense Network is a community based organization providing access to justice to low and moderate income tenants.

## WANTED: VOLUNTEER SOUND ENGINEER

The Unurban Cafe seeks a sound engineer who is willing to donate his/her time and equipment to support the excellent live music and comedy featured there several nights a week and afternoons-to-evenings on weekends.

In return, you'll have abject devotion from brilliant talents (also volunteers, BTW) and unlimited lattes and scones.

Call Pamela at 310-315-0056.

The Un-Urban Cafe  
3301 W. Pico Blvd. Santa Monica.

# Organizations

- Abbot Kinney Library - 501 S. Venice Blvd. 821-1769.
- Boys and Girls Club - 2232 Lincoln Blvd. 390-4477.
- Beyond Baroque - 681 Venice Blvd. <www.beyondbaroque.org>
- Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council - <www.grassrootsvenice.org> - 281-1943.
- Inside / Out Community Arts - 2210 Lincoln Blvd 310.397.8820 www.InsideOutCA.org
- LAFCO (L.A. film coop) 2210 Lincoln Blvd. 574-4733
- LPBN (Linux Public Broadcasting Network) 913-3483
- St Joseph's Center - Rose & 4th - 396-6468
- Venice Arts Mecca - 610 California Ave. 578-1745.
- Venice Community Housing Corporation - 399-4100 or <www.vchcorp.org>. 720 Rose Ave. Venice.
- Venice Family Clinic - 604 Rose Ave. 392-8636.
- Venice Health Center - 905 Venice Blvd. 392-8636.
- Venice High Alumni Assoc. - www.venicehighalumni.com
- Venice Historical Society - POB 12844, Venice 90295 or <www.veniceofamerica.org>
- Venice-Ocean Park Food Co-Op. - 839 Brooks Ave.
- Venice Peace & Freedom Party - 399-2215 - <pf@freevenice.org>.
- Venice Skills Center - 611 5th Ave. 392-4153.
- Vera Davis McClendon Center - 610 California Ave. - 305-1865.

## Community Events



### Community 'Yard Sale'

for any and all residents of Venice. Private sellers only. No Commercial, due to type of permit. 9AM - 3PM, Saturday, Nov. 15 at the Oakwood Recreation Center basketball court and lawn area.

This is for persons who would like to have a yard sale, but have no actual yard to do such. Everyone is welcome. No entrance fee will be charged, however donations to the Senior and/or Youth Center will not be declined.

Contact: Barbara - 396-5516 or <Barbeebbarvenice@yahoo.com>.

**Las Doradas Children's Center**  
Is Currently Enrolling Low Income Families  
For Subsidized Child Care  
Ages: 2-5 years  
Center hours: 8:00am - 6:00pm.  
Visit the Center  
809 Broadway, Venice, CA 90291  
Or call  
310-450-0327 Tel.  
310-450-3687 Fax.

### Spanish Classes Fall Semester

•••••

**Beginning Spanish**  
**Wednesdays - 6 - 9 PM**  
**Venice High Adult School**  
**\$16 for the semester**  
**\$3 for seniors**  
**Call 306-8111**

•••••

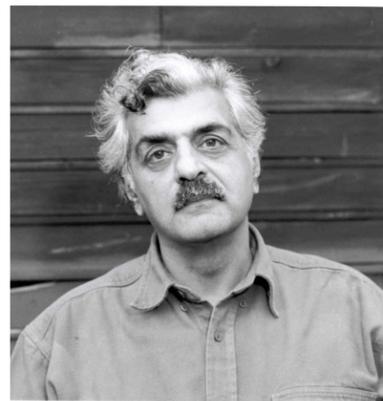
**Intermediate Beginning Spanish**  
**Tuesdays - 6 - 8 PM**  
**Vera Davis McClendon Center**  
**610 California Ave.**  
**Venice**  
**\$35 for 7 weeks**  
**or \$5 per class**  
**Call 831-2325 or**  
**305-1865**

•••••

**Taught by Profesora Letha Worden**

•••••

No sea un gringo unilingüe



## Tariq Ali

**noted historian, novelist and poet is coming to Venice.**

9:30 PM, Friday, Nov. 14 - Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 822-3006. He will give a talk on *Poetry in Turbulent Times*. Tariq Ali, celebrated and controversial author of the bestseller *Clash of Fundamentalisms* and a new book *Bush in Babylon* will discuss the role of poetry in Iraq and the Arab Middle East, and will read selections from his novels. Co-sponsored by The Levantine Cultural Center.

### Diversity Fest presented by Inside-Out Community Arts, December 7,

featuring all day (10AM-6PM) entertainment, community education and activities - and a special evening performance at 7PM of Rhythms...music, poetry and art. Expressions from community. Featuring performances by the Venice All-Stars and Natural Afrodisiac. Venice Center for Peace and Justice with the Arts, 2210 Lincoln Blvd. (at Victoria)

## AMASS

### Magazine - Contents of the Current Issue:

- War, Oil, Patriotism - *Gore Vidal*
- Fanaticism And Truth - *Arianna Huffington*
- Declaring Independence From "Corporateering" - *Jamie Court*
- Iraq, Oil, Petrodollars - *Peter Dale Scott*
- African Americans And The War - *Sonja Ebron*
- Studs - *Tim Robbins*
- The Meaning Of Anger - *Patricia Cunliffe*
- Cruel And Unusual Punishment - *Erwin Chemerinsky*
- Depleted Uranium, New Weaponry & Hot War - *Susanna Hecht*
- Venice Speculations - *John O'Kane*
- War And Democracy In Venice - *Sheila Bernard*
- La Famiglia Zappa - *Gerry Fialka*

Available at: Henry's Market (Speedway and Dudley); Small World Books (Ocean Front Walk & Horizon); LAInternational Newsstand (Lincoln & Navy); One Life (Main and Pier); Angel City Books (2nd and Pier); and Davey Jones Market (Pacific and Navy).

### Finally Some Good News!

#### Santa Monica Airport: Local Residents get Active...

By Theresa Hulme

The bad news first: The Santa Monica Airport and the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) have taken over our skies. As a result, our pursuit for a peaceful life at the beach has become more like overpriced apartments on a military base. Unfortunately, both of these U.S. taxpayer funded entities live inside the pockets of the corporations that control their decision-making and pull their strings.

As the Venice community is painfully aware, the Santa Monica Airport exists under the jurisdiction of the city of Santa Monica. Bringing plenty of corporate dollars to the city and lots of fancy tax breaks for business jet owners, it is a sweetheart deal for the city and its corporate clients.

The airport vomits jet fuel all over Venice and West L.A., leaving residents toxified and infuriated. In addition, noise pollution is a huge grievance. Corporate jets take off and land at the airport sometimes every few minutes, 7 days a week, robbing residents of peace and quiet. The fines imposed on pilots violating noise levels are kept inside the Santa Monica Airports treasury.

The good news: Most often in major media, stories of great importance are published but never followed up on as circumstances evolve. With the Santa Monica Airport abuses being a very personal and upsetting issue to Venetians, the Beachhead receives requests for on-going updates on airport issues.

So, after several determined months of community outreach, WE, the unified peopledom, are working together and forging new paths to prove Margaret Mead's timeless and sweetly famous words of wisdom: "Never doubt that a group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Here's how we've progressed:

Outcries about the airport from Venetians has spurred The Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council (GRVNC) to adopt an official position on the airport. Elected Treasurer of GRVNC Jim Smith says: "Venice does not reap any financial benefits from the airport yet residents are subject to noise and pollution that is hazardous to their health. I am hopeful that the Neighborhood Council will take some action on this issue."

Local Activists started a website <jetairpollution.com> which is chock full of relevant articles, studies, and links that answer questions, encourage involvement, and shed light on truths about the realities of living near an airport. Affected citizens should join Concerned Residents About Airport Pollution. (yes, that's CRAAP!) and receive updates on relevant meetings, a who's who, an invaluable contact list and much more. Sign up for CRAAP on the jetairpollution website and tell your friends and neighbors!

The Santa Monica Airport Commission, comprised of 5 appointed individuals who advise the City Council, and hold sway and vote on topics of importance at the airport, have responded to community concerns. They have voted to "agendize" air pollution and environmental impact issues. In the past, these vital issues have been strangely ignored. In addition, with pressure from the community, the Commission has also voted to make public and easily accessible the tail #'s, models and/or ID's of all aircraft, which will someday answer questions in regards to violations, air quality issues, etc.

The Commission has also decided to investigate the legal guidelines concerning 'commercial' versus 'general' aviation. In other words, 'general aviation' seems to imply that the airport exists as a function of and service to the community. 'Commercial' aviation is business aviation and diametrically opposes the essence of 'service to the community' to say the least. The SM airport is supposed to be a public municipal airport: the average person can walk into the airport,

sign up for flight lessons, buy a plane, park and fly it at will. However, the airport has somehow turned into a virtual recreation center for corporate/commercial interests, contradicting its actual purpose and becoming a nuisance and liability to the very community that pays for its operation. Results of this research will be reported on in coming months.

The GRVNC Conservation Committee, which addresses environmental concerns impacting Venice, has started a sub-committee of community volunteers to deal with airport issues. The panel includes residents of Venice, Santa Monica, and West LA, anyone affected by the airports intrusion is welcome to join. The committee is organizing and outreaching to individuals who are confused about where to channel frustrations proactively. To become involved, sign up on the jetairpollution website. Meetings are usually the last Thursday of every month at the Venice Library.

Enough of that good stuff! There is still a real long way to go. Most of us are not used to hearing good news these days but its only fair that community members read about the successes of their labors.

In the bigger picture, the exploitation of OUR skies are a translation of how our very own government is using us, with our money, as easily disposable pawns in their game of global domination and corporate empire. The U.S. government isn't just limiting its unchallenged military prowess to starving and defenseless Third World nations such as Afghanistan and Iraq. We, here in the U.S., are experiencing a looting of our U.S. Treasury by our un-elected White House to fund illegal/immoral wars, a shredding of our Constitution and a literal massacre of our precious environment.

Some Americans are becoming like disgruntled ex-employees of Bush Incorporated and, ironically, the very victims of its domestic terrorism.

Our 'public' airport is a glimpse into the smoke-screens of corporate seizures of civic ownership under the façade of 'free commerce', 'democracy', and BushCo's favorite word: privatization.

**CHEE-WAH-WAH**  
*You Are Invited to a Celebration*

**BEACHHEAD  
 BIRTHDAY  
 PARTY**

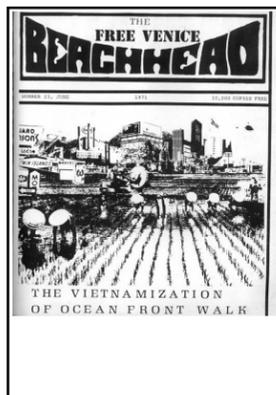


**\$10. Saturday, November 22**  
**8 PM Until ?**  
**United Methodist Church, Lincoln and Victoria in Venice**  
**35TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**OF THE FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD**

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**Vegetarian  
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 by  
 Food Not Bombs  
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**"We support our Free Venice Beachhead"**