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Curfew May Be Illegal Restriction of Access

By Greta Cobar

The city of Los Angeles has adopted a beach and Ocean Front Walk (OFW) curfew without getting approval from or even consulting with the California Coastal Commission (CCC).

“The city does not have any approval from the CCC to implement the ordinance,” said Charles Posner, Coastal Program Analyst with the CCC, when referring to LAMC 63.44.B.14(b).

In a phone conversation with the Beachhead he went on to say that under the Coastal Act the city needs a permit for “any sort of curfews or restrictive ordinances that have such a negative impact on coastal access.” According to him, the CCC is negotiating with the city, trying to get them to submit to the permitting process and to work out a solution that “does not keep people from getting in the water.”

The curfew is in clear violation of the Coastal Act of 1976, according to which “the public should have 24 hour access to the beaches.”

Ordinance 63.44 itself is not only not approved by the CCC, but it was considered to “constitute a violation of law exposing the responsible agency to possible enforcement actions” by Andrew Willis, District Enforcement Analyst for the CCC, in an August 26, 2010 letter directed to Mark Mariscal, the Superintendent of the Pacific Re-

land Parks:

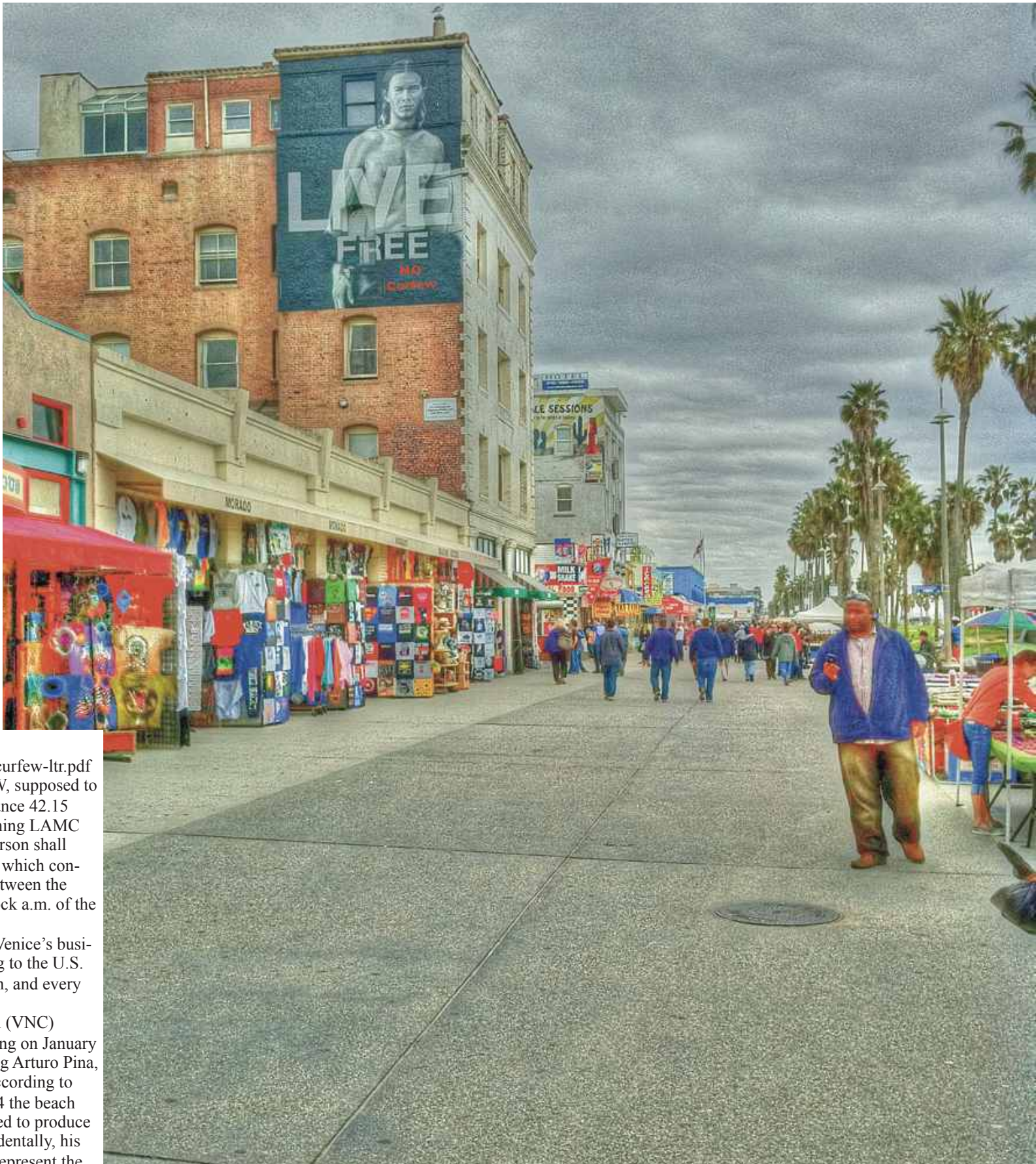
www.freevenice.org/Beachhead/CCC-curfew-ltr.pdf
The signs currently posted on OFW, supposed to announce the implementation of ordinance 42.15 regarding vending, start out by mentioning LAMC 63.44.B.14(b), which states that “no person shall enter, remain, stay or loiter in any park which consists of an ocean area, beach, or pier between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 5:00 o’clock a.m. of the following day.”

However, OFW is not a park, but Venice’s busiest street instead. It is a street according to the U.S. Postal Service, the Venice Specific Plan, and every city map.

The Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) Neighborhood Committee held a meeting on January 23 regarding the curfew. At that meeting Arturo Pina, Council District 11 Deputy, said that according to Venice’s annexation documents of 1924 the beach and OFW are part of a park. When asked to produce those documents, he was at a loss. Incidentally, his job is to protect the rule of law and to represent the city in court, not to produce new legislation.

Similarly, Lieutenant Paola Kreefft blatantly misinformed the public that the Jones settlement, allowing people to lie on the sidewalk between 9pm and 6am, is valid only on Skid Row as a result of a recent re-interpretation by a judge. Neither she nor Pina was able to provide further details as to what case, when and where. Yet another law broken, another right denied in order to make sure that the people chased out of OFW will not move onto the neighboring side-streets.

Since OFW is not a park, but a major thoroughfare instead, numerous residents have in and out access of their houses solely onto OFW. When asked whether these people would be locked down in their houses during the hours of the curfew, Lt. Kreefft stated that the residents “will not be harassed.” Selective enforcement is not new to Venice, but a lieutenant publicly making provisions for it might just be.



A civil action lawsuit is sure to follow, depleting the city of the funds it constantly complains of lacking. Wouldn’t those funds be better spent helping the poor as opposed to financing another big law firm? The answer is that the city, under the rule of Carmen Trutanich, Los Angeles City Attorney, and approval of Bill Rosendahl, District Councilperson, is launching an effort to rid OFW of the homeless population. Even the price tag of the lawsuit, which is guaranteed to follow, does not deter their prospects. By the time their tactics are thrown out by a court of law, the “undesirables” will be gone and the politicians’ mission of pleasing the rich, gentrifying population of Venice will be accomplished.

The fact is that the police have allowed nighttime drinking, drug use, prostitution, loud noise and unleashed pets on OFW for the past two years. When asked why the existing laws against the illegal aforementioned activities have not been enforced, lack of resources and fear of lawsuits were men-

tioned. When asked what the plans are for enforcing the curfew, no answers were provided.

An informal straw poll was taken at the January 23 meeting with 63 people supporting the curfew, 18 opposing it and 18 not having enough information to cast a vote at the time. Although the poll is not scientific and is invalid because it was not announced, it also surveyed the wrong section of the population. At the same time that the non-binding show of hands was taking place there were over 100 people sleeping on OFW. But then again, the votes of the “undesirables” are not desired.

The meeting ended with the Neighborhood Board unanimously (7-0) passing a motion asking the VNC Board to request that the city take emergency action to improve lightning on Speedway and on the walk streets between Speedway and Pacific. Lightning does not equal safety, however, and push-

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Photo by Jim Smith



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2012 – Oh, No!

Dear Beachhead,
The last front page of the Beachhead was absurd! I truly hope you will get educated on the Mayan Calendar. Exactly who are you trying to scare? When I saw the paper at my Juice place on Windward I flipped the paper to the Boat Parade story (an actual event that was awesome in our neighborhood). I would have turned all the papers if I had had the time.

I know you all work very hard to put out a great local free press paper so if you want people to take you seriously you can't print untrue fear-based trash on the cover.

Respectfully your neighbor,
Jennifer Everhart

Who Created the iZip Mural?

Dear Beachhead,
I'm Claudia Morimitsu, Currie Technologies Director of Marketing. (Currie Technologies owns the IZIP Store in Venice)

I'm writing this email since I received your latest publication and saw you posted an image of the IZIP Store Mural and it says "By Jonas Never". This is not true.

I am the real artist/designer of the IZIP Store Mural and I'm in my right to claim what I created. Where did you get the information that Jonas Never created this illustration?

I really appreciate if you can do something for me. It is not fair that another person is getting credit for something he didn't created.

I expect to hear from someone at Free Venice Beachhead Paper as soon as possible.

Thanks!
Claudia S Morimitsu

From the Beachhead: We regret the misattribution.

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Mission Not Accomplished

Dear Beachhead,
Is the Santa Monica Bay healed? How much money has Heal The Bay received during Mark Gold's 23-year presence? Is there an acceptable plan in place to finish the mission? In my opinion the answers are: No, Too much for too little in return, and No.

In Gold's recent HTB year-end support letter, he states he saw a blue whale in a part of the Bay that two decades ago was declared a dead zone. On two recent occasions I went to the same area and didn't any see whales. Only an abundance of plastic debris and pollution on the surface that was completely disheartening.

Weeks later he announces stepping down as HTB president and was quoted stating, "We don't have these sewage spills that were commonplace in the 1980s." A week later the City of Inglewood reported a 5,000 gallon spill which entered the Ballona Creek flood control channel and closed a mile of beaches.

Another misleading accomplishment is the Beach Report Card. The January 4, 2012 report shows eighteen Fs and the fine print states: "The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches." Are eighteen Fs acceptable? Aren't toxic synthetic chemicals equally or more dangerous than bacteria, the basis for the report?

If you want to know who the real hero of the Santa Monica Bay was, that raised awareness to the dead zone and fish with tumors you should read the book "Dirty Water" by Bill Sharpsteen. Mark Gold shouldn't be taking credit for the dedication and sacrifices of others. He also takes credit for his input in the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) process, which is significantly flawed because it takes a resource away from us without concurrently allowing artificial reef enhancement in areas outside of the MPAs, a practice that the Department of Fish and Games hasn't continued in the Bay since the 1970s. The 2008 Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan, an accomplishment of Gold's that I have criticized, excluded artificial reef language entirely. Gold told me they never discussed artificial reefs. A year later he corrected himself saying they never discussed the definition of artificial reefs. Regardless, Gold and others are responsible for hindering the enhancement and subsequent recovery of bio-mass in the Bay.

SB 1381, passed in September 2002, established the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission with the mission of protection, restoration and enhancement of the Santa Monica Bay and its watershed. Furthermore, SB 1381 established "the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Account in the State Treasury, and would authorize the expenditure of moneys in the account, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to support the activities of the Commission."

A State Treasury representative informed me that this account has never been used. What has happened is all of the money, millions of dollars have been questionably directed to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation, a non-profit organization, similar to HTB, and whose Executive Director, Shelley Luce, is from the HTB organization and a close friend of Gold.

I see this as intentional scandalous behavior. There should be total financial transparency and there isn't. Accountability to the public is limited, similar to HTB.

What is alarming is the State recently OK'd \$6.5 Million dollars for Ballona Wetlands restoration planning to a commission and foundation which in my opinion is out of control. The Ballona Wetlands Land Trust, Sierra Club, Ballona Institute, Ballona Ecosystem Education Project, Grassroots Coalition, Wetlands Defense Fund and others like myself all oppose the current alternatives that Luce and Gold have supported. It's time for a change in leadership which will not happen without community outrage and participation.

Gold may be stepping down as president of HTB. The public needs an honest perspective of the mess he's created and left behind.

And for the record, my father was the legendary Venice native, lifeguard, marine biologist, educator, and political activist that was known as "The Father of the Santa Monica Bay," Dr. Rimmon C. Fay. Rim's values and commitment to fight to restore the Bay to what it was when he was a child were epic and should be memorialized. It's a vision I never got to see and something my children may never see without community support.

Douglas Fay

The Venice Skills Center Is In Danger of Losing Its Funding

By Charles Thomas

The Venice Skills Center, our adult education and training school, is threatened with losing its budget.

Once again a governmental agency claiming “budget woes” threatens to kill a pillar of the Venice community. The Venice Skills Center has provided low-cost (and in some cases free) quality educational opportunities for over 40 years.

The Skills Center offers classes in relevant on-the-job skills training. These classes are primarily in the genre of computers, dental and medical assisting. The computer classes cover the most important areas of making older adults, and others, more marketable to secure employment and get back on their feet in this troubled economy. A number of the adult students at the Skills Center are unemployed (receiving unemployment or on “general relief”), trying to bone-up on the new technology that will make them competitive once again in the job market. Some are homeless (as was the case of this writer, until recently) and others struggle to make ends meet while seeking to better themselves through education.

We, the people of Venice, recently went through the threatened demise of the historical Venice Post Office. Community action and activism accomplished a “stay of execution” for this loved and appreciated staple of the community, as we know it. But, we are not “out of the woods” with the Post Office. These things are ongoing challenges. There is a new challenge. It is time once again to mobilize, this time for the Skills Center. Many of you are familiar with the Skills Center located on Fifth Street, just a couple of blocks south of Rose. It is the attractive and functional-looking modern structure featuring the rotunda-like ground level “commons area.”

The current threat to the Skills Center is coming from the powers that be in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The LAUSD administers the Skills Center and controls funding for the adult educational programs thereof. The LAUSD has, over time, cut funding for these programs claiming ongoing budget deficits that will not provide for continued operation. I personally have seen and been affected by these cuts, which sorely impacts the disenfranchised. I once enjoyed the automobile repair class (auto shop) offered by the adult evening program held at Venice High School. In that class, we (the students) could bring in our own cars to work on them, and get repairs and maintenance done ourselves. Being one of Venice’s homeless living in a vehicle (at that time) it was vitally important to keep my car running. I depended on my Chevy for shelter. In auto shop, I was learning a skill and learning self-sufficiency, too. It was about the only way I could afford car maintenance (having to only cough up money for auto parts – a challenge in itself). Unfortunately, this class was axed by LAUSD along with all the other classes in the adult evening program. Venice High’s adult evening program, as funded and within my means by LAUSD is no more. It happened at Venice High and it can happen at the Skills Center. Without an organized community effort, the Skills Center will go on the chopping block, too.

The LAUSD School Board will hold an emergency budget meeting on February 14. Word circulating is that this will not be a pleasant valentine. Word circulating as well as published preponderance of evidence says the School Board will vote to “do away” with adult education. Please see the L.A. Times Adult Education On L.A. Unified’s Chopping Block (January 28th - by Sandy Banks). According to this article, the current proposal before the Board would leave no money for the adult educational programs. That assessment is backed up by the current issue of Los Angeles Business (January 2012, Vol. 1, No. 1). If the Board votes as such to cut adult education, then the Skills Center would likely be shut by June according to an instructor with whom I spoke at the Center.

LAUSD’s motivations and budget claims could be questionable considering the attractive possibility of selling or leasing the Skills Center property. The Skills Center is located on choice property indeed, and that location could provide a hefty cash flow for the School District - a lucrative proposition. Unfortunately, such cash lust would be at the expense of those seeking the educational opportunities currently offered. The Skills Center’s locale would make a great corporate satellite location for, say, Yahoo or Google, and others advancing the gentrification of Venice. If you think LAUSD doesn’t know what it could get for the Skills Center property, then there’s some swamp land in Florida I would like to talk to you about.

Also questionable is the School Board’s appreciation and understanding of what actually goes on at the Skills Center. Does the School Board really “get it” that the Skills Center is one of the most important outlets for providing those of humble means with the technical knowledge to gainful employment? The Skills Center instructor (just mentioned above) quipped that “the School Board thinks we do yoga here.” Well, no one is saying there’s anything wrong with yoga, but if this remark is accurate, then it seems the “board of education” itself needs educating. (Ironic, huh?)

So, the community is called upon again to help preserve our Venice. What can you do? Please sign our petition circulating. We are gathering signatures to present to the Board in advance of the February 14 meeting. The petition simply states, “Adult Education is essential for better jobs through education. Adult Education is essential for helping parents help their children. Adult Education is a pathway to economic recovery and its elimination will make the recession worse.”

Please support this petition if you are approached by students (and others) advocating for the Skills Center. You can also drop by the Vera Davis Community Center (California Avenue at Electric Avenue) to sign. For those preferring the Internet, you can “electronically” give support by signing the petition found at Change.org.

Please go to Change.org and do a search under “Defend adult education for the 99% in Los Angeles.” Then click on the link to the petition. In addition to the petition, please also telephone the following automated phone system to voice your support. The phone number is 323-929-2529. Please tell your School Board member to STOP CUTS TO ADULT EDUCATION! Please voice support on this issue to your governmental and civic representatives.

More Internet advocacy can be found on Facebook. For our Facebook friends, the “hash tag” is #saveadulted! to connect with the like-minded on this matter, and for further information and happenings. The Rally To Save Adult Education is scheduled for February 9 at 1:30 p.m. at the LAUSD Headquarters – 333 South Beaudry Ave., Los Angeles. The aforementioned School Board meeting on February 14 is set for 1:00 p.m. at LAUSD Headquarters. (At press time, it is unknown exactly when the budget matter on adult education will be heard as other items are on the docket for this 1:00 p.m. meeting.) Please visit saveadulted.org for yet further happenings and resources to make your voice heard.

Please get involved with any of the above events and access the resources listed for a positive change. Our collective efforts can help ensure the survival of the Venice Skills Center. The Skills Center (like the Post Office, the Ocean Front Walk, the Pier, Abbot Kinney or the drum circle) is an institution, and part of what makes our community what it is. The Skills Center is a vital part of the gentle principality of Venice. Let’s keep it going for the sake of our present, and future generations to benefit from. ☺

**Rally to Save
The Venice Skills Center
and Adult Education
1:30PM Thursday, Feb. 9
L.A. School Board, 333 S. Beaudry**

Unfortunate Times For La Fortuna Market

By Anne Alvarez

The Venice Neighborhood Council voted unanimously, Jan. 17, to recommend that L.A. City Council revoke the liquor license of La Fortuna Market located at 824 Lincoln Blvd., adjacent to Cafe 50s.

Proprietor Margarita Romo and her brother, Emilio, have been serving Venice’s Latino community for over 32 years, a community that is diminishing day by day, thanks to the gentrification taking place.

“That is why they want me out of here, they are doing away with the Latinos.” They see us as trouble, even though my wife, Maria, and I have always paid our taxes, business and licensing fees every year for the past 32 years. We have never asked for anything from anyone. We are respectful hard working people.

“I’ve made one or two mistakes,” added Romo, referring to a citation he received for having a beer with his lunch in the back of the store back in July 2009. I had to pay a fine and our license was briefly suspended, so never again would I do that.”

During this time Romo adds, “The Los Angeles Police Department was really on me, in particular Officer Paul Bowser. I felt targeted. All these years in business, 29 years at the time, and never any problems.

“All of a sudden a neighbor that lives in the alley directly behind my market is upset that there are homeless people loitering close to her home and she decides it is my fault, if she saw them holding a beer in hand it was automatically presumed they purchased it from me, even if at the time my store was closed. I actually have pictures of garbage left behind, including empty beer cans. These photos prove the alcohol did not come from me as it is a brand that I don’t carry,” Romo said.

According to a letter from the Department of City Planning there have been allegations of buying and selling narcotics, prostitution, public urination and defecation, lewd conduct, excessive noise, vandalism, loitering, graffiti, trash and debris, illegal parking and police detention.

There was never a complain filed with Alcohol Beverage Control or the Alcohol Tobacco and Tax Trade Bureau regarding these issues, and never any warning for what followed.

Officer Bowser and another officer, not in uniform, showed up at La Fortuna with a paper, which Romo was pressured into signing. He was told by the officers that not doing so, would garner him another condition to abide by, he would have to bag everything in orange plastic bags and he would be arrested for refusing to cooperate he said.



Proprietors Maria and Emilio Romo
Photos by Gary Neville

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The only public meeting about the Ocean Front Walk Curfew was held at Oakwood Recreation Center, Jan. 23, by the Neighborhood Council's "Neighborhood Committee." Photo by Pegarty Long

Curfew May Be Illegal Restriction of Access

—continued from page 1

ing the OFW homeless population onto Speedway is likely to create more problems, especially for the residents.

Another unfortunate effect of the curfew will be inaccessibility to the bike path in a very bike-dependent community. If one needs to ride a bike from Venice to Santa Monica without access to the bike path, the available choices are scant and unsafe. Riding down Speedway would be going the wrong way and could result in a ticket. The next closest option is Pacific, which would be extremely unsafe. Further east, but only north of the Windward circle, there is Main Street, and new bike lanes have suspiciously just been painted, but it is still significantly more dangerous than the bike path. And if we wanted to ride our bikes down a street, we might choose not to live in Venice.

Bottom line is, the curfew was not mentioned at all until the signs concerning the new vending ordinance somehow lost focus and started out by mentioning the ordinance establishing the curfew first. Enforcement followed suit, with police chasing the homeless population off the beach, the recreation area and OFW every night while the vending ordinance, set to take effect January 20, has not been enforced at all. While only hand-made articles are supposed to be sold, the swamp-meet atmosphere continues unabated. The only changes implemented are that they re-painted the assigned spaces, limited each vendor to just one spot, and stopped allowing people to sell or perform out of assigned spaces.

Although the ultimate goal of the curfew is to prevent people from sleeping on OFW, its immediate effect on all of us is a further hindrance on our freedom and basic human rights spelled out in the Constitution, the Coastal Act and the Jones settlement. And just because the police are too lazy to stop the illegal activities that have been transpiring on OFW every night for the past two years does not mean that our elected officials should illegally suppress our liberties. 🚲

The Meeting to Close the Boardwalk

By Mary Getlien

I arrived early to the VNC Meeting. The room was filling up with well-dressed people. Marc Saltzberg told everyone the Police would be there soon and they were going to explain the new curfew for the Venice Boardwalk. Between the hours of 12 am and 5 am, the Boardwalk will be closed. They explained that the ordinance was written into law in 1989, but had never been enforced. Then Arturo Pina, Bill Rosendahl's Deputy, explained that the law had actually been on the books since the 1920's. Lt. Paola Kreefft explained that residents would have to carry ID's in case they were stopped on the Boardwalk after 12 am.

Lt. Kreefft said the reason for this is the problem of homelessness on the Boardwalk. The Police explained that this law would give them the legal power to kick people off the Boardwalk. So then where would they go? The walkways, of course. That is not really a solution, because it essentially moves homeless people closer to the residents' houses.

The Police also said no one would be permitted to walk on OFW. The closed part of the Boardwalk extends from OFW all the way down to the water. That essentially denies a resident of Venice access to the ocean and the coast. LAPD was telling these worried residents that they would have to get in their houses by the back entrance. People objected to this because it is more dangerous for a single woman to open her door in the dark, than on OFW, which has a lot of lights.

Denying people access to the coast is denying part of your inheritance of this country. This is the problem of closed beaches - they fence off the ocean (which is your birth-right) from poor people. And they think they can get away with this.

I couldn't believe I was hearing what I was hearing. Venetians were meekly accepting the plan to lock down the Boardwalk!

Members of the audience asked Lt. Kreefft a lot of questions about the homeless problem, several related experiences of being threatened by the homeless, and were scared in their own homes. Lt. Kreefft said, "Our hands are tied." They don't want to be sued, so they don't arrest the homeless. The residents seemed very worried and afraid of the homeless situation.

Some of the public comments were:
- "Now people will have to walk on Speedway, at night, now homeless people will be in peoples' back yards. You're moving them from OFW to walkways, where we live. How is that going to help us?"
- "OFW is a treasure. We need to preserve it for residents and visitors."
- "Homeless people are not accessing services. It's a lifestyle choice. They stay

out on the street, drunk - they like it. Meanwhile, my wife is afraid to walk on OFW anymore. They have destroyed the Boardwalk and made it a homeless encampment."

One man got up and said, "Look what they are telling you. They are telling you they cannot deal with this unless they kick everyone off the Boardwalk, including residents. The Boardwalk has only been closed once in its history - during the L.A. Riots."

An older woman said, "This is a battle between the rich and the poor. The Boardwalk is out of control. I do not feel safe down there anymore."

The feeling in the room was very tense. The Police did nothing to reassure people that things would improve. A woman asked Lt. Kreefft, "If you can't enforce the laws now, how do you think you will enforce this new law?"

Steve Clare brought up the fact that the Jones Act is on the books, which states that people can sleep on the streets of L.A. because not enough shelter beds are available. LAPD maintains that the Boardwalk of Venice does not qualify as a "Street of L.A.", which is illegal and just plain stupid.

You have to have equal protection under the law. There can't be a law banning people from their own addresses, can there? How absurd.

—continued on page 10

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Police attempt to deny blame at a press conference following a march by Petelski's friends.

Left to right: Capt. Joseph Hiltner, Councilmember Bill Rosendahl and Shaunnah Godfrey (Devin's mother).

Photo by Jim Smith

In Fatal LAPD Crash, Blame Is Obvious

By Jim Smith

This is a story about a crime, and no justice. It's also a story about police officials, who are here to "protect and serve" being above the law.

It has been more than two years ago since Devin Petelski was killed by a police car traveling 78 mph. Witnesses said it was engaged in "silent running," which means driving without lights. She died in the hospital.

Had anyone other than the police engaged in this behavior, a judge and jury likely would have put them in jail and thrown away the key. Regrettably, the driver of the police car, James Eldridge, and his accomplice in the passenger seat, Ramon Vasquez, were not charged with reckless driving or third-degree murder, and were not even subjected to internal discipline.

While it was not justice, we taxpayers shelled out \$5 million to settle a civil suit brought by the Petelski family. On April 27, 2011 the Los Angeles City Council unanimously adopted the \$5 million recommendation of the City Attorney. The motion stated: "this matter involves a traffic accident that resulted in a wrongful death which occurred on October 15, 2009."

Wrongful death is defined by the Free Dictionary as: "The taking of the life of an individual resulting from the willful or negligent act of another person or persons."

Devin Petelski was a popular 25-year-old woman who spent much of her time volunteering for good causes. She worked at a center for disturbed children just two blocks from where she lost her life. That corner of Glyndon Avenue and Venice Blvd. has been the site of many vigils by her friends. Now, two years later, her friends still bring flowers to a small shrine there. On Nov. 19, 2009 dozens of her friends marched two miles to the Pacific Division Police Station in hopes of getting officials to take the case seriously. Instead Capt. Joseph Hiltner launched into a tirade about irresponsible journalism (i.e. the Beachhead) for publicizing the case. (See video at <http://bit.ly/5Cyo2G>).

The Coverup

Instead of facing up to the potentially criminal behavior of two of its officers, the LAPD decided to stonewall. It conducted an internal investigation instead of calling in the California Highway Patrol or another agency to conduct the investigation. The result was predictable.

1. An officer who arrived on the scene stated that he smelled alcohol on the breath of the unconscious Petelski. A test at the hospital found no alcohol in her blood.

2. A city attorney told the press that the police car was traveling between 40 - 45 mph when it hit Petelski's car. The vehicle's "black box" recorded the speed as 78 mph.

3. Before the internal investigation was completed, a police spokesperson said Petelski was at fault for pulling out in front of the police car.

4. The cover-up reached all the way to the top. On Nov. 25, 2009, Chief of Police Charlie Beck told radio station KPCC that "a preliminary report that examined the lights' heat following the crash indicates that officers had their lights on. He said the report also found they were traveling at a safe speed." Apparently, although smashed in the impact, they felt warm to the touch. But a witness driving behind the police car said Officer Eldridge turned on to Venice Blvd. from Lincoln Blvd. and turned his lights off. According to the black box, the police car came to a stop (at the intersection) 17 seconds before the crash. Even if the lights were off for that period, they would still be warm to the touch after being on all night.

5. The black box, which records everything up to 25 seconds before a crash in all police cars, could not be read by police investigators.

That would have been the end of the story had it not been for the civil suit from Petelski's family. Lawyers forced the examination by three independent experts, all of who were able to extract information from the black box, and all of who agreed that the police car was traveling up to 78 mph within three seconds of the crash.

6. Police initially said Eldridge and his partner were not responding to a call for assistance. Later, the story was changed to say they were responding to a call (as justification for silent running and driving at a high rate of speed?).

7. Both Capt. Hiltner and Chief Beck claimed they had never heard of "silent running." Yet officers at other police forces in the area have told Beachhead reporters that the term is in common use for driving without lights. LAPD cars are frequently observed in Venice employing this tactic when on the prowl.

The L.A. Times Joins In

The mighty L.A. Times has mostly supported the police story. A brief article on Nov. 20, 2009 uncritically reported a city attorney's statement that the police car's lights were on. The

next story in the Times was not until Jan. 17, 2012, under the dubious headline, "In fatal LAPD crash, blame proves elusive." The article reviews some of the evidence pointing to negligent and criminal behavior by the officers but ultimately whitewashes their behavior. "There is science to support both versions," says reporter Joel Rubin, who neglects to tell readers what science supports the police version.

Readers of the Times article must be wondering why the City Council doled out \$5 million while the cops were not even disciplined by their superiors.

The Aftermath

Devin's shocking - and seemingly inexplicable - death was devastating to her family and her many friends. It was particularly a blow to her only sibling, Michael, with whom she was very close. Michael's life was never the same. He began a spiral downward into depression and drug use. It ended with his death from an overdose last July 14.

Before the crash, Shaunnah Godfrey and Ronald Petelski had two loved and loving children who were just at the beginning of their adult lives. Now they have none. And no one is to blame?

Why hasn't the Dept. of Justice intervened to investigate why Devin Petelski's civil rights were violated when her life was taken? Why hasn't the Los Angeles Times taken the side of justice instead of the side of the cover up? Why have the city councilmembers and the Mayor, who are ultimately responsible for the conduct of the police, gone along with this cover up? And who will be the next victim of criminal behavior by those we expect to defend us?

Beachhead articles about Devin Petelski include those in back issues for Nov. 2009 (2 articles), Dec. 2009 and June 2010 at www.freevenice.org.



Devin Petelski



Photo by Jeanelle Lee

Lincoln Place Rehab Underway

By Jim Smith

It's been more than six years since the biggest eviction in Los Angeles history drove more than 80 residents of Lincoln Place Apartments out of their homes early on the morning of Dec. 5, 2005.

The apartment complex located behind Ralphs and Ross, with nearly 800 units, is the largest in Venice.

Thanks to corporate owner, AIMCO (Apartment Investment and Management Company), the 40 acres of garden apartments have stood empty as greedy owners squared off against tenants and the community.

A years-long battle for justice, which gained support from Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, but not the Mayor, finally resulted in AIMCO dropping its plans to raze the apartments and build 1,000 condominiums in their place.

A combination of court decisions and direct action ended with the corporate owner agreeing to restore the evicted tenants to their homes and to rehab all apartments, which will ultimately be available to rent.

The empty apartments will be renovated over several years with the same exteriors, but with upgraded interiors.

New tenants will have to pay market rates, but increases will be regulated by rent control and the Housing Dept. Returning evictees will pay the same rents as in 2005.

At least 64 evicted families will reoccupy their homes in April. They will be grouped in apartments behind Ross.



Photos by Jim Smith

"We're looking forward to reestablishing our community," said Sheila Bernard, President of the Tenants Union. "We're hoping Lincoln Place will do for new residents what it did for us, that is, give them a sense of belonging."



Venice Artist David Phillips

By CJ Gronner

I first learned about the art of David Phillips in probably the best way possible. I was walking down the beach last year when I came upon this crazy piece of art (that I now know is called "Birth") just sitting there in the sand.

It had the curious name "Wino-Strut" across the front of it, compelling enough for me to write a little



story about it at the time. Then I got an email from the artist - David Phillips - who somehow had seen my Blogtown article, and contacted me to invite me to his studio. THEN I got a random email from a reader - Matt - that they had come upon some more Wino Strutting on the beach and thought I might find it interesting. I did.

So time flies and things pile up and I didn't get to the studio, but then I got an invitation from Phillips to the Hotel Erwin for his opening during the Art Crawl last summer.

I went; it was great, and I had a new friend in Mr. Phillips. But I still didn't know the whole story. So a bunch more time passed, exchanging messages and trying to find a time to sit down and tell the tale, until it's a new year and you gotta make things happen, so we finally sorted it out and here we go. Phillips is from Tulsa, Oklahoma (Sooners!). His Grandmother was a painter, so from a very early age, Phillips knew that he too wanted to be a painter - in fact, he started with oils. He grew up and wanted a larger audience for his art than perhaps Oklahoma offered, so "Art brought me here" - here being Venice, California. He had come out and stayed on a friend's couch in Venice, and knew that was the only place that made sense for him to settle. Which he did, right on Abbot Kinney. He got a job as a PA, which let him afford to get a studio (which he says is in Venice, but really it's Marina Del Rey...Ha.) and he was off to the races.

Phillips would load up his truck with paintings and just hound gallery owners to see his stuff. Soon enough, after not taking no for an answer ever ("I was gonna be a painter whether they liked it or not!"), he got a gallery rep. This led to a spot on CBS News about his art, and he's been able to work on his painting full-time ever since. He IS a painter.

At this point, we decided to leave the beach-adjacent studio and conduct our interview on the



sand. I thought this appropriate as it's where I first discovered his work, and I feel great guilt and oppression over being inside when I know a remarkable sunset is shaping up outside. See below.

He's been hired by Urban Outfitters to do works, he gets a bunch of private commissions, but with all the edge and fun and good times and free wheelin' vibe of the beach, he started thinking about doing art that was more accessible to an even larger audience...

Willem De Kooning is "the end all, be all for me", says Phillips, and he recalled a story about De Kooning selling a painting (One of his "Woman" paintings, which later sold for \$20 million) to a guy for a case of wine. De Kooning had to walk the out-sized painting all the way uptown to claim his payment, and Phillips thought that would be called a "Wino Strut". This would become his name for his otherwise anonymous pieces that he leaves behind.

—continued on page 9

'Save the Post Office' Enters Critical Phase

By Greta Cobar

The Asset Manager of the postal service (USPS) is getting the Venice Post Office building ready to sell, according to an email from Diana Alvarado, Facilities Vice President.

Appeals challenging the closure have been rejected by the USPS. The Postal Regulatory Commission granted the USPS motion to dismiss. Although the plan is to sell the historical building that now houses our post office, both the USPS and the PRC classified the closure as a relocation, since services will be moved to what currently is called the Annex.

Venice residents, organizations and the law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher sent in appeals arguing that the Venice post office classifies as a closure, not a relocation, and therefore qualifies for a hearing.

Ruth Goldway, chairperson of the PRC and a Venice resident, chose to recuse herself from the vote because it involved her own neighborhood. The other three members of the PRC unanimously voted to grant the USPS motion to dismiss the appeals.

In a phone conversation with the Beachhead, Goldway stated that the law clearly defines the move of retail operations to the Annex and the closure of our post office as a relocation, and that the PRC does not have jurisdiction in the matter.

The move of the post office to the Annex is a temporary consolidation that will not be able to provide enough service windows or parking for the customers and not enough room to sort the mail for the postal employees. According to Alvarado, eventually we will end up with a storefront or a drugstore selling stamps and other post office services.

The PRC order granting motion to dismiss states that on April 26 "the Postal Service held a public meeting to share information about the proposed move and to hear comments from the community," which is not true.

Currently Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, the law firm that has been representing us pro bono, is assessing the possibility of a legal challenge before deciding whether it will continue to represent us.

Amanda Seward, attorney at law and Venice Neighborhood Council Board member, is working to put the post office building on the National Registry of Historical Buildings. Being on that list would not stop the USPS from selling the building, but it would prevent the buyer from tearing it down.

Our community continues to stand strong against the closure of the historic post office housing the beautiful Edward Biberman mural, "The Story of Venice."

Thousands of individuals have signed petitions, attended rallies and volunteered their time to this cause that has, probably for the first time, brought the community together with a common goal.

Many local organizations have come together to stop the sale of the post office building. They include the Venice Peace and Freedom, SPARC, the Venice Arts Council, the Venice Stakeholders Association, the Venice Neighborhood Council, the Free Venice Beachhead, the Venice Chamber of Commerce, Venice Town Council, the Edward Biberman Estate, the Los Angeles Conservancy and the New Deal Preservation Association.

All over the country 3,700 post offices are scheduled to close or have already been closed, and that does not even take into account the relocations, as is the case in Venice. This is a perfect example of Wall Street strangling a federal self-sufficient institution with a strong labor union and a reputation for providing reliable service. By handing the mailing business off to private companies such as FedEx and United Parcel Service (UPS), the rich businessmen become richer while the poor, disabled, elderly, rural populations are most negatively affected.

Although the culprit for the post office closures, relocations and consolidations is said to be loss in revenue, the USPS has not taken any taxpayer money since 1971. However, the federal government owes the USPS between \$50 and \$70 billion in excess retirement benefits payment. Furthermore, the USPS is the only business in the country that is required to pre-fund its employees' healthcare benefits for the next 75 years in a ten year period. Putting any business in this type of situation in the middle of a great recession would probably disable its operations.

It is only a myth that people do not use the post office anymore because of the Internet. In fact, the USPS experienced its highest profit in 2006, and revenues have declined only slightly since then and in pace with the overall decline of the economy.

Remember that even though purchases are made online, the Internet cannot ship them and the USPS's rates are cheaper than FedEx or UPS. Furthermore, only the USPS delivers a letter anywhere in the country for less than 50 cents. If a package is sent to rural Alaska through FedEx or UPS it is then taken to the USPS, which charges less and is the only company that even delivers to remote, rural areas.

It seems that Wall Street, in its efforts to please more businessmen, bought out the higher-ups at USPS, who have been intentionally suppressing revenue. For example, on January 22, when the price of stamps changed from 44 cents to 45 cents, the Venice post office did not have one cent stamps for sale. It consistently has had only a limited selection of stamps, which is a major deterrent to stamp collectors and picky customers.

Furthermore, for the past two years only two of the five windows have been open for customer service regardless of the length of the line or the waiting time. The USPS's own provision to provide service in less than 20 minutes has been ignored on a daily, hourly basis. Overworked clerks have to constantly deal with frustrated customers, which only increases their poor morale.

Take the billions of dollars the federal government owes the USPS, the requirement that the USPS pay for the health benefits of people that have not been born yet, its own efforts to suppress revenue, the discontinuation of next-day delivery and Saturday mail, and add to that the thousands of closures and relocations. What we are looking at is a continued decline moving in a fatal downward spiral.

The Constitution states postal service and militia are two services that the country must provide. Although the war in Afghanistan is going strong at a price tag of \$2 billion a week because of the military-



industrial complex, the postal service is being purposely annihilated to switch profit to private businesses that will put more money into Wall Street.

In other countries the post office offers a myriad of cards, postcards, gifts, paper goods and writing instruments. Here in Venice, a major tourist attraction, the post office doesn't even sell postcards. And one has to go to a store and then the post office to send a birthday or Christmas card. Wouldn't it be better for everyone if we didn't have to make two trips? Goldway herself has officially proposed about a dozen ways to increase revenue. However, both Goldway and common sense have been ignored by the USPS higher-ups.

Few know that the Postal Saving System was a non-profit bank operated by the USPS until 1966, when it was abolished because of banking industry pressure. Apparently Wall Street has been involved in the annihilation of the USPS for quite a while.

Now that 99 percent of us are ready to take a stand against Wall Street's oppression, just as many would be delighted to switch banks to the Postal Saving System, which would hire more employees, provide fast and courteous service with a smile, and use the money to pay whatever debts the federal government is demanding for the health benefits of people who have not been born yet.

It's time to stand up before we are stepped over. By sitting comfortably and doing nothing we will allow them to proceed with the sale of a beautiful, historical building and further cripple a service provided for in the Constitution.

We are collecting petition signatures (www.change.org, search Venice Post Office), selling custom-made first class stamps featuring the beautiful Edward Biberman mural in the lobby, have held two rallies and are planning a third for Saturday, February 18 (see advertisement, back page).

Please make your voice heard and your point of view known. Write letters to Senators Feinstein and Boxer urging them to use their political power to stop the sale of our post office, come out to the rally with signs, and contact the Beachhead to buy beautiful Edward Biberman stamps or to help in any other way. If you are a lawyer and would like to help with legal strategy, please contact the Beachhead.

We can only win if we continue the fight and increase our efforts and your participation. Get involved! ☺



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We are a country of amnesiacs

By Jack Neworth

America’s foremost humorist, Mark Twain, considered the Spanish-American War rather ironic. (Actually he considered it rather criminal.) Our forefathers had come to America to escape tyranny, and yet we became imperialists.

George Washington warned the country against “foreign entanglements,” but for over a century we’ve been tangling all over the globe. About every twenty years we wage pointless wars as the self-appointed world’s policeman, sacrificing our young and our treasury. (I can hear a right-winger say, “And your point is?”).

As opposed to the bogus rationales of “Remember the Maine,” or “WMDs,” we start these wars pursuing power, money and that hideous black crude called oil. (Which, I believe, is a lyric of the opening to “The Beverly Hillbillies”).

You could say we began with our treatment of the Indians. While the British Proclamation of 1763 forbade colonists from settling west of the Appalachians, after our independence we decimated the Indians. (Later we gave what’s left of them gambling casinos.)

According to University of Colorado studies, the North American Indian population went from an estimated 12 million in 1500 to 237,000 in 1900. I’d call that genocide, but I don’t want angry e-mails from John Wayne fans.

Our religious justification for these atrocities was “Manifest Destiny,” the 19th century belief that God had ordained it that we should expand across the continent. (As the Church Lady from “SNL” said many years ago, “How convenient.”)

I mention all of this because on December 17, after almost nine years, our combat troops finally came home from Iraq. (ABC news calculates the Afghan War is the longest in our history, Vietnam second, and Iraq a close third.) As if an omen of things to come, a few days after we left, 63 Iraqi civilians were blown to smithereens in terrorist bombings. Lovely.

So I thought I’d tally up the pluses and minuses of the Iraq War. But first please remember that we still have a significant presence there, our embassy. (And we somehow own the land, so it’s rent-free.)

Our Iraq embassy is the most expensive in the world (\$750 million to build and \$1.2 billion a year to operate). It’s bigger than the Vatican. It’s bigger than 80 football fields should we run out of venues to hold the Super Bowl. (I just hope that the embassy is fortified to withstand angry Iraqis when they eventually storm the gates.)

Some call the Iraq War among the worst foreign policy blunders in our history. (I’m not that charitable.) The total dollar cost is estimated between \$3 trillion and \$5 trillion by the time we treat the wounded soldiers, many of whom are permanently disabled. (4,487 GIs died and 32,226 were wounded.)

But the wounded statistics don’t include the 300,000 brain injuries, or the tens of thousands of PTSD cases. Meanwhile, 18 vets commit suicide daily and more than 135,000 are homeless. To say it’s shameful is a gross understatement.

I suppose on the plus side of the ledger we got rid of Saddam. But, then again, in so doing we made Iran part of Bush’s “Axis of Evil,” the dominant power in the region. Having feared Saddam for decades, the Iranians must thank Allah five times a day that we did them this “generous” favor.

Frankly, I don’t see any pluses from the Iraq War for U.S. citizens. But corporations like Halliburton, Blackwater and especially Exxon and BP (polluter of the Gulf Coast) with Iraqi oil refinery contracts worth trillions of dollars, made out like bandits. (A description that’s actually too kind.) For those who predicted invading Iraq would help with the price at the pump, when Clinton left office gas was \$1.39. Now you need a second mortgage to fill your tank.

Vietnam was another sad chapter in American history. As early as 1965 LBJ admitted (revealed via taped phone calls) that he saw no way we could win the war. It took eight years and 58,000 GI deaths to get the same peace settlement that was on the table back in ‘66.

The parallels between Vietnam and Iraq are striking. In Vietnam we invaded a country whose culture and history we didn’t bother to understand.

In Iraq we seemingly had no awareness that Sunnis and Shias have been fighting each other since 632 A.D. As George W. Bush said in frustration, “I just don’t get it, they’re all Muslims, aren’t they?”

Another parallel can be drawn to the Roman Empire. It began as a democratic federation of independent farmers but, over time, the Senate wastefully sent Roman legions all over the world. The rich became even richer, but the Republic was replaced by an Empire doomed to fall. I suppose we’re following the adage, “When in Rome do as the Romans.”

Will we ever learn? It’s tough to do when you have amnesia. ☞

Atomic Scientists Set The Clock Forward

Faced with inadequate progress on nuclear weapons reduction and proliferation, and continuing inaction on climate change, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (BAS) announced today that it has moved the hands of its famous “Doomsday Clock” to five minutes to midnight.

There are still 19,000 nuclear weapons in the world, said the BAS. ☞

Swami X Speaks

What we believe has a lot to do with what we experience, and how we experience it. Unfortunately, we take on beliefs before we are emotionally mature enough to fully understand them.

Herein, we have religion, and it’s disturbing history and challenging psychology. If we go to the bottom line we find monogamous marriage taking part in an endless number of social ills.

To be brief, it simply doesn’t work. Not to be judgmental, however, I don’t believe, aside from a couple thousand successful mystics, that anyone has attained permanent peace within themselves, here on earth. Of course, I could be overreacting to television.

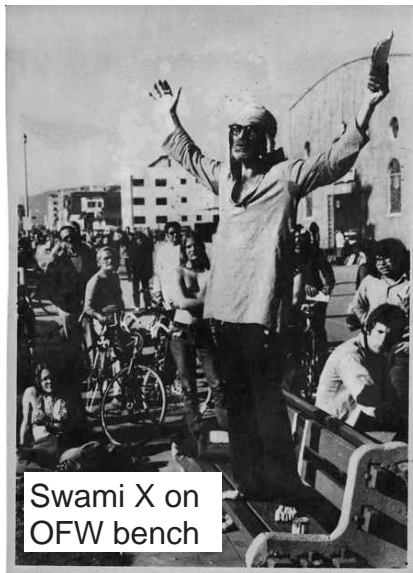
We need each other, real, rich, human contact if we are to be spiritually alive. We are spirits, projected from the Supreme Spirit, to experience the mystery, wonder and bliss of creativity.

No, I don’t have any answers, but I do have a lot of questions. I’ll share them with you sometime. Forming a good sentence is an achievement; however, forming a good question is even more impressive. Zen people say

the answer is hidden in the question. What can you expect from someone who stares at a blank wall all day, and rejects a well-cooked steak. I kid the Buddhists because Buddha had a great sense of humor, and he danced with the stars, sun and moon, and only passed the hat when he felt he had done a good show.

Teach me always to be humble and grateful all the days of my life, because the enlightened souls of yore have left their endless gifts of revelation and wisdom that I may live on earth in happiness and joy.

Like the song of the morning bird, let thy wisdom and love awaken me from the slumber of spiritual forgetfulness. ☞



Swami X on OFW bench

Free Speech on Ocean Front Walk?

By Bill Mitchell

‘Dissident speech’ is the revolutionary Right protected by the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution of the United States. It is not a permit to make a buck, but awaken public consciousness to the horrors of government abuse, criminality, duplicity, war crimes, and with the passage and signing NDAA into law by Barack Obama, this Right must be exercised adamantly, seriously, and loudly in public space to target audiences.

Venice has been a base for free-thinkers, radicals, and beatniks. Among them was Lenny Bruce, who loved to leave Palm Springs for Venice after finishing working at a nightclub. If one man is to be created for pushing the limits of Free Speech, it was Lenny Bruce, who said; “Take away the right to say “fuck” and you take away the right to say “fuck the government.”

And that is what is at issue. Vendors are merchants, not revolutionaries, political activists or dissidents. They have walled off Ocean Front Walk selling merchandise, not ideas. They have monopolized Ocean Front Walk from Windward to Navy avenues.

There is no place to repeat what I did vociferously there from about 1985-1993. There were at least twice as many public benches then too. If there were a conspiracy against dissent political speech, it couldn’t have been as covertly and completely implemented.

But, there was no conspiracy,

just apathy accented by lack of venue. I think Hype Park podiums should be erected with clear space on either side to 20 feet. Three locations that make sense would be at Ocean Front Walk and Horizon, Breeze, and Paloma. Amplification to override ambient sounds to facilitate speakers and listeners alike.

This is an election year, political speech must trump mere entertainment and souvenirs on Ocean Front Walk. From my perspective what we have is an infringement on Freedom of Speech and that is why I have taken it to level of Freedom of Press, to build upon Freedom of Assembly, and declaring ourselves the government of the United States, that is, ‘We, the people’ and proselytize for Pure Democracy to supplant the criminal plutocracy that has usurped and makes a sham of the whole political process and we better get into serious political dialog about it, and not be silenced by someone just out there to make a buck, and otherwise do not want to risk “making waves” and therefore are contrary to the Spirit of Venice I have known and loved since 1966. ☞



Bill Mitchell on OFW bench



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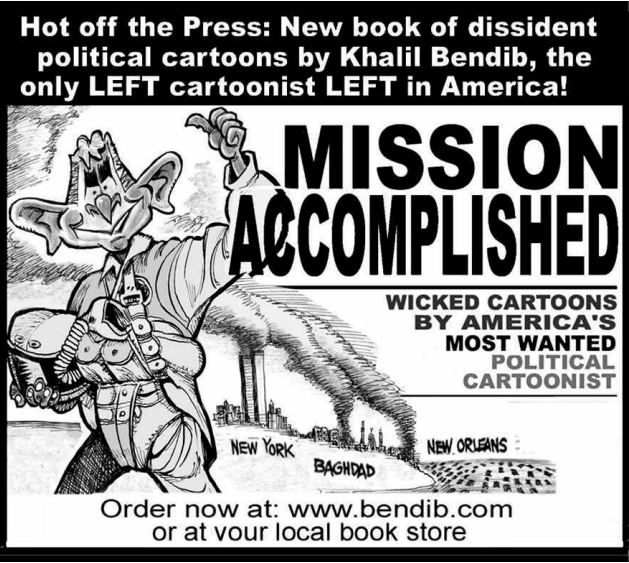
ACTING*AFRO-CARIBE DANCE
CREATIVE WRITING*CAPOEIRA
JAZZ*TAE KWON DO*MUSIC
SAMBA*YOGA*TANGO
and more!!

I came out of the store
and saw Diane, handcuffed,
face to the wall,
surrounded by eight cops.
I'm, like, "what happened?"
How many cops does it take
to arrest one tiny musician?
The cops had rolled up to Ibrahim
and told him:
"Turn down the drums or
we will take all your instruments."
They announced it on their loudspeaker
The crowds at the Bistro and the Candle Café
Booed loudly-
People love this drumming orchestra
The police:
it's a strange play
The police act like assholes
the crowd goes WILD
now, suddenly,
they are watching someone have their rights
taken away from them
right in front of them
just like on T.V.

but this is Diane -
the painter of pictures
the singer of songs
Diane - who is mother to half the beach
Diane - who can laugh so bitterly
who doesn't see her own beauty
the way others do
Diane -
whom everyone loves,
everyone is rooting for -
Diane -
Mother of the motherless
guardian of the winds and the breezes
a pigeon - mother
rescuer of injured birds
nurturer
Amazing paintings
of the locals
of the unseen
making the invisible appear
creating the illusion of reality upon a canvas
So there they are -
a montage
one tiny woman crumpled up on the wall
her hands in handcuffs
her weight shifts
the big male cop holding her hands,
behind her back,
lets go -
and she falls into the wall
this is how they treat an artist in America.
Hey -
Welcome to America,
where if you have beauty, talent, and guts
you can quite easily be rolled over by the Machine.

We all just stand there
Waiting,
Witnesses to these corrupt police
Why can't they learn to talk to people?
we're still waiting
I know if they take her
I'll be crying.
This wakens up all the anger I have against the LAPD
the tourists watch this little drama
and wonder about this country.
finally they let her go home.
the sun goes down and she is home.
we all love you Dianne.
we love your bravery and guts,
your light and your love
Keep your head up sister,
and I'll keep mine up too,
and we will keep on dancing.

—Mary Getlein



Home before the Hour

By Michelle Lepori

When I loved you...
cooing over photographs. Glow
grey marine morning after sex
alone, away from no breakfast
in bed organic chef, new lover.
"You have one hour to leave."
"What I tell all my women..."

Turned away from face down
pillow sex to watch shadows fuck
in a mirror for two minutes.
"The Four Agreements"
watched from nightstand.
Practicing honesty, spiritual man?
"Sorry that wasn't any good for you."

What else could be said?
Photograph boyfriend, mescaline
chardonnay mushy white skin,
remember then? So consumed.
They said I could do better, had to...
Last night I laid back to back,
holding hands with my lover. I was
home before the hour.

Love Knows

Love knows no bounds or master
It comes not summoned
Moving without temperature
Energized by apathy
Cooled by contrived connection
Soul taction radiating from molecular memory
You are found before you find it
If you love a thing
Is this love
Are you what you love
A song, a laugh, some food, some sex
What magnitude of ascent can you survive
Waiting takes too long
Rushing is too dissolute
How do you know it's love
It makes you human
All who love
All who are loved
Are not absent
All you need
Is the need
Your skin covers the intersection
Of then and now

—Ronald K. McKinley

16:13 Monday, January 30, 2012..... I found this
sheet of paper in the sand, Along the Venice bike
trail. I obtained By pulling to the side and stooping
down, Impulsively; like picking up a stone. I felt no
inspiration, nor a need To write something. Enough
to plant a seed. And when the moment came, I'd
probably know The best use for this wayward leaf;
and so, A quick fold and deposit. I delayed, Until
this moment. I was not afraid. I trust my muse. She
radiates upon The alley of my consciousness. Con-
done, Does she. Likewise, my pen has ascertained,
And breathed life into lines, not yet explained.....
—Roger Houston (nodding off with LG Octane in my
hands.)

can't ask the wind why

By Joanna Silva

Crows eat other birds. Crows are the tight knit
family type and know their neighborhood. If a
kid says that way down that row of sickly, smog-
dusted, rat-choked palms, towards the sunset-
direction, there's a seagull looking rather lost and
slow, the crows, like wolves, will together begin
the hunt. They'll chatter and wait, a perfect, but
not a considerate distance from the weaker, now
terrified, sea bird.

Beatrice, a young gull who'd shed her black and
grey at birth, hadn't known she was ill, but felt so
immediately when the crows appeared, studied
her, moved in, suffocating her courage. Her
rapid-paced bird-heart and light-speed tiny-breath
slowed. Moments divided into themselves. All
things stretched out and spoke. She had time to
notice, to second-guess, and to have fear.

In an instance of just one of her bird-swift blinks
she went further. She felt shame. She suffered.
She cowered because she'd been arrogant and
had imagined maybe, not because she was spe-
cial, but because she was true, that maybe God
had blessed her, that there might have been a
name for her even before she was hatched.

She lifted lightly into the air as if nothing were
different, as if she had not this shadow.

Dance

By Jim Smith

One by one my friends
are covered by Shadows.
The sunlight ends
and a cold wind blows.

Used to be The Fear was about
walking down the street when
a brilliant flash knocked us out
and then a harsh wind, and then...

Now the oncoming Fear is nameless.
So powerful your mind can't visualize.
So ominous we're crazy with stress,
which newspapers make us realize.

Here comes a singularity of hidden intention.
It could be the great hope of humanity.
But some say it's our total destruction.
Change will be hard, or perhaps a calamity.

The dread will wake you in the night
when it creeps into your dreams.
It's coming close, bringing tears and fright
Nothing can stop our fate, it seems.

So wrap it up and throw your Fear away
in a trash can. It's your last chance.
Fear won't help when comes the day.
Put it out of your mind, and D A N C E.

Dance until the morning Sun comes out.
Dance until everyone becomes a friend.
Dance until you drive away your doubt.
Dance until the end.

Venice Artist David Phillips
—continued from page 6

He figured why let the graffiti artists have all the fun,
and maybe the next step beyond graffiti as public art
would be a contemporary artist leaving behind works
that people could actually take home!
This began the Wino-Strut practice and Brand of
"Giving someone a HAPPENING ... The experience
IS the art!" So the installation like "Birth", that first
led me to this interesting fellow, and his studio. Then
he painted 500 bottles, inserting painted scrolls of
abstract faces inside, and placed them all along the
coast, from Venice (Marina Del Rey) to Malibu, for
people to discover along their morning walks and
keep. This little caper did earn him a call from the
LAPD, who thought that he might be planting pipe
bombs all over vs. just making someone's day. Sigh.
Phillips had just done an installation the very
afternoon that we spoke, with colorful scroll paint-
ings spilling out of a red briefcase of Casa Linda on
California Ave. Rather than think of the art as fleet-
ing, Phillips sees it more as "Disrupting someone's
monotony. This art HAPPENED. And now they have
an illustration of a memory." How great is that?

We wound up our interview back in the studio,
where there are multiple works in progress, as well as
lots more bottles being prepared for a 3,000 bottle
onslaught, perhaps somewhere near you. I have a
David Phillips bottle/scroll, and it makes me smile
just to glance at it and think of the lift one like it is
going to give someone else, totally unexpectedly.
Another day brightener in Venice.
Phillips is a big fan of the Ferus/"Cool School"
of art, and loves to mingle with those guys (Bell, Lo-
dato, etc...) around town at Larry's Venice, The Er-
win, the Art Crawl, VENICE ... and keep that in-
spired torch burning.
I'm so happy to know the story behind it all now,
and look so forward to hearing about - or just again
stumbling upon - what new hijinks Phillips has in
store for the unassuming audience. He has followed
his dream, and had brought fun to many in doing it.
And that's about the highest form of living one can
do. May he long continue his wino strutting! 🚲

Theatrical Review: “Awake in a World that Encourages Sleep”

Reviewed by Roger Linnett

From the beginning of Raymond J. Barry’s “Awake in a World that Encourages Sleep” at the Electric Lodge, the audience is subjected to a lurching, frenetic exposition of the tormented lives of three people on the edge, presented by a top-flight trio of actors fused into a powerful ensemble. The play examines the price of power, patriotism and loyalty and how they wear on the human soul and, as Barry writes in the program notes, the “exploitation of economically weak countries by giant corporations, as described in John Perkins’ Confessions of an Economic Hit Man.”

The movements of the actors often border on vaudevillian, and their behavior is at times absurd, but the rat-a-tat dialog, with sometimes two or all three characters speaking at once, often to humorous effect, keeps the audience riveted, hardly able to catch its collective breath as the focus careens from one character to another as they rant, squabble, threaten, manipulate, cajole and struggle in their personal Dantean levels of hell.

The breakneck pace is intermittently interrupted as the action comes to a jarring halt when the characters confront each other in overtly dramatic poses and tortured expressions, or react to unheard nearby explosions of bombs, representing the omnipresent but unseen fourth character of the piece - war as the means of exploitation – that is at the core of their individual agonies.

Paul and Erica (Joseph Culp and Tacey Adams) are Albee-esque as they grapple with the loss of their son to the war which Paul encouraged his son, as the heroic and patriotic thing to join, although we learn he lied his way out of his obligation, yet claims he is a wounded and decorated veteran.

From the outset Paul seems a man on the edge of a breakdown – devious, high-strung and paranoid, a corporate tool wracked with guilt about his dead son. Erica despises him for his cowardice and for sacrificing their son, even though she too is somehow complicit in abetting the Orwellian perpetual war for perpetual peace

Edward (Raymond J. Barry) is a quirky and troubled underling in Paul’s war sustaining enterprise, bent on quitting. His movements are reminiscent of a Monty Python character, replete with silly walk and exaggerated gestures. Like Paul and Erica, he is needy, lonely and mildly sinister, but ultimately harmless.

After Paul rushes off following an intense opening spat with Erica, he invades Erica’s momentary peace and carries on a cat and mouse flirtation, wheedling and obnoxious, but also terribly vulnerable as he wrestles with his decision to leave the war-making enterprise known as the “Group”, of which it turns out, Paul is a high-powered executive, and his boss.

The play resolves with Edward reawakening in a reluctant Erica the dormant capability to love, although in the end, even as she confesses her love for him, she cannot detach herself from the broken, self-loathing Paul.

Barry’s comic yet disturbing play was first nurtured as a workshop piece at the Electric Lodge during January and February of last year, growing with each performance. It is rare to find a cast commit to a play for such a long time. It is also what makes it so seamless and professionally realized.

The play had its world premiere at the Theater for the New City, in New York in April, 2011, and has returned to its Venice nest. The play runs at the Electric Lodge through February 26, on Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm and Sundays at 2pm.

Tickets are \$25, \$18 for seniors, and \$15 for students available thru brownpapertickets.com. Electric Lodge also offers a special \$50 dinner and a show deal in association with Hal’s for the Saturday performances. Reservations for this offer must be made in advance at livearts@electriclodge.org. 🚲

Unfortunate Times For La Fortuna Market –continued from page 3

Romo, whose second language is English was not allowed to call an interpreter. The officers said they would interpret for him.

According to Romo, he was unaware of the content of the document, thinking it pertained to his previous citation.

Soon after a letter arrived from the Zoning Commission asking Romo to show up for a hearing. Romo hired an attorney Robert Starr, who informed him that the document officer Bowser had forced him to sign, was a list of rules that LAPD had imposed on La Fortuna in order to continue operating his store.

These new rules restricted the hours of operation, and demanded they have a uniformed security guard to patrol the 50x18ft store as well as patrol the adjoining alley/parking lot and the adjacent sidewalk area to deter individuals from loitering. The rules also prohibited him from selling anything less than a six pack of beer along with 29 other requirements. Romo complied with all but one, a full-time security guard.

“It is impossible for me to hire a full-time employee at this time, we are barely getting by. It is unnecessary and unfair to single me out. Other much larger liquor stores and markets, including 7-11, aren’t required to have a guard. The neighbors that are complaining have never set foot in my store, yet they hate me and my family. They want us out. It is incredible how people can be so cruel towards someone they don’t know. This is my livelihood I have spent most of my life in Venice,” Romo said.

Gary Neville whose office is two doors from La Fortuna has been an avid advocate for the Romos.

“I can’t stand by and watch an innocent person be railroaded, by vicious lies. Romo is a good hard working man, I have no complaints.”

Neville sent the following letter in support of La Fortuna to VNC members, before the January vote: Attn: Board Members - Tuesday night, January 17, I shall be distributing photographs of certain activities relating to conditions of Dillon Court alley and in support of La Fortuna Market exemplary and responsible current operation, i.e., Ralph’s market customers toting their singles and glass bottles I find in the alley (not from La Fortuna). I do this in an effort to educate the VNC to the reality of alley drinking problems—Ralph’s Market and some of the places you identified to me—not La Fortuna Market.

The following is an excerpt from an e-mail sent by Neville after the VNC vote: “An innocent man may get railroaded out of the community and lose his only livelihood because of board members seem unwilling to challenge speakers . . . and ask for FACTS! Thank God courts don’t allow unsubstantiated, mindless babble such as mouthed Jan. 17 by both speakers and most council members, instead of provable facts!”

Romo also has the full support of his landlord, Ortencia Delgado, who says she doesn’t agree with what the city is trying to do. She used to operate La

Fortuna from 1975 until 1980 at which time the Romos took it over.

“It is unfair what they are doing, these are good hard working people that never hurt anyone. They are struggling in this economy barely surviving. To take away their liquor license would devastate them,” she said.

Not all are against Romo. A letter dated Dec. 10, 2011, addressed from the Zoning Administration stated: “LAPD Pacific Area Vice Unit, does not protest the removal of condition 1, licensed security guard required, and condition 3, modification of hours to 1900 hours.” On January 26 LAPD officer Branis conducted an inspection and found no violations.

Lourdes Green, Associate Zoning Administrator, could not comment on the case as her final ruling is still pending. She did say, however, that LAPD is happy with the way Romo is operating his business. In response to a question about how it is that Zoning is involved in the revocation of a liquor license, she said they didn’t have that authority to do so, but they can revoke the use of the space.

According to Will Salao, ABC district administrator, La Fortuna has no restrictions or open complaints on file. Salao added that ABC is the only governmental entity allowed to revoke a license, not the city council, zoning administration or police department and most certainly not the local neighborhood council. In the meantime, Romo was forced to file a Plan Approval with the Office Of Zoning Administration, as if he was opening a new business, for which he had to pay a \$5995 application fee.

The City has also billed Romo \$21,025 and applicable surcharges, for looking into this matter, and according to City planning this is only “partial cost recovery.”

The most disturbing part of this story is the devious way that this matter has been mishandled by members of the VNC, who are suppose to represent the entire Venice population, not just based on race or economic standing. Margarita Romo was told by VNC Boardmember Jake Kaufman that it was more than likely the La Fortuna issue would not be voted on that night, yet 40 minutes later, after members of the audience had left, including Margarita Romo and a couple that had come to speak on behalf of the Romos, the issue was brought up again. Romo’s opponents a chance to speak and persuade the members to vote in favor of recommending the Romo’s license revocation.

If you would like to support La Fortuna, stop by 824 Lincoln Blvd. Get to know its proprietors and sign the petition to stop the harassment and unfair treatment being brought by the city against a 32-year Venice community member.

Also please contact Councilmember Bill Rosendahl at e-mail councilman.rosendahl@lacity.org or 310-575-8461 to voice your support.

In the meantime the Romo’s patiently wait for their fate to be determined. 🚲

The Meeting to Close the Boardwalk -continued from page 4

Marc Saltzberg asked for a straw poll on this ordinance. By a show of hands, 63 people voted for closing the Boardwalk from 12 am to 5 am. Eighteen people felt the issues were not clear enough to discuss. Eighteen people believed that there are other ways to deal with the homeless.

This meeting was called at the last minute, and so many people were left out. Lisa Green, an advocate for the homeless, urged residents to have some compassion for homeless people. The problems of the homeless are many: alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, to name a few. The situation on the Boardwalk at night is scary. The Police say they can’t enforce laws at this time, that “Their hands are tied.”

I can understand that some residents are afraid, and no one should have to live in fear.

One woman told Lt. Kreefft that someone was in her back yard and wouldn’t leave. She called the Police and they wouldn’t come out and help her. At the meeting, they told her to post “No Trespassing” signs on her property, which would make prosecution easier.

This is one more example of how the L.A. City Council rolls over the residents of Venice. No one in Venice had a chance to vote on this, LAPD simply announced that this new law is going to happen. They are denying people access to the coast, which is illegal, according to the Coastal Commission. There are a lot of residents of Venice that go jogging, swimming or surfing in the early hours of the morning, or late at night.

I don’t see this as a solution to the homeless problem on the Boardwalk. They are talking about shoving people off the Boardwalk, onto Speedway. The only place next are the walkways. This is a bullshit attempt by the LAPD to cater to the population of homeowners and take away our civil rights at the same time. This is a total lie by the LAPD that this will solve the homeless problem.

George Orwell said, “Through times of universal deceit - telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” 🚲

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Community Events – day by day

Free Venice Beachhead • February 2012 • 11

Calendar Compiled By Karl Abrams

Wednesday, February 1

- 7-10pm - **Miss Jessica and the Sugar Shack Attack** sing at Danny’s Deli. Free.

Thursday, February 2

- 7-10pm – 7 Dudley Cinema: **Natasha Maidoff Films**. Beyond Baroque. Admission \$7, students/seniors/children \$5, members free.

Friday, February 3

- 7-11pm – **First Friday** on Abbot Kinney Blvd. Lots of people and open shops. Free.
- 10pm – **Raquel Rodriguez** sings Winehouse-esque. WitZend in Venice. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10.

Saturday, February 4

- 2pm - **HARC Foundation benefit**: “Command Performance” with bands and solo music, poetry, silent auction and Italian food. Gebert Gallery.1345 AKB. \$50 donation, \$20 for students.
- 2-7pm – **Second Annual Poetry of Venice Photography Event**. Beyond Baroque. Admission \$7, students/seniors/children \$5, members free.
- 7pm - **Art show**: Floating Head Found in Venice: In Search of the Present. Mystic Journey Bookstore. Free.

Sunday, February 5

- 5pm – First Sunday **Open Reading**. Hosted by Billy Burgos. Beyond Baroque. Free.
- 7pm – **Florence Weinberger reads**. Beyond Baroque. Admission \$7, students/seniors/children \$5, members free.

Wednesday, February 8

- 7-10pm - **Suzy Williams sings at Danny’s Deli**. Truly amazing jazz/blues on second Wednesdays. Free.
- 9pm - **Venice Underground Comedy**: Local talent & national headliners every Wednesday. Del Monte Speakeasy (Townhouse, downstairs). 52 Windward. No Cover.

Thursday, February 9

- 1:30pm - **Rally to Save the Venice Skills Center**. LAUSD Headquarters. 333 Beaudry Ave, Downtown.
- 2-4pm - **The National Parks**: America’s Best Idea: Mid-Day Movies Ken Burns’s PBS series Part 1. **G2 Gallery**. \$5.

Saturday, February 11

- 2pm - **Klezmer Band Jam**. Talking Stick. Free.
- 7pm - **Art Opening**: Mini Yoon. Cave Gallery. 1108 AKB. Free.
- 4pm – **Mary Jane Interview on Venice History**. Unurban. Free.

Sunday, February 12

- 7-10pm – **Jazz Funk Fest**. Talking Stick. Free.

Wednesday, February 15

- 4pm - **Master storyteller** Vicki Goring spins new stories inspired by children. All ages. AK Library.
- 7-10pm - **Meditation on Media** at Beyond Baroque. Free.
- 7:30-11pm –**Open Mic**. Talking Stick. Free.

Thursday, February 16

- 6pm - **Venice Art Crawl**. Find the maps online or go to OFW and Windward. Free.

Friday, February 17

- 8pm – Writers in Treatment Presents: **Venice comedian Barry Diamond** headlines astronaut Buzz Aldrin’s award ceremony. Skirball Cultural Center. Donation.

Saturday, February 18

- 2-4pm - **Save the Venice Post Office President’s Day Rally**. **Bring signs to protest the sale of our historical Venice PO**.
- 11pm – **Orlando Napier**. WitZend in Venice. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10.

Sunday, February 19

- 4-8pm - **Geoffrey J. gets bluesy** with guitarist James Elliot. Hinano Café in Venice.15 Washington Blvd. Free.

Tuesday, February 21

- 7-9:30pm - **Venice Neighborhood Council Board Meeting**. Open to the Public. Westminster School Auditorium. Free.
- **Malcom X Memorial Day**

Wednesday, February 22

- 8pm - **Stormin’ Norman & Suzy**. Singer Suzy Williams: From Carnegie Hall to Venice. Witzend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10.

Friday, February 24

- 5:30-9:30 - **Kathy Leonardo** with her band. Hinano Cafe. 15 Washington Blvd.
- 7:30-10pm - **Subversive Cinema**. 212 Pier. Free.

Saturday, February 25

- 9pm - **Gypsy Music Night**: Dustbowl Revival, AK & Her Kalashnikovs. The Del Monte Speakeasy (Townhouse, downstairs). 52 Windward. \$5.

Sunday, February 26

- 8pm – **Last performance** of one act play “Awake in a World that Encourages Sleep.” Electric Lodge. \$25.

Tuesday, February 28

- 6:30-7:30pm – **Venice Book Club**. AK Library. Free.
- 7pm - **Bioneers Meeting** for all environmentalists. G-2 Gallery. Free.

Location Guide

- Abbot Kinney Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd, 310-821-1769.
- Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 310-822-3006.
- Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, marinadelrey.lacounty.gov
- Danny’s Deli, 23 Windward Ave.
- Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave, 310-306-1854 - electriclodge.org
- G2 Gallery, 1503 Abbot Kinney Blvd 310-452-2842.
- Hal’s Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 310-396-3105 - halsbarandgrill.com
- Oakwood Recreation Center, 757 California Ave.
- Pacific Resident Theatre, 703½ Venice Blvd. 822-8392 pacificresidenttheatre.com
- SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x15.
- Talking Stick Coffee Lounge, 1411c Lincoln Blvd. 450-6052 - thetalkingstick.net
- Vera Davis Center, 610 California Ave. 310-305-1865.
- Westminster Elementary School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (enter auditorium from Westminster Ave.) 310-606-2015.

Ongoing Events

Music

- 8pm-12am - **Hal’s Bar and Grill** features Live Jazz, Sunday and Monday nights. Free.
- 8:30pm - **TKO Comedy’s “Open Mic”** for comics, musicians. 212 Pier. Free. Every Thursday.
- 12-2pm - Saturday & Sunday; **Music at Uncle Darrow’s**. 2560 Lincoln Blvd. Free.
- 5-9pm – **Venice Street Legends**. Venice Bistro, OFW & Dudley. Every Wednesday. Free.
- 6-10pm - 2nd Thursday - **Psychedelic Surf Rock**. Mollusk, 1600 Pacific Ave. Free.

Movies

- 5:30pm - **Abbot Kinney Public Library** Thursday Movie Night. Call 310-821-1769 for title.
- 6-10pm - **7 Dudley Cinema** - First Thursdays at Beyond Baroque. Free.

Kids

- 6:30pm -Abbot Kinney Public Library Children’s **Pajama Storytime**. Second, fourth Tuesday evenings. Free.

Miscellaneous

- 7-10pm - MOM: **Meditations On Media**. 3rd Wednesdays. Beyond Baroque. Free.
- 11:30am-2:30pm – **The Venice Oceanarium** (a museum without walls). Venice Pier. Every Sunday, weather permitting. Free.
- 6-8pm - **McLuhan-Finnegans Wake Reading Club**. Lloyd Taber - Marina Del Rey Library, 4533 Admiralty Way. First Tuesday of the month. Free.

Computers

- Venice Library offers a variety of **Free Computer Classes**. 310-821-1769.
- Vera Davis Center offers **free computer use**: M-Th 10am-Noon and 1pm-3pm; Fri 1pm-3pm.

Food

- Vera Davis Center. 12:30pm - 2nd and 4th Thursdays - **Free Food Distribution**.
- Vera Davis Center - **Sign up for Food Stamps (EBT Cards)**. Call for date and time. 310-305-1865.
- 1st Baptist Church: 5-7pm Mondays - **Hot Meals; Pre-packs**: 2-3:30pm Saturdays, Westminster & 7th St.

Get Your Local Event Listed

Email your time, date and a brief description to Calendar@freevenice.org by the 20th of the month. Please take out an advertisement if you charge admission.

Political Cartoon
by Khalil Bendib



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