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# FREE VENICE SINCE 1968 BEACHHEAD

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September 2022 #474

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Stephen Longfellow Fiske, Photo By Enyaj Pitchford

## Dribbling his way through the Arts to the Ashram: the fortuitous, circuitous journey of Venice's own Stephen Longfellow Fiske!

By Enyaj Pitchford

Gentrification has stolen yet another great Venetian from our hood. Stephen L. Fiske, who lived with his wife and raised three children in the heart of the ghost town, through cop and gang shootings, crack sales, and massive redevelopment, lost his home of forty years, full of dear memories. Gone with the wind is yet another incredibly gentle, cognoscenti, and creative Soul. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to record his tale and share it with my readers.

Stephen, whose great grandmother, was a niece of the poet Longfellow and great grandfather, a Unitarian Minister. His father was an intellectual agnostic who was a writer and publisher, and his mother was an opera singer. He was born in Manhattan on 168th St., the now legendary Washington Heights. It was an apartment with six rooms, high ceilings, and overlooking the Hudson River, just across from the George Washington bridge that led many New Yorkers to their New Jersey country homes; I being one of them. His home was filled with music; with the record player spinning the great composers daily, and his mother giving voice and piano lessons in the living room. She also prepared for the many concerts and events she sang at. As Stephen describes it, he grew up "in the womb of music". He also, as was a scene I remember from my own childhood, always had a ball in his pocket, ready for stickball, streetball, and stoopball. It's a New York City I remember well. Where kids rode their bikes all day and found a spot to play 'street hockey', on roller skates, and would take over the whole street for their game, only allowing those who lived on the block to drive through. We agreed that this was the norm; people did not get pissed off about the inconvenience, but somehow understood that this is what kids did; it was natural. His particular corner had four sewer covers that represented all four bases; brilliant!

Stephen attended the coveted High School of Performing Arts, where he focused on fine arts since music was just natural to him; plus, he says, he was "too kinetic for music." Unfortunately, his father passed away when he was only 15. When not doing art, he played basketball every chance he could, in courts all over Manhattan. Upon graduating from HSPA, he avoided the draft by enrolling in the City College of NY to further his studies in art and met his lovely wife, Niki. She was an English Literature major and has just retired from working as an English teacher at the prestigious Franklin Elementary School in Santa Monica.

He graduated from the community City College,  
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Venice West Cafe Interior Photo

## Our Story

by Gerry Fialka

Jazz shaman and bandleader Sun Ra talked about it not being his story, it is "my story." In our own hometown, we celebrate our story. Not just his story, we include her story and everyone's story. Inclusivity . . . in toto . . . all together now. We are the atomic dogs pulling back the curtain to reveal the hidden psyche effects. As Caroline Casey howls on her Visionary Activist Radio Show, "Woof, Woof, Wanna Play?" As George P-Funk Clinton barks, "Nothin' butt the dog in me . . . Bow-wow-wow-yippie-yo-yippie-yeah . . .Bow-wow-yippie-yo-yippie-yeah."

Of course, James Joyce nailed it: "Let past times become pastimes" – Finnegans Wake (1939). As a rebellious freethinker, his words presaged our probes: "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake." So all you Venetians, Wake up, and celebrate our community. Arf !!!

Two happenings are jubilating our past, present and future. "Venice Beats" on Sept 11, and the Venice Heritage Film Festival from August 13.

On September 11 please join us at The Venice West to celebrate "VENICE BEATS," including the spirit of legendary artist/curator Mark "Sponto" Kornfeld, who nurtured the creative and Love community for 24 years at his 7 Dudley Avenue. This location was the very same home of the infamous Venice West Cafe from 1958 to 1966, one of the birthplaces of a free-spirited literature and art movement. The Beats shared themes of spirituality, environmental awareness and political activism. Sponto felt the sacred ground bubbling up from the Beat roots, and extended it. We are calling out a S.O.S. = Summer Of Sponto, which evokes the bebop tune "Now Is The Time," by Charles "Yardbird" Parker, who shares the same birthday with Sponto: August 29.

Mark "Sponto" Kornfeld (Aug 29, 1949 to Dec 28, 2008) greeted folks with the vivacious "Yo We." The "We" took his Spontolicious sing-songy slang into the "We are all oneness" realm. He hybridized "spontaneous" simultaneity with that feisty "pronto" punch, reinventing the spirit of the Beats. His Spontopolis operated in the inclusive realm, not in the "guilty until proven rich" exclusivity - a direct democracy utopia of participatory involvement. He often employed houseless people, one of which declared "They'll never get him out of there now." Spontoneers and Spontanarians unify in the Spontopolitan Bohemia. Daddy-Oz . . . the Wizard of Us

Abbott Kinney invented Venice and Sponto reinvented it. Soon after Kinney died, the pier burned.

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## Reese -Tabor Park and Recreation Center

797 California Ave., Los Angeles, CA  
Department of Recreation & Parks  
City of Los Angeles

Photo rendering by Eric Ahlberg

## REESE-TABOR OAKWOOD PARK AND RECREATION CENTER UPDATE

By Jon Wolff

The following is from a recent conversation with Dr. Naomi Nightingale about the name change for Oakwood Park in Venice.

Jon Wolff: What's the story about the name change for the park?

Dr. Nightingale: I think we have to go back two years when some of us met with Councilman Mike Bonin to ask him about his support of African-American History in the Oakwood area. With all the years that he had been involved in working for elected officials, and now that he's an elected official himself, we were just concerned that we didn't feel supported by him. At that time, he said, "You're right. I haven't done much at all. I understand that I need to walk the walk, not just talk the talk." And he made the commitment at that time to be supportive of African-American History and initiatives in his district. The first thing was, we were asking for his support for the historic and cultural designation of First Baptist Church of Venice. We got that wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. He spoke before the Office of Historic Resources Commission and he spoke before the full L.A. City Council. So we got his full support there. The other thing was the Black Lives Matter [mural] in the street. That was another of our initiatives. When I say "ours", I say the Original Save Venice group that was speaking with him. That was because of the significance of the church to the African-American Community and also that surrounding area, Westminster Avenue from 7th to 6th Street and the general Oakwood Community. To make it known that Black lives do matter. And that area was predominantly Black. That was just another one of our initiatives to make the history known to the wider community.

The other thing was to discuss a Walk of Fame. It may not be that name, but it would be a tribute to people from all ethnicities and nationalities from the Venice area who have made major contributions to the growth, development, and success of the Venice Community. Their names would be embedded in the four streets surrounding Oakwood Park. There would be an advisory  
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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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## Tenants Organize Mass Meeting at Oakwood Rec Center to Fight Landlords

By Jacob Woocher

The Westside Local chapter of the Los Angeles Tenants Union convened a meeting of tenants from all across the city at the Reese-Tabor Oakwood Recreation Center on August 1, 2022. Over 50 individuals, many of them members of their own tenants associations, gathered to discuss strategies on how to fight landlords and take back the land for the people.

The Sunset Avenue Tenants Association – a recently organized group made up of the residents of 559 Sunset Avenue in Venice – shared about their dealings with the new owner of the building. The new ownership, operating through a faceless LLC, has been bombarding tenants with cash-for-keys offers; one of its representatives even stated explicitly that the owner “preferred” that tenants leave the building permanently. But the Sunset tenants, almost all Latinx and Spanish-speaking, are staying united and strong, determined to maintain a working-class presence in the Venice neighborhood.

The Hillside Villa Tenants Association also gave an energetic presentation on their struggle to expropriate their building from the landlord using the process of eminent domain. These tenants in Chinatown have been fighting for almost 4 years now against their landlord Tom Botz, inspiring poor people across the region that a better world is truly possible.

The Westside branch of the Tenants Union will continue to fight for decent housing for everyone, which can only be won by directly taking on the landlord class. They meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm, at the Reece-Tabor Oakwood Recreation Center (meetings can also be joined via Zoom with the link bit.ly/westsidezoom).

\*\*\*\*

Lxs inquilinxs organizan una gran reunión para luchar contra los propietarios en Reece-Tabor Oakwood Rec Center

La sección Lado Oeste del Sindicato de Inquilinxs de Los Ángeles convocó una reunión de inquilinxs de toda la ciudad en el Reece-Tabor Oakwood Recreation Center el 1 de agosto de 2022. Más de 50 personas, muchas de ellos miembros de sus propias asociaciones de inquilinos, se reunieron para discutir estrategias sobre cómo luchar contra los propietarios y recuperar la tierra para el pueblo.

La Asociación de Inquilinos de Sunset Avenue – un grupo recientemente organizado formado por los residentes de 559 Sunset Avenue – compartió sobre sus tratos con el nuevo propietario del edificio. La nueva propiedad, que opera a través de una LLC sin rostro, ha estado bombardeando a los inquilinos con ofertas de dinero-por-llaves; uno de sus representantes incluso afirmó explícitamente que el propietario “prefería” que los inquilinos abandonaran sus viviendas permanente. Pero los inquilinos de Sunset, casi todos latinos y de habla hispana, se mantienen unidos y fuertes, decididos a mantener una presencia de clase trabajadora en el barrio de Venice.

La Asociación de Inquilinos de Hillside Villa también hizo una presentación enérgica sobre su lucha para expropiar su edificio del propietario mediante el proceso de “dominio eminente.” Estos inquilinos en Chinatown han estado luchando durante casi 4 años contra su propietario Tom Botz, inspirando a los pobres de toda la región que un mundo mejor es realmente posible.

La sección del Lado Oeste del Sindicato de Inquilinxs continuará luchando por una vivienda digna para todos, que solo se puede ganar enfrentándose directamente a la clase de los propietarios. Se reúnen el primer y tercer miércoles de cada mes, de 6:30 p. m. a 8:30 p. m., en el Reece-Tabor Oakwood Recreation Center (también se puede unir a las reuniones a través de Zoom con el enlace bit.ly/westsidezoom).

## The Winning Playbook

By Pat Raphael

We Liberals... gotta love us. The way we arrange our firing squad into a perfect circle, then we lock and load, hone in on our target, and with much zeal, await to hear, "fire!" Down goes another set of key players among our allies. Clear the chamber, line em' up, await to do the same all over again. But even here in LA? In this metro area that knows what it means to be tactical, and what it means to win? Think of the UCLA Dynasty, when the Bruins won 10 championships in 12 years. Or the Showtime Lakers, and their five rings in nine years. What can we learn from these successful teams? Both in the Bruins locker room and with the Showtime pros, the essence that captured their eras is that winning became an attitude. They spent time on the details to produce tangible results, then allowed these results to grow into a culture of winning.

When will we good-hearted leftists be just as tactical? When will we look at our process, see what works at convincing our neighbors, then actively make the decision to incorporate these winning processes, while avoiding the pitfalls that have historically kept us -- who hold the majority opinion -- away from the levers of power and unable to execute our policy positions? If the aim is to win, we have to look at the other side who's in the minority, and have been kicking our butts of late, then ask sincerely, what are they doing right? And what can we learn from the opposition that can transfer into our own tactics, so that we can wrest control and enjoy the same success in which they now relish?

To the other side, he's been elevated to a conservative saint. Ol' Saint Reagan gave them the 11th Commandment in which he told them, "thou shall not speak ill of any fellow Republicans". In this, they understand that politics is an alignment of interests. Working together, speaking with clear quotable language, it becomes easy for an evil genius like Frank Luntz to direct the choir, then repetition becomes fact. It took Saint Reagan to point this out, perhaps from an understanding honed right here in Hollywood during his days in media, where he got to understand more intimately the power of broadcast. He admonished his side to use broadcast only as a tool to get their message out, and never as an outlet to settle their own internal conflicts.

Whether we understand this or not, and no matter how much our opponents hate this, our voice here in the Free Venice Beachhead is an authoritative voice in this town. We come from a legacy of active readers and contributors, and even today maintain a lineage that keeps us at the pulse of the Venice conversation. It takes a clear view of how the paper is run, and how contributions are selected, along with an understanding of our "not-an-editor" editor, to really see how the magic of this crowd-sourced paper comes together every month. Before I got this view, I read an article in the Beachhead (this was a few years back), where one of the contributors was using the pages of the Beachhead to come after the guys on the boardwalk handing out CDs. Yo I mean reeeeeealy coming for them dudes. As I read this angry Venetian's article calling for the cops to arrest the CD guys, I who was considering submitting some articles to the paper, questioned whether I wanted to have anything to do with a paper that would give ink space just because they didn't like how a neighbor was making his money. It's only later I got to see this was just ONE CONTRIBUTOR'S opinion, and that our accessible local gem allows all contributors space to air their points of view, because here we welcome ideas.

I've since read many articles in the BeachHead with which I might disagree. None of those articles that I disagreed with ever made me ask myself if I want to have anything to do with this paper -- to the contrary, I am honored to feel the love burden of adding my voice as a contributor to the BeachHead. Even after reading the recent BeachHead coverage airing the internal conflict broiling through Original Save Venice, my position yet remains: err on the side of adding voices, rather than stifling the con-

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with a full ride to NYU on a basketball scholarship, where he continued his studies in fine arts, and played basketball at Madison Square Garden every Thursday night. He was now in the heart of the city, with Washington Square Park as his playground and the Greenwich Village Folk scene exploding all around him. He taught himself guitar, and joined the stage with many legends of the time at Gerdie's Folk City, singing songs of freedom along with the upcoming Joan Baez and Bob Dylan, and the beloved Pete Seger. He also played with Arlo Guthrie, Richie Havens, Phil Ochs, and Joan Baez, at the Bitter End Club. He had an opportunity to tour with the New Christy Minstrels but when then his scholarship came in from NYU, he chose that, in order to further avoid the ominous draft hanging over young men's heads at the time.

Stephen had visited San Francisco, where his sister and her husband were living, in 1967. It was the height of the summer of love, and he was all in. He got to see the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Quicksilver Messenger Service on stage live, free, at Golden Gate Park. He heard a loud voice from within calling out "I wanna DO that!" So, in 1968 he left the Big Apple with the love of his life and headed for San Francisco. He got a job as a singing waiter at the Red Garter in the city. He had worked as a head waiter for their branch in NYC and had a position waiting for him. Nicky worked there too as a waitress. They stayed a short time at his sister's place but quickly settled in his own place in Berkeley. He then formed a loud acid rock band with a wall of amplifiers called "Bicycle". He was the lead singer and his bass player was the sound engineer for the Grateful Dead. Not only did he hang with this band, but he played the Winterland and opened for Canned Heat, Jimi Hendrix, and Crosby Stills Nash and Young. It was an amazing time, and yet, the war in Viet Nam was still raging and it was the same year that Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated.

Besides music and art, Stephen also woke up to the peace movement to fuel his 'songs of freedom'. He walked with and witnessed Martin Luther King's "I have a dream speech" and was deeply imprinted with the idea of nonviolence and peace. He leaned toward the lefty, progressive thinkers. He read and followed the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Once out of school, he was no longer safe from the draft. He became lucid with the idea of non-violence.

While in Manhattan, he sought out a Catholic

priest, a Rabbi, and a Unitarian priest to get established as a conscientious objector. He worked with the American Friends Service Committee and counseled other young men on how to get their conscientious objection status. He also got involved with his lifelong practice of yoga through his guru, the venerable Swami Satchidananda, whom he traveled with. As an Interfaith Minister traveling with Swami Satchidananda, his beliefs coincided with his guru's teaching that "truth is one, paths are many." He said that rabbis, hippies, yogis, and different conscious seeking people all converged to seek wisdom from the Swami.

After a couple of years of screaming over the loud music blaring from the stage, Stephan was over it, and ready to move on. The volatile mix of crazy and psychedelics and weed just didn't last. These were great times and tragic times. Everyone was so high all the time that everywhere he turned the conversation was "I'm coming on", "I'm flying high" or "I'm coming down." It just got old, and wasn't what he nor his wife were looking for. Drugs were destroying people's lives, including that of his friends of the Grateful Dead. He needed something more, and that's when he was offered a music contract with the then Tacoma Record company in Santa Monica. It fell through because it just didn't mesh with his yogic lifestyle; but the idea of settling in a laid-back, creative enclave with low rents called Venice hit his radar. So, by 1973, he arrived and found a flat on Rose Avenue, near the beach. Nicky was pregnant with their first child, and though the landlord was not looking for a family of long-haired hippie disposition to move into their home next door, on Christmas day, in 1974, they handed Stephen and Nicky keys to a two-bedroom home with all the charm of the 20's style architecture graced with a charming breakfast nook overlooking the big yard for \$200 a month. There was never a lease; just a handshake; from a time when one's word was one's bond. Mr. and Mrs. Green were WWII riveters, hired by Douglas Aircraft. They took a chance on this young couple, and simply required them to maintain the property and take care of the yard.

They maintained the property and planted the yard and remained for 40 years, raising three children, and continuing their adventure. Even though the rent was raised over time, it was always way below the market rates of today. And until their passing, they were good friends and neighbors with their landlords. They attempted to buy the home when it

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WIZZARD OF EDD

by John Davis

The Executive Director of the California Employment Development Division is analogous to the cinematic Wizard of Oz. It pulls important levers while being shrouded by an opaque curtain. This employee of the State exercises vast control over people's lives. Yet, the public has no way to contact it.

Many citizens of the State of California have needed the services of the California Employment Development Division to obtain benefits they have earned as a result of becoming unemployed.

After the pandemic ensued, the problems of the EDD were amplified.

People have been discouraged from using the system because their calls went unanswered, even after hundreds of attempts. And, when they were able to connect, often times they would be presented with an undertrained agent or one who would simply hang up the phone. Or, there case problems would remain unresolved.

The question begged is, how can the people directly hold the agency to account for the ongoing activities that do not benefit the public?

It is easy to contact many of their agencies by phone, fax, email, or even make appointments with an Executive Director/Officer and or Deputy Directors.

That is not the case with the EDD because it is labeled as a not being a public facing agency. And that is the problem, it should be, given its vital importance to the people and families that rely on its services.

It should hold monthly public meetings around the State so that the people may address the agency publicly with both its efficiencies and insufficiencies. That way the people can be treated as a full partner with the agency they created instead of simply being considered inhuman statics. This could only lead to an operational improvement engendering trust.

The people of this state are not subservient to the agencies they create and fund.

But here, it appears the people have lost control.

The Governor has not taken any responsibility in this matter. Gavin Newsom's office would not provide the contact information for the Executive Director when asked telephonically.

When the agency works it does a very good job. But, problems remain, and there is no indication they will ever be fixed, unless the people demand a positive change.

If enough people ask their elected officials for change it may happen, so that is the first step in our democratic process.

Until then, the people can only rely on the law to gain control. The California Public Records Act is meaningful in that respect. A response for public records was provided by an attorney for the EDD on August 12, 2022. It provides the contact information for the Executive Office of the EDD and the Executive Director/Officer below. Whether the agency is public facing or not, the Executive Director is responsible for the Agency operations.

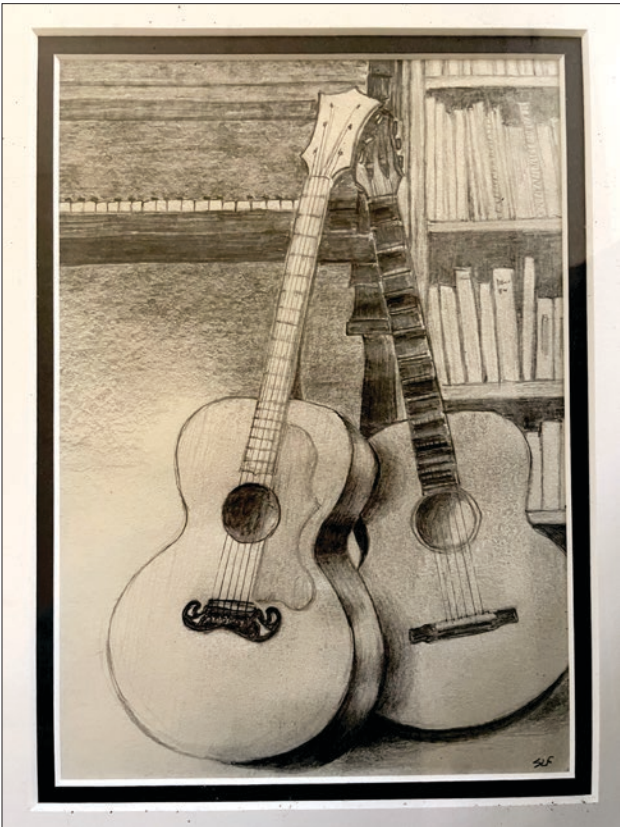
CONTACT INFORMATION

Nancy Farias is the EDD Executive Officer and Director: Nancy.Farias@edd.ca.gov / Physical address of the executive office of the State of California EDD / 722 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814 / Mailing address of the executive office of the State of California EDD / P.O. Box 826880, Sacramento, CA 94820 / Phone number of the executive office of the State of California EDD. / (Via the Legal Office Phone) (916) 654-8410 / Fax number of the executive office of the State of California EDD. (Via the Legal Office Fax) (916) 654-9069





was affordable, but the Greens insisted on leaving it to their heirs, as they had no children. Their heirs were in Idaho, and never set foot in the place nor Venice, and immediately sold the properties, numbering their days in their beloved home. Thankfully the new landlord, who lives locally, is not rushing them, but they don't want to move East in the winter months.



Stephen continued his music and art while raising his children. He performed locally at our beloved Come Back Inn, which once graced Washington street, before it became Abbot Kinney, with the most magnificent banyan tree in the yard. (That area has been so demolished and gentrified, that one can't even fathom a space like that existing in today's merciless economy.) He did not like the vultures of the music industry and eventually found a way to get paid to speak and perform by traveling the New Age circuit, with yoga conferences, ashrams, retreats, human potential movement, and festivals. His songs were recorded by legends like Jose' Feliciano, Luther Vandross, and the New Christy Minstrels. Besides performing, before COVID, he did voiceovers and enjoyed the benefit of residual checks in the mail. No more passing the hat and competing with background noise! He also coached basketball at local schools like Westminster, SAMO-HI and Westside Alternative School. He continued, as he does to this day, with his yoga practice and taught classes at the Church at Ocean Park. He recently published a book of poems called The Art of Peace which he describes as a "poetical philosophical book with drawings"

Abbot Kinney was Washington St. when he arrived here. It was full of small little shops, and laid back. There were oil wells in Venice; canals were dilapidated and polluted and the hood would go through bouts of random gang shootings and various drug sales, like the infamous crack days. The changing and conflicting interests of Venice got him Involved with boardwalk activities and he tried to create the Venice Ambassadors' Program. It was to be a citizens' monitoring group to help with the merchants, musicians, artists, then arguing over the spaces, a way to compromise and find peaceful solutions. He worked with then councilman Bill Rosedahl to create a program; Bonin, then an associate of his, also came to the meetings. They'd come together at the Sidewalk Cafe and discuss how to protect the free speech zone and foster artistic expression. This was in the late 70's. Stephen wanted a memorandum of understanding from the police but the police didn't want it. It was a plan to work with groups of people managing the boardwalk people's issues, and fell under the egress of the parks. "Everyone was engaged but no one from the police would work with them; they wouldn't agree to protect us." The safety reality of having a management team needed the police's support. Because of the

lack of police support, the project was abandoned but instead he produced the Venice Eco Fest from 1979-1981 There were 150 booths, a petting zoo, yoga, and a parade down the boardwalk. "It took so much energy, especially with the conflicts with the city and parks department. It began to take too much from my creativity and performance. I couldn't even perform at the Ecofest. I was the MC and had so much administrative work." Finally, he just had enough of it. "It took over my entire home, which became one big office. I decided to stay with music, art and writing instead, and kept on it."

Later down the road, Stephen worked with James Lawson, the Director of the nonprofit ICUJP; a group of artists "Intercommunity United for Justice and Peace". James Lawson, was a mentor to Congressman John Lewis and a keynote speaker at the John Lewis memorial service. He serves as pastor at Holman Church now, and can be heard each Saturday morning on zoom. He is one of the last relics of the original civil rights movement. He's been committed to doing service about peace since 9/11.



Stephen's children flourished under the influence of their parents and the neighborhood and in turn have influenced them. His second daughter, Alana, is a UC Berkeley graduate. She lives in Fort Awesome near the college. She and a group of likeminded people bought a couple of old homes there, and established a largely off the grid community. They make all their decisions by consensus, live cooperatively, have a communal kitchen, solar panels, and gardens. It evolved from the cooperative student living quarters at the college. She works as a fact checker and researcher for film makers, when she's not conducting or attending the many social gatherings and workshops at the Fort and their neighboring home. A matter of fact she will assist Stephen in his recent project, inspired by his son, Evan Gabriel. A New School of California graduate, plays with a Klezmer band, which is an eclectic mix of Eastern European music. That led to his interest in a Jewish meditation group. Although he was raised in a vegetarian yogi Interfaith family, without any specific religious doctrine, his mom is Jewish. He just got attracted to Judaism, and took the scholarship that was offered to him to Yeshiva in Israel. As his mom predicted, he fell in love with a Jewish girl, a fellow musician, and now has dual citizenship as an Israeli American. He married and now lives there in a community with other musicians. He's getting his Masters at the Hebrew University there. Stephen emphasizes that "He is not Orthodox." Stephen has been back and forth about eight times now for he got inspired by his visits and his commitment to peacemaking to make a film about those in Israel, both Palestinian and Jewish, seeking to create peace amongst themselves. He and his filmmaking partner are in production of a film for over five years on the Israel and Palestinian conflict. Showing both sides of the issues; highlighting the grassroot peacemaker both Jewish and Palestinian working together. Stephen decries that "the right wing Orthodox Jews



control Israel. It has become a theocracy, particularly since Netanyahu has ruled. The original pluralistic, welcoming, cultural hub of eclectic, cooperative energies that founded the country is all but lost now." But his film makes him hopeful as he wants his audience to feel. He goes on to state that "within the Israel Palestinian situation, what seems like unmakeable peace, there are people on the grassroot level actively keeping the peace alive; brave, brave people! Courageous peacemakers on the grass roots level that no one hears about." This is what his film focuses on. "Liberal Israelis are way out of power. (The Orthodox in power) have built a horrible wall!"

His son Evan led him to be a filmmaker. As the political landscape keeps changing, so does the film. Robert Christie is his partner on his "Warriors of the Heart" project. It is two stories; one of the organization of women who wage peace; and that of ROOTS, an Orthodox Jewish settler partnering with nonviolent Palestinian activist Ali Abu Awwad. Their partnership builds a communication bridge between Palestinians and Jews. It is a nonviolent peace center in the crossroads of Palestine and Israel. It's a safe zone where both can come and intermingle in a secure environment. Stephen gets great inspiration from this unique place, which is about "the humanity of being a human being in this world, with a reasonable amount of security and dignity with one another " The project has had some fundraising support but it's mostly been an out-of-pocket expenditure. I, for one, can't wait to see it!

Finally, their youngest Amy is an IT expert in Santa Monica. Stephen worries about her spending 10-12 hours a day in front of a computer screen. She is slated to follow them into their next home, which leads to their next mythic adventure, of owning their own home, built by a dear friend, in Yogaville, Virginia; a town of 100 yogis, built around an ashram started by Swami Satchidananda that is actually on the map now. A four-bedroom home, with a separate one-bedroom apartment awaits them attached and another detached one-bedroom apartment for renting! All while surrounded by yogis and mystics like themselves.

So, as a man who has been in Venice for decades and seen many changes, I asked him how he sees the future of Venice. He speaks as a poet would. "Now the Soul of Venice is being dissipated by gentrification but there is still something here. It's in the way the sun continues to shine on the place. Venice still has an inspiration, even as the contagious capitalistic venture of Los Angeles continues to spread, it still survives, this unique vision of Abbot Kinney." And then he speaks of the Venice Beach basketball courts near the pit and the whole scene there. "It's been an important part of my life; learning to play ball from the parks and the streets." I'd say this man has scored many points on the scoreboard of the game of life. And while I am sad to lose such a marvelous Soul, I am ever grateful to have made his acquaintance and wish him well on his next adventure. I'm sure we'll be able to see his film very soon! [stephen@stephenfiskemusic.com](mailto:stephen@stephenfiskemusic.com)



[www.fromthehoodtothehollerfilm.com](http://www.fromthehoodtothehollerfilm.com)



THE AWARD WINNING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT CHARLES BOOKER  
**PREMIERING SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> - 23<sup>RD</sup>**  
**AT THE SANTA MONICA LAEMMLE**

1:00PM, 3:30PM, 6:30PM

FROM THE  
**HOOD**  
TO THE  
**HOLLER**



PAT MCGEE PICTURES PRESENTS "FROM THE HOOD TO THE HOLLER"

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DIRECTED BY PAT MCGEE



Our Story – continued from page 1

Soon after Sponto died, the Gallery closed, but we'll be burnin' the Sponto light forever. Bustin' the bardos loose. "It's all good, Sponti."

Jack Kerouac, author of ON THE ROAD, introduced the phrase "Beat Generation" in 1948 to characterize a perceived underground, anti-conformist



youth movement. Venice West Cafe at 7 Dudley Ave in Venice, California was one of the origin cornerstones grooving out of public repression. Free your mind and your ass will follow. Dig that Lord Buckley hung out dare. The coolio lyrics of Slim Galliard and Babs Gonzales filled the air.

The Venice West Café was the hang-out for many creative people including artist Wallace Berman, photographer Charles Brittin, underground film star Taylor Mead, jazz shaman-comedian Lord Buckley, photographer-filmmaker Leland Auslender, artist Earl Newman, photographer Harry Drinkwater, Robby Kreiger & John Densmore of The Doors, musician Bob Romeo, songwriter Eden Ahbez (writer of Nat King Cole's hit Nature Boy and be sure to visit <https://www.edenahbez.com/> with pre-views of the upcoming film by Brian Chidester, who presented events at Sponto Gallery. His pal Dominic Priore was there probing history deeply. Be sure to check out his excellent essay in the book BEATS-VILLE, "your ticket from squaresville to the world of the cool, the way-out and the offbeat."), prop designer-mad scientist Larry Albright, artist Eric "Big Daddy" Nord, sculptor Ron Boise, Ed Cassidy (drummer for Spirit), jazz icon Art Pepper, Larry Lipton (author of The Holy Barbarians), comedian Mort Sahl, drummer Tambu, author Clifford Irving, artist George Herms, author Charles Foster, politicians Al Matthews & Jack Hampton, and social worker Paul Smith.

This important historical venue was a nurturing stomping ground for many poets including: Susan & Stuart Z. Perkoff, Tony Scibella, Frank T. Rios, John Thomas, Anna & John Haag, Aya, Saul White, William Margolis, Clair Horner, Danny Propper, Maurice Lacy, Jack Hirschman, MC Ford, Larry Lake, Bob Alexander, and Kenneth Rexroth, who is often credited as being the first to have live jazz back up his poetry readings. We have now learned that ruth weiss was the first. She attended Venice

West Cafe. <https://www.ruthweissfilm.com/>

Numerous groundbreaking poets and artists drew their inspiration amongst the group, including John Altoon, and Philomene Long. It's rumored that Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Lenny Bruce, Leonard Cohen may have hung out there too.

Jazz shaman and influential comedian Lord Buckley held court at the Venice West Cafe. He summarizes our feelings with two quotes:

"People, yes people are the true flowers of life and it has been a most precious pleasure to have temporarily strolled in your garden."

"Laughter truly is religious. It gives off vibrations from the subconscious. When a person is laughing he's illuminated, he's illuminated in the fully beauty of a human being. You're thinking love, you're vibrating love. It's a prayer. It's a beautiful thing."

In the 1959 book The Holy Barbarians, poet Lawrence Lipton detailed the Beats in Venice: "The names they give their gangs are indicative of their hunger for social status. In Venice West it's The Doges. Some of them pronounce it "dogs" but they know it means something like The Man of Distinction. (Wasn't "putting on the dog" once a slang synonym for distinctive?) If one gang names itself The Counts, the gang in the next block goes it one better with



The Dukes. Such pretensions are abhorrent to the beatnik." <https://kennywilson.org/2016/08/10/holy-barbarians-by-lawrence-lipton/>

Was he presaging "Dogtown" and the homogenizing of subversive culture? And Dog Latin is a humorous device mocking scholarly seriousness. Let us have fun in our playground. Can we be serious about being not serious?

The remarkable Venice Heritage Museum hosted their Film Festival on August 13. It was a grand gathering of community celebrating history with film clips from 1917 to the present. One highlight was the montage of beloved photographer Frank Talbott's stunning images from the bohemian 1960 & 1970s featuring the song "Dogtown" by The Dark Bob from his 2006 album "Stoked." A must listen on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ChsaXCtGfg>

Major loving kudos to Kristina von Hoffmann and Michael Murphy for their inspiring and inspired dedication to telling our tale. Their thoughtful oral history project is extremely important. I was deeply moved by hearing and seeing Joan Huff intimate being a descendent of one of the first Black families of Venice. Major kudos to VHM's relentless commitment.

All these efforts to preserve Our Story, HerStory, history are rooted, not retro.

Beat poet and environmental activist Gary Snyder said: "My task as a poet entails the work of seeing the world without language and then bringing that seeing into language." Marcel Proust expands: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but seeing with new eyes."

Much like James Joyce's Finnegans Wake, we are generating a new essence. Transporting information, as we transform it. Standing on the shoulders of our ancestors, we can seek new visions, new metaphors and new questions.

Jack Kerouac's motive was "to make a try at a spontaneous Finnegans Wake with the sounds of the Universe itself as the plot and all the neologisms, mental associations, puns, word-mixes from various languages scribbled out in a strictly intuitional discipline at breakneck speed."

It takes time . . . because . . . "Walking on water wasn't built in a day." — Jack Kerouac.

How can we reword these maxims? like . . . "Venice is not a place, it's a poem."

"Love my label as myself"- James Joyce. Love thy story as thyself ?

Visit Youtube and enter "The Venice West Tour" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9vsPk1iSts> to see the colorful walls of this righteous local venue, The Venice West. Kudos to the owners, Rob Lissner and Adam Sanford for displaying iconic Venice history memorabilia, art and photos. We are grateful for this exemplary exhibit. I welcome your input: [Gerry.Fialka.pfsuzy@aol.com](mailto:Gerry.Fialka.pfsuzy@aol.com) 310-306-7330 Laughtears.com

Join us at The Venice West - Suzy Williams - Venice Beats

Sept 11, 2022 - SUNDAY at 7pm (doors 6pm) at 1717 Lincoln Blvd

<https://thevenicewest.com/> \$10 (Free souvenir Sponto postcard with each paid admission)

Gerry Fialka host a celebration of the Beats in Venice with Suzy Williams "LA's Diva Deluxe" with Brad Kay, Kahlil Sabbagh, Carol Chaikin, and from The Bonedaddys - Mike Tempo, & Rick Moors. Delve deep into Venice West Cafe & Sponto history, live stellar poets, songs by Jack Kerouac, Philomene Long, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and all the local cats. Featuring Reverend Dan of <http://music-fornimrods.blogspot.com/> and Flo Lawrence (from the film MANK) doing "Nature Boy" by Eden Ahbez, and Michael Jost & Suzy doing John Thomas.

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/events/458892346092261>

Gerry's podcasts are on Youtube "I'm Probably Wrong About Everything." Laughtears.com

UPCOMING: SUNDAY, Oct 16, 2022, 6pm-live music, 7pm-films at Beyond Baroque -

An Evening of Music Films with Mark Cantor: "I've Just Gotta See It But It Ain't On YouTube Blues"

<https://www.facebook.com/events/789902615532438/>

Cinema historian Cantor screens jazz, blues, folk music, Western Swing and just plain "pop" films drawn from the Celluloid Improvisations Music Film Archive. These rare film clips cannot seen on YouTube, or found on commercial DVDs. Featured on screen, in a full two hours of music on film, will be such artists as Duke Ellington, Louis Jordan, Dinah Washington, Phil Woods, Dakota Staton, Benny Goodman, Frank Sinatra, Archie Shepp, Louis Armstrong, Lee Konitz, Gerald Wilson and many more. <http://www.jazz-on-film.com/>







Sugar Witherspoon's friends and family celebrated her birthday this year on Saturday, August 20 with a 1970s-themed party in Reese-Tabor Oakwood Park in Venice. Hundreds of attendees turned out for food, and fun, and music.

Memories of Sponto and his Gallery.





Thirty-Five Thousand Titles

I WORKED AT THE BODHI TREE BOOK-STORE for over a decade. I'm used to perusing book spines. We carried a lot of titles: 35,000 of them. At least one title represented on the floor and overstock was upstairs. When I first started working there, the store was an Operation. A Machine. And remained an institution even in its decline when it succumbed to the voracious appetite of the internet & Amazon. Before that the phones were always ringing, and a steady stream of new customers graced open hours most days and some of the regulars practically lived there. As far as titles, there was not room to place a book facing out on the shelf. Very few were allowed this position. Everything was tightly packed. A couple of display tables of multiple copies in the entrance of the store caught the casual browser's eye. But the diehard searchers and researchers parked themselves in the four corners of the building, drank tea, and read and read, occasionally coming back to the office to special order a title we were out of or possibly—was that possible?-- did not carry.

I was used to looking at spines. Too many covers was too visual for me. Whenever I was in a store that had a lot of book covers faced out on their shelves, it reeked of a kind of poverty to me. Buy me, buy me it all seemed to say. Because if you don't, the store may fold. This is all we have, so we're making the best of it. We will dazzle you with the colors and graphics of the book cover, seduce you with what you may conjure from a first glance, because we are a pretend bookstore – we cater only to the superficial whims of the casual reader. Bodhi Tree wasn't like that. Bodhi Tree was a library of anything you would want to know about the religions across the globe and any kind of spiritual or metaphysical experience throughout the ages. Everything from Rumi to witchcraft and beyond. And it attracted people from all over the world, from scholars to glitterati, to the hidden homeless.

I miss the packed bookcases. The staircase I walked up and down twenty times a day, the good workout I got from lifting carton boxes of books at all hours. I have muscles in my shoulders and back I don't know how I acquired but figure it must have been from all that heavy lifting all those years. The incense, the cool world music, and the coolest people on earth who I worked with. And the books, books I bought at discount, books I read on my lunch break, books I read on the sly. Books that were packed in tight to the bookshelves because that is the only way you can make 35, 000 of them available to the public to trail their fingers upon, to pull out on a whim, to peruse out of curiosity, but more often to search for answers on how to feel better, be a better human being, and for some how to make the world a better place. From Dreams to Numerology, from Tibetan Buddhism to Gnosticism, acupuncture to the Alexander Technique. How are people now even going to know what to ask for, what to look for, without a physical library to present to you all that is possible in this realm?

How I miss the brick and mortar bookstores, the real deal bookstores, the accumulation of real knowledge, the jump-start to inspiration. All that fraught possibility.

Lisa Marguerite Mora  
Hidden Wisdom Writing  
since 2002

"You are a gifted and generous & brilliant friend and advisor." -- Susan G. Wooldridge, Poemcrazy: Freeing Your Life with Words (Crown Books)

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<https://www.lisamargueritemora.com>

*Winning Playbook – continued from page 2*

versation because some may not like what is being said. As a community platform, the Free Venice BeachHead is my platform too. It is a place of free speech where we can counter speech that is not of community value, with speech that positively serves the community.

Dealing with money in a transparant way that promotes community trust is a typical trip up for organizations large and small, from leftist liberals to rightwing conservatives. Scan the news and there'll be many examples where fiscal mismanagement was the cause of the organizational failure. While I do not have all the details in the Original Save Venice matter, let us suppose a hypothetical so we can talk through some best practices, which may be useful if such an issue ever arises in the future.

Here's the hypothetical: Suppose a comrade in the trenches communicates the need for us to raise funds, then we agree and create a 501c3 raising funds in our name. If later allegations of mismanagement arise, how should this be handled? In one word: quietly. Why quietly? Do I want to provide cover for bad actors in our midst? Well of course not. None of what comes next should provide the bad actor an avenue to escape consequences. But all consequences should have the future in mind, and not just the cathartic short term benefit of a public stoning. We must move quietly because the first examination should have made us consider HOW we set up the governance of our non-profit, which gave rise to such unchecked access. At this point the future is assured, since new monies would be received under an updated, more secure governance structure. But justice does not only look forward, we must also go back and communicate to as many donors as practical -- especially any larger contributors -- that some monies collected were not used for the purposes intended. It is to THESE contributors that we would communicate the next piece of making things right: the restitution plan brought into agreement after all investigations net an exact amount that must be paid back. From here we are at a crossroad, because we must have patience, understanding that mismanagement is most often carried out by broke people. Rushing for quick payback (even a year later) is what we would do if all we wanna say is 'we gave a chance for payback', so we can quickly get to the run and tell part. Instead, pursuing restitution offers a chance to seek a heart that recognizes the harm caused, from which true sorrow can develop while making things right, ending with a firm determination to never let such mismanagement occur again. We lose all of these opportunities, if attacks immediately put people on the defensive, and camps align with everyone wielding their sharpest knives. We must value the revelation that the mismanagement gives light to, along with the repentant spirit that could arise as consequences play out, and with the future in mind appreciate the insight we gain as to whom the management of fiscal responsibilities can rest.

So even if repayment takes time, when funds are all paid back, it's okay to leave the past in the past, and we can go forward together without inflicting public damage to an ally. After all, mismanagement aside, we still believe and want to accomplish those same good things that brought us together, shoulder to shoulder, in the first place. Working through these conflicts quietly does not put the big picture outcome as secondary to the righteous zeal of dealing with bad actors.

Never forget that even amongst our allies, we are dealing with flawed individuals who gather and offer the best version of themselves for public consideration. It would not be too smart to take that person's best version that we've been spoonfed, and make that the foundational basis upon which we build a working relationship. The key is to truly get to know those who labor in our midst. Time gets us to the real person, and a facade becomes more and more difficult to uphold as we get to know people. Not jumping in and placing responsibilities on people until we truly know who we're dealing with, is the least that we can do to assure solid allies for

the future.

A winning team is always a collection of winning individuals who know that they are part of the whole, and in a practiced way, exercise their role with reliable precision. The Winning Playbook is only for a winning team. Let us learn to fill our team with players who are solid in the areas of sex, money and power. If we want to go forth and crush it, all of us must be thinking with our big head and not with our little head, while also supremely respecting every cent of resource committed to our management, while also not being so full of ourselves that we only seek positions to satisfy a need to tell the world what to do -- then we're ready to be a real challenger. This is a team that the opposition would take note of, cause only then do we pose any real threat to their grip on power. Besides, aren't we tired of playing to lose? The Buffalo Bills were back, to back, to back champs.... but only in the little bowl. When it came time to bring home the Big Bowl, it was choke, after choke, after choke. Working hard to get an ally elected is akin to winning the little bowl. Having that ally come into power as a lame duck, embroiled in scandal and unable to advance any of the ideas he came to power to deliver, is choking in the Big Bowl.

*Reese-Tabor – continued from page 1*

committee made. A multi-racial, gendered group as diverse as we could make it, representative of the Venice Community, that would serve on an advisory committee to determine what the criteria would be for nominations and eligibility for being embedded in that walk. That committee would receive nominations and would make the decisions. So this is a very long range, strategic plan for the Oakwood and Venice Community that we see lasting way into the future, twenty, thirty, forty years or more. I mean, how long would it take us to go around those four blocks embedding people's names? It's somewhat patterned after the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Also, some of us went out to the Sepulveda area where we see those individuals who have been significantly contributing to the airlines and air industry that are embedded in the sidewalks on Sepulveda and around the airport area. So that's something that Councilman Bonin has also supported, and it's still in its very embryonic stages. I won't be meeting with his office until next Wednesday. Then the steps will be to pull together a diverse advisory committee and then to talk about having some kind of artist contest to come up with what the emblem would be that would be embedded in the sidewalk with the individuals' names.

A last thing was the recognition of [Arthur] Reese and [Irving] Tabor, two people who are documented historically as having settled in the Oakwood Community over 117 years ago, and being the footing for the development of the Oakwood Community. The suggestion was, to acknowledge that and to give some historic sustainability to that, why don't we add the names Reese-Tabor to Oakwood Park? Initially, Councilman Bonin had put forth a motion to the city asking support for the name of Reese-Tabor Park and Recreation Center. Laddie [Williams] and I approached him with the suggestion that, in order to diffuse some of the concerns that people had that there was an erasure of Oakwood, and to also acknowledge that people have a particular passionate and emotional attachment to the name of Oakwood, in addition to Reese-Tabor being added, the name Oakwood would stay within the park's name. The Reese-Tabor Oakwood Park and Recreation Center. Councilman Bonin agreed to that and has submitted a letter to the general manager of the Parks and Recreation Board, Mr. Jimmy Kim asking for support for that name change.

Jon Wolff: That's a perfect description of this. Did you want to talk about any of the controversy that's creeping around this issue right now?

Dr. Nightingale: Yes. There has been controversy regarding adding those two names to the park because two people, [Laura] Ceballos and

*continued on page 10*



\*THE WORLD IS IN TROUBLE\*  
(a reggae song) marty liboff

The world is in trouble, trouble, trouble  
better change it on the double  
or we're all gonna die  
H-bombs raining from the sky  
mothers goin to cry...

Wars everywhere, everywhere, everywhere  
poisons in the waters and air  
it's such a scare  
more than we can bear  
we need to care...  
Let's get together and change the world

Racism and bigotry, bigotry, bigotry  
we pollute and cut down every tree  
corporations only want more money  
everyone out for me, me, me  
no one can see...

Diseases kill, kill, kill  
so many getting ill  
what can we do  
politicians say nuthin true  
heroes are so few...  
Let's get together and change the world

Armageddon and death, death, death  
take your last breath  
murderers & robbers in the city  
there's no love or pity  
our earth was once so pretty...

So much hate, hate, hate  
it may be too late  
civil war and revolution  
we must find a solution  
to a terrible situation...  
Let's get together and change the world

Hunger and poverty, poverty, poverty  
we don't know what will be  
death and homelessness  
the world is a mess  
our end is a guess... Ooo

The world is in trouble, trouble, trouble  
we need love on the double  
or it will all be rubble, Ooo nooo...  
So many goin to die, die, die  
but we must try, try, try,  
Let's get together and change the world  
Ooo yeah...

We need love, love, love  
oh yeah...oh yeah...Ooo  
we need love, love, love...Ooo, Ooo  
Let's get together and change the world- Ooo,  
Ooo, Ooo  
and we need love, love, love Ooo yeah...

MY PRISON -marty liboff  
Prisons of our mind  
locked up in a bind  
struggling to find  
Conversations with me  
talking unable to see  
rationalizing what will be will be  
Anxieties, sadness & fears  
paranoia & suicidal tears  
medicating on drugs & beers  
My prison is hiding at home  
afraid to go out and roam  
depression, anger, a crazy poem  
Storms & lightning in my brain  
drowning in a rain of pain  
feel I'm goin insane  
Feelin stuck & hopeless  
fucked up in a mess  
always unsure tryin to guess  
My house is my jail  
there is never bail  
feelin I'll always fail  
Am I mad  
I'm feelin so bad  
depressed, confused and sad  
Questions, talk, lies, BS  
no, yes, no, yes, no, yes  
is it all hopeless  
A scared little boy lost  
in violent waves I'm tossed  
I've paid Hell's cost  
They say I'm goin crazy  
others say I'm just lazy  
my future is chaotic and hazy  
They tell me take this & that pill  
the pills make me ill  
a zombie with no will  
Lookin for someone to blame  
I'm feelin such shame  
tired of playin a game  
Don't know if I can go on  
doin crap with a bad con  
lying to myself on & on & on  
Resentment, guilt, pain, fear  
it's OK to laugh or shed a tear  
listen, hear and lend an ear  
There's always hope  
learn how to cope  
try not to use booze & dope  
Anger and I'm gonna bust  
love & understanding a must  
in yourself you must trust  
Express yourself & be who you are  
you are a blazing star  
expand your universe and go far  
Gotta be brave & try  
it's OK to cry  
sing & dance with a butterfly  
I want to be all I can be  
hug a tree and be free  
see clearly & be me  
Life ends so soon  
so talk with the sun & moon  
and whistle a happy tune  
Ya don't have to kill yourself & die  
swim with a whale & kiss the sky  
get out & grow wings and fly, fly, fly...

9 • September 2022 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD



I went to the launch of Maintenant 16 and found a bevy of irreverent poets, willing to mock sacred cows and deconstruct the worst things with the best humor. Our own beloved Linda Albertano is a mover and shaker in this movement, but sadly she could not come. Here we offer a sampling of Two Poems from maintenant 16, a Journal of Contemporary Dada Writing and Art, available at the Beyond Baroque Bookstore, or at <https://threeroomspress.com/shop>

Mike M. Mollett & Michael Lane Bruner  
Los Angeles, California & Las Vegas, Nevada  
NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

What to make of the messy cadavers, strewn about the playing fields, with the heroisms of death and defeat the exact equal of life and victory? In our hyperinflation, the games and the dances are for most of us long overdue, or long gone, long over and gone elsewhere.

Fearing life and death and the incomprehensibly infinite, our atoms shared with everyone, our souls left to ourselves with substance we might imagine. What's a soul to do in this place and its violence? What's expected on the next day, and the next, apparently forever?

Fishing for relief is what the addict says, no matter how clean. Listen, for example: "Oh ignorant kings of the universe, a mirrored endless rain falling

makes a lot of sense. Its wild rhythms layering blankets all over the place of fields and rooftop thinking, orchestrally layered, pilgrims dancing, so many tunes recalled, locked in again and wetting the body. Just look at them! Don't try to count. But listen to the rush ... ahhhhhh."

Robert C. Ford  
New York, New York  
HAIL TO THE GAS-POWERED LEAF-BLOWERS

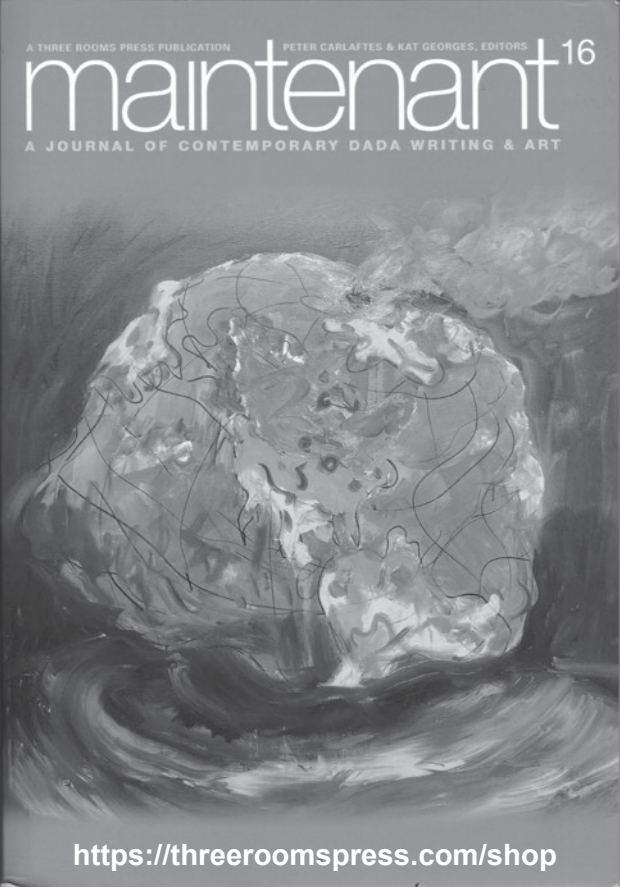
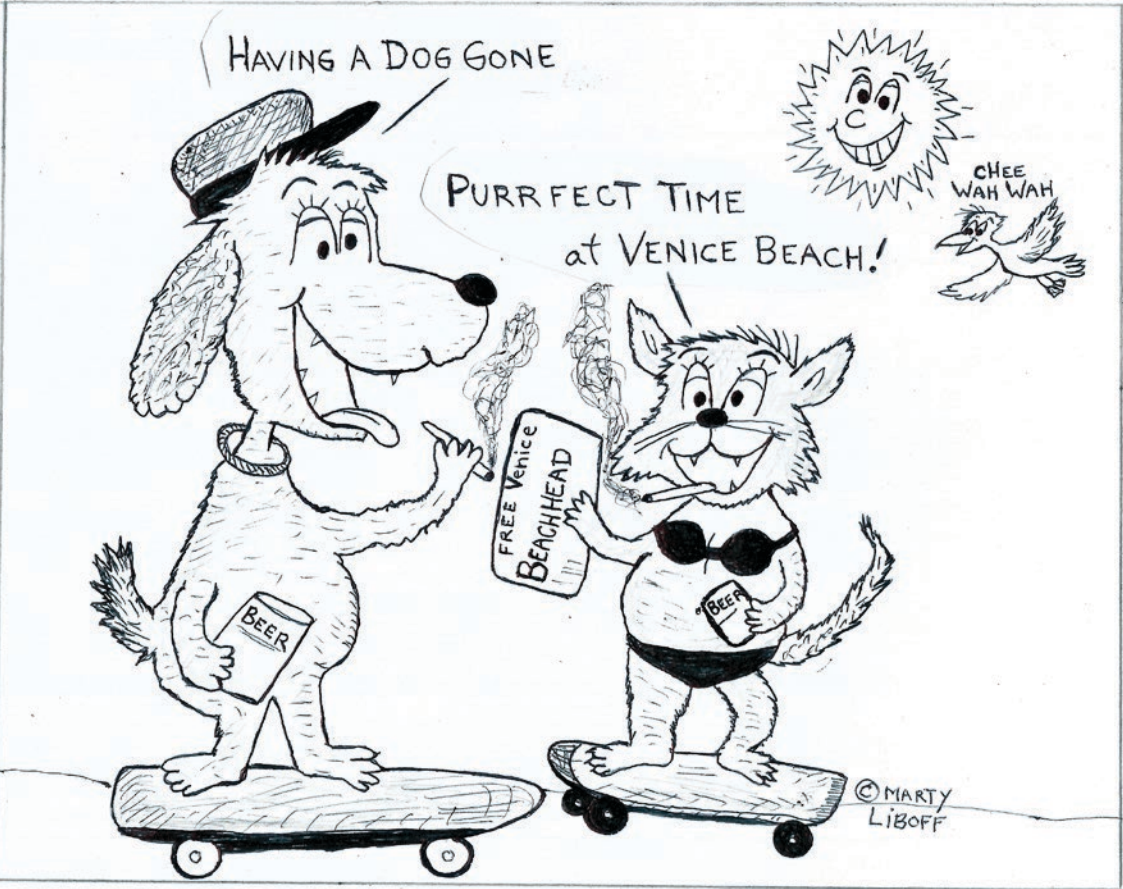
31% omission+ 41% deflection+ 59% exaggeration  
Bake into a 360-degree pie chart Until all assets are frozen

Eventually the spreadsheets Ran out of memory and developed leaks No longer could soiled baby diapers Be classified as Brut cologne sales

Icebergs were liberated With blow torch enthusiasm  
The Maldives took a dive  
and disappeared

However, nocturnal emissions Continued unabated Until one day butt.plugged cows Exploded into supernovas

And it rained hamburgers  
For forty days and forty nights





(An afternoon at the Unurban Coffee House)

Story and photo by S. A. Gerber

Sundays are back with a vengeance at the Unurban Coffee House.

Recently reopened after the siege of Covid, it hosts a variety of events from open -mic music, poetry readings, stand-up comedy, as well as Twelve-step self-help groups, activist groups and other community self-help clubs and gatherings.

But Sundays are special. From two to five o’clock an event known as “Mews Small and her Fabulous Females” light up the house! This troupe is made up of well established, known, and still working actors, all of whom perform as singers. They perform material mostly from the “great American Songbook”, in this Sunday labor of love.

I have been in the audience many times, but this past Sunday, (08-28-22) was stellar!

Despite the fact that this day, the lovely and talented Ms. Small was elsewhere on assignment.

The afternoon was hosted by a member of the troupe and local Chanteuse Suzy Williams.

Featured were the regular line-up, including the hostess “de jour”, (who also performs some of her own material), along with the sensual and dynamic Flo Lawrence, the calming angelic voice of Rita Obermeyer, and the sweet, playful, sing-a-long songs of Penny Safranek. They are all beautifully complemented by the backup strains supplied by...

Brad Kay on “stride” piano (and sometimes horn) ...Mark Fletcher on guitar...Tom Marion on guitar/mandolin...and Paul (“Dutch” Newman, also on guitar. (Dutch and Brad also perform well-timed duets between the ladies to the audience’s delight).

This day also on the bill were several guest performers... Dan Weinstein on violin, a fine addition to the sound, and two singers...Sanja P. who scored with a Stanley Turrentine number, and a willowy, edgy Veronique Van Pelt, another pleasure to hear.

The capacity crowd was noisily appreciative of all the talent, while they drank and dined on the café’s bill of fare of all organic pastries, sandwiches, and beverages from ice-tea to smoothies, bottled water, and of course, the obligatory blends of coffee drinks.

*Reese-Tabor – continued from page 8*

[Miguel] Bravo initially started by saying that they were against the names because the Mexican Community was excluded from the discussion. We rejected that in the beginning because, again, this conversation about these changes started two years ago. There hasn't been any secret about it, although there hasn't been any full out social media information about it. But we didn't hear any protest from the Mexican Community about the church, about the Black Lives Matter, about any of the other initiatives that we had. So we didn't expect that there would be opposition to adding these names. Particularly since Miguel Bravo was, once upon a time, a member of our group. He is of Indigenous heritage and has a relationship with the Mexican-American Community. And so, it was always considered that he was a liaison with them. We never thought that there would be any opposition, because he was in full support of all the initiatives that we had in place or that we had proposed. He was even a member of, at that time, Save Venice, and the meetings that we were having with Councilman Bonin. But he voluntarily excused himself because he had a dislike for Mike Bonin and didn't want to sit in meetings with him. But he still had information because we shared all that information with him. So, to say they were left out of the discussion is not factual. It's after he stole money and left the organization. Then he chose not to hold true to the beliefs and the support that he had given when he was a member.

The irony of the situation is that these two people, who are so adamantly opposed to Reese-Tabor being included in the name, are assertively openly asking for support, financial and otherwise,



photo by Jane Cantillon

All created and presented by café owner Pam Stallings, with equal amounts of courtesy and hip-ness in the casual, friendly clubhouse atmosphere she has instituted.

The Unurban Café is located at 3301 Pico Blvd. at the corner of Pico and Urban Ave.

Stradling the boundaries of Santa Monica and West L. A. all are welcome in this also “dog-friendly” venue. There is no admission or cover charge for this plethora of entertainment, however, a basket is present for donations, and the purchase of food and drink is always appreciated. The hours of operation are:

Tuesday through Thursday- 4pm to 9pm-  
Friday- 7am to 10pm-  
Saturday & Sunday- 8am to 5pm.

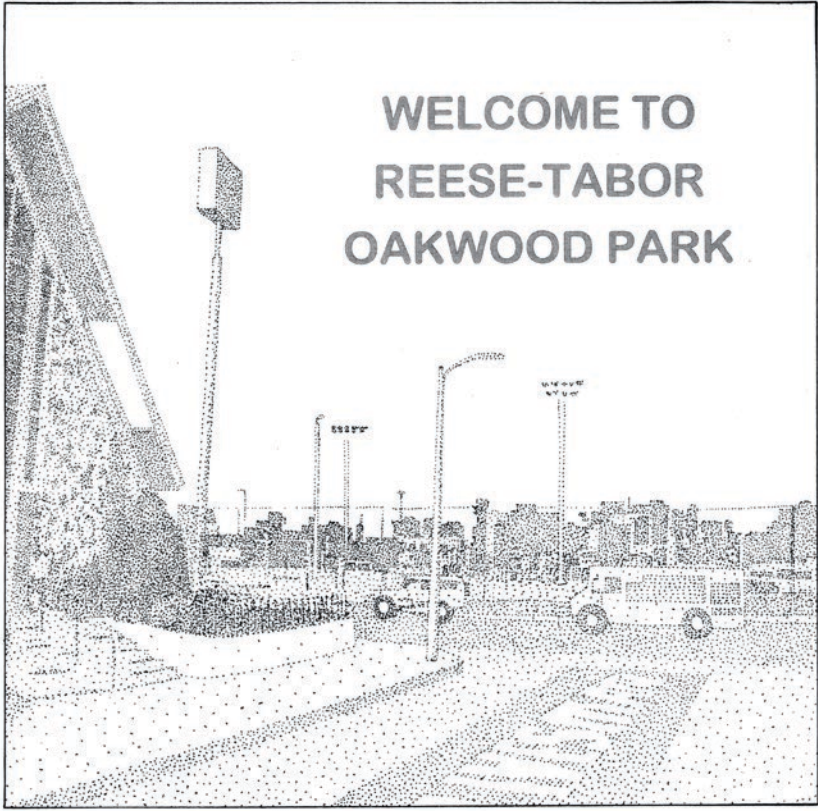
A complete listing of events is available on Facebook or call (310)-315-0056.

(Also, important to note, is that Sundays, before the main show, Suzy Williams, Brad Kay, and Mark Fletcher play jazz beginning at twelve noon. Always worthwhile).

All in all, an excellent way to spend your Sunday afternoon. Check it out!

through a GoFundMe for the Traquero Monument, which is a monument to, in their words, the Mexican and Mexican-American workers who helped build the railroad to the West. This Traquero Monument would be at the Windward Circle, literally the gateway to Venice Beach. Laddie, representing the group, advocated for and supported the Traquero project before the City Council and before the Venice Neighborhood Council. And so, she felt that Laura Ceballos was being a traitor and also misrepresenting facts in this matter. We have said as much. How can you ask for support for your particular group but oppose naming Reese and Tabor who are significant to the African-American group? That is an issue that they have supported with lies, things that were not true, through their various social media sites. Miguel has said something to the effect that the gentrifiers were the ones trying to erase the Mexican-American Community with this name change. Laura Ceballos has said that the park belongs to everyone, and that naming the park Reese-Tabor takes away from the Mexican-American Community. And she said something to the effect of, "Well, we were here first." That rings racist to me. An effort to pit the Black and Brown Communities against

each other. So, I have said profoundly that naming the park Reese-Tabor Oakwood takes nothing away from anyone, from any group, from any culture, from any ethnicity. But it certainly does add the historical significance and sustainability of the contributions that African-American people made to the Oakwood Community specifically. It certainly does not prevent other monuments being erected and supported in other parts of the community just as they are asking for the Traquero Monument to be supported. I don't understand their opposition.



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CALENDAR
beyondbaroque.org

9/11 To Aid & Abet: A Reading and Fund-raiser for Abortion Access

Sunday, September 11, 2022, 2:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque

Shout Your Abortion and Beyond Baroque present an afternoon of poetry and storytelling dedicated to uplifting community voices protesting the recent overturn of Roe V. Wade by the Supreme Court. The event brings together several L.A. writers, activists, and artists for reproductive justice. Readings by bridgette bianca, Briana Muñoz, Lynne Thompson, Karla Lamb, Sehba Sarwar, Lisbeth Coiman, Alice Fulmer, Luivette Resto, Suhasini Yeeda, and more TBA. Keynote speaker, Amelia Bonow, co-founder of Shout Your Abortion will also be sharing more on the resources SYA has been providing and what community members can do to remain involved.

9/16 A Reading & Conversation with traci kato-kiriyama & Noriko Nakada

Friday, September 16, 8:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque

Celebrate the recent publication of traci kato-kiriyama's, Navigating With(out) Instruments, with a reading and conversation featuring Noriko Nakada, the author of a series of memoirs including I Tried, Overdue Apologies, and Through Eyes Like Mine. traci kato-kiriyama's work is transdisciplinary, as they are a writer, actor, and theatre devisor, centering community building within their work at large. Noriko Nakada is a member of the leadership team for Women Who Submit, an organization empowering women and non-binary writers to submit their work for publication.

9/17 L.A. Book Launch: Interstellar Theme Park by Jack Skelley

Saturday, September 17, 7:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque

Join Jack Skelley for an evening of celebration of a thrilling new poetry collection! Reunited with Beyond Baroque friends, poet Amy Gerstler and writer Benjamin Weissman, who will also read from their new work.

9/30 True Tales of Family: A Reading by Five Macondistas

Friday, September 30, 8:00 PM PDT
In person at Beyond Baroque

A reading with Macondo Writers Workshop alum Pat Alderete, Lucy Rodriguez-Hanley, Cecilia Caballero, Juanita E. Mantz, & Allison Hedge Coke. Join these five writers and alumni of the Macondo Writers Workshop for True Tales of Family a reading that explores family history, conflict, and relations through the lense of six authors from different regions of Latin America.

Pacific Resident Theatre presents: The Kings of Klezmer.. Sunday September 11, 2022 7:00 pm

The Trip Bar

Tuesday, September 13, 2022, 2 events
8:00pm Scott Detweiler (funk/New Orleans jazz)
9:15pm The Mark Leggett Quartet

Tuesday, September 20, 2022, 2 events
8:00pm Corcovado feat. Natalie Jacob (jazz/bossa nova)
9:30pm The Nick Mancini Collective (Jazz)

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\*You Matter- Michael's picnic with friends. Tue. & Thur. around 11 am. North border of Venice on the Ocean Front Walk near Ozone Ave. Also Sat. around 8 am near Dudley Ave. Hot dogs, burgers, snacks, fruit. .

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

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

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

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

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