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June
2012
#368

Special Summer in Venice Issue

Summer in Venice, in 2062

By Jim Smith

Hello, and Welcome to Venice!

If you're visiting the City of Venice this summer, there are some things you should know. Venice is easily accessible by mass transit and bike lanes and paths. You should have no problem getting nearly to the beach before you have to put your feet on solid ground. Venice is also one of the most economical excursions in Southern California. If you bring a picnic lunch and have a transit pass or bike, you may get away without spending a cent. But if you want to buy someone a gift, Venice artisans abound on Ocean Front Walk and Windward Avenue, all the way to the Lagoon.

You'll have your choice of a party atmosphere beach or a place of peace and quiet, save only the waves crashing against the sea wall. When you arrive, just look for the Tram (Streetcar) on Pacific Avenue. It will take you from the end of the Venice Peninsula to the Santa Monica border. Actually, you can ride it all the way to the transit centers in downtown Santa Monica.

Extending the Tram into Santa Monica was the subject of a huge debate in Venice a couple of years ago. Many people did not want an easy link with this regional transit center since it would, they said, bring many more visitors into Venice. But in the end, what carried the



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Everything is Normal in Venice

By CJ Gronner

I was in project mode one recent Saturday, and found myself poking around in Lincoln Hardware, getting ready to paint a chair bright red. I looked up from my deciding to see my friend and Venice impresario, Danny Samakow, all excited and on a mission. He told me that the next day was going to be the best solar eclipse of our lifetime, and he was on his way to the Valley to buy a whole bunch of special glasses to view the spectacle through. Awesome. I told him I'd see him tomorrow, and we split our separate ways. I painted and thought about how much I love Danny's sense of "School Spirit", for lack of a better term.

He is always organizing and facilitating fun in the name of Venice and its people. I mean, who wants to and then actually DOES drive to the Valley on their Saturday to get special glasses to make something more fun for others? Then offers up special Eclipse drink deals at [Danny's Deli](#) and gives any glasses donation money to AIDS research? Danny Samakow that's who. He reminds me of a friend of mine from college who once showed up with massive amounts of glow sticks that we broke open to fling the light stuff around our walls and play (toxic) glow tag with. He would say, "There's nothing worse than running out of fun". Danny is that same type of dude. A real gem, and Spirit of Venice preservationist who we should all thank every time we see him and his wonderful team/s. For real.

Sunday was weird out all day alternating fog and sun. Most Venice people I spoke to were Art Walk crowd avoiding, and doing their own thing. Which is why it was so great to get down to the beach just in time for the maximum of the eclipse (6:38 pm!) and see absolutely everyone gazing skyward, collectively sharing the phenomenon.

And a phenomenon it was! The fog muted the whole thing, and made it so you didn't really need the special glasses (but probably should have worn anyway) to see the super trippy eclipse go down. People

were sharing the glasses bought at Danny's Deli (About \$1,000 bones made for AIDS research!) with strangers and passersby. It was hard to capture in photos, as was the electricity you felt in those moments of group excitement.

There aren't that many events, especially natural ones, that bring a whole people together in the name of just seeing something cool, and way bigger than us. This was such an evening, and the beating of the drum circle in the distance only made it all feel more tribal. Heavy and joyous at the same time, which is what life itself is, after all.

To celebrate, we hit all three of Danny's joints, and wound up at the Canal Club inventing what may be the drink for Summer '12. A mango margarita with pepper infused tequila! So it tastes just like when you get a mango from a fruit cart person and they put the chili powder on it, and it's a perfect fiesta in your mouth. We called it "The Eclipse". Try it. And HAPPY SUMMER 2012 in Venice!!!

Here's to never running out of fun! ☺





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Surf & Skate Fest

Dear Beachhead,
I am writing with the hopes of determining the community’s opinion of the inaugural Venice Beach Surf & Skate Fest held on April 21, 2012.
What I saw and heard from the revelers the day of the event was a wonderful outpouring of fun, camaraderie and enjoyment. I personally feel that the event was a success and met my goals of presenting the local community a day of celebration in regards to our surfing and skating heritage. But this is just my opinion. And although I heard a lot of positive feedback on the event, there are some folks who do not share my views.

I like to think that I do my best to address everyone’s concerns when proposing or holding an event in my beloved community of Venice. I also like to discuss these concerns in private or in a forum where it is beneficial to all parties involved. But when these concerns are sent directly to the Councilmember’s office, the Coastal Commission & the LADOT two and three weeks after the event is over in attempt to spin a negative image on myself & my productions, it not only puts a bad light on me, but it also hurts my feelings deeply.

If city agencies & the California Coastal Commission only hear these negative comments on the event, it is a pretty good bet that they will not approve a 2nd Annual Venice Beach Surf & Skate Fest.

I spent almost 1,000 hours of time & over \$3,000 of money out of my pocket to bring this event to the people of Venice. I am reaching out to the public to get your feedback, negative or positive. Any ideas of what you would like to see? Thoughts on what I can improve to make this event better if allowed to be held in 2013? If you liked it or loved it, please send me your comments, no matter how long or short they may be.

Thank you for continuing to let me have fun with all of you wonderful Bohemians!
Sincerely, *Brady Walker* - 310-980-7129
brady_walker@hotmail.com

PO’d at the P. O.

Dear Beachhead Collective,
The song, “PO’d at the P.O.,” featured on p. 5 of the May issue, was co-written by Sam Clay and me. It is mostly his work; I added some lyrics. Please print a correction in the June edition.
Love, *Suzy Williams*

Even More PO’d at the P. O.

Dear Beachhead,
I have to say that I won’t be sad to see that post office go, for several reasons: (1) It’s ugly in there. There’s string hanging from the louvers, crap laying around the counters, and the whole space feels impersonal and bureaucratic. (2) I hate the plexiglass. If we keep the present P.O., we keep the plexi. Makes it like East Germany in there. If we change the post office, maybe the new one can come without that stuff. (3) The help is less than helpful. Let’s just say that they are of widely varying intelligence levels. (4) The mural is historic, but it’s also very weird.
It’s one of the weirdest in the entire Post Office Mural Program (and I know because I am an art historian and I have studied this). Abbot Kinney rising out the doorway, photographically accurate which does him no favors, while the rest of the mural is more loosely painted. Hoo Boy. So I think the Postal Service should sell the building. Let it become a bar or something. And let’s try to make a new post office that we can be a little prouder of.
Patrick Frank

About The Cover

Independence Day ~ Venice Style is an original acrylic on canvas by local Venice artist Frank Strasser. The painting depicts the amazingly eclectic swarm of locals and tourists seeking hot fun in the summertime and cheap thrills in the lurid carnival atmosphere of our world-famous Venice.
Frank has performed music and painted in Venice Beach for over 30 years. He will perform as part of Hinano’s 50th anniversary celebration on Friday, June 1. His art can be seen at www.frankstrasser.info and www.frankstrasser.com and is on display at Very Venice Gallery, 1629 Abbott Kinney Blvd. He can be reached at franksterocks@live.com or 310-827-5729. 🚲

Thanks for your generous donations!

- Richard Abcarian
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- Meenoy
- Christina Morehead
- Joe and Nanci Ward
- Nutritional Warehouse
- Suzy Williams

Venice Entertainer Framed in Santa Monica?

By Greta Cobar

Solomon, the one and only Venice Snake Man, also known as Willie Lee Turner, was arrested in a coordinated operation in Santa Monica on April 29. Accused of felony assault and battery with great bodily harm for allegedly pushing a man in the Hollywood area on April 22, Solomon was taken to jail even though he does not match the description of the suspect.

Described as a 22- to 27-year-old black male wearing a baseball cap and riding a beach cruiser with a milk crate attached to the front of the bike, the suspect does not match Solomon’s style of clothing nor his age, as Solomon is about 30 years older than the written description of the suspect.

The incident in Hollywood left the victim in a coma and on life support. It was witnessed by two women, who were subsequently shown pictures of six subjects. One of the pictures was of Solomon, taken about 20 years ago. The two witnesses selected two pictures that resembled the suspect, and Solomon’s picture was not selected.

The police then asked the witnesses to watch videos of Solomon doing his Snake Show in Venice, and subsequently one of them stated that Solomon resembles the suspect, even though his show image is different from his day-to-day style and demeanor.

After spending 19 ferocious days in three different jails, thanks to family members he is now out on a \$50,000 bail. On another happy note, the victim of the incident recovered out of the coma and is no longer on life support.

Solomon has been a primary target of police harassment in Venice, and he is currently in the middle of a civil lawsuit against the LAPD. He received dozens of tickets over the last ten years for things like performing without following the rules of the Lottery system, which was since deemed unconstitutional. Just two years ago on Memorial Day he was arrested for speaking out against the war and criticizing the Police and Military for taking over the basketball courts to conduct their propaganda. As a result of that arrest he was banned from Ocean Front Walk for a year.

Known for speaking his mind against the injustices committed by our armed forces overseas and our police forces at home, Solomon is no stranger to being ticketed and arrested time and time again on bogus charges, all of which have been subsequently dismissed in court. Out of the dozens of tickets received and the dozens of times he was arrested, he was never found guilty and never was sentenced or required to pay a fine. The only exception is the previously mentioned Memorial Day incident, in which he was not found guilty, but was cornered into accepting a plea deal.

On April 29 Solomon was peacefully jogging in Santa Monica when 15 police cars and undercover police cars, half of them from Hollywood and the other half carrying Venice cops, swarmed in on him from all directions with their sirens on. At gunpoint, Solomon was ordered to surrender. The two women who witnessed the April 22 incident in Hollywood were in the back of one of the police cars and were asked to identify him as the suspect. After what legally can be classified as coercion, the two witnesses agreed with the policemen’s statements and Solomon was taken away.

The operation to arrest Solomon was planned out and organized thoroughly enough to ensure that Venice’s Alex Thompson, the police blogger

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Post Office Picket Planned For June 22

By Greta Cobar

The hole-in-the-wall new mini Post Office (PO) at the site of the current Annex is scheduled to open June 22, and the Coalition to Save the Venice Post Office plans to protest the inauguration with a picket line.

PO box service at the current post office is set to end Friday, June 15 and access to PO boxes at the new location is set to start Monday, June 18. Neither the zip code nor the PO box numbers will change.

Starting June 16 there will no longer be postal retail services available on Saturdays. Those of us who cannot make it to the PO Monday through Friday between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm will be out of luck.

Although the United States Postal Service (USPS) is moving forward with the sale of our Post Office as quickly as it can, it might be forced to move right back by current ongoing litigation in Washington DC.

Furthermore, the sale of the building currently housing our post office might not be completed due to USPS's failure to create a covenant protecting the historic 1939 Works Project Administration building and the "Story of Venice" Edward Biberman mural that it houses.

"Section 106 must be concluded ... prior to the transfer of the PO out of federal ownership," stated Caroline Hall, Assistant Director of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, in a letter to Dallan Wordekemper, Federal Preservation Officer of the USPS. The Section 106 process ensures that the building and the mural will suffer "no adverse effects" as a result of the sale of the federal building.

In a phone conversation with Mark Ryavek of the Venice Stakeholders Association, Hall agreed that the USPS did not properly conduct the Section 106 consultation process. She noted that under that process the USPS is required to make formal submissions to the Advisory Council explaining their "undertaking" and their determination of whether there will be an adverse effect from the undertaking (in this case, sale of the Venice PO).

The covenant drafted by USPS was deemed to be "vague and virtually unenforceable" by John Henning, Attorney at Law, in a letter addressed to Hall and Wordekemper. Henning went on to state that the current covenant "has no beneficiary that is able or willing to take on the role of enforcing the covenant."

Adrian Scott Fine, Director of Advocacy for the Los Angeles Conservancy, also wrote a letter to Hall and Wordekemper. In his letter, Fine points out the fact that although the covenant drafted by the USPS re-

quires the California Office of Historic Preservation to accept, monitor and enforce the covenant, that office does not currently hold any covenants and has repeatedly stated to the USPS that it will not accept a covenant for the Venice PO building.

Hall stated to Ryavek over the phone that for a finding of "no adverse effect" to be made, a credible third party must accept the covenant and in that process the third party can negotiate the level of protection in the covenant. She went on to say that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has litigated such matters in the past and has expressed an interest in the Venice PO if the covenant and beneficiary issues are not resolved in the consultation process.

So far the USPS has refused to amend its draft covenant, which appears to indicate the agency's acknowledgement of the precedent-setting potential of such an action for historic post offices nationwide.

Henning drafted an alternate covenant as a replacement to the useless covenant that the USPS has drafted, but the USPS has not accepted the terms of the new covenant. Among other things, Henning's preservation covenant states that the buyer "shall fund

a permanent endowment in the amount of \$75,000 to fund the monitoring and compliance with this covenant." It also regulates the use, repair, preservation, maintenance and inspection of the building and mural.

On May 7 Jim Smith submitted a series of questions to Diana Alvarado, USPS Pacific Facilities Service Officer, on behalf of the Coalition to Save the Venice Post Office. Simple questions such as when services plan to be moved to the new location; what the names of the bidders on the PO building are; are the bidders required to accept the covenant, have yet to be answered. However, a case file was open as a response to the inquiry.

The hope is that there will be no need for a picket line come June 22, by when the USPS should realize its foolishness in going against a strong, united community like Venice. However, in the unfortunate case that the USPS proceeds with the unpopular decision to move PO services to the Annex, please join forces with signs, slogans, instruments, microphones and lots of hoopla. See you all there! 🚲



Old Post Office



New Post Office

Saturday Service to end at new mini-Post Office

Defaced Mural to be Restored

By Roger Linnett

Last month the beautiful old mural at the corner of Market and Main St., an iconic depiction of Venice in its heyday a century ago, was the target of a vandal's spray can. Unlike the usual, pathetic, garden-variety tagger, this self-loathing punk excreted large, red letters across a span of about thirty feet, nearly covering the mural from end to end and continuing around the corner, defacing more of the mural on the building's side.

Clinical psychologists say that individuals who express themselves in this way do so in a desperate attempt to silence an incessant inner voice screaming their worthlessness, and definitely indicates an individual with deep-seated feelings of sexual inadequacy as the result of an embarrassing underdevelopment of the genitalia.

Other malignant misanthropes, emboldened by this rape of a public work of art, and probably suffering similar problems, have since added their pathetic scrawlings to this craven exhibition of mental masturbation.

The Oceanview Adult Day Health Center that owns the building is planning to restore the mural as they have after past desecrations of this wonderful public art piece. Someone began the work but has not returned after only one day's effort. The Oceanview people are eager to have the mural returned to its original condition, and will pay for the work. Any interested muralist should contact the Oceanview administrator Anna Moyseyev at 310-581-6700. 🚲

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Voting Like It Mattered

By Jim Smith

While some countries, including Egypt, Greece and recently France, are making a change from their old regimes to, well, something else, here in Venice we are stuck with the old "same old, same old."

The ho-hum on your June 5 ballot will include candidates for U.S. President, Senator and Representative, as well as a California Assemblymember, assorted local officials and some questions (ballot measures) for you to answer.

If anything on the ballot is remotely important, it is denying Carmen "Nuch" Trutanich the opportunity to do even more damage as County District Attorney. Wrong-way Nuch is currently our L.A. City Attorney, where he spends his time fighting medical marijuana, homeless people and other issues of concern in Venice. Just vote for anyone else on the ballot for District Attorney. There will be a runoff.

This election will be conducted under the "Top Two" process which denies third parties their right to contend in the November election. That means this is your only chance to vote for Peace and Freedom, Greens and Libertarians, since the rules are rigged against any of them ever becoming one of the top two vote-getters. But in this election, you are permitted to vote for any candidate of any ballot-qualified party regardless of which party it is to which you belong. That is, a Republican can vote for a Democrat or vice versa, or for any third-party candidate.

Depending on your point of view, you might want to vote for Marsha Feinland (Peace & Freedom) or Gail Lightfoot (Libertarian) for Senator instead of multi-millionaire Dianne Feinstein. For Congress, you can vote for veteran politician Henry Waxman, whose district now includes Venice. Despite never having represented us, he will be listed

as the incumbent on the ballot. Alternatives to Waxman include Bruce Margolin, a Democrat and lawyer, who represents those of us who have been busted for pot. Or you could vote for a Topanga Green, David Steinman, or for a Venice Libertarian, Steve Collett.

Waxman was one of the sponsors of a 2006 Postal Reorganization Act that plunged the Postal Service into billions of dollars of deficit by requiring that 75 years of future retiree medical care be paid in ten years. He has also turned a deaf ear to pleas from the community to use his Congressional clout to save our historic post office. A lower vote for Waxman than expected in Venice might get his attention.

What about the judges? There are several schools of thought on voting for judges. Some people won't vote for anyone who might later put the voter in jail or prison. If you believe in affirmative action to help overcome white male privilege, then you should vote for the women and people of color who are running. If you want a reasoned analysis of why you should vote for a judge, you can consult political activist Jackie Goldberg, as the Beachhead has in past years. Her picks for the June Primary can be found at: <http://bit.ly/N9HiyB>.

Most of the candidates have web sites where they tell (in theory) what they stand for. They can all be found at: <http://bit.ly/KYxR2A>. You can find your polling place location at: www.lavote.net/LOCATOR. Polls are open Tuesday, June 5 from 7am to 8pm.

Whether you vote or not, remember that these people have exceptional power over us, and at the federal level, over the entire world. On June 6, the day after the election, let's dedicate ourselves to a complete overhaul of a system that serves to protect the power of the 1 percent. 🚲

Students, Teachers Work To Save The Venice Skills Center And Adult Education

By Charles Thomas

Uncertainty and tension continue at the Venice Skills Center. For many students and teaching staff, it is “needles and pins” over the future of the Center in the wake of recent drastic budget cuts.

In March, the school board voted to “zero out” funding for adult education. However, since then, there has been ongoing talk among the board, the school superintendent, labor unions and others for ways to keep adult education. Unless a solution is reached, this will mean closure for the Venice Skills Center.

Since that devastating news from the March meeting, the board has not revisited the budget issue as anticipated. According to Steve Zimmer, our board district representative, we should have received more budget information (via board vote) around May 15.

However, the “anyone’s guess” atmosphere continues among staff and students at the Center (as nothing further has come from the board). On May 9, the Center’s teaching staff was summoned to a meeting and told they likely would lose their jobs on

June 19. This meeting was a “last rites” (of sorts) for the Skills Center. Teachers were instructed to remove all posters from the walls along with personal effects, and to turn in student records. Teachers were also given technical assistance on applying for unemployment and addressing the issue of whether to take retirement. The principal, herself, is opting for retirement although she had hoped to work at least another two years.

Despite discouraging news, there is still an amazing undercurrent of hope and resolve for the Center’s survival. Rallies and activism have continued full force. As we go to press, a Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for June 1 to mobilize supporters, teachers and students on the issue of adult education.

The meeting is scheduled at 3p.m. at city council member Bill Rosendahl’s field office, 7166 W. Manchester Ave (at the corner of Manchester and Lincoln Blvd). Zimmer, Congressional Representative Maxine Waters and representatives from the offices of Bill Rosendahl and State Senator Ted Lieu are expected to attend. This could be a great opportunity for meaningful dialog. Please show your support by attending.

On May 5, a few hundred of us rallied at Venice High School. Response to our Westside Rally was evidenced by honking horns along Venice Boulevard from passing drivers showing support. Speakers at the event included Matthew Kogan, who chairs the Adult Education Committee for the teachers’ union.

In his remarks, Kogan pointed out that the sign identifying the office of board member, Steve Zimmer had been removed the day before our rally. Zimmer’s office is right across the street from where we held our rally, and the previous day Zimmer’s sign had been taken down.

On March 29, a bus load of us from the Skills Center trekked together to La Plaza del Mariachi in East L.A for a rally. We bonded in camaraderie as our bus load emerged together, converging on the Plaza with our placards, signs and whistles. The rally speakers, as usual, were passionate and motivating on what we can do for our adult ed crisis. A big focus of the speeches that day was directed towards Monica Garcia, the current school board president. There is great contention and dissatisfaction among Garcia’s constituency for what was said to be her budget mismanagement, squandering, and voting along with the board majority to “zero out” funding for adult ed. A formal “recall” campaign has been launched against Garcia. See www.RecallMonicaGarcia.com.

A “testimonials page” is now online, where written accounts of those who have benefitted from the Skills Center (and adult ed in general) can be read. A video version of that format is available at youtube.com/saveadultedstories.

The latest developments with the ongoing adult ed struggle can be found at <http://lastudents.org> and <http://saveadulted.org>. ☺



Summer in Venice, in 2062 –continued from page 1

day was the idea of having an easy link for Venetians to the old subway that runs downtown, the Expo line and the Magnetic Levitation (MagLev) bullet train to San Francisco.

Many Venetians won’t have a chance to kick back until after our city-wide Summer Solstice (June 20, 2062 at 6:11 p.m.) celebrations are over. In recent years, the Solstice celebration has become even bigger than July 4th (founding of Venice day). There is something going on during the Solstice on nearly every block. While the Solstice falls early in the evening this year, the parties will likely go all night!

If you haven’t been to Venice in a while, you might be surprised by the changes. In recent years, the City of Venice has been engaged in beautifying and restoring our crumbling town. The first order of business was building a sea wall to protect against the ever-higher waves due to global climate change. Flooding had been occurring with increasing frequency, with powerful waves pushing water for blocks into the center of town. That’s a thing of the past now. Our famous sandy beaches have been preserved. Only problem is there is now a looming wall between the beach and the ocean. It doesn’t bother the surfers, but if you just want to swim, check the low tide schedule before you come.

At last, Venice has become a center of the arts and culture, just as Abbot Kinney had in mind 150 years ago. That doesn’t mean that you can’t indulge in “cheap thrills.” There are plenty of Pot Houses in Venice. There’s a giant game arcade on Windward Avenue, a skate park on the beach, amusement rides on the pier, and other delights to enjoy with a consenting adult.

The City has helped the arts along with generous stipends for serious painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, thespians and others. In addition, the new Center of Performing Arts has just been completed at the location of the old bus yard on Main Street. The Greek Theater is state-of-the-art with 5,000 seats, and numerous rooms for small events, classes and exhibits. The University of Venice also holds many of its free classes at the new Center.

It is also the location of some of the best entertainment in Venice, the meetings of the Venetian Assembly. This body, open to all residents of Venice, can override the City Council, since it represents the will of

the people. It takes a big issue to pack this hall. Smaller meetings are held at the City Hall/Post Office on the Lagoon. The first meeting to be held at the Center was about building a desalination plant to produce fresh, clean water for all of Venice. It’s an expensive project, the cost of which many residents did not want passed on in their water bills. A compromise was reached where half the cost will be spread out over 20 years in water rates, which will still be only a fraction of those charged by the Dept. of Water and Power. The other half will come out of the general fund. At least, we can soon say goodbye to water rationing. Others were concerned with an unsightly plant marring the view of the coastline. The good news is that it will be hidden under the Abbot Kinney Pier.

Another change you might notice is that some streets have disappeared. Ever since the private automobile went the way of the horse and carriage, we’ve been left with all that concrete and blacktop. This problem, of course, is worldwide, but in Venice we’ve taken the lead in some innovative solutions. The canals and the Lagoon (former traffic circle) are back. Digging out the old canals in Central Venice was so easy with new digging equipment that other neighborhoods are now talking about having canals in their front yards.

Other streets have become community gardens, mini-forest preserves, sculpture gardens and pleasant - but separate - paths for walkers and bikers. We also want to keep some streets just as they were before Peak Oil hit, and the cars went away. Our children might want to visit an old-time street that carried thousands of gas-guzzling, polluting cars with anonymous people locked away inside.

Don’t worry, in Venice many people have been getting by just fine for 150 years without an automobile. The city was founded before cars took over our lives. The Beats and many of the Sixties Generation scorned these vehicles that kept people so isolated. The use of bicycles and walking has always been a part of Venice, and so it is today. In addition, we now have Trams on Pacific, Rose, Venice, Washington and Abbot Kinney Blvds.

While you will encounter lots of people on a summer’s day on the Boardwalk, it won’t be like those photos in the history vids when hordes of people jammed every available space and often had fights with each other!

Venice once had gangs, dangerous drugs, wild car drivers, crime, and was occupied by Los Angeles. Nothing seemed to be repaired; trash, advertising, and graffiti accumulated; and in their frustration people lashed out at each other. Due to economic conditions, many people had to live in their vehicles or even on the streets. These were obviously unacceptable conditions that no longer exist.

If one of these “homeless people,” as they were called, somehow appeared in 2062, they would instantly be befriended by a passing Venetian who would take him or her to a hotel or hostel where the person could stay, and eat, until they were able to secure income. What a horrible life some people had to endure before the Occupy revolution, which ended foreign wars and put the needs of the people first.

Today, with rapid transit throughout California, people have nearly limitless choices for recreation. One behalf of the Welcome to Venice Committee let me say how pleased we are that you have chosen to visit our fair city. ☺



Tourists drop in on Venice, in 2062.

Two Views of the Zip Line

Zipped, Not Taxed

By Dean Henderson

The vote for the zip line at Windward Plaza was probably a foregone conclusion, possibly a classic example of bait and switch salesmanship. Regardless, at its May 15 meeting the Venice Neighborhood Council voted (with some dissension) to approve a proposal permitting a 3 month trial period for a zip line at the beach. After the fiasco of the big wheel, any project promoted by the Recreation and Parks Dept. would likely be an improvement.

Ian Green, co-founder of Greenheart/Flightlinez and 3 of his staff gave a brief presentation illustrating previous projects as well as artist's renderings of the Venice pavilion zip-line proposal. Two of Greenhearts staff members are Venetians and will be teaching classes and workshops to area children; one of the 15 conditions recommended for the proposal.

Among other conditions attached to the project are that the zip-line be removed at the end of the 3 month trial. And that permanent structure is subject to review by the City of Los Angeles and the California Coastal Commission and the VNC. Also, that 2/3 of the gross revenue received by the City of LA is spent on maintenance and services at Venice Beach. And also the VNC reserves "meaningful consultation" rights regarding maintenance and services. Other conditions cover security, lighting, signage, a monthly review of operations by the Parks and Recreation, LA Council District 11, the VNC and community members. Finally, Condition 15 permanently rejects the "Great Observation Wheel" aka Big Wheel.

Public opinion during the comment period was evenly divided. With criticism of the project including the view that the zip-line may be a president for other commercial ventures and Venice does not need an attraction, the beach is the attraction. One community member commented that the parks are public and should not be made a revenue source. This is exactly what the Parks and Recreation does not seem to understand. In years past the city was able to maintain the beach and it facilities without having to resort to commercial partnerships. When most of the buildings along Ocean Front Wall were residential and there was little commerce on the beach area, the city found money to clean restrooms and remove garbage. Now that Ocean Front Wall s almost entirely retail and dining and "Silicon Beach" is a buzzword, the city can no longer pay for services it had in the past.

Where did the tax receipts go? Business license fees or the city's share of the massively increased property values (via tax) that even in this post real estate bubble time are still far above the not so distant past.

The crux of the issue is not any individual project. The Big Wheel stunk, the zip-line seems far less intrusive and more in harmony with the community. But why must we be told that these sorts of projects are needed to pay for services our tax monies once covered? If this is to be the new model for funding city services then there will be more ventures such as the zip-line and the Big Wheel here in Venice and throughout the City. The limit will only be reached when the public says NO but at the VNC, on May 15, that did not happen. 🚲

Zipped or unzipped?

By Katy Crenshaw

At the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) meeting held on May 15, the Zip Line proposal appeared on the agenda. The VNC recommended the installation of the structure by Greenheart/Flightlinez productions (a Canadian based company) with a few conditions.

First, and foremost, the Zip Line should get a three month trial period. And, thereafter the structure should be dismantled. At the end of the trial period the attraction would be subject to environmental review by the City of L.A., the California Coastal Commission, and to input from the VNC, and the community regarding; noise impact, parking, visual blight, security & safety, crowd control and revenue earned.

Among other recommendations provided by the VNC included nighttime lighting and security, local entertainment opportunities, financial packages provided for at-risk minors, local artistry opportunities to dress the towers, financial incentives for Venice residents, monthly benefits for local non-profits hosted by the Greenheart, and permanent rejection of the "Great Observation Wheel" in favor of a location elsewhere in the City where it may generate community support.

Greenheart Productions offered a half-hour pitch where they offered a big-hearted effort to win over the community. Addressing the concerns of local residents, the team explained the Zip Line project and the fundamental concept for the installation of the Zip Line structure. Ian Green, co-founder of Greenheart/Flightlinez productions

(<http://www.greenheart.ca>) is based out of Vancouver but works worldwide to provide conscious, nature-based entertainment. Canopy walks and flightlines are developed and aimed at nature conservancy and giving back to the community. The company also has structures located in Las Vegas, San Diego and Bootleg Canyon in Nevada.

Ian Green assured the crowd that he is only interested in providing a Zip Line that is not "too showy" and developing something that fits into Venice Beach. Green also insists this is an opportunity for conservation of Venice parks and Venice Beach. The Greenheart team includes locals from the Venice community that support the idea and would work with the community to integrate the culture of the

community as well as maintain the artistic integrity of Venice. Included in the planned events for the three-month trail period include a school that would offer classes for Trash Art, Ocean Awareness, Empowerment Through Bravery for young girls and Costuming class.

During the public comment time period member of the community raised their voices. One commenter supported the idea of a family-friendly attraction, even at the cost of visual blight to customers from his Sidewalk Café, yet he still requested more information. Others had serious reservations including safety concerns and one resident told the VNC, "Don't REC our PARKS!"

The VNC listened and voted with eight in favor, six opposed, and three abstentions. The Zip Line is approved for permitting. Now the major hurdle that stands in the way of Greenheart productions is the California Coastal Commission (CCC). An email from Ian Green to the Beachhead stated that Kevin Regan of Rec and Parks was working to get the Zip Line on the Commission's June Agenda. As of May 30, the Zip Line is not on the June Agenda. According to Chuck Posner, of the CCC, the City has not yet submitted an application for the permit. Since the Zip Line structure is on the coastline it must have a permit for any structural coastal development. The earliest this could occur would be July's CCC Agenda.

Do the math. One ride at the attraction will cost \$20 bucks. During the 90-day trial period Greenheart projects about 250 rides on a good day. This equals a potential for \$450,000 in revenue for the Zip Line project. After covering the total costs of the structure (\$300,000) the potential return on the investment is \$150,000.

How much will go to the City of L.A.? And how much will trickle into Venice? Possibly, there could be a return in revenue to the City of L.A. of \$90,000, if they are given 20 percent of gross revenue. Is this gonna happen? It is recommended that two-thirds of the revenue from the City be returned to Venice. This is a ballpark figure of about \$60,000. The Greenheart team also stated they anticipate hiring 3-4 people for the Zip Line crew from the local community. The total impact on Venice from the Zip Line project remains to be seen.

If you are interested in filing an appeal form with the California Coastal Commission, FAQs are located here: www.coastal.ca.gov/cdp/appeals-faq.pdf 🚲

Money Available for Venice Nonprofits

The Abbot Kinney Festival Association (AKFA) is accepting applications for its Community Grants Program. Every year the AKFA donates proceeds from the Abbot Kinney Festival to local arts, beautification, youth, and family programs. Venice organizations are encouraged to apply for grants up to \$5,000.

The AKFA has donated more than a quarter million dollars to the Venice community since the grants program began; planting gardens, building robots, sparking creativity and supporting families in need.

Money from festival sponsorships, exhibitor booths, commemorative merchandise, and advertising fund the AKFA Community Grants Program.

Who's benefiting? Past recipients include: Inside Out Community Arts, Boys and Girls Club of Venice, Westminster Elementary Endowment, Venice Arts, 826LA, Coeur d'Alene Elementary School, Venice High School Robotics Club, Venice Arts Council, A Window Between Worlds, Electric Lodge, Beyond Baroque, Venice Historical Society, Venice Community Garden, Venice Oceanarium, Venice Surf & Skateboard Association, and others. Festival proceeds will be awarded to this year's recipients during the Abbot Kinney Festival on September 30.

For more information and details about the AKFA Community Grants Program and the 2012 Abbot Kinney Festival, visit www.abbotkinney.org or call 310-396-3772. To apply online, visit abbotkinney.org/grant-application.

Deadline for applications is July 15. 🚲



From The Beachhead Archives: #6 - April 1969.

<http://www.freevenice.org/Beachheads-1960s/April1969/Resources/April1969-6.pdf>



Get To Know Vibul

By Anne Alvarez

Tucked away in a tiny studio on the corner of Ocean Ave and Washington Blvd, is where you'll find world renowned international visual artist Vibul Wonprasat, a gentle unassuming man whose works have been exhibited in some of the world's most prestigious museums, including the Louvre and Grand Palais of France.

A child prodigy originating from a small village in Thailand, Wonprasat was given a full scholarship at the age of 15 to attend the Phillipines University, where he excelled and completed the program 9 months ahead of schedule. He then attended Bangkok College of Fine Arts and graduated with honors at age 20. It was during his time at the Fine Arts school, after having sold 3 paintings during his first art show as a student, that he realized that he had the potential to be an artist. Immediately thereafter, he began to sell paintings to European and American art collectors.

It was one of these collectors that sponsored his move to Stuttgart Germany, where he was exhibited at various galleries at the time. Wonprasat has since traveled the world exhibiting and selling his art. In 1984, after having visited Los Angeles various times, he decided to make Venice Beach his permanent home. Asked why he chose Venice to reside in out of all the places he has visited, Wonprasat stated "Venice is the best city in the world to me. Nowhere else that I've been offers such a diverse and eclectic environment. This is the perfect place for an artist to be."


While Wonprasat maintains that Venice is home, he maintains a studio in Paris to which he retreats at least once a year, most recently in December 2011 for the opening of "Carrousel Du Louvre" at the Louvre, which marked the third time exhibiting there for the seasoned painter. The Paris attending audience typically reaches up to 40,000 per day during red carpet festivities. During this exhibit he unveiled "First Kiss" from The Blue Bird series, a 30x40 inch oil on canvas (which is available for \$32,000US.)

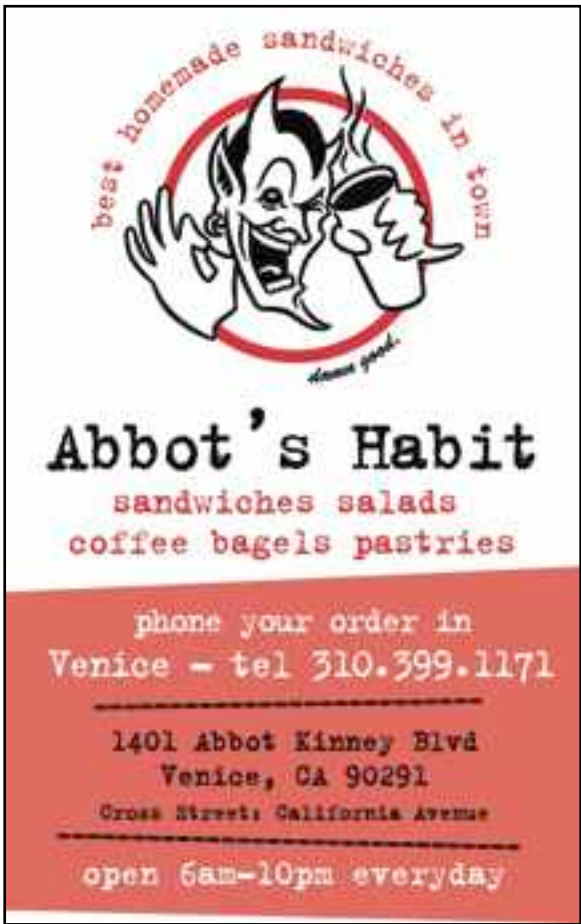
This past March, Wonprasat was honored as Artist Of The Month for the Mural Conservancy Los Angeles (MCLA), a coalition composed of artists, public art advocates, city and state officials, and restoration specialists, all of whom have one goal in mind: protecting the legal rights of artists and preventing the loss of significant works of public art. This honor was for his mural entitled "East Meets West" located at 4757 Melrose Ave, (at Harvard Blvd), described by MCLA as an optimistic depiction of Asian immigrants moving to Los Angeles, melding images of traditional costumes, Oriental architecture, and contemporary life.

Wonprasat has been honored by the California Arts Council, U.S Commerce association, The City Of Los Angeles, and a few others for his outstanding contribution to the art world. In addition to being honored by various organizations, he has also received a number of awards, including the Asia Alive Award in 2005, for his contribution to Asian art history. Currently his art is a subject at a Yucatan Mexico university, where it is used to teach and explore his unique technique. "There isn't a day that I am not creating: it is like breathing to me." That is why he opened his studio and converted into an art school, having successively taught over 300 students in the past 27 years. Students from Chile, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, and Japan have sought his guidance in perfecting their art.

Although Wonprasat has received International acclaim and success throughout the world, the American art market has mostly overlooked his talent. Currently in the running for an exhibition at MOCA in 2013, he is hopeful. "L.A is my home: it would bring me great joy to be exhibited locally at one of our great museums." At this time Wonprasat has been contracted to paint a mural on a side wall of an apartment building on Speedway owned by Joe And Nancy Ward, who moved to Venice from Oklahoma a little over a year ago. The Wards became familiar with his art when they would come visit their son who lives next door to Wonprasat. "I couldn't believe it when I saw his art, it's like living next door to Picasso," she told her son. Nancy Ward is ecstatic to have the artist painting the mural on her property. Much more can be said about this extraordinary artist living down the street from us Venicians, but then this article would turn into a novel. Get to know

Vibul: call his studio for a private showing or to sign up for lessons from a truly gifted artist.

Check out Vibul's website . 



Vibul Wonprasat in his studio



Work in progress "Soprano" for exhibition in Carrousel Du Louvre Paris 2012



Below: "The Kiss" oil on canvas 30x40 inches



Photos: Mariah Postlethwaite

What The Frack Is Under My Bed?

Free Venice Beachhead • June 2012 • 7

By Suzy Williams

I've got some good news and some bad news.

First, the bad news: They're fracking in Culver City. That's right, our next-door neighbor has a 1,000-acre oil field with old wells now being used for hydraulic fracturing, which means that at this moment there COULD be fracking right underneath us, because at a certain depth, fracking becomes horizontal. And fracking has been found to cause seismic disturbances.

The good news is that these small earthquakes will most likely not be the cause of The Big One. I spoke this weekend with Dr. Greg Lyzenga, Professor of Geophysics at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont. I told him of my concern that hydraulic fracturing might cause a domino effect, with small tremors triggering bigger, and then bigger quakes, then-POW! But Dr. Lyzenga gave assurance that because of the discrepancies in magnitude and depth (2 miles for fracking versus ten miles to the San Andreas Fault), it would be as if a sparrow landing on a car could cause the car to roll over a cliff. (I dug his wife's sweatshirt motto: "STOP PLATE TECTONICS")

But the bad news gets worse: The fracking going on right now in Culver City and Baldwin Hills is un-regulated and un-monitored. The big Texas oil company that runs these operations, Plains Exploration & Productions (PXP) was forced to do a study of itself (I'm getting a fox-guarding-the-henhouse image here) by the Community Health Councils and the Culver City municipal government, among others last summer and that report still isn't due until July. And

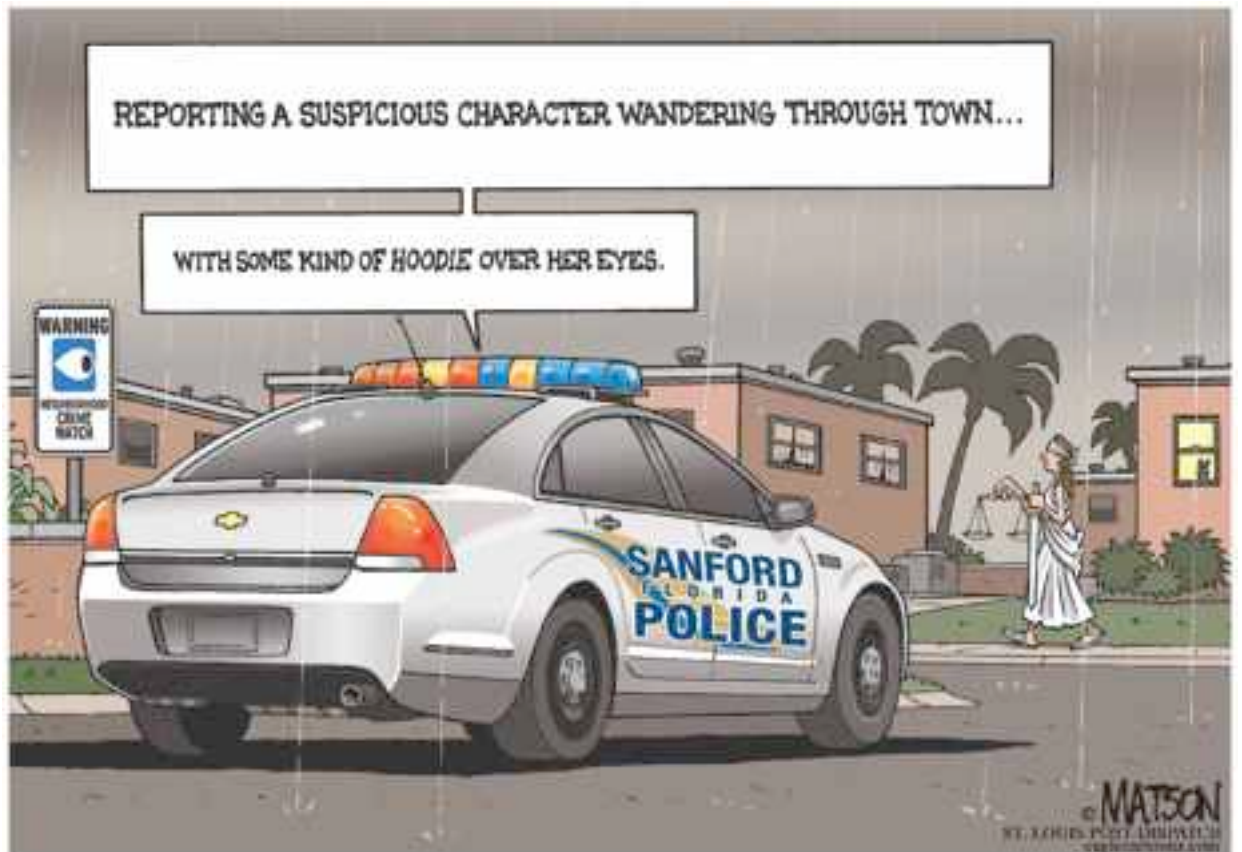


we know - if we've seen "Gasland," the great doc by Josh Fox - that fracking is rife with environmental risk for our ground water and our air.

A point that was brought up recently (April 16) in a much-banded-about article in Mother Jones is that even more than

fracking itself, the practice of injecting the vast amounts of its wastewater into wells is a concern regarding quakes. Seismologist Bill Ellsworth explained that these wells go deeper than gas drilling wells, reaching an older layer called "basement rock," where stresses and faults are more common. He told NPR that these "perturbances can tip the scales, allowing an earthquake that might not otherwise happen for a long time."

So we need to know, and sooner than July and not just from the oil company itself, how the wastewater is being disposed of. There's no really great way, but the wastewater well concept is not acceptable. ☺



Book Review: *The New Jim Crow*:

Mass Incarceration in The Age of Colorblindness, by Michelle Alexander

Reviewed by Mary Getlein

Once upon a time there was slavery in this country. Jim Crow laws were laws put in place during the reconstruction of the South, for the management and regulation of freed black slaves.

Ladies, when you're walking down a street and it's dark, and you see a Black man following you, does your heart accelerate and you start moving faster down the street? That reaction proves that racism is not dead.

The Jim Crow laws got Black men lynched. In 1954 Emmett Till went to Mississippi to visit a cousin. He was fourteen years old. He supposedly whistled at a white woman, which you did not do in Mississippi. A small crowd of white men forced their way into his cousin's house, took him away, and beat him until he died. They wrapped him with barbed wire and chained him to a car motor and threw him into the river. When they found his body, his face was mutilated beyond description. His mother got his body back to Chicago and had an open casket funeral. White America got to see what happens to a young black man in their country. Most whites were horrified beyond belief. That happened in 1954.

Michelle Alexander and her book "The New Jim Crow - Mass Incarceration in The Age of Colorblindness" documents what is happening to millions of Black and Latino people today. Instead of lynching, we have the "War on Drugs," which started with the Nixon White House. President Nixon said to Haldean: "Face the facts! The whole problem is the Blacks. We have to devise a system to keep them in check." Voila! the War on Drugs was born, designed specifically with the goal of locking up an incredible number of people with Draconian drug laws.

Black people are set up for a crime, are harassed and intimidated into accepting a "lesser charge," but it's still a felony conviction. Now they have a felony

drug conviction in their records, and thus do not qualify for any federal aid such as food stamps, federal housing, any federal education grants, or anything else. You have no food and no place to live, yet you're supposed to get a job and have a place to live in order to stay on parole. Most people will not hire anyone with a felony conviction.

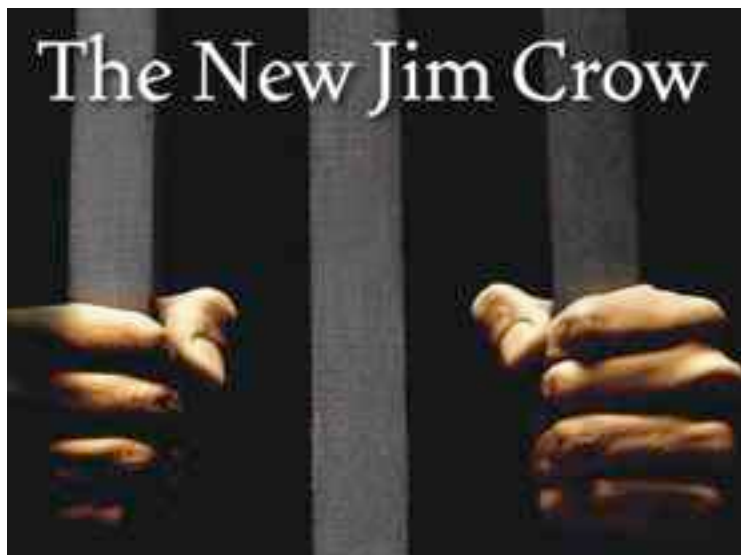
Our country leads the world in locking up its citizens. For a drug offense in England, for example, you might get six months. In the United States, because of mandatory drug sentencing laws, a person might get five to ten years. The three strikes law gives you 25 years to life for your third strike. This year in the US there are over 50,000 in solitary confinement. This is "cruel and unusual" punishment.

These people are locked in a cell twenty - four hours a day. Their food is shoved into the room. There is no contact with another human being. Humans are social animals. We need to be around other people. This is a prescription for mental illness, and it comes true.

This is a prison system that is cruel beyond belief. Who profits? The criminal "justice" system starts with juvenile hall and goes all the

way up. They make money on the entire imprisoned population, which is often put in jail illegally. People do not know their rights and are easily persuaded to take a "lesser charge." What they should have done was to stay in jail and fight it. If you fight it, they will usually drop it. Once you have a felony drug conviction, your life gets less and less your own. You are busy trying to get a job, trying to find a place to live, trying to reconnect with your kids, trying to live down the shame and stigma of a felony drug conviction.

Criminals are the one social group that we have permission to hate. They are entitled to no respect. They have our collective scorn and contempt. They are routinely treated as less than human.



What can we do? We can fight for new laws on drugs. In the Senate there is bill 1506, which would make possession a misdemeanor and not a felony. Marijuana is socially acceptable in most of the US, yet the drug laws do not reflect this. If they were reduced to misdemeanor charges, they would pay a fine and go home.

If you feel no compassion for the prisoners, you might care about this issue just on the cost to taxpayers. This is a 100 billion dollar issue. That's how much California's budget pays their criminal "justice" system. The jails and prisons are overcrowded as it is.

Michelle Alexander has written a brilliant book about this apartheid has come to be. While most white Americans think that racism is over: the fact is that we lock up mostly Blacks and Latinos. Why is that? She details the process extensively.

Alexander: "Rather than shaming and condemning an already deeply stigmatized group, we collectively can embrace them - not necessarily their behavior, but them - their humanness."

People think that people in jail are in there because of their own fault. Mass incarceration is based on the belief that all these people have freely chosen a life of crime and that they deserve to be in prison. It's exactly like when people believe that homeless people have freely chosen to be homeless. Losing a job, being evicted, having no money and no place to live - that has "nothing" to do with people being homeless. Those that are trapped at the bottom actually "chose" their fate.

Alexander ends the book by saying, "I was never a believer in conspiracy theories, now I am. Now I am a believer." ☺

Novel Explores Early Day Venice

Lions & Gondolas By Laura Shepard Townsend

Reviewed by Delores Hanney

Venetian Laura Shepard Townsend loves Venice and it shows. Opening the stunning mystical cover of her latest book, *Lions and Gondolas*, is something like stepping into a time machine to be whisked away – through a potent combination of painstaking research and elegant writing – to a viscerally felt presence in Venice, California, circa 1920, where a “perfumed gardens of the gods on the temporal plane of fantasy” aspect prevailed, according to an opinion in the Los Angeles Times.

Venice, indeed, radiated a heady blend of enchantment and excitement. With Townsend as guide, one revels in the splendid excesses: the chronic bathing beauty contests, endless parades of pretty starlets advertising new movies, and many reckless airplane wing walkers stealing our breath away. Thousands of twinkling lights lined the shores of the romantic canals. Everything and nothing were reason for a celebration, for which the whole town was swanned out in abundant embellishments by decorating maven Arthur Reese, to further heat up the happy quotient of the occasion.

Visionary cum founding father Abbot Kinney is all over the place: accessible, protective, cheerleading. We roam U.S. Island at the confluence of three of Venice’s original canals, a compound of pretty, white-shuttered bungalows awash in lush plantings of colorful flowers. And also the pier with its concessionaires and rides and amusements, and the huge sea lion that served as the aquarium’s welcoming greeter.

Townsend also gives us the less jolly experience of Venice in the time of the swine flu pandemic, when folks scurried around behind the protection of gauze masks. Posted signs listed ways to avoid infection, including the rather mysterious injunction to “Drink plenty of water and keep your bowels open;” and roving helmeted patrols tacked bright green quarantine notices on the doors of those failing a health test.

Overlaid upon the compelling true-to-life Venice backdrop there’s a swell fictional factor to be avidly consumed.

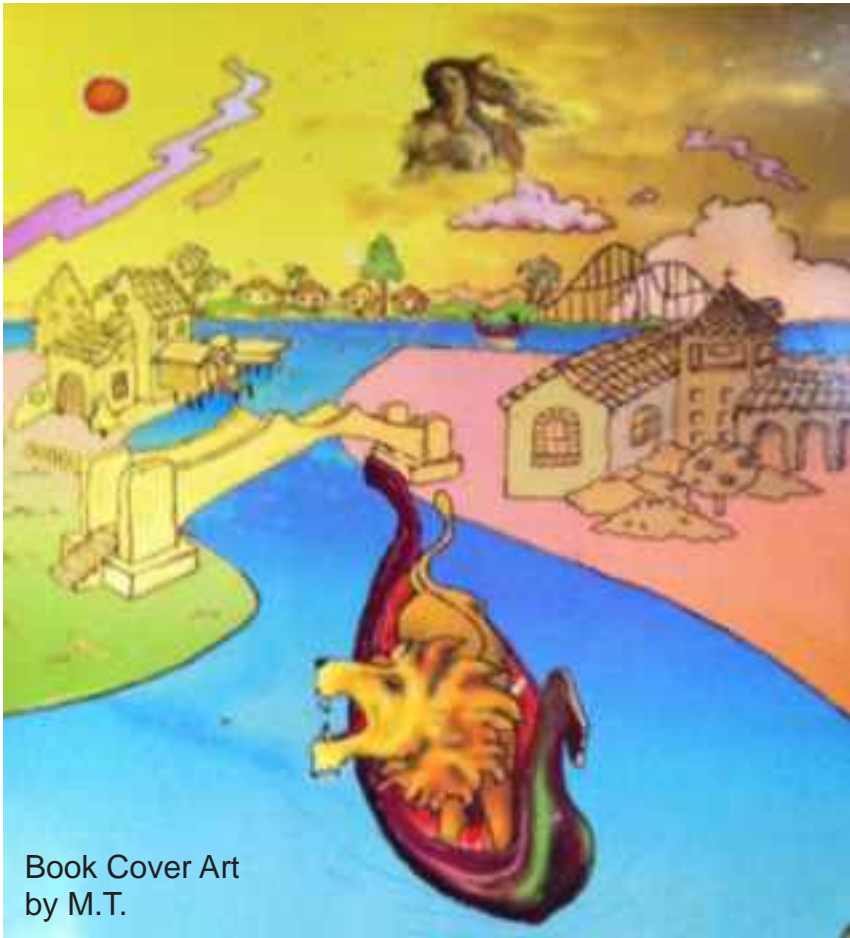
Lions and Gondolas is sort of like *Catcher in the Rye* with a feminine persuasion. Its first person narra-

tor, Angelica Grastende, is Holden Caulfield in a skirt, stomping about, all adolescent angst and alienation and narcissistic self-importance. But, whereas Holden had only coming-of-age madness to deal with, this poor babe’s teenage self-individuation process has the complicating issues of assimilation and skin tone to cope with, plus the whole contentious early-twentieth-century’s shifting paradigm regarding a woman’s place in the American social structure.

Favored by destiny’s consent – foretold in Grandmother Lena’s Tarot card reading – gypsies Angelica, her mother Ava, and grandmother, along with their pair of pilfered lions, arrive in Venice, three fugitives from a small traveling European circus (and Ava’s husband), panting with keenness to begin life afresh in the sun-soaked promised land on the Southern California coast.

The realization of the plan hinges on the transmutation of gentle Ava into “La Domadora,” the great tamer of lions. Expecting this radical makeover seems overly optimistic, but it’s brought to fruition by the arrival of Mabel Stark, the honest-to-god, real life tiger trainer of global repute, who generously sets herself to the task of fairy god mothering Ava into a respectable trainer of large cats and a popular attraction on the Venice pier.

Meanwhile, Angelica flings herself furiously into reinvention as a typical American youth while constantly at odds with her Grandmother Lena, who is usually as cranky as a bear with a toothache and always haranguing about maintaining the traditional Romany ways. Rechristening herself Anne, in the way of most kids, she sometimes sells out on herself in order to promote a sense of belonging with her new, aggressively shallow teenage peers. But fortunately, she is blessed by the coming of a mentor, too, in the person of Abbot Kinney, assuming the role of



Book Cover Art
by M.T.

wise, adoring uncle. Not that she always heeds his advice, to be sure.

Woven through it all are glowing bits of wisdom that make one stop short to reflect. “Now I know that love always possesses a fragility to it that lets it be forgotten in a breath,” for example. Descriptions of alluring grace call out for re-reading several times – for the pure joy of it – as well.

In this “memoir” of her early years in Venice, Angelica Grastende recalls, “I first entered Venice, on foot, much like a pilgrim who enters a holy place, as a seeker, stirred with expectation.”

Immersion in Laura Shepard Townsend’s delicious second book in the *Destiny’s Consent* series, might cause readers to find themselves enjoying a similar sensation.

I did. 🚲

The Alleys of Venice

By Fred Owens

I wanted to be alone, by myself. So I walked in the alleys of Venice.

They are so quiet and bare. I am surprised how clean they are. People walk their dogs and carry clean up bags these days. I walked for hours, day after day.

Once I got into it I thought I would get to every alley in Venice and I did walk more than half the alleys and I never saw any nasty trash or fast food debris or dog crap or foul pile of debris, nothing like that.

I saw a few artful junk cars, a bit of furniture worth taking home and some lovely weeds springing up through the cracks in the pavement – that’s freedom, they just grow – nasturtiums, geraniums,



lantana, fennel and wonderful California poppies – free flowers, no work. I walked in quietude. No traffic. I only saw pleasant men working on their cars.

You get out of the wind in the alley and the sun beats down. The pavement absorbs the heat.

You see the fences too much, too many 7-foot fences, not like the old days when you

could peak into someone’s back yard and see what they were really like. But now you see too many code-breaking tall fences and electric gates that barricade alleys because people are afraid to be seen.

Come out, come out, I call to the people over the 7-foot fences.

I am not the law.

I am not the code enforcer.

You can build your fence 30-feet tall if you want, but don’t be afraid of the alley vision. It’s only your shadow. Your shadow plays with the flowers in the sunshine in the alley.

These alleys in Venice are good places. 🚲



Well-kept Alley - Photo: Fred Owens



Alley in the Fog - Photo: Jim Smith

Every

By francEYE

cover that covers me sleeping has a story, every one but maybe one of them. The bottom one’s a quilt I bought at Henshey’s (Henshey’s! Gone now. The local department store where I went when I first came to town, no money in my pocket, no i.d., to buy a baby-carriage for the baby-sitting job I had. The clerk took a check. “You look” she said “like an honest woman.” The check didn’t bounce but they wouldn’t do that at Sears). I bought it because the colors matched the desert tans of golds of the afghan my grandmother’d crocheted fifty years before and I still had. That’s gone now to moths but the quilt remains to remind me. On top of that there’s a sleeping bag but Im not sure of its story; I had one that Mary Ann gave me but this may not be it. When I grasp it though and pull it up I think of the one I brought to Los Angeles in 1963; I was skinny then and could zip it around me on top of the bed In the furnished room on Vermont and someone took up a collection because word got around that I couldn’t afford to buy sheets & blankets but the fact was I could but I was too lazy I was too lazy to want to make my be in the morning or launder the sheets. Then over that’s the white one Skye left when she died; she left it to keep me warm, Skye who used always to ask me what I really wanted most and give it to me for my birthday. Oh Skye. Skye it chokes me to think of but whose down-filled blanket I love to pull up to my chin. That’s at home; when I go to my daughter’s there used to be heaps of quilts made for her by people we knew. Now instead there are feathers and feathers keeping me warm no matter how cold the night because she doesn’t keep the heat on all night the way I do but their story is more of care; feathers or not the heavy quilts are more than I can lift but she puts them there for me and makes sure Im cozy under them. And I dream Under all these stories, and don’t remember my dreams.

I Love My Homies

By Mary Getlein

I saw him on the corner of Lincoln and Venice
Hey Bubba!
I love Bubba,
he always makes me laugh.
He gives me a big hug with a big smile “to go”
“I just got out of jail,” he says
“Oh yeah, good!” I say.
We’re crossing the street now
He goes: “I ain’t got nothin”
But he’s smiling, he’s home
“Hey, are you hungry?” I say
“Shit yeah, I ain’t eat nothin all day”
Well, I have a big chunk of corn bread
and a bag of “vegan” cookies from a Whole Foods donation –
I thrust the bag at him
He took it gratefully, hopefully, as he looks in the bag
“Alright! Thanks Mary!” he says
I go: “God is good, my brother!”
as I ride away, on my bike, he yells,
“God is good, my sister!”
I smiled all the way to the Beachhead meeting
It’s who you love – you know –
and a dirty face and dirty clothes don’t
hide the fact that you’re my friend
We’ve shared sunsets and stories and laughs
and smokes, and free food and free smiles!
We will be here, forever, because we are
already living in Bliss –
Where all are one and one is God
Where Art is Love is God is Love is Art!
Where Love is, will always Be – Blessed Be



Breaking Through

By Jim Smith

Here it comes again
that old feeling
that a breakthrough is near
layers of ego and fear
falling away

You triggered it
when I looked into your eyes
and fell into your soul
such power swallowed me whole
but you didn’t know it happened

Have you ever had an epiphany?
Do you know the real from the fake?
Have you ever been shaken by the light?
Have you ever had a ghost in your sight?
Do you want to float in the sky?

We’ll go for a swim
inside the black lagoon
We’ll eat mushrooms and berries
and dance with the fairies
Close your eyes and watch the sparks

Venice, we have cognition.
All engines are firing.
We’re on our way to the moon and the stars
with a short stop on Mars.
Cuidado! Don’t look back or you’ll fall.

They have taken my life
devoured me like a well cooked steak
with as much interest in me as they have in the cow.
They regard my dreams as inconveniences (if they regard them at all)
getting in the way of progress that ever receding horizon.
Soon I will be gone and the relief will palatable.
Another one bites the dust.

- Hillary Kaye

Bummer ? Summer

How do we see the summer?
From our high guard-tower local wisdom.
Will it perpetrate last year’s gloom
Robbing us of our God-given-rights to a full-blown sunny So. Cal.
summer!
> god damn it
Why, I remember Venetian summers, when everyone literally hit the beach,
Both days every weekend all season long.
It was always sunny...
The hippie nude beach - the recent surf bonanza -
But what will this summer hold?
The constant morning greyness suddenly breaking
Into summer gloriousness
Or eternal sunshine of the Venice kind!
I THINK SO!...
Anyway, I’m still sitting here on my perch, watching the sun ultimately go down.
And it seems ok for summer by me...

- paul tanck



Venice Fog

By Frank T. Rios

The fog rolls in
everything disappears
over the broken child

I’m left alone
turning my back
to the world
looking for the poem
in the fog

the fog
makes it impossible
to see
She tells me
to make it up

a large bird
lands by
looks sad
tells me to hop on
i do

& see beneath me
written in the sand
“your luck has been
completely changed today”

I have no idea
what this means
I think of home
& softness & my lady
in Orlando

the bird lands me
the beach is empty
the fog thicker
I heard it began
with Abbot Kinney
a vision to invent
as i do

all the birds
sit quiet
as i turn in
& disappear
inside one.

Living Life Amused

Artists about time
Them about them
Living in life’s rhyme
Not to be condemned
Living Life Amused

- Cameron Prior

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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

DATE: JUNE 15

TIME: 7pm

WHERE: 1st BAPTIST CHURCH
685 Westminster Avenue
Venice, CA 90291

DATE: JUNE 16

TIME: 11am to 6pm

WHERE: OAKWOOD Park
767 California Avenue
Venice, CA 90291

Father's Day Essay Contest

FELLOWSHIP

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT V2K H.E.L.P.E.R. FOUNDATION 310-825-6100
or Donna Stewart 323-596-8863

Day of Remembrance to Honor Oakwood Deceased

Every year on Memorial Day, we remember the dead and wounded of the wars our country has fought against other countries. The H.E.L.P.E.R Foundation invites everyone, on June 15 and 16, to remember the dead and wounded from a war that took place right here in Venice 18 years ago. From August 1993 to June 1994, a real war raged between the Black and Latino gangs in Oakwood, there was at least one gunshot EVERY night; usually more than one, often many more. It ended with three separate shooting incidents in one day (two dead and two seriously wounded in one, one person with a minor wound in each of the other two.) When the war was over 17 people had died and 55 had been wounded in 10 months.

Many present-day Venice residents don't remember that time, either because they're too young, or they moved here after 1994. Whether or not you can attend a Day Of Remembrance event take some time to think about what YOU can do to help ensure that nothing like that ever happens again. Especially now, when so many outside forces threaten the very identity of Venice, it's time for everyone who loves Venice, regardless of ethnicity or socio-economic class, to help build a commUNITY where Venetians will NEVER fight other Venetians again. 🚲

Venice Entertainer Framed in Santa Monica?

—continued from page 2

hiding her own felonious background (<http://bit.ly/rpwqpU>) was on the scene in Santa Monica to snap pictures.

As clearly illustrated by the pictures that Thompson posted on her blog site, the arrest occurred on Second St. and Montana Av. in Santa Monica.



Solomon on Windward Avenue

However, according to Solomon his arrest papers Testate Wilcox St. and Hollywood Blvd. as the location of arrest. The fact that Solomon hasn't been to Hollywood in the last several months is just another piece of information that the LAPD is disregarding.

"I felt like I was six feet under ground, but what gave me hope was the fact that I knew I didn't do it," Solomon said about his time spent behind bars. He also talked about being starved, served only one hot meal a day that had to be eaten within five minutes. Examples of dishes that he was served include what he describes as "peanut butter with pieces of glass in it." He and the other inmates went through major digestive problems on a daily basis.

Solomon was subjected to this treatment without being proven guilty, as a result of an operation that proves to be an LAPD effort to silence dissidents. The jail medical staff determined that his blood pressure was higher than normal and he was forced to take medicine that he wouldn't voluntarily take. He described the pills as being of different colors and sizes from day to day.

"If a humanitarian world organization was to see the treatment of the inmates or the racial make-up, they would say that this is a form of genocide based on race and economic status," Solomon said.

The Beachhead documented unjustly acts of police harassment towards Solomon in the past (<http://bit.ly/MW543x>), and the saga continues. The counter-culture that he represents is a vital part not just of the Venice community, but of the world as a whole. There are millions of people who take the dictated steps day to day, but progress and new ideals were never fostered by those types. And individuals who created real change in our consciousness and expanded our thinking found the courage to think outside of government constraints in spite of the hardships those choices have historically been sure to foster.

If you would like to be a witness to the fact that Solomon has never been seen wearing a baseball cap, as the suspect in this incident was wearing, or if you would like to help in any other way, please contact the Beachhead. Solomon himself is offering a \$1000 reward for anyone who is able to identify the perpetrator. It might take a village to prove an innocence, and Venice is undoubtedly the type of community that comes together to save its own. 🚲

Theater Review: Astral Dick

By Roger Linnett

As Director Hanna Hall writes in the program's Director's Note, "Chaos represents the thread in the universe that allows humanity free will. Even though it is wild and unpredictable, it is part of the human condition."

And from the opening scene of James Mathers New play, when a crazed, ranting woman (Laura Peters) crawls into an oven, in a sort of extreme Sylvia Plath maneuver, you kind of wish your seat had a safety belt because you're definitely going down the rabbit-hole.

Enter the Homicide Detectives – The Captain (Paul Tei) and his psychic sidekick, the eponymous "Astral Dick", Lt. Leo Fleck (Marc Hickox), a para-psychological detective, i.e., a medium with a badge,

under the recreationally abusive guidance of his captain, to investigate what they ultimately determine, by way of a fluid Abbot and Costello-style repartee, is the work of a serial killer – and that's one of the more rational scenes.

Hall uses every inch of the compact Electric Lodge stage, accented by perfectly-executed lighting, to create a modernist noir reality upon which this existential mixing of terror and freedom struts and frets, framed by a nondescript hodgepodge of architectural styles and extraneous objects, complementing the sparse, multi-functional set pieces.

The use of wooden orange crates adds a playful, almost childlike, quality to the set.

Occasionally, amateurish Mummenschanz-like figures attempt to surreptitiously deliver to, or take props from, the characters, who continue unfazed, adding another delicious layer to this tiramisu of absurdity.

The use of pre-recorded audio as Lt. Fleck communes with the Captain from his "astral plane," synchronized to the action on stage, helps draw the audience into the screwball multi-dimensionality of Mathers' tour de farce.

After the Captain is "killed" at the end of Act I, the intrepid, albeit insipid, Lt. Fleck, wracked by totally over-the-top anguish, vows to find his killer. As he says: "I'm a dick. It's my job to know things."

The play is billed as a whodunit, but in the end it doesn't really seem to matter that the mystery isn't

solved as Fleck's investigation leads him into a web of sex and religion. One he wants, the other he despises, but at times you can't tell which.

The subject/object of his investigation/desire is one Marlo Montecarlo (Kaytlin Borgen): "It rhymes and it's alliterative," she points out.

Abetted by her conniving, lascivious mother, Bunny (Rachel Robinson), Marlo sets her sights on the tall, dark and handsome, but conflicted Lt. Fleck. Then things get really kinky. (I'd just like to add a personal note to Mr. Mathers – Thanks for undoing years of therapy with that damned Sock Monkey (the late, crispy Laura Peters)).

Fleck's interrogation of the cult leader Master Jeshu (Dan Lawler) and his sycophantic minions (Skyler Millicano and Jessica Farr) is a glib send-up of every bad cop show or movie you ever saw, and made even zanier by the appearance of their attorney Stan (Jordan Byrne), the best Satan incarnate smarmy lawyer since Al Pacino in The Devil's Advocate.

The finale is a Fellini-esque amalgam of bodies, and amid all the craziness is a "message," but it's up to each audience member to figure out what that is after they emerge from Mathers' darkly-wacky world.

Astral Dick will be performed at The Electric Lodge, 1415 Electric Ave., Venice for the next two weekends: May 31 – June 3 and June 7 – 10. Thu., Fri., Sat. evenings at 8p.m. and a Sun. matinee at 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$20, and are available at carboncopyproductions.com or at the door. 🚲

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Community Events – day by day

Calendar Compiled By Karl Abrams

Friday, June 1

- 3-5pm - **Town Hall Meeting: Save Adult Education.** Council Office, 7166 W. Manchester Ave.
- 5:30-9:30pm - **Hinano Cafe’s 50th Anniversary Party.** Live Music/Food/Giveaways. 15 Washington. Free.
- 6pm - **Venice High School’s 2nd “Grease-Sing-A-Long”** on school’s football field. Venice High. Free.
- 6-9pm-**Alejandro Wood:** Pop Acoustic Dinner set.
- Le Cellier:** Wine & jazz bar. 417 Washington. No cover.
- 7-11pm – **First Friday** on Abbot Kinney Blvd. Lots of people and open shops. Free.
- 7-11pm - **Singer Songwriters:** Karrie Parish Anderson (7pm), Julia Price (8pm), Dannie Rosner (9pm), Orlando Napier (10pm).WitZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10.
- 9pm-2am - World Music: **Quetzal, Marbella & DJ Panamami.** Museum of Music and Instruments (**MOMAI**). 711 Hampton. \$10.

Saturday, June 2

- 11am-4pm - **Coeur d’Alene Elementary School’s Annual Spring Fling.**Food/Games/Vendors. 810 Coeur d’Alene Ave. Free.
- 4pm - Beyond the Bell: **Student Poets Anthology Reading.** Beyond Baroque. Free.
- 7-10pm - **Talking Stick’s 9th Anniversary Party.** Talking Stick. No cover, donation only.
- 7pm - **Opening Reception: CAVE Gallery** presents Eatcho. 1108 AK Blvd. Free.
- 7:30pm - **Mezz Mezrow:** Words & Messin’ with Music. **Suzy Williams & Brad Kay** do “Reckless Blues” by Bessie Smith. Beyond Baroque. Free/Donation.
- 8pm-12am - **Antonieta Villamil’s La Poesía Festival ¡en español!** and Potluck Party: Bring original poesía, cuento, música and pintura to share. First Saturday of month. Beyond Baroque Library. Free.

Sunday, June 3

- 4pm - String Project LA Presents: **Alternative String Groups & Rock Youth Orchestra** performing a wide range of music. WitZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10.

Tuesday, June 5

- **California’s Presidential and State Primary Election.** Sample ballot: hwlavote.net/LOCATOR/Default.cfm. Free.

Wednesday, June 6

- 11:30am-12pm - **Toddler Story Time** for newborns to 3 years old. Join us for stories, music, laughs and more. Venice Library, Free.
- 9pm - **Venice Underground Comedy: Local talent and Headliners.** The Townhouse. 52 Windward. No Cover.

Thursday, June 7

- 8pm – **Comical, well acted/written detective play: “Astral Dick”** by artist James Mathers. Electric Lodge. \$20.

Friday, June 8

- 7:30pm- **Poetry Readings: James B. Golden** reads from “Afro Clouds & Nappy Rain” in a “whirlwind of anecdotes”. Beyond Baroque. \$8, students Seniors \$5, Members Free.
- 8pm – **Comical, well acted/written detective play: “Astral Dick”** by artist James Mathers. Electric Lodge. \$20.

Saturday, June 9

- 6-10pm - **Grassroots Acoustica.** Talking Stick.
- 8pm – **Comical detective play “Astral Dick”** by artist **James Mathers.** Electric Lodge. \$20.
- 9pm - **Poetry Readings: Jimmy Cvetic with S.A. Griffin.** Beyond Baroque. \$8, students Seniors \$5, Members Free.
- 10pm-1:30am - The **Paul Chesne Band.** 21/over. O’Brien’s Pub. 2941 Main St. No Cover.

Sunday, June 10

- 3pm – **Comical detective play “Astral Dick”** by artist **James Mathers.** Electric Lodge. \$20.
- 5pm - **Anthology Poetry Reading by Venice High School students.** Beyond Baroque. Free.

Tuesday, June 12

- 7-10pm – **Comedy & Magic** magicians/comedians. WitZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10.
- 8pm - **Taco Tuesday Open Mic Comedy:** Lillian’s Rose, Yel Air, Meltarino Aura. Trip. 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Free.

Wednesday, June 13

- 7-10pm - **Suzy Williams Sings at Danny’s Deli.** Jazz/blues. Free.

Thursday, June 14

- 7:30pm - **Selected readings from James Joyce’s Ulysses.** Beyond Baroque \$8, students Seniors \$5, Members Free.

Friday, June 15

- 7pm - **1st Baptist Church and Venice 2000’s “Community and Remembrance”.** 1st Baptist Church. 685 Westminster Ave. Free.

Saturday, June 16

- 11-6pm - Venice 2000 Community Day and **Day of Remembrance.** Oakwood Recreation Center Park. 767 California. Free.

Sunday, June 17

- 10am-1pm - **Backboners at Santa Monica Farmers Market.** Ocean Park & Main St. Free.
- 7-10pm - **“It’s Blues Time”** hosted by **Tom Gramlich and Mystic Miles.** Talking Stick. Free.

Monday, June 18

- 8pm - **Laurie Larson sings progressive rock.** Trip. 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Free.

Tuesday, June 19

- 7-9:30pm - **VNC Board Meeting.** Always Open to the Public. Westminster School Auditorium. Free.

Wednesday, June 20

- **Summer Solstice** - On this day, the sun reaches its highest position in the sky giving June the longest daylight hours of the year. Let’s Celebrate! Free.

Thursday, June 21

- 6pm - **Venice Art Crawl.** Find the maps online or go to OFW and Windward. Free.
- 6-9pm – **Opening Reception: Voices Behind the Wall:** Photo Art and Spoken Word (by youth at Camp Gonzales’ Probation/Detention Facility). SPARC Gallery. Free.
- 8pm - **Fly N Lion Reggae Rock.** Danny’s Deli. Free.
- 8pm - **All Natural Ingredients Band performs alterative pop.** Trip. 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Free.

Friday, June 22

- 8pm - **Marcus Very Ordinary (10-piece indie folk rock band)** performs indie folk genre strings/melodic horns. Trip. 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Free.
- 8pm - **Suzy Williams & Brad Kay and Friends at Moose Lodge.** 1600 Ocean Park Blvd. \$10.

Saturday, June 23

- 6-10pm - **“Nite-Write” Multimedia Art Experience for a mural installation.** Dockweiler Beach. 12000 Vista del Mar. Free.
- 7pm - **Barbara Kraft** reads from her memoir book **Anaïs Nin: The Last Days.** Beyond Baroque. \$8, students Seniors \$5, Members Free.

Sunday, June 24

- 6-10pm - **Jazz Funk Fest.** Talking Stick. Free.

Tuesday, June 26

- 7pm - **Bioneers Meeting.** G2 Gallery. Free.
- 7-10:30pm - **The People’s Mic Poetry Night.** WitZend. 1717 Lincoln Blvd. \$10 (Readers Free).

Thursday, June 28

- 7-10pm - **Dutch Newman and the Musical Melodians.** Talking Stick. \$10 cover.

Friday, June 29

- 7:30-10pm - **Subversive Cinema.** 212 Pier. Free.

Saturday, June 30

- 8-11pm - **Talking Stick Fundraiser Closing Show.** Talking Stick. Donation.
- 8pm - **The Mason Affair** performs R&B Soul/Funk/Dance. Trip. 2101 Lincoln Blvd. Free.

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.

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

COMPUTERS

- Abbot Kinney Public Library offers **Free Computer Classes.** 310-821-1769.
- Vera Davis Center offers **Free Computer Use:** M-Th 10am-12pm and 1-3pm; Friday 1-3pm.

FOOD

- 12:30pm - **Free Food Distribution:** 2nd and 4th Thursdays. Vera Davis Center.
- **Sign up for Food Stamps (EBT Cards).** Call for date and time. 310-305-1865.
- 5-7pm - Mondays: **Hot Meals and Pre-packs.** 2-3:30pm - Saturdays: **Free Food Distribution.** 1st Baptist Church. Westminster & 7th.
- 8-10am - Sundays - **Food/Meals** at Ocean Front Walk near Rose Ave.

KIDS

- 6:30pm -Abbot Kinney Public Library **Children’s Pajama Storytime.** 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings.

FILMS

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

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. Thursday nights.
- 12-2pm - Saturday & Sunday: **Music at Uncle Darrow’s.** 2560 Lincoln Blvd. Free.
- 5-9pm – **Venice Street Legends.** Venice Bistro, OFW & Dudley. Wednesday nights. Free.
- 6-10pm - 2nd Thursday - **Psychedelic Surf Rock.** Mollusk, 1600 Pacific Ave. Free. • 9pm-12am - **Jazz Flight on Tuesdays.** The Del Monte Speakeasy. Free. 52 Windward

MISCELLANEOUS

- Daily ongoing Photography Exhibit (ends June 8): **“Uprising: Los Angeles 1992”.** SPARC (Old Venice Police Station). Free.
- 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.
- 6-8:30pm - **Eco-Yoga.** 3rd Sunday of the Month. Church in Ocean Park, Hill & 2nd St. Bring a mat. Donation required.

POETRY

- 8pm-12am - **Antonieta Villamil’s La Poesía Festival ¡en español! and Potluck Party:** Bring original poesía, cuento, música, pintura. First Saturdays. Beyond Baroque Library. Free.

POLITICAL AWARENESS

- **Occupy Venice General Assembly** meets Mondays/Thursdays at 7pm. 1358 AKB. Free.



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