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FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

SINCE 1968

September 2020 #459

P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA. 90294 • www.venicebeachhead.org • free@venicebeachhead.org • 424 645-7358



New VCH Building mural by Henry Lipkis at Pacific & Navy.
 Featuring Mike Bravo, Jessica Sugar Long, Lionel Powell, Deborah Daly & Sunny War among others. Just Finished! Photo by Todd Von Hoffman

Interview with Venice local Muralist Henry Lipkis

By Mike Bravo

Mike Bravo interviews muralist and Venice local Henry Lipkis, the muralist commissioned by VCH to paint the beautiful mural at the apartments on Navy & Pacific.



Photo by Todd Von Hoffman

So Henry, tell us about yourself real quick. What's your background, where are you from and all that good stuff?

Yo thanks for the interview! I grew up around Venice and Lincoln in the shadows of the epic R Cronk murals all up and down the boardwalk. Started doing little bits of graffiti up and down Speedway and Pacific as a teenager, mostly drawing weird monsters and making more detailed ink drawings on those USPS stickers and slapping them up all around Venice. Eventually I got into painting murals but didn't really start painting big walls until I left Venice at 18. I got to travel around the world for a few years with my mural practice and then ended up in New Orleans, where I paint walls, make giant puppets, paint Mardi Gras floats, and do a little tattooing.

It's rare for me to see artists FROM Venice doing prominent work here. What are some of your thoughts/opinions on the art scene in Venice these days?

It's really been awesome to come back home to paint a classic community oriented mural on a street corner that I spent a lot of time boppin around on as a youngster. As I don't live here anymore and I don't want to start any fires I'll speak more generally about muralism in neighborhoods that are battling through different stages of gentrification. I think murals are often

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Guerrilla Cleanup of the FBCV



photo by Louis Kravitz & August Arikawa.

By Mike Bravo and Jon Wolff

On Sunday August 23rd, 2020 SaveVenice and our new wave of beautiful supporters asserted our spiritual ownership of the sacred 7 lots of the First Baptist Church of Venice by initiating a guerrilla cleanup of the purposely neglected properties.


It is the Penske's modus operandi to not maintain the FBCV properties in order to keep our sacred community space to be perceived as a public eyesore and to accelerate the dilapidation of the church edifice. This is how Penske, the owner of Rolling Stone and Variety is doing the Black community in Venice while posturing about how his business supports Black Lives and equity in America on the covers of his famous magazines.

Every year around this season we notice the landscape of the property becomes very dry and overgrown. In the past three years of our fight a simple call to LA311 by neighbors sufficed to get the property owners Jay Penske and Elaine Irwin to clean up the grounds. However, 2020 being the highly unusual year that it is, it didn't play out easy this time around. The overgrowth, trash, and garbage accumulation looked to be


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photo by Louis Kravitz & August Arikawa.



FREE
Fresh Food & Veggies
every Wednesday at 12:45pm
at
132 Brooks Ave in Venice



from the
Venice Equity Alliance



photos by Margaret Molloy



Beachhead Collective Staff:
Eric Ahlberg, Alice Stek, Fehmi Yildirim, Logan Mote, Suzy Williams, Lisa Robins, Marty Liboff, Jon Wolff, Mike Bravo

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

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

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**SAVE THE LOS ANGELES PEACE CENTER!
STOP THE SALE!**

Since 1989, the Peace Center, created and funded through the generosity of Aris Anagnos, has provided rent-free offices and meeting spaces to diverse peace and justice groups throughout Los Angeles, enabling them to focus on the work they do best: educating and organizing for justice. The Peace Center’s continued existence is now being threatened. The building is for sale, and all the tenants have been told to leave.

To ensure that the Peace Center would permanently house its social justice tenants rent-free, Aris established the Aris and Carolyn Anagnos Peace Center Foundation. Prior to his death, the Peace Center Foundation Board voted to grant the social justice tenants at the Peace Center rent-free office space in perpetuity. Soon, after Aris died in 2018, his son Demos Anagnos, began to undermine his father’s legacy and take actions that his father would never have approved. Not only is he trying to sell the Peace Center, he has also filed to dissolve the Foundation.

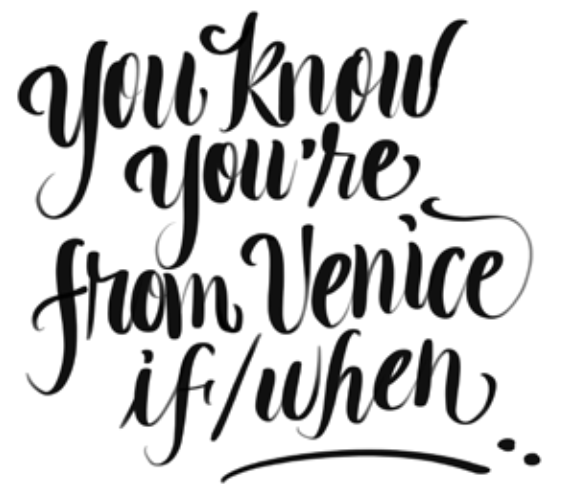
The groups housed in the Peace Center include: the Center for the Study of Political Graphics; the National Lawyers Guild; Peace Action; California Clean Money; Common Peace; Americans for Democratic Action; the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; and the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala. The Peace Center’s impact extends much further. Countless progressive groups use the meeting rooms—for free—to organize, train, educate, fundraise, and celebrate. These include the Democratic Socialists of America, the Pacifica Foundation, Veterans for Peace, Jewish Voice for Peace, Health Care for All, and the American Civil Liberties Union. All that could be gone! Many of these organizations depend on the rent-free space at the Peace Center and, if taken away, may no longer be able to continue their peace and justice efforts. At a time like now, when social justice is at the forefront of the news and politics, these organizations are a critically important and vital part of the debate and cannot be lost.

A lawsuit to stop the sale of the Peace Center and challenge the dissolution of the foundation has been filed by the Center for the Study of Political Graphics. CSPG is represented by Jason H. Tokoro and Emily Sanchirico with the law firm Miller Barondess. While CSPG is but one of the beneficiaries of Aris’ generosity, the success of this lawsuit will protect all the peace and justice organizations housed in and using the Peace Center.

At a time when civic engagement is increasingly important, it would be catastrophic to all their work, and to Aris’ vision, to destroy the Peace Center. In the midst of a pandemic that has the greatest impact on the poor and people of color, the Peace Center is needed more than ever.

We are outraged at the attempt by Demos to subvert Aris’ legacy and lifelong commitment to the cause of peace and justice. Help us win this fight by adding your name to the attached letter which we will release to the press. Thank you for joining us in a show of support for these efforts.

In solidarity,
ad hoc Committee to Save the Peace Center:



You Know You’re from Venice if/when.. Is a mischievous, nostalgia Venice community page on Facebook where Venetians, traditional and newer, share their memories of Venice.

Please submit to the paper or join us online: vog.news/youknow

If you’ve ever driven down Vista Del Mar & seen that long stretch of abandoned streets leading to nowhere and wondered about it. Well in Playa Del Rey it was called Surfridge established in the 1920’s. Hollywood style mansions & Cecil B. Demille & Mel Blanc once owned these palaces. A small airport was made just behind it to fly in guests such as Charles Lindbergh & Amelia Earhart. Little by little that airport grew & so did the neighborhood. By the 60’s it was getting unbearable for the residents & in the 70’s LAX declared it eminent domain & forced residents out. Now it’s abandoned with only a small park as a reminder.



Poster by Mark Vallen, 1987, from the collections of The Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

The following was written by Rebecca Liu, and is from the CSPG Newsletter.

40 million people in America face eviction in the upcoming months. As eviction moratoriums across the U.S. end, people are not only at risk for homelessness but also criminalization. In Los Angeles CSPG continued on page 3

Correction: In the August Issue of the Beachhead, the man in the backpage photos, third row in the middle, is Reverend Demico Fitzgerald.

Muralist - continued from page 1
seen as neighborhood beautification by many people- regardless of the content of the piece. Not to say that every painting needs to be some deep down community oriented project because that ain't it either, but when areas of a neighborhood are labeled by the powers that be as "in need of beautification" that's some coded language that kicks off a process that inevitably leads to displacement. Murals can quickly change the visual landscape of a place, a painting of a pretty young girl here, a primary rainbow splash with a bird there, and boom you've got an "up and coming " marketable neighborhood that looks identical to 10,000 others around the world. In Venice, we've got a real unique place that has been home to so many different communities throughout it's whole history, I hope that artists can sit with that and keep it in mind while making work, especially in the public sphere.

Are there certain themes or messages in your art you're inclined to?

When it comes to my mural themes, it all depends on where the piece is going up. I want the painting to be connected to its surroundings y'know, relevant to the people who are going to live with it and see it every day. So that can run the whole range content-wise but usually it's focused on people just doing their thing. I always like to bring an element of magic into it though, some sort of abstraction that alludes to something bigger. That magic will usually appear as some mysterious element that isn't clearly defined- but can be interpreted as transcendent beyond what is strictly physical and from that point it can be open to individual interpretation.

What type of work do you usually get commissioned for?

I make a lot of different types of work so I get commissioned in pretty different arenas. With murals, I like to do these large community focused pieces like the one here in Venice. Sometimes I get commissioned to make smaller pieces that are related to a certain mural, or on the other side of the spectrum of my style I paint a lot of swampy magical landscapes full of decay, fungus, and toads.

You come off as a sincere, socially conscious person. How does that play out in the commissions you seek out, accept, or don't accept, etc.?

I do a lot of culturally focused work, which can be a very delicate process in a time where awareness around cultural appropriation, racial dynamics, and tokenism are being discussed very seriously. I have made mistakes on these issues, I will make more. When approaching a project I try to get input from different stakeholders of really varied backgrounds, suggestions of who or what could be included in the piece. At the end of the day I am making the decisions of what goes into my paintings, but getting material input from a broad range of people helps to spread the source of the content out beyond my own limited experience or imagination.

Your recent mural here in Venice off of Navy and Pacific, how did that commission come about?

This recent mural was commissioned by Venice Community Housing (VCH) and my godmother Deborah Daly connected me with the open call they put out for paintings on four of their properties. I was very grateful to be granted one of the buildings and wanted to do a painting of the drum circle! It was especially

exciting to paint a mural for an organization which is actively fighting the displacement of long term Venice residents and providing very real and concrete solutions for people who may otherwise be homeless or pushed out of the neighborhood.

What was your intention and what were you trying to accomplish with that piece?

I wanted to do a depiction of the Venice drum circle for a few different reasons, primarily because there's a real good cross-section of the different types of people living in this town. All types of backgrounds economically, racially, spiritually, generationally, and otherwise. Another great aspect of the circle is that it is a free event, every week, and it's an opportunity for people to come together and get down. When I was growing up the drum circle was always the spot our group of friends would meet up. We weren't exactly involved with the circle, but it's where we would be and could reliably find each-other on a weekend afternoon. So much of my culturally oriented work is engaged with cultures that are not my own, so it felt extremely good to come back home and paint something I really came up around.

What aspects of that mural are extra special to you?

Something that is really important to me in this piece is that there's nobody famous. Some people in there have varying levels of local notoriety, but there's not a celebrity to be found, except for our beloved Treeman. I'm really proud to populate this wall with nothing but real ones, just good people who are from around here, been around here, and contribute by living their lives.

What upcoming projects do you have?

I'm trying to get back into the studio and make more protest banners. Since covid hit, and then even more since the uprisings sparked by George Floyd's murder, I've been involved with some of the local organizers in New Orleans to create large paintings as marching banners. It doesn't look like the country is calming down any time soon so I'm going to keep on hitting

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that and making work that goes directly into the hands of people fighting for justice.

How can people follow and stay up on your work?

The best way to keep up with my work is on instagram @HenryLipkis or on my website www.Lipkisart.com, and I can be contacted directly at Henry@Lipkisart.com

Anything you'd like to express that we didn't touch on?

This piece is the first substantial mural I've painted in the city and I hope it opens up the doors for more projects in the future! If the work really speaks to any readers here, please reach out and let me know.

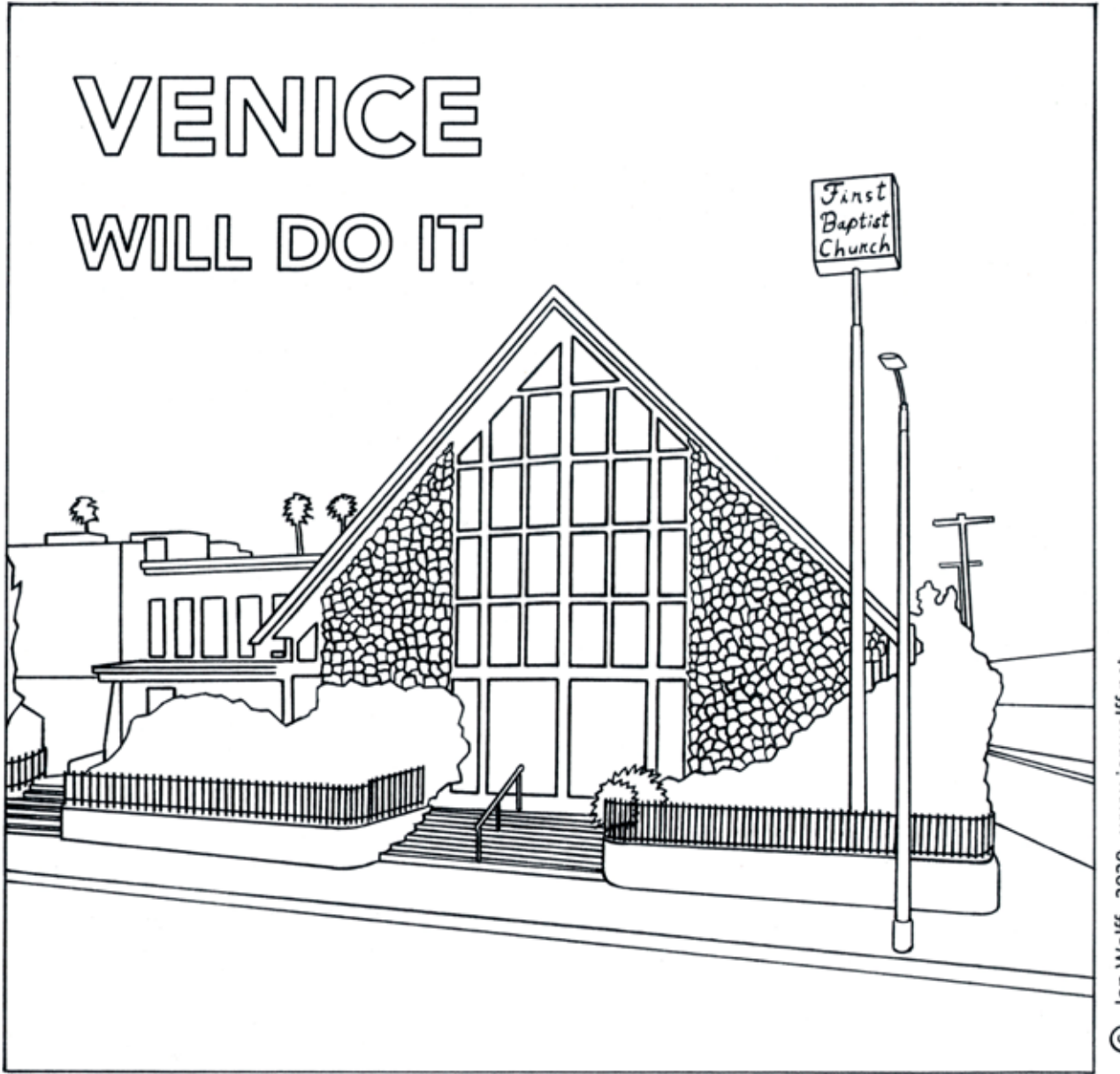
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CSPG - continued from page 2
specifically, it is legal to cite and arrest people for sleeping, camping, or lodging in their vehicles; for panhandling; or for any behavior that can be considered to "disturb the public peace or decorum, scandalize the community, or shock the public sense of morality." Efforts to "clean up the city" (as part of the ongoing process of gentrification in Los Angeles, and more recently, in preparation for the 2028 Olympics), have resulted in the further dispossession of the few belongings unhoused people hold.

Despite California Governor Gavin Newsom's issuance of an eviction moratorium, more than 400 evictions have taken place since March 13th. In Los Angeles alone, evictions have already resumed, even while Los Angeles County voted to extend the eviction moratorium until September 30th. In effect, this eviction moratorium offers little protection to tenants, as many tenants never make it to court and are not provided with legal counseling to win cases against their landlords (who are almost always represented by legal counsel). Even during a heatwave that has set historic highs in certain parts of the country, Los Angeles has continued to evict people from their homes and enforce Special Enforcement and Cleanup Zone (SECZ) sweeps. Black people, disabled people, mothers and children are often left with little to nothing after police officers come with no warning to sweep away homeless encampments.

The pandemic has not only exacerbated the hous-

CSPG continued on page 4



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COMMUNITY SUPPORT ENSURES
VENICE FAMILY CLINIC CONTIN-
UES TO SERVE PATIENTS DURING
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Volunteers Donated Nearly 74,000 Items, Gave
Countless Hours and Contributed Generously to
Nonprofit Community Health Center

LOS ANGELES – Because of an outpouring
of community support and dedication from its
staff, Venice Family Clinic has been able to
continue to provide high-quality health care
and other services to its nearly 28,000 patients
during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pan-
demic.

The Clinic released a report detailing the
extensive support it received from mid-March
through June and how that support made its
services possible when the pandemic required
the nonprofit community health center to shift
to virtual heath care visits.

Community support and staff dedication also
made possible its transition of educational and
Children First Early Head Start programs to
online and the expansion of its free and healthy
food distributions to people in need. In addition,
the Clinic was able to adapt its street medicine
program to safely care for people experiencing
homelessness and help secure housing for them.

Community members donated nearly 74,000
face masks, bottles of hand sanitizer and many
other much-needed items to provide health care.
Donors contributed generously, and volunteers,
like Keerthana Sivathanan, an undergraduate
pre-med student at UCLA, gave countless hours
calling patients to check in on how they were
doing during the pandemic.

“During a time when social interaction and
communication is limited, I can make a differ-
ence by making them feel like someone is out
there for them and cares about them, which can
be a very hard thought to maintain during such
a strenuous time,” Sivathanan said. “This is an
experience I will never forget for the rest of my
life, and I hope we all continue to listen and
help each other whenever others may need it.”

Naveena Ponnusamy, Venice Family Clinic
chief development and communications officer,
said the response from supporters has been “re-
markable. We were able to shrink the revenue
gap from canceled appointments and quickly
transition to a new way of operating that con-
tinues to evolve as the situation with the virus
evolves. The initial response has been hearten-
ing and affirming, and we know we can count
on this support for the many months to come
when it will continue to be greatly needed.”

With the community’s support, Venice Family
Clinic has kept its five main clinics open since
the start of the pandemic. It initially shifted to
telehealth for 67% of appointments to ensure
the safety of patients and staff and continues to
evaluate the safety of providing in-person visits
and adjust accordingly.

It increased its distribution of free and healthy
food, delivering more than 170,000 pounds of
food to patients and community members in
need. The Clinic’s homeless services program
is helping to secure housing for its patients
through Project Roomkey, providing care at
shelters created in response to the pandemic
and assisting in COVID-19 testing for people
experiencing homelessness.

“We are so thankful for the community’s
generosity in providing us the tools we needed
to adapt our protocols and services so that we
are providing the safest and most effective care
for our patients and staff,” said Anita Zamora,
Venice Family Clinic’s deputy director and



Graffiti Art by Brian Zarate Dahlheimer (RIP)

Just cause you pay rent here, doesn’t
mean you are a local

Photo & Story by
Josh “Bagel” Klassman

This photo is 31 years old now, 1989 - 2020.
What’s written on that wall is as relevant today
than it was back then, and even more so. For us
it was a statement against people with attitudes
of entitlement moving into our neighborhood
and doing all that they could to ruin what made
it unique in the first place.

Please keep in mind that this isn’t about
people moving into an area that they aren’t
originally from. I have many friends that moved
to Venice over the years who didn’t grow up
here and became a part of the community
because they flowed with us, they meshed with
us, and most importantly, they didn’t move in
with attitudes of entitlement. They appreciated
what Venice has to offer in it’s bohemian, gritty
scenery, as well as its diversity. I also have
friends that grew up here that don’t live here
anymore, but will always be from here because
it’s always their home in their heart.

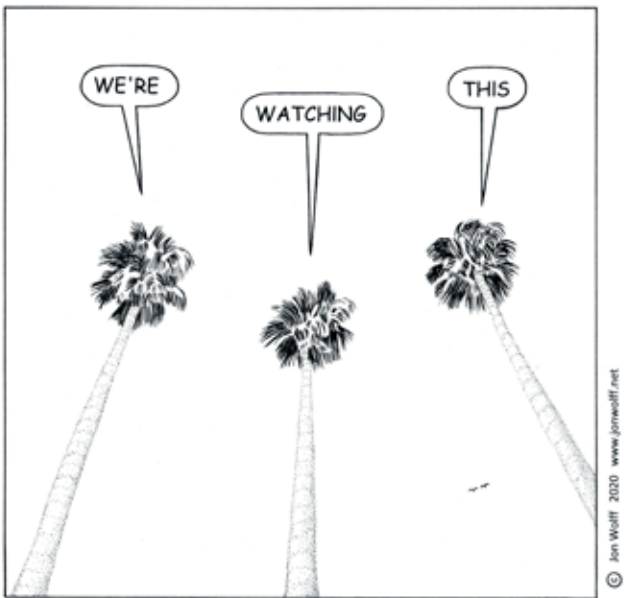
This isn’t about economic class either. I
have learned over the decades that an attitude
of entitlement can be found in every economic
class, whether it be the Middle Class, the Poor,

or the Wealthy. Venice has had every econom-
ic class live here for decades now. It’s always
been a place where the famous and unknown
hung out side by side on an even playing field.
Simply put, people get judged by their attitude
and character more than their economic class
around here. It makes no difference if you live
in a bachelor pad, two bedroom apartment, or
a multi million dollar home, if you’re a shitty
person we’ll definitely let you know.

My friend Bri (RIP) and I, put this up
in protest of what we saw going on in our
neighborhood when we were 19 years old. It
seemed juvenile at the time to a lot of people.
But one has to admit that it still rings true 31
years later. That wall was knocked down many
years ago, but the statement remains. So maybe
it’s grown up a little and has taken on a more
mature meaning. I understand that you can’t
stop progress, but I also understand that it’s
asinine to strip the very foundation away from
an area that gave it its character to begin with
in the first place. That statement started off as a
way to piss people off, but as time went on it’s
become a way to make people think and take a
good long look at themselves in the mirror, and
ask themselves, “Are they taking about me?”. If
you even have to ask yourself that it means yes,
yes they are.

CSPG - continued from page 3
ing crisis in Los Angeles and other cities across the
country, but laid bare the deep socio-economic inequities that undergird our everyday lives. Moreover,
the fact that voting for the presidential elections this
year is contingent upon the ability to send a mail-in
ballot, which requires a permanent address, is just
another tactic in the decades-long war on poverty
and homelessness. Unemployment, medical care,
housing—these are all issues that have been aggra-
vated by COVID-19, not caused by it. As such, we
cannot simply tell others to get to the voting booths
to solve these problems. These problems are inter-
woven into the very social fabric of this country, a
country built by stolen lives, labor, and resources.
In the face of a government that works to disenfran-
chise marginalized people, especially Black people,
through racist and classist tactics, it is clear that the
government does not take care of us. We take care
of us.

chief operating officer. “The only thing con-
stant through all of this is change. During these
stressful times, it is very comforting to know
that we have a supportive community behind us
providing the resources we need.”





How To Steal The People’s Post Office

by James Smith

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is being dismantled one brick at a time. Not only are many of the classic buildings gone, but missing also are the collection boxes where one can mail their letters. The USPS claims that it is removing the boxes because of declining mail volume, not to interfere with mail ballots. But this has been going on for a long time. One motive is to reduce the number of postal employees, another is to make it more difficult to use the post office, thereby increasing public anger and making it easier to abolish the postal service entirely.

Who would want to destroy the post office? Three suspects come to mind: UPS, FedEx and Amazon. While it is common knowledge that the new Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, is a big-time Trump fund raiser, what is not known is that this billionaire held large amounts of stock in UPS and Amazon, which he divested upon assuming his government position. However, he did not divest \$30–\$75 million in stock in XPO Logistics, a private subcontractor for USPS, specializing in home delivery of heavy goods and appliances. XPO had \$16.65 billion in net revenue in 2019 and employed 100,000 workers.

A defunct, or fully privatized, Postal Service, which is the \$1.5 trillion centerpiece of the mailing and packaging industry, would enable private corporations, also including Walmart and Target, to assume postal activities and make big bucks. Wall Street would be thrilled to pick over the dead carcass of what had been one of the greatest achievements of the U.S. government.

The origin of the unofficial motto:

Herodotus, in about 440 BC, describes the Persian postal system which had been perfected by King Darius about half a century earlier:

‘There is nothing in the world which travels faster than the Persian couriers. The whole idea is a Persian invention, and works like this: riders are stationed along the road, equal in number to the number of days the journey takes - a man and a horse for each day. Nothing stops these couriers from covering their allotted stage in the quickest possible time - neither snow, rain, heat, nor darkness. The first, at the end of his stage, passes the dispatch to the second, the second to the third, and so on along the line, as in the Greek torch-race which is held in honour of Hephaestus.’

Herodotus, *The Histories*, translated Aubrey de Sélincourt, Penguin 1954, 1972, page 556

The Post Office version: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers

from the swift completion of their appointed rounds”

Growing Up with the Mail

More than 50 years ago, the U.S. Post Office Department (as it was known then) was a miraculous organization. Imagine letters, costing three cents to mail, crossing the country in one day. Mail was delivered to downtown businesses up to nine times a day. Whole industries, like the railroads and airlines, succeeded only because they were subsidized by the post office.

The Postal Service currently employs more than 600,000 workers, of which 39 percent are people of color and 40 percent are women. Nearly all are unionized and the medium wage is \$25/hour. They were hired, not by favoritism, but by test scores.

During the New Deal days, monumental post office buildings that became the centerpieces, and pride of cities, were constructed throughout the country. Priceless murals were painted which graced ornate lobbies, and gave hope and beauty to working people caught in depression and war. Most had themes showing feats by workers or a promise of a better future. Some of the WPA (Work Projects Administration) artists snuck in representations of Lenin or FDR in their paintings.

Back in the last century, when I was a toddler, the high point of my day that was filled with so many wonders, was sitting behind the front door every morning and waiting for the postman to shower letters through the slot. I didn’t care if they were personal letters or bills, as long as they floated to the floor for my squeals of enjoyment. And then, if I wasn’t napping, I would go back to my little chair and watch the afternoon mail delivery perform for my entertainment.

Yes, twice a day delivery happened every day but Sunday in my working class neighborhood of Flushing, New York, and in communities all over the United States. As I grew up, I hardly noticed that the Postman (officially called the Letter Carrier) visit only once a day, and carried more and more junk mail.

Flash forward 25 years, after a well-earned year-long vacation after being an Army draftee, I went to work for the Santa Monica Post Office. My first day on the job I was introduced to the union president, who walked a route just like everyone else. Before I got my own route, I drove “Special Delivery” mail directly to the addressee. That service is long gone.

When I got my route in Ocean Park (once an independent city), I had time to stop and talk to

photo by Janet Gervers

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lots of people along the way, and yet, I would finish delivering all my mail sometime between noon and 3 pm. We weren’t allowed to check in at the PO until 5 pm (union rules?) so we would go to the donut shop or someone’s house.

Nowdays, letter carriers are lucky if they finish their routes by 8 pm. In other industries, they call it “speedup.” Here it’s longer and longer routes, layoffs, and greater and greater stress. The term “going postal,” came from the large number of post office workers who couldn’t take it any longer, and began shooting their bosses and co-workers.

The Purpose of the Post Office

The original purpose of the Postal Service was not to deliver Christmas gifts or iPads but to deliver democracy. It was the conduit for political discussion and debate, tying a geographically dispersed population into a single, somewhat informed electorate. – Dr. Michael I Niman

By the late ‘70s neo-liberalism had struck the Post Office. It took everyone by surprise. The “dark of night,” became a regular companion of the workers. A 22-year veteran of the Venice Post Office, Dean Henderson, told me that when letter carriers were routinely out on their routes only one of their cute little vehicles even had headlights.

The Post Office had functioned as a socialist enterprise, more or less, since the Second Continental Congress had appointed Benjamin Franklin, in 1775, to be the first Postmaster General. The Post Office was one of the few government agencies to be written into the U.S. Constitution in 1789.

In 1970 there was one of the largest labor strikes in U.S. history when more than half a million postal workers walked. The following year, President Richard Nixon turned the Cabinet-level Department into a quasi-private organization called the U.S. Postal Service. It became self-supporting instead of being funded by federal money. Stamps and other services skyrocketed.

However, it did function better than expected, until email took away most of the letters that it had been delivering. The Post Office bounced back with package delivery, which could be performed more cheaply than for-profit corporations, such as Amazon. Then came the bipartisan The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. One of the three co-sponsors was Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman, a supposed California liberal.

This bill was nearly the death knell of the post office. It prohibited the post office from selling anything other than mailing goods, such as, stamps, and envelopes. No greeting cards, post cards, let alone a coffee bar, copy machine, t-shirts, etc. were allowed. This was a far cry from the old days when the post offices also functioned as a poor peoples savings bank. Sen. Bernie Sanders and others have advocated restoring the banking services, to no avail.

Worse yet was the 2006 requirement that the postal service pre-pay 75 years of health premium, at a rate of \$5.5 billion per year. This was a bizarre requirement that no other government agency is required to perform. Without this burden, the postal service would be showing a profit. Instead, it is getting deeper in debt by the year. The so-called Great Recession took place, followed by the Depression and Pandemic of 2020.



photos: above by Dave Healey, below by Al Keith, right by Lydia Ponce



By: Cheryl Eckford

Activist, flutist, Conga player, Phyllis Des Verney, 64, of Venice Beach, was found deceased August 15, 2020 in a Hawthorne apartment where she was staying without the permission from the landlord. Phyllis had been staying with Jerome Anthony Poingsett at an apartment in Hawthorne where Phyllis sublet from Poingsett. Poingsett had took Phyllis in. Before coming to stay with Poingsett a year ago Phyllis had been homeless since 2009. Phyllis once told this writer that she had been evicted from her housing and that was how she became homeless. While taking care of her mom who was ill years ago, Phyllis injured her back and became physically disabled. On August 10, 2020 this writer and several of Phyllis’s friends tried to reach her by phone after days of no answer a friend of Phyllis went by the apartment days later to see if she was ok. It was then Phyllis was discovered deceased. Cause of death is unknown at this time, according to Phyllis’s daughter, Andrea Hart.

Poingsett, who says he goes by the name of “Toni,” moved from the apartment June 30, 2020. The two had been having a disagreement. Phyllis stayed on at the apartment hoping to save money to move to her own place. Toni remembers first seeing Phyllis at the drum circle in Venice Beach when he was 10 years old where he played the Conga the two did not know each other at that time and the two would later meet during the 80’s. “Phyllis came to my sisters house to take my sister to a protest In Venice and I was there.” Later the two would meet at Oakwood Playground where according to Toni, “Phyllis saw me playing conga. “We would later play at coffee houses, one was the Talking Stick.” “Phyllis later played under the direction of Abraham at Rose on the Venice Beach Boardwalk.” Abraham had a permit to have amplifiers and speakers at the Rose location during the e 80’s. “You could give Phyllis a

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Phyllis was my friend, my neighbor and my landlady.

She was wicked on the drums, she could teach anyone how to play if they could maintain that bottom beat. She played the flute but she didn’t always get recognized as a flutist and she was definitely talented. She was talented and Phyllis had a smile that could brighten up anyone’s day because we all needed Phyllis smiling... we, as being the world.

She was non-bionary before it was. Her presence was good stories waiting to be shared or she was one sided conversations with people to the point of hard truth after she sized you up. If you were worth it, she’d lay in on you. If you weren’t worth the spit in her mouth, you got the truth but you’d never coming back from that bell only she could ring.

When we first moved into the duplex unit next door, Lu, seven years old, had asked, “What does ghetto mean?” As Phyllis complained about the ghetto birds nesting in the clay tiles on the roof and what a mess they made. Phyllis tried to get me to explain to Lu. I refused, as Lu asked Phyllis directly, as direct as small children are.

We spoke for hours many years on erasure of Black and Indigenous history, our fate and speculated would there ever be a revolution. Phyllis had critique on everything we were doing in the neighborhood however she gave up on politricks and stayed closer to playing music.

We had many adventures! Many included:

- We attended Celia Cruz at the Hollywood Bowl.
- We had battle with a possum in the wee hours of the morning after it attacked our pet duck, Pato-Pato.
- We had suffered the paranormal activities and spiritual visits of her Aunt Doris who had deceased several years before. We prayed for Doris’s journey and eventually the spirit visits stopped.
- Phyllis was the first person to tell me of the wicked and evil stories of gentrifying the Original Venice especially as we witnessed the fuckery. She had Venice stories about the white only cemetery where the Smart & Final’s and Fox Theatre stands today. The KKK burning crosses on lawns in the 90291.
- We all made history as we endured and struggle to be Black and Brown seated in the most democratic Neighborhood Elections for the first ever Grassroots Venice Neighborhood Council. The most intersectional council Venice had to rep and rightly so! Now, today the VNC is just a Clowncil! It’s a joke of itself! A mirror reflection of their own white fragility, misogyny, patriarchy... entitlement with no longer veiled white supremacy.

Phyllis and I had a friendship that many misunderstood. It was simply unconditional love as human beings. It wasn’t anything more than I made couple dozen cookies, here’s a dozen friend and neighbor... she’d be busy boxing with the world or boxing with God... we all just accepted that she was in a mood.

My heart is heavy feeling the pain of my friend who I won’t play music with anymore. I won’t be able to talk to her about being Black in America, how the world has changed, which we shared a similar path. I met Phyllis almost 25 years ago and she welcomed me with open arms to the Venice Beach music scene, which I fell in love with. Many times we would discuss the issues of the day and figure how we can solve the world’s problems. We shared the pains of living in the USA and we survived it to pass on the knowledge to those who will follow a path we have laid for youth to follow as we did when we were the young ones. We knew we had to share what we learned along the way and a lot of it came through the music we would play.

Yes, she was radical, outspoken and didn’t take shit off anyone. I loved how she was, like myself, a boat rocker. I have a thing for strong women, period. Phyllis was a very strong sister, period. I will always hear her flute, I will always hear our hands pounding out another rhythm. I’m glad I got to spend some good times with the one and only Phyllis Des Verney.... Rest Well Now my very good sister, Rest well. ♥

- Al Keith

WE’LL ALL MISS PHYLLIS -marty-
An old original of Venice was Phyllis who we’ll all terribly miss.
She was great on flute and drum she didn’t take any shit if you were dumb. She played drum and flute with various bands and loved to play by the Venice sands. We would listen and sing and dance her music was a beautiful romance. She played music and had cool dreds her stories always blew our heads. Now in Heaven she plays for God let’s send her our love, a kiss and nod.

Her anger with me and her hate for me in the end had everything to do with words never spoken. I had said hello to her - over 6 years- or was it 9? She rejected my salutation.

I accepted that everyone including me - we were all responsible for Phyllis being in a mood, everyone but Phyllis. It was that way and there was no reconciliation or forgiveness... that was very consistent.

That corner of Dudley and Ocean Front Walk will forever be a loving memory of musicians from all over the world who bless us with their talent, time and unpaid labor of love. It was day long prayers on the weekends sent off with drums, all year ‘round. Many have danced to the music as they could not just walk by... and they put their prayers right there into the night’s sky after a blessed sunset. There will be many empty chairs for the people that brought that musical Venice Love with that salty and delicious ocean breeze.

“Fuck the white people who complained about our music!” Phyllis would reject their hate. We would laugh because we shared the notion that maybe they were haters because they were born with no rhythm! They can’t dance to the music that really wasn’t for them. We laughed because we knew it was about their white people property value. Phyllis and I both knew the ocean was going to rise one day soon to swallow everything and everyone up.

Rest in Power Phyllis Des Verney
- Lydia Ponce



Paintings By Wendy Brown - Wendybsstudio.com

R.I.P. Annie (Constance Ann Cox Flaum) 1934-2020.

By Mick Flaum

On Sat. Aug. 14th, one of the early icons of Venice Boardwalk, Annie, has passed on after a long fight with various ailments. If you were around in the Summer of Love 1967 you would have known Annie and her kids. A striking Southern belle, with long red hair who had driven to the



photo by Mick Rock

West Coast with her 4 kids in search of a more enlightened lifestyle. They ended up at Gridley Wright's psychedelic commune, "Strawberry Fields" in Decker Canyon where she reigned as the Acid Queen. She moved to Venice Beach early 1967 where she took up residency in a big old house on a walk street on Breeze Ave that quickly became a commune and local hangout. The first meeting of the Venice Peace and Freedom Party with John Haag was held there. Annie would hold court and would talk about her vision of going to the Fiji Islands and setting up a Utopian society.

I was a newly dropped out 23 year old English artist traveling with my good friend Bill Olive (who designed the logo for the Beachhead) and was working with Earl Newman at his Westminster Ave studio. I started hanging out at the house on Breeze and quickly fell under Annie's spell and not long after we had a full on Hippie wedding on Venice Beach. By then she just birthed her 5th child so I became at 23 years old the father of 5 children. The wedding ceremony, heavy on Kahlil Gibran, was conducted by "Happy Jack" one of the local fixtures on the boardwalk. In early 1968 we purchased an old Ford Falcon station wagon, piled in the 5 kids, 2 dogs and a sack of brown rice and drove to New York, via Birmingham, to see Annie's folks. We were the quintessential Hippie family, long hair, beads, bells, barefoot. The folks in the deep south could not believe their eyes. Our mantra was that "we were the children of light and our innocence was our shield" and it kept us out of harm. We were avid students of Eastern phi-

losophy and totally believed that anything was possible, that material things were not important and that Love would conquer all. We spent the summer of 1968 running barefoot in Central Park and later in the year we made it over to London, England to visit my folks.

We got to hang out at the Apple offices of the Beatles and visited with John & Yoko Lennon and George Harrison in their houses. We survived the notorious Apple Christmas party attended by Ken Kesey and some Hells Angels from the LA chapter.

We went on to France and lived and travelled in an old Austin van, squeezed in like sardines

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photo above by Bill Chamley 1967

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photo by Bill Olive, Christmas 1967

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No Shit Sherlock by Gerry Fialka

“It’s not worth getting into the bullshit to see what the bull ate.” - Don Van Vliet (aka Captain Beefheart)

Is there a deeper meaning to this aphorism? It confuses me, though it does seem evident. One friend said it means that one should not waste time trying to diagnose bad/offensive/stupid/non-sense behavior. Garbage in, garbage out! I thrive on asking questions.

If an animal shits on the Venice Boardwalk, who is responsible to clean it up?

I did a survey of ten mounted police on the Boardwalk a few years ago. I politely asked them if they were aware of the Philly cops on horses having a bucket attached to the horse. It could catch the poop instead of dropping it right on the Boardwalk. One of them said, “Good idea.” Some of them resisted even talking about it. One said, “Get away from me.” I was saddened by this response.

I know that horse shit is mainly grass. It’s a no-brainer that the look of a big load on the Boardwalk is not a pleasant sight. Two weeks ago, I was astonished to see a mounted police off his horse, cleaning up the shit. It seemed like a change. I asked other regulars and they said, “Yes, I have seen the cops cleaning it up.”

More recently, to follow up, I asked a Venice mounted policeman, “What is the protocol on cleaning up the horse shit?” He was coolly responsive, “When it’s on a busy area, we will clean it up.” I asked, “Is that by choice or is that a law?” He said, “Choice.” I recall Devo’s inquiry about freedom from choice or freedom of choice.

This raises bigger issues. Lenny Bruce said we can call cops three names: peace officers, cops, or pigs. It seems that we become what we behold. Why not just be civil? Let’s treat each other with respect. When you see somebody break the law, where do you file a grievance? When a cop breaks the law, what do you do?

How can we make Venice better? We come together in this newspaper to express thoughts, invent new questions and metaphors. Recently, I was startled to see a radical way to address the issue of police failures. At the corner of Penmar Ave. and Venice Blvd, I noticed that a yellow yield sign was stenciled with spray paint to portray two people kicking a policeman on the ground. I am a peaceful activist for non-violent protest. Does culture jamming property get people’s attention?

How do we directly address these issues? List the many ways in your head right now . . . voting, participating in the process, communicating to the leaders, holding power accountable, embracing risks, harnessing energy, protesting, revolting, making art, writing, talking, and {what did I forget to mention?} many more. Now survey which do you actually employ?

Here are some wise words. I highly recommend preminent author Brad Schreiber’s recent book MUSIC IS POWER: Popular Songs, Social Justice and the Will to Change. He quotes Gil Scott-Heron, who wrote “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised,” on the nature of revolutionary change:

“Revolution sounds like something that happens, like turning on a light switch. But it’s moving a large object. And a lot of folks’ efforts to push it in one direction or the other have to combine. And the people who are there when it finally moves visibly—when people finally realize that it’s over here and it was over there—those are

the people that get the credit for it. But I think everybody who moved it a little bit further were folks that understood that you try and change things, not necessarily for yourself, but for your children and their children. Because you want things to be better, by and by.”

Can exploring the arts make things better? I still facilitate the Venice Finnegans Wake Reading Group on Zoom every first Tuesday. Peter Quadrino, who is the new host, wrote some relevant related shit about James Joyce’s 1939 book, Finnegans Wake (which presages Zoom):

“So the scene (in a book published in 1939) takes place in a sports bar with a massive plasma TV with satellite connections. Most striking of all, though, are the many references to the atomic bomb inside a chapter that’s mostly about war. The “verbivocovisual” entertainment on “the bairdboard bombardment screen” is a comedy show starring Butt and Taff playing out the book’s apocryphal allegorical story of when Buckley shot the Russian General during the Crimean War (Robert Anton Wilson, who has written much great material on this chapter, points to Joyce’s use of the Crimean War because it contains the word “crime” which for Joyce represents all war). In that story, a soldier named Buckley caught an unsuspecting Rus-



sian General in his crosshairs but didn’t have the heart to shoot him when he saw the General in a most human position, squatting to take a dump. That little tale is loaded with symbolism, certainly, as the predominance of the anal territorial level (think of animals marking their territories with shit) of consciousness underlies the problem of war but it’s also striking how the General looked more human with his pants down taking a shit than he did with his uniform on. Of course, Buckley ends up shooting the General after the latter rips up a clump of Irish sod to wipe his butt. . . . Perhaps the key thing I learned from all of this is that Joyce was not human. He had to be some kind of cyborg to compose this book. Or at least he was tuned into something, some force granting him powers far exceeding the heights of human capability. The texture of Finnegans Wake is like an encyclopedia containing not only everything that’s ever happened but everything that will ever happen. As unfathomable as it seems, it’s perhaps not totally surprising as he was attempting to represent the deepest levels of the dreaming mind, a realm that is outside the bounds of time and space.” Read more Peter Quadrino at his remarkable sites: <https://finwakeatx.blogspot.com/> and www.abuildingroam.com

Welly well well, it is not “like,” it is. Sam Beckett agrees. No Shit Sherlock. Shit happens! Do you know shit from Shinola? This whole idea of marking one’s territory causes grounds for further research.

Consider these words from more thinkers:

“You have a mongrel perception of humor, nothing more; a multitude of you possess that. This multitude see the comic side of a thousand low-grade and trivial things -- broad incongruities, mainly; grotesqueries, absurdities, evokers of the horse-laugh. The ten thousand high-grade comicalities which exist in the world are sealed from their dull vision. Will a day come when the race will detect the funniness of these juvenilities and laugh at them -- and by laughing at them destroy them? For your race, in its poverty, has unquestionably one really effective weapon -- laughter. Power, money, persuasion, supplication, persecution -- these can lift at a colossal humbug -- push it a little -- weaken it a little, century by century; but only laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand. You are always fussing and fighting with your other weapons. Do you ever use that one? No; you leave it lying rusting. As a race, do you ever use it at all? No; you lack sense and the courage.” -- Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger.

James Joyce made up a word “laughtears.”

“Discipline means to learn, not to conform, not to suppress, not to imitate the pattern of what accepted authority considers noble. The austerity of the priest and the monk is harsh. They deny certain of their appetites but not others which custom has condoned. The saint is the triumph of harsh violence. Austerity is generally identified with self-denial through the brutality of discipline, drill and conformity. The saint is trying to break a record like the athlete. To see the falseness of this brings about its own austerity. The saint is stupid and shoddy. To see this is intelligence. Such intelligence will not go off the deep end to the opposite extreme. “ - Krishnamurti.

Regulars on the Boardwalk told me more recollections: “I have seen the horses shit in Venice many times. Only twice did the cops even bother to pick it up. Once there was a huge pile on the OFW and tourists by the hundred trekked right through it.” “One horse pooped on the grass. The cop laughed and said, ‘Fertilizer!’ and rode off leaving it! They give dog owners a ticket if they don’t pick up dog poop.” “I have seen an increase in the cops cleaning up horse shit.”

So in the very midst of this data dump, please consider your proposed protocol for cleaning up horse shit? Is it the responsibility of the mounted police or the sanitation department to clean it up? Do you want horse shit on the streets in our neighborhoods?

“Is this bullshit or fertilizer?” - Author Unknown.

Can we navigate between not being taken seriously, and generally being treated like shit? Or is the trick not putting up with the bullshit?

“You understand, of course, that everything I say is horse shit.” -- Kurt Vonnegut.

It does not end with another cute aphorism, people. Is it the mastery or mockery of metaphor? Or the mystery? What pacifies us? What activates us? I welcome your input. Gerry Fialka pfsuzy@aol.com Dedicated to Marty Liboff, who published a free Venice newsletter from 1992 to 1995 entitled Seagull Shits.

Flash: The Guardian reported on Sept 3, 2020 that testing feces could prevent covid outbreaks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/sep/03/arizona-university-prevents-potential-covid-outbreak-testing-feces>

A Poem to our lost Venice Post Office

by Jim Smith

Our Sacred Places
There are sacred places in the woods
first recognized by the Tongva people
and revered to this day.

And who would not stand in awe
of a mountain spring,
or a mighty tree thrusting towards heaven,
amid the woodland silence, and the subtle sounds.

The Sacred is where you find it.
Here in Venice, the hidden Redwoods,
Japanese gardens and impossible flowers.

And walking toward the center, the Circle,
there is a Temple on a rise of ground.
Inside is a space like the Greeks once knew.

In ancient times they looked up in awe at the mighty
Apollo, or the wise Athena, until their calm places
were pulled down by Barbarians, blind to the Sacred.

Inside our Post Office, the deified Abbot looks down
and watches us through the journeys of our lives
as we embrace the Sacred, or turn away.

And now we face the loss of our holy place
where joy and sorrow are carried in a letter
as the new Barbarians pull down our temple.

from The Dinner Party Before the Revolution



Destiny is written in the skies

by Irina Azarova

In this world everything is unpredictable

Get into this quiet place of your own heart

Burst open, read between the lines, be available

“Read my lips”, - says the Beloved

Drop anxiety in control of destiny

Destiny is something written in the skies

Set your boat sailing to uncertainty

As its marriage to the destiny is the only thing right

At this time half of the world is in despair

While the other half is spared, but for how long?

Let our prayers make rain happen over Australia

Let our intentions dry out the hurricanes

New forces, new sprouts are brewing inside the planet

Evolution cannot be stopped by catastrophes

Generation after generation is coming to the ground, thus

Let’s leave nothing behind us but one Love

SUCH A MESS

by- MOISHE SHMEGEGGEE

L.A. is in such a mess
everywhere there are homeless.
Everywhere people camping on the street
hungry with nothing to eat.
Out of work and nowhere to go
the numbers continue to grow and grow.
Politicians waste millions of bucks
the homeless actually get little and it sucks.
Give food, clothes, medical, a tent and rent
that’s where money can be spent.
Millions are broke and down
trying to get off the ground.
The poor with repression and frustration causing
vexation and depression.
So many homeless are hurt and sad
many on the street go bad and mad.
The rich curse them and put them down
they don’t want them around.
The police arrest and put them in jail
they don’t have money for lawyers or bail.
Some are sick and mentally ill
they need help and to be taught a skill.
A pandemic making millions lose their jobs
while the super rich are heartless snobs.
Millions without jobs, homeless and sick
this is a Ruling Class trick.
They want us poor and to be their slaves
work for little then drop in our graves.
Soon automation and robots will take our place
the work ethic obsolete for the human race.
The unemployed can’t pay their rent
leaving many more homeless without a cent.
Con-gress gives trillions to banks and corporations
they need to pay rents and give the poor donations.
The richest country on earth
yet children go hungry in the land of their birth.
Looking through garbage cans for something to eat
an old slice of pizza is such a treat.
Long unemployment lines
people losing their minds.
The economy is in such a stew
tomorrow the homeless will be me and you.
The American Dream scheme is a dirty lie
BS and pie in the sky.
Republicans and Democrats are liars and crooks
they take the People for fools and shnooks.
They may start a war to get us back to work
with either a Democrat or Republican we get a jerk.
Politicians and elections bought by lobby’s money
elections are so phony that it ain’t funny.
Vote for the lesser of two evils they say
all we get is more evil and the Devil to pay.
The media lies as our society and culture fails
all we hear from both sides is lies and tall tales.
Our future looks bleak and full of gloom
even the Ruling Class can’t escape the doom.
It’s Time for Change
society and the world we must rearrange.
Equality and Justice for all
for Human Rights we must stand tall.
A new way of living
with sharing and giving.
Free up your Mind
loose the shackles that bind.
A New World of Peace and Brotherhood
watered by kindness, compassion and good.
A Revolution of Mind and Soul
with understanding and awareness our goal.
Love will lead the Way
to the Dawning of a New Day.
Our world is in such a mess
what will be we can only guess...

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QUARANTINE 2020

Stop Pause
Take a breath
Make a sound
Connect
See the invisible
Hear the silence
Feel with your heart
I know you are tired of running in circles in
circles in circles
Stop, don’t move
Listen and laugh
Fill your being with the Buddha’s vibra-
tions
Let’s see Siddhartha under the tree
Wisdom is simpler than what we imagine
After the world has deliberately stopped
Love is what will come out of fear
No hurrying or running, just sit next to me
Let’s build - not the walls - but the spheres
We will sing and the Angels with us
All our voices will be united
We will sing and the Angels with us
Do you remember Hagia Sophia?
Los Angeles March 19, 2020

Irina Azarova

I am crying for you, George
I can’t stop my tears
I can’t stop my sobbing
Officer, please please

Your pain is my pain, George
My heart is terribly wounded
I keep begging please please
Officer, I can’t I can’t breathe

As days are passing by
My hurt is not leaving
Your death is like the last drop
That causes a river to flood

Do we care that shops being looted
When over the centuries
Our souls been looted and shut

Please don’t kill me, officer
Mama, I can’t I can’t breathe...

May 30, 2020
Irina Azarova

I got the venice street blues
Somebody hand me my dancing shoes
Some days you just can’t cry
Some days you just can’t sleep
Seeding sowing, harvesting, growing
People lost in a maze
Cities of darkness
Drug ‘s and, midnight hotels
Living in a time warp of
Death doom and hell’s
Yet, still the black roses
In full bloom
People and puppies
On the streets
Musicians and there dancing feet
Cadillac”s and movie stars yesterdays of hip new bars
I got the venice street blues
Somebody hand me my dancing shoes
Teresa lynn mason 2019

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Felecia Des Verney Obit - continued from page 6
CD and she would study it and know the melodies by the next day.” “She was a very good musician who knew counter rhythms.”

Robert Havis who took over the band when Abraham left for the east coast said “Phyllis was a wonderful contribution to the band. She was very professional and serious about her music, she will be truly missed.”

According to Andrea Hart, Phyllis’s daughter, “My mom was a good person who sacrificed a lot for Venice as an Activist, she tried to stop gentrification in Venice. My mom was against Market rent where low income properties would be changed to those without rent subsidies that would command market rent.” “Mom fought against program that would take property from owners who were not able to keep the property up,” said Hart. Phyllis, who was 42 at the time was one of three residents who sued a local management company and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in November 1997 according to a Los Angeles Times article. The three residents refused to sign a provision that they could be evicted from Holiday Venice Properties if anyone in their household or any guest was involved in a crime within three blocks of the development.

Hart stated Phyllis attended Westminster Elementary and Mark Twain Middle School before attending Venice High School. Hart stated her mom worked at a pet store on Brooks in Venice, and at one point at Builders Emporium, and at times as a waitress. Phyllis was also an apartment manager at one of the properties where she lived. Phyllis loved music so much Hart said Phyllis had collected over 1,200 albums. At the pet store Phyllis was known as the bird-woman as she was often seen with a Parrot on one shoulder and an iguana on the other shoulder. “Often kids in the housing where I grew up would bring wounded pets to my mom to fix them or place them in a home, Hart said. “I miss my mommy,” Hart said with emotion.

Phyllis is survived by her two brothers, Tim Des Verney, and David Des Verney, and daughter Andrea Hart along with two grand children Oliva, and Tristin Hart.

Probably all closed due to Social Dstancing Rules.

Location Guide

- **Abbot Kinney Public Library**, 501 S. Venice Blvd. 310-821-1769, fovl.org
- **Beyond Baroque**, 681 Venice Blvd. 310-822-3006, www.beyondbaroque.org
- **Electric Lodge**, 1416 Electric Ave. 310-306-1854, electriclodge.org
- **Pacific Resident Theatre**, 703 Venice Blvd, 310-822-8392, pacificresidenttheatre.com
- **SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center**, 685 Venice Blvd. sparcmurals.org
- **Townhouse**. 52 Windward.
- **Venice High School** 13000 Venice Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90066 (310) 577-4200
- **Westminster Elementary School**, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (enter auditorium from Westminster Ave) 310-606-2018
- **Unurban Coffee Shop** - 3301 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica, 310-315-0056

FBCV Grounds Cleaning

By: sove love

Well... there’s two things I don’t like to do. One is disturbing people’s sleep--because our immune system is repairing our body, while we sleep, and the other is distracting from someone’s nurturing sabbatical.

Hope you forgive me.

But because you are an all-time, vigorous, instrumentalist, fighting for progressive changes for the First Baptist Church, and for the community at-large, I am compelled to share the news of our intentions to enter onto the lands of the church--and adjacent parking lots, this Sunday.

Absolutely, this is an open community effort to clear away debris and hazardous overgrowth of foliage from an 110 year old church located in the historically Black, Oakwood area of Venice California.

To me, this is a jewel of a step towards recapturing this monumental, ocean side, community-invested land from the treacherous, underhanded, slipping grip of the multi-millionaire son of a B B Billionaire, commonly known as JAY PENSKE.

CALIFORNIA IS GOING THROUGH A DANGEROUS AND DEVASTATING HEAT WAVE. OUR GROUP LEADERS HAVE TRIED, TO NO AVAIL, TO GET THE CITY OR PENSKE'S OUT TO CLEAR THE OVERGROWN, DRIED OUT BRUSH AND ACCUMULATION OF DEBRIS WHICH BLIGHTS THE AREA AND POSES A SEVERE FIRE-HAZARD.

Recognizing our need to practice being responsible for our own community -- especially during this time when the Covid-19 has effected he loss of funding to states, counties and local governments-- we have decided that it is in the best interest of our church to do what is needed to secure the lands from potential harm, while we continue working towards the miracle that will see us back inside our community hall of love.

You will be there, in our hearts as we spill our literal sweat on the literal spiritual grounds.

Thank you for being, before, now and loving.
See photos on the back page.

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5:30PM

outreach@latenantsunion.org

Guerrilla Cleanup of the FBCV- continued from page 1
the worst I’ve ever seen. LA311 said they were not enforcing unkept landscaping, nor was LADBS, and despite dozens of pleadings to them and the fire department to mitigate what was clearly a serious fire hazard they refused to take appropriate action. We were forced to act and what a blessing in disguise that was.

About 30 SaveVenice supporters and members came to answer the call that Sunday. Most of them our new young and talented supporters and even some curious neighbors, felt inspired to come help with the guerrilla cleanup effort. We started at noon and culminated around 3:30 pm. We literally shared, blood, sweat, tears, songs, and music together. It was three plus hours of arduous work under a consistent hot sun but the aura of love, community, and Ancestors’ love of this sacred site was working their magic on us to where that work and heat became an occasional, secondary distraction.

Real Venice showed up that day. Black, white, Brown, OG residents, new residents, women, children, elders, spiritualists, atheists, housed, unhoused, teachers, students, and even dogs— a far cry from the flavorless homogenous scenes you will find at other popular community political and social venues that are supposed to be representative of the “progress” of Venice.

There was also an unhoused brother squatting on the property, his name was John. He spectated and had mixed emotions and worries about us being there since a cozy nook on the southwest of the property was his refuge. We assured him we weren’t there to kick him out and also explained our plans for the property. We made sure he understood that this is his space too. We ended the cleanup gathering ceremoniously and had the youngest child lead a prayer and saging of the northern section of the church properties.

It was a beautiful and glorious day that is hard to fully encapsulate into words. It marked a new milestone in the proactive defense of our community space and neighborhood. There is more work to do and we plan on doing this guerrilla clean up again. I’m sure the Penskes and their other gentrification agent cohorts were still betting on waiting us out and for us to fall away. We can do this all day. It should be clear even for their thick arrogant skulls to know by now that we’re not going anywhere.

–V–
see color photos on back page

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VENICE SHOWS HOW TO DO IT

By Jon Wolff

Many of the participants in the August 23rd First Baptist Church of Venice cleanup expressed their motivations for helping out on that day.

Sarah Mahir: I’m here because I’m a local resident, born and raised in Venice. I want to see life brought back into this beautiful church that was just such a big symbol of love and hope in this Community. To see it deteriorate at the hand of the Penskes has been heartbreaking. To feel the Community love again, and the vibe... It is beyond beautiful to be here in this moment and take back our corner and our church.

Cameron Murphy: I’ve lived on this street for sixteen years and I used to go to this church when it was a functioning church. It was a place that always lifted up my heart. It makes me sad to see the state that it’s gotten into. When I saw everyone cleaning up, I had to join in.

Jake Greene: I’ve been coming to the Save Venice meetings since June. I helped Mike with the press release. I just came out to clean this place up. I’m actually genuinely concerned about the church lighting on fire, because of the shrubbery and the fire season. I think we got a lot accomplished.

Kim Ford: I’m here to help clean up the church here that the billionaire owners can’t seem to bother to clean up themselves. We just want to preserve the Community and make sure it doesn’t catch on fire. A big chunk of California is burning right now. We’re just keeping the neighborhood safe.

Chaka Foreman: I’m out here to represent and support the Venice Community.

Desmond Foreman: My age is six. I just want to support this church.

Chaya Foreman: I have love for my Community and I want to help bring in new energy and restore it. I look forward to the future when we can have a beautiful restoration of energy. I go to Venice High School.

Eli David Ow: I just want to get a lot more involved in my Community. I’m a teacher at Venice High School. I’m still pretty new to the neighborhood but I’m really fortunate to be here to get to know a lot of wonderful people here. I’m really happy to be helping out.

Stephanie Serra: I’m here today because Black Land and Black History matters. It’s as simple as that.

Caroline Ferroni: I’m here to save Venice.

Nicholas Santiago: I came out here to help clean up the church, and clean up all the trash and the weeds and everything that’s been grow-

RIP Annie continued from page 7
along with our 2 dogs. We ended up in the South of France where we camped outside of Cannes for a while. Annie and I would go into town and sit on the Croisette, where the tourists were. I would paint little cards and Annie would dance for loose change which was how we survived, day by day. One day we went to Monaco and put in a request for an audience with Princess Grace Kelly and it was granted. Grace Kelly was totally beautiful and so gracious. At one point she asked Annie what she thought about the Immaculate Conception and Annie said that she thought all conceptions were immaculate! The Princess got us a place to live in the winter as Annie was expecting my first child, her 6th. After the birth, back in Cannes, we met a beautiful young, wealthy aspiring film producer there for the Cannes Film Festival and he bought us an old bus to live and travel in. We got half way down Italy and the bus broke down and (long story) we got arrested and spent the next year and 7 months in prison as suspected drug dealers. We finally got a pardon from the President Leone of Italy as there were no drugs involved. When we got out we returned to France and ended up in Amsterdam. I got a job as resident artist at the Melkweg (Milky Way) designing and printing posters and Annie would come in often to dance and do Tarot Readings. In 1974 Annie had my second child, Ananda, and not long after that she wanted to return to the States, so the Melkweg put on a special event that raised enough money for the whole

ing. It’s not been cleaned up for a while now.

Michael Rosario: I just want to help out the Community. The church is a good place to bring people together. So let’s make it pretty.

Ella Lush-Hansen: I really want to help.

Esteban Pulido: I’ve never felt more “at home” here in Venice. And every opportunity I can, I want to give back to Venice and to the land that’s here and to the people that have made me feel so loved.

Andy Anderegg: Nobody who has property trumps Community in Venice.

Breana Desmond: I believe in the cause and I see the vision of what this place could be. The Community, especially the Black Community, really deserves a space where everybody’s welcome to connect. I’ve learned so much in the last few months about the gentrification and the racism that’s systemically gone on in Venice. It’s spreading the word and creating a hub for people to come together. I think it will have a ripple much bigger than just this building.

Venice showed how to save our Community. You can help by going to: **savevenice.ca**

11 • September 2020 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD



photo above: Annie’s Family in La Blondine, Provence, France: Mick, Annie with Chris, Buzz, Shannan, Patrick and Adam taken by Roger Hardy 1971

family to fly back to America. By then Annie and I where going in separate directions so the split was amicable. I stayed on till late 1976 and returned as I missed the kids. I stayed in Santa Monica were I am still and Annie moved to Portland Oregon where she remained till leaving the Planet. Annie was a Force of Nature, a true free spirit marching to a different drummer. If you ever met her it is unlikely that you would ever forget her. We remained close friends throughout and would often reminisce about the “good old days on the Venice Beach boardwalk , going to POP and the Cheetah Ballroom, visiting with Anna Haag when she worked at the Laffeyette cafe and hanging out at the Westwinds all now long gone but not forgotten.



My name is Zekaia. This is my son, Maurice Brown Jr. He was arrested in March of 2018 for 30+ counts of felony robbery. Maurice has served in the US Army and is suffering with mental illness. And he also has NEVER been in trouble with the law. We learned that some of the charges against Maurice aren’t any crimes that he actually committed and now he is facing 96 years. Every Public Defender assigned to his case had dropped his case without reason. Finally, one Public Defender was assigned to his case but with no receptive mindset. As his mother, I noticed that he wasn’t receiving the fair representation he deserved, so I reached out to our communities for monetary support to obtain a private lawyer. Unfortunately, the private lawyer has not kept her word in representing my son and we have not been able to get hold of her since COVID. So we have officially turned to another lawyer to get my son the fair legal representation and currently raising money for this lawyer . If you have it in your hearts and wallets, we are asking for any help to get us to the \$20,000 needed for this new lawyer.

Thank You and Please Donate and Share

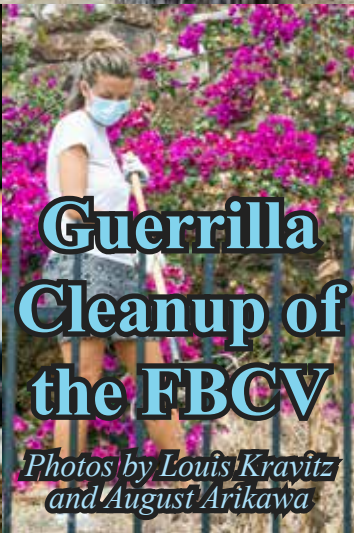
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**Guerrilla
Cleanup of
the FBCV**
*Photos by Louis Kravitz
and August Arikawa*