

# Is Venice Safe?



## Murder on the Beach; Killers Still At Large

By Karl Abrams

The body of brutally beaten 25-year old Nathan Alan Morgan was discovered on March 9. The victim's body was found partially buried in the sand on the beach near Ocean Front Walk and Breeze Avenue. Some sources told the Beachhead that the murder was followed by what was described as a Satanic ritual. Police officials said that Morgan had been beaten to death and then dragged to the burial site.

Nathan Morgan was much loved by his family back in Toledo, Ohio. He was a free spirited young man who had many friends who admired his love of adventure and travel. His favorite places were the west coast mountain trails and the lingering beauty of a Venice beach sunset.

He loved the outdoors and especially loved to ride three and four wheeler vehicles. According to his parents, Nathan used to say that "life is what you make of it" and that a person's attitude to life "can make or break you."

His funeral services were held on March 21, at the Swan Creek Community Church in Toledo.

The Los Angeles Police Department homicide detectives are asking for the public's help in this murder investigation.

Councilperson Bill Rosendahl has asked the L.A. City Council to offer a reward of \$50,000 for information leading to the "identification, apprehension, and conviction of the person or persons responsible for Morgan's death."

According to Rosendahl's council motion, the LAPD determined that Morgan was "sexually assaulted and beaten to death by several men." The Motion goes on to state that such murderers must be apprehended as they could "terrorize and present a continuing and immediate menace" to the community.

Information about the case may be directed to LAPD Pacific Area Homicide, 310-482-6316 or Pacific Area Detectives, 310-482-6313.

Morgan, who was wanted in Indiana for parole violation, came to Venice for a vacation and the fun of sleeping on the beach. It was there that he apparently interacted with some dangerous people who ended his life.

Detective Joe Lumbreras, LAPD homicide division, told the Beachhead that Morgan was considered homeless. Lumbreras said that he suspected Morgan may have had a drug problem and that a suspect is at the center of intense investigation.

Lumbreras claimed that he was unaware of a video tape. Sources told the Beachhead that there is a video tape of the murder.

According to one source who said he viewed the video, more than one person was involved in the slaying and there were six witnesses who did nothing to stop the murder.

The video is also said to show that Morgan's neck was possibly broken and that some of the bystanders were cheering on the murder. Morgan's dog was killed by cutting its throat and the blood was then used in a Satanic ritual.



Nathan Alan Morgan

## How Do You Define Safe and Secure?

• **Murder on the Beach** – The cold-blooded murder of Nathan Alan Morgan and his dog was captured on video. Page 1

• **LAPD Raids in Oakwood** – Are Venetians safe in their own homes? See Letters, page 2 and Racial Dreams and Nightmares. Page 5

• **Unsolved Murders** – How many more people have been murdered in Venice? Locals say lots, police say one.

• **Eviction of Renters** – The ongoing saga of Lincoln Place. Page 3

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• **Sleepers Harassed in their RVs** – That knock on the camper door in the middle of the night might be the LAPD or an irate homeowner with a club. Page 2.

• **Adverse Control by Another City** – Will Los Angeles' misrule of Venice never stop? How about Venice police to protect us?

• **Serial Killing of Trees** – Global warming and shade be damned, we're cutting down these trees because we can. Page 4

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**4,000 U.S. Dead in 5 Years**  
**U.S. 4,011 Dead – 38 this month**  
**U.S. 29,496 Wounded – 293 this month**  
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 Sources: antiwar.com • justforeignpolicy.org  
 Cost: \$507+ Billion Source: costofwar.com



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The Beachhead encourages anyone to submit news stories, articles, letters, photos, poetry or graphics of interest to the Venice community. The staff reserves the right to make all decisions collectively on material published. There is no editor on the Beachhead. The printing is financed by ads and donations. The articles, poetry and art work express the opinions of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Beachhead Collective.

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### The RV Controversy

I am concerned about all of the negative comments that seem to appear in the local press on a regular basis in regards to the motor home community in Venice. Many of them are upright citizens who can no longer afford to live in the city they call home.

Venice used to be a cool place to live. It was the last bastion for artists to live and work in southern California. It seems that over the past few years all that has happened is that the wealthy have come into Venice, bought up all the real estate, thus pushing all of the true Venetians out and in effect turning Venice into another Santa Monica. The newly relocated do nothing but complain about the real people of Venice who can no longer afford the astronomical rents that even studio apartments rent for.

It seems the yuppies that now inhabit Venice love having the artists and street vendors here because that is what draws millions of dollars to Venice annually. They just don't want them living here. It seems as if they would prefer them be bused in from downtown Los Angeles each morning and then sent back at night.

Many of the motor homes are fully compliant with the law, insured and registered. Implementing laws that discriminate against someone's vehicle and lifestyle is simply not constitutional or legal. Per the law: a motor home is a fully self-contained vehicle with a toilet, shower, cooking facilities, etc. Why is that any different from an apartment?

Having said that, the police knocked on my door this morning to tell me I had to move and that I was not allowed to sleep overnight in a motor home. I promptly informed them that my vehicle is completely legal and that I have the legal right to park for 72 hours just like anyone else. I was told that if they had to come back again I would be cited for a misdemeanor. What for? I did an enormous amount of research regarding this choice before I made it and this simply is not constitutional or legal.

As for the belief the streets of Venice are lined with motor homes is completely false. There are probably 50 at the very most. It seems though that the streets can have all the SUV's and other expensive vehicles and that is not a problem. What happened to the VW bus and the woody?

As for parking problems, home owners or apartment renters knew beforehand if their property had a garage or whether they would have to street park. A family of 4 could all have a car each therefore taking up 4 parking spaces. Who is taking up more space?

I know that some RV dwellers are not responsible and cause a nuisance, just like any other group in society; I therefore fully sympathize with home owners who have to put up with this crass behavior. This is when law officers should step in and cite these individuals for any laws broken. However, to blanket all motor home occupants as though they are all the scum of the earth is ignorant, offensive and quite frankly an abomination of civil rights.

I really hope that Bill Rosendahl can implement a plan like that of Santa Barbara rather than getting laws passed where they just get tickets they can't afford to pay and have their homes towed and impounded. Bullying law abiding citizens is not acceptable.

Venice isn't just for the rich and if they cannot co-exist with the true Venetians, then maybe they should move to Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Manhattan Beach or Malibu. It is the rich that want to work in their corporate jobs all week, then come the weekend, dress in a tie-dye shirt and flip flops and pretend they are all cool and down with the scene, while at the same time drinking a 6 dollar cup of coffee and displaying contempt towards the very people that keep this community true to its identity in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Enough of this snobbery in Venice and lets all try to live together and respect each other. Remember, when you move to a community, it is up to you to adapt to it, not the other way around.

*Brett Pikey*

### Mary Getlein

Dear Beachhead,

I just want to applaud the letter/rant from Mary Getlein in the March issue [of the Beachhead]. I am in agreement with her and feel her pain, as they say...Perhaps because I have known her for 32 years.

We met in Venice. became good friends, left to live in Berkeley for awhile along with other locals. She made it back to Venice, I did not. I'm glad she has your paper to write to and express herself freely. Of course I envy any one who lives there, as I feel I still belong there too.

Mary's Best Friend,

*Kitty Bratton*

### Operation Oakwood - 1

Dear Beachhead,

Why do we not hear about the arrests of the white collar criminals driving through Venice in the early morning hours searching to make a purchase of their drug of choice? Why do we not have record setting arrests of the people who own the planes and ships that bring drugs into this country? Let alone Los Angeles?

The recent Operation Oakwood hurt the community. There is such a disconnect to the community! In this situation, 'to serve' would have been to knock on the door and 'to protect' would have meant protecting the children and elderly living at the various places in question. To serve and protect everyone...

Have we reached the point of no return? The entire Venice community need to realize how people are being treated. We need to specifically get back to our hearts' challenge of finding a way to treat others with respect and to empower everyone with a sense of their civil liberties and rights, as human beings. If we do not then we are perpetuating apathy and hate. To me, that is the biggest crime of all.

We all come with a story and we all have life challenges. Some people's lives are not neatly packaged like others that includes a pretty ribbon or bow. That does not mean that we set a blind eye or a deaf ear to anyone's sorrow and pain. That means that we need to step up and help by listening to their heart. None of the authorities - not one regulation or law that was executed during Operation Oakwood was recognized as law breaking of its own accord. Isn't what happened child abuse, child neglect and child endangerment?

Let's call it what it really is, hyper-gentrification. The government agencies are failing the communities at an all time high. Like it or not, we are all responsible for each other. There are some Venice residents that will deny their neighbors - those people will continue to live in fear and hate.

Beachhead, there have been homicides on the Ocean Front Walk and not one TV station has covered these crimes. I know murder is not good for the real estate market and Venice homes continue to sell for over \$1,000,000. Why is that? Could it possibly be because the people killed have been homeless?

Venice's problems and blame can not be simply cast on the disenfranchised or poor or on the families who fortunately purchased their homes 4 or 5 generations ago where someone's retired grand parents live. The problems and blame are on those who fail their neighbors and community.

We need to put our representatives in check; they are continuously failing at representing us. There are Council Members in other districts busy dumping people from their area - dumping people here in Venice by the bus loads. Not one person is disposable including our veterans and elderly!

So who are we Venice community? People who listen with our hearts and rise to assist? Or are we a cog in the wheel that perpetuates apathy and hate?

*Lydia Poncé*

CORRECTIONS: In the March issue, the geniuses here at the Beachhead screwed up two bylines. They should have been Alexandria Shankweiler (not Alexander) and CJ Gronner (not Gronin). We regret breaking the first rule of journalism (get the name right).

### More Letters on Page 10

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VENICE LCP REDEUX

# The Missing Coastal Plan for Venice

By John Davis

What the hell is an LCP, is it like a BLT? And what is the Coastal Zone, a place where those near the coast get zoned? In 1972 when many other environmental laws were being passed like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, another very important piece of legislation appeared to protect valuable coastal resources and strike a balance with proposed development but focusing more on protection of the environment. The U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 called on States to voluntarily participate in the enforcement of the federal act by producing their own state acts to implement the national law. In exchange participating states are entitled to obtain grants from NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Coastal Zone



Resource Management. The agreement between the state and federal government is called the Coastal Zone Management Plan for California and the state law that implements it is the California Coastal Act passed in 1978. A Local Coastal Program (LCP) is a plan allowing the City of Los Angeles to issue Coastal Development Permits without appeal to the State Coastal Commission which has that jurisdiction today.

A grant was awarded to the state to complete the Venice LCP in the late 90s. Two components are necessary to complete an LCP, a Land Use Plan and an Implementation Plan. Until it is approved by the state the Implementation Plan is called a Specific Plan. After extensive local public meetings the city documents were submitted to the State Commission. The Land Use Plan (LUP) was approved in the late '90s, but the Implementation Plan (Specific Plan) was not. The Coastal Commission rejected the city submission outright for being incomplete and inconsistent with the already approved LUP.

Now here is the scam. The prior city councilperson allowed the Specific Plan to go unfinished. The City Planner at that time Con

Howe failed to respond to the Coastal Commissions' letter stating the requirements to complete the Specific Plan. What this absence of planning has led to is the ruin of Venice. The same density calculations used by the City and Coastal Commission to justify the Land Use Plan in the late '90s are no longer valid because of development that has occurred since that time and that adversely affected the public infrastructures such as Lincoln Blvd. and neighborhood streets.

Pretending that past figures can be valid years later contributes to practices such as the demolition of single family homes and placement of four condos on the same site effectively quadrupling density piece meal. Development of the

regional area also must be considered regarding its direct impact on Venice infrastructure, such as parking.

If this negligence were not insult enough to Venetians, the city engineer continues to issue coastal development permits without empowerment of state law, the Brown Act and the City Zoning Administrator follow suit in a false process. What that means is due process is removed from the picture and substitute practices similar to the legal ones are illegally employed.

The bad news is the public has been frozen out of its right to upcoming process in regard to due coastal planning in Venice. The good news is the process seems ready to be started again.



EARTH DAY  
April 22

The current Councilmember, Bill Rosendahl, has sent a letter to the City Director of Planning expressing his wish to complete the Venice LCP within his term. This would place the public in the important role of helping plan their communities.

Venice is a very special place and deserves a good LCP. Perhaps we could reclaim some of our beach area for habitat and exercise the cities jurisdiction over its beaches and the entrance to Marina del Rey as it rightfully should. Councilman Rosendahl in my opinion should be commended for understanding that planning is a long term process with lasting consequences.

# 191 Lincoln Place Tenants, Evictees Sue Landlord; AIMCO Files Counter-Suit

On March 14, Lincoln Place Garden Apartments attorneys John Murdock and David Lefkowitz went to court to add more tenants and former tenants to their lawsuit against AIMCO, Apartment Investment & Management Co. The suit is designed to make AIMCO pay for ongoing disruption to the lives of 191 tenants and evictees at the largest apartment complex in Venice.

AIMCO returned the favor, March 25, with a suit in federal court against the city of Los Angeles. The city had granted AIMCO a track map for redevelopment several years ago with the provision that the tenants not be evicted. The Denver-based corporation apparently believes that if it can persuade a court to agree that the track map was not in force, then AIMCO cannot be held legally at fault for the evictions.

Tenant leaders insist that AIMCO should restore the illegally terminated tenancies of 450 households, which included many seniors and families with children. Eviction threats persuaded many families to abandon their rent-controlled apartments. Payments they received rapidly disappeared in the local housing crisis. The lawsuit for damages demands that AIMCO compensate these households for the higher rents they've had to pay since leaving Lincoln Place, as well as for the destruction of their community and the harm caused to the lives of these people. Most of the plaintiffs are also asking to be restored to their former apartments.

On December 6, 2005, AIMCO had the LA County Sheriffs lock out 52 households, including 21 children and 65 adults. This was the largest single-day sheriff lockout in the history of Los Angeles.

In its 2007 annual report, AIMCO acknowledged to shareholders that "Plans to develop Lincoln Place have been the subject of controversy and litigation, which reduces its market value and may result in a future impairment (financial loss)." AIMCO's idea of development apparently is to kick out the tenants, tear down the apartments and build hi-rise condos.

"AIMCO took a bad business gamble. They broke the law and hurt a lot of people. They threw families out of their homes, little children, frail elderly ladies, and people with life-threatening illnesses. You bet it's going to cost them," said Sheila Bernard, the feisty president of the Lincoln Place Tenants Association.

Laura Burns, a locked-out tenant observed that this is the first acknowledgment AIMCO has made to its shareholders that its plans to demolish and redevelop Lincoln Place have run aground. "AIMCO thought they could extort more height and density from the city of L.A. They used the tenants as hostages during a protracted period of eviction threats and tense negotiations spanning the last five years. But this Goliath has met its match," said Burns.

According to lead attorney John Murdock, who shepherded LPTA's case against AIMCO to a stunning victory, Superior Court Judge David Yaffe has issued an injunction preventing further evictions at Lincoln Place. Attorneys for the tenants will be using this injunction to obtain dismissals for the 48 households who are currently fighting their 2005 eviction orders in court.

"AIMCO abused its power," added Amanda Seward, an entertainment and intellectual property rights attorney who won historical status for Lincoln Place and has learned landlord-tenant law on the job as she successfully held off the eviction of the last group of senior and disabled households who are still anchoring the complex. "The company underestimated the tenants at Lincoln Place and they are not going away."

# Martians Steal Ray Bradbury House

The house at 662 S. Venice Blvd. where Ray Bradbury wrote the The Martian Chronicles is missing. The plaque on the house telling the story of the writing of the classic book is missing also.

An alternative theory is that it wasn't Martians who stole the house, but a developer intent on making money by tearing down the cultural heritage.

A sign on the adjoining old power station says Howard Robinson of 875 Venice Blvd. is planning to build an addition to the station.

# Jane Harman Denied L.A. Labor Endorsement

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor turned thumbs down on U.S. Representative Jane Harman, who represents Venice, even though she has no opposition in the June primary.

A committee of the Federation, which represents 300,000 union members in L.A. County had recommended endorsing Harman, but the union delegates voted not to endorse by more than a two-thirds margin.

Harman's support for NAFTA, the Iraq war, her sponsorship of HR 1955 on domestic terrorism and her opposition to Universal Healthcare led the delegates to oppose endorsing her.



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Douglas Eisenstark salutes the Beachhead for its coverage of the Lincoln Place crisis.

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## NAFTA Is Sucking Immigrants Over The Border

By Karl Abrams

When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began on New Year's Day 1994, a new age of free trade prosperity was expected to begin. Hundreds of thousands of US jobs would be created, immigration from Mexico would slow to a trickle and the living standards on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border would rise to new heights of economic abundance. Unfortunately, this never happened.

Originally pushed through by corporate interest, NAFTA remains a complex trilateral trade agreement which has eliminated most tariffs on traded products between Mexico, Canada, and the US.

The U.S. has already lost 3 million manufacturing jobs and six million Mexican peasant farmers have been driven off their ancestral land. They have had no choice but to migrate into Mexican cities or find their sad way north into the U.S. as slave-wage migrant workers.

Mexico was once proud and self-sufficient in terms of indigenous food supply. Now it has to import 40% of its food for survival. Mexican corn (maize), for example, can no longer compete with imported U.S. subsidized corn. The Mexican farm industry has nearly been destroyed. As a result, the standard of living in Mexico has gone down and undocumented immigration has risen by at least 60%.

It was Mexico's former President Carlos Salinas who signed the NAFTA agreement in 1994. What was he thinking? Salinas was aware at the time that NAFTA would destroy the livelihood of 10-13 million farmers and drive them off their land. He knew they would not be able to compete with US and Canadian untariffed grain imports.

Salinas had hoped and assumed that fruit and vegetable exports would offset the loss to grain farmers. He was so wrong. Millions of farmers and their families have since gone broke, while fruit and vegetable exports have only marginally increased.

NAFTA wrongly assumed that thousands of Mexican farmers who cultivated corn for hundreds of years would smoothly switch over to growing fruit (e.g. strawberries) and vegetables.

According to agriculture economist

Professor Philip Martin of UC Davis, NAFTA proponents didn't realize the difficulties farmers would have making a smooth transition. Without the Mexican government spending money on crop-change education and efficient roads, the switch-over will continue to be doomed.

Perhaps we should learn from the European Union. They have already implemented their plans to subsidize the infrastructure for poor countries like Portugal, Spain, and Greece to enter the EU. In this way, European countries can better "converge economically" and prevent mass migration of economically displaced people.

Salinas believed that foreign manufacturers would hire low cost Mexican labor at fair wages. He knew that industrial jobs in Mexico would be created by eager US investors. General Electric, for example, has sent thousands of US jobs to Mexico. Today, the GE conglomerate and its partners employ 30,000 Mexicans at 35 factories.

But, Mexican workers are only being offered wages half of what they were in the past. And, as the products of Mexican labor, from refrigerators to washing machines, are shipped back to the US, the people of Mexico will find they've become poorer than ever.



Artist: John Hood

## Whole Foods Chops Down Whole Trees

By Michael Zeno

Fourteen trees have been cut down at the soon-to-be Whole Foods Market parking lot in Venice to make way for 'new' trees.

It's disconcerting to return to a place you know well and sense that eerie feeling that something is not right, like coming home to find your door slightly ajar when you know you locked it tight. That's exactly what happened on Feb. 27 when I pulled into the strip mall parking lot off Lincoln Boulevard at Rose Avenue; something was missing, I thought. Then it hit me...the trees!

The trees were gone! Fourteen trees that encircled the lot had been unceremoniously cut down by the contractor hired to begin remodeling the former Big Lots site for the new Whole Foods Market. Only the mutilated stumps remained, festooned with yellow caution tape, appropriately reminiscent of a crime scene.

Four of those felled were large trees, with leafy green canopies that softened that asphalt nightmare like only trees can. I'm not a tree-hugger, but I'm a tree-lover, and it's painful to witness the indifference with which we destroy these living, breathing organ-



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-continued on Page 11

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## Prop. 98's Hidden Agenda: Abolish Rent Control

By Paul Hogarth

To learn about Proposition 98's agenda, look no further than Dan Faller, President and Founder of the American Owner's Association (AOA) - the largest landlord group in California. In a nine-page essay published in the association's magazine, Faller complains heatedly about rent control, calls pro-tenant elected officials "terrorists" and "suicide bombers," compares the effort to pass Prop. 98 with World War II, says that renters "choose not to provide for themselves," and - with rhetoric that channels George Bush - tells landlords: "you are either for us or against us in this fight for your freedom and property rights."

We cannot dismiss Faller as just another right-wing kook, for his organization has already contributed \$325,000 to the "Yes on 98" cause - and the AOA has plans to raise even more money in the coming weeks. With voter turnout in June expected to be very low, Faller's fringe beliefs might actually become public policy in California - if we don't act now.

While proponents want voters to think it's about eminent domain reform, Prop 98 is the most dangerous right-wing initiative to hit the California ballot in years. It would abolish rent control, gut the most basic tenant protections, repeal sensible environmental laws and endanger public water projects.

In the post-9/11 world, calling someone a "terrorist" is a serious accusation - but Faller refers to pro-tenant elected officials who oppose Prop 98 as "terrorists" or "suicide bombers" at least seven times. "The bombs and explosives they are throwing at us," he writes, "are rent control, eminent domain, inspection laws, building codes, requiring 60-day notices so tenants can steal more time from you, eviction laws that allow tenants to live rent-free for several months, relocation fees, inclusionary zoning that drives up the price of housing so they have another excuse to justify even more laws. These elected officials are dangerous."

Urging his fellow landlords to fight this "war" on the "terrorists," Faller says the solution is to hit them with the "big bomb": Proposition 98, which would invalidate all these existing laws and then some. "Help to permanently take away their weapons that allow unfair eminent domain and rent control," he writes before asking for campaign contributions.

But it's not just the "terrorist" politicians that Faller has a bone to pick with. He demeans people who can't afford to buy California real estate as lazy and ineffectual. As he urges landlords to "join this war" to pass Prop 98, Faller says "you've worked hard providing housing for others who chose not to provide for themselves. You gave up a lot of weekends to

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## Racial Dreams and Nightmares:

# 40 Years Without Martin Luther King

By Jim Smith

If the Reverend Dr. King was alive today, he would weep at the lack of progress between races. It is hard to believe that we lost him 40 years ago. It was on April 4, 1968, that an assassin, or assassins, shot the great civil rights leader on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to support a strike by the city's Black sanitation workers.

*A Personal Comment: I heard the news that evening in Augusta, Georgia, where I was serving out the last six months of my two years of involuntary servitude (the draft) in the U.S. Army. I felt that night that the 1960s dream of a better world had also been assassinated. Although my job in the Signal Corps was to train recruits to operate advance communications devices in Vietnam, I didn't do a lick of work after that night. And I wasn't alone. The Army was teeming with soldiers on the verge of mutiny. King's murder confirmed to many of us that this society was not worth fighting for.*

In the days following the assassination, at least 125 American cities exploded in rebellion. In 1965, King had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent efforts to end segregation and racism. Throughout his life, King practiced non-violence, but the violence of his assassination was too much to bare for the millions who loved him. They struck out in anger and frustration at the death of their hero. Many more people died and more than 70,000 National Guard troops were deployed to restore order in the cities.

At the time of his death, King had been planning a "Poor People's Campaign" that would unite people of all colors in a march on Washington to win an Economic Bill of Rights that would include housing for the poor and a guaranteed annual income. The plan would have required a dramatic shift of income away from the wealthy. King's assassination had averted the threat to the status quo.

*A Personal Comment: Sitting in the mess hall the day after King's murder, I am surrounded by angry and sullen Black soldiers. As usual, I sit at a table with six or seven Black men. The other whites keep to themselves. Months ago I had begun making friends with draftees from the ghettos of Philadelphia, New York, Chicago and elsewhere. We found a common bond in music and in our attitude to the army (FTA). But that day we were united by the tears in our eyes.*



Martin Luther King, Jr.

Today, segregation and racism is more subtle because Dr. King's ministry made gross racism and discrimination socially unacceptable. But it is not eradicated.

This year, King would have been 79 years old. Had he lived another 40 years to work for justice and equality, we might be living in a far better country today. No one since King has had his commanding presence and eloquence. Instead of progress in race relations, we have been sliding backwards.

- In 1978, the Supreme Court sided with Allan Bakke, a white medical student, who felt he was discriminated against in getting into UC Davis by a handful of Black applicants. It was the beginning of "reverse racism," in which privileged whites made use of civil rights laws to protect their privilege. Years of scare tactics about Blacks taking jobs away from whites resulted in a majority of California voters endorsing Prop. 209 which eliminated affirmative action in public employment.
- Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, a large and vibrant city just three years ago. When the storm hit, many Black residents were

locked in a stadium, concentration-camp style. Today, much of the predominately Black area has not been rebuilt, and it is estimated that as many as half the of the Black population will never return. Even in Venice, the homeless population has surged with refugees from New Orleans.

- In Jena, Louisiana, in 2006, a high school scuffle resulted in Black students being jailed, including charges of attempted murder, and white students going free. Meet the New South, same as the Old South.
- It's not just the South. A recent study found that for every dollar of per capita income among white Americans, the average Black American had made about 55 cents in 1968; forty years later, it was 57 cents!

*A Personal Comment: After being released from Ft. Gordon, Georgia, on June 14, 1968, I took a leisurely drive through the South en route to Venice. The practice of segregation and inequality was everywhere. In almost every area of social interaction, whites received undeserved deference from Blacks. I breathed a sigh of relief when I reached California. Venice seemed at the time to be a country apart, where Blacks, whites and Latinos fraternized and even became friends. Today, I'm no longer sure that Venice is different.*

Is Venice integrated? Superficially, it is more integrated that it was 40 years ago. Today, a few Black residents live throughout Venice, as do many more Latinos. In Oakwood, gentrification has increased the number of whites living in what was a solidly Black community. Yet it is not an integrated community. Many of the new white homeowners immediately erected high fences, leading to resentment from their Black neighbors. Letters received by the Beachhead since last month's issue from white Oakwood residents indicate little or no familiarity with their Black neighbors.

The attitude of police toward Black and white residents of Oakwood is markedly different. Aggressive policing has been a fact of life since Venice was taken over by Los Angeles. Elite LAPD units have been common in Oakwood. In the 60s, it was the Metro squad.



Barack Obama

Then came the CRASH units.

In 1988, the LAPD created "The Oakwood Plan," to pacify the community. It called for mass arrests, creation of local vigilante groups, and a focus on eight "criminal families" in Oakwood. The Plan had uncovered a conspiracy: "The more the families of Oakwood are studied,

the more it becomes apparent and the more you understand that almost everyone is related through either marriage or out of wedlock births." Clearly, something had to be done.

In 2006, when a Venice High School student was gunned down on campus, police - as if on auto pilot - headed for Oakwood, a mile away, and put the community under siege. Ultimately, the killer was found, not in Oakwood, but in jail on an unrelated charge.

On Feb. 19, as reported in last month's Beachhead, 300 LAPD and federal officers kicked down doors throughout Oakwood, handcuffing grandmothers, while providing a photo opportunity for City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo. Not surprisingly, all of those accosted by police were Black.

*A Personal Comment: I sat in a crowded meeting of outraged Black residents on the evening of Feb. 19 while two white cops tried to explain why a battalion of police had put guns to the heads of 70-year-old women a few hours earlier. Again, I seemed to be one of the few white residents who cared enough to lend his support to those who had been terrorized by men with guns. I thought back to the day I had been evicted from my off-base apartment in Georgia because my Black*



Photo collage, Oakwood Recreation Center

Photo by Alexandria Shankweiler

*friends sometimes visited. It seemed like yesterday, but it had been 40 years ago. I thought back to the time when my ancestors had owned - actually owned - other human beings. For 200 years, men and women whose blood and genes I carry had gotten rich by working Black men and women nearly to death. The slaves were confined to small shacks on the plantation when they lived with the knowledge that their doors could be kicked down at any moment and they could be carried off. Was it years ago, or just yesterday?*

On March 18, Barack Obama made a historic speech about race that sought to bridge the gap between whites and Blacks. The immediate motivation for the speech was the damage done to his campaign by the media's repeated playing of selected parts of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright's sermons. However, as the above partial list of examples about the condition of Black Americans shows, Obama was wrong when he said, "the profound mistake of Reverend Wright's sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society. It's that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress has been made..."

Is it progress that we can glorify Dr. King but still consider his comments to be inflammatory or un-American, such as calling this country, "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." His words, of course, are still true today.

Some would point to Obama's front runner status in the Democratic nomination for president as evidence of a profound improvement in race relations in the United States. But it is unclear at this time if the rich and powerful in this country will allow a Black man to become President of the country and ruler of the American Empire.

If the race went to the swiftest, it would already be over. Obama has won most of the states and leads in delegates and popular votes. It is hard to imagine that if Hillary Clinton had won ten states in a row that the media would still accept Obama as a credible candidate.

Should Obama ultimately win the Presidency this year, it would be one of the most positive events in the history of the country, regardless of his politics. Yet, as Obama stated on March 18, "I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy."

What the flap around the Rev. Wright's remarks shows is that many Americans are unwilling to criticize their country when such criticism is justified.

The enslavement and subsequent abysmal treatment of Black people, the genocide of the Native Americans, the theft of half of Mexico's land, the forced labor of Asian peoples, the conquest of the kingdom of Hawaii, and so on, and so on, up to the illegal invasion of Iraq are either ignored by most Americans, or else these transgressions are attributed to "policy mistakes."

And when someone like Rev. Wright makes it impossible to ignore the message, the response by "good Americans" is to angrily attack the messenger.

In this atmosphere, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the Kennedys, and hundreds of Black activists in the 60s as well as more than a million Blacks behind bars today can be seen as simply business as usual.

# 5 Years, 4,000 U.S. Dead and One Million Iraqi Dead – Mission Still Not Accomplished

By Jack Neworth

Last month marked the 5th anniversary of the Iraq war. That's a year and a half longer than WW2, but the news is back to business as usual which means in-depth coverage of stories like Ashley Dupre (Eliot Spitzer's call girl) being offered a million dollars to pose nude in "Hustler Magazine." What a country.

The trend of the networks reporting on stories as much for ratings as for news, goes back to when the decision that news divisions had to show a profit. Today the networks have concluded that after five years the war in Iraq doesn't get rating. Instead they feed us clips of Dick Cheney suddenly claiming the war is a success. (Keep in mind Cheney also said the troops would be "greeted as liberators" and the insurgency was in its "last throes.") Last month, when told by a reporter that 2/3 of the country is against the war, Cheney said rather contemptuously, "So?" (As in do you think I give a sh\*t?)

The truth is when Bush and Cheney brag about the "success of the surge" it only confirms the total failure of the previous four years. General Eric Shinseki warned congress that we'd need two hundred thousand troops but Donald Rumsfeld dismissed it as "absurd" and essentially Shinseki was forced to retire. (If only it had been the other way around.) Rummy, another neo-con genius, proudly predicted the war would last "six days, or six weeks but certainly no longer than six months."

John McCain is another one. Last year he declared a bustling Baghdad marketplace was evidence that Iraqis could "shop freely." (At the time McCain was wearing a bulletproof vest, surrounded by soldiers and Blackhawk helicopters.) This year the military informed him that he couldn't visit the marketplace as it was more dangerous than last year! Some surge.

Lately people are referring to McCain as "McBush," especially after a press conference in March where he charged the Iranians with training Al Queda. (The two have only been enemies



Arlington West, sponsored by Veterans for Peace, at Santa Monica beach has been going on for four years. Every Sunday 20 to 30 volunteers plant 2,000 white crosses. There have been so many deaths that they started using red crosses which indicate 10 deaths. The coffins are in memory of soldiers killed during the week. There are also Stars of David and Crescents for Jewish and Islamic soldiers. Photo by Will North

for 1400 years.) Panicked, Senator Liberman covertly whispered into McCain's ear and the Senator sheepishly corrected himself.

The wheels are coming off the straight talk express. Not long ago McCain said, "If there were no casualties Americans would support the war." No casualties? Hello? We're at 4011 (3872 since "Mission Accomplished") with 30,000 wounded, record suicides and PTSD cases possibly in the hundreds of thousands when this occupation is all said and done. If it's ever "all said and done."

One of the many rationales for the war was to bring democracy to Iraq. Five years later we can't even bring electricity. It seems like only yesterday Paul Wolfowitz said Iraq had "no ethnic strife and had vast oil revenues to pay for the reconstruction." What happened to those oil revenues? One-third are siphoned off through corruption and actually fuels the insurgency.

To mark the fifth anniversary of the war last month I visited the Arlington West Memorial north of the Santa Monica pier. A project of Veterans for Peace, every Sunday volunteers erect a memorial on the beach. Along with bulletin boards featuring photos of the wounded and biographies of the fallen, the beach is covered with white crosses, each representing a soldier's death. In the center is a row of flag-draped coffins which indicate how many GIs have died since the past Sunday. (Thanks to Bush Sr. we're not allowed to see the real coffins. What do you think this is, a democracy?)

When I gaze at the endless rows of crosses, or read about the fallen soldiers, young men and women whose lives had barely started, it breaks my heart. I don't know how the volunteers find the strength to come back each week, but they do. They start at 4 A.M. grooming the beach and setting up the crosses. During a typical day thousands of people will view the memorial. Around sunset the volunteers take everything down, only to repeat the process the next Sunday. (To see the website go to: [Arlingtonwestsantamonica.org](http://Arlingtonwestsantamonica.org). Be sure to click on "Winter's Soldiers," the GI's actual accounts of the occupation.)

Last month after examining 600,000 documents from Iraq, the Pentagon concluded there was no operational link between Sadaam Hussein and Al Queda. (Now they tell us.) Even more offensive was the Gridiron Club Dinner in D.C. in March where George Bush had the unbelievably poor taste to joke about missing WMDs. Given the loss of life and destruction, I don't see the humor. Impeaching Bush on the other hand could be good for a few laughs.

The fifth anniversary of the war has come and gone. I wonder if most Americans even care? I worry that for many a bigger question is will Ashley Dupre pose for *Hustler*?



Photo by Alejandro Gallo

Coffins at Arlington West in memory of this week's U.S. death toll in Iraq.

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# Are Murals An Endangered Species?

By Judy Baca

Within the borders of the city of Los Angeles all murals must receive a permit from the Cultural Affairs Commission before they can be painted on public or private property. This means that if you choose to paint a mural on the outside of your own property you would need to receive a permit from Cultural Affairs to do so. If you do not have a permit you could be fined or jailed and the mural can be removed by the Department of Building and Safety. This policy is apparently in question at the moment and rightfully so as it seems to be a blatant violation of first Amendment rights of the public and individual property rights which are held in higher regard than the interest of the public in most all debates in our country.

What seems to be happening is that some muralists who have been given permission to work on private walls with full support of building owners for the creation of a fine art work have sought Cultural Affairs permits and have been told that they cannot apply while the city sorts out this issue. In one case a mural was removed at Cesar Chavez and Breed Street in January of this year because it was not permitted even though they sought and were denied the right to apply for a permit. The beautiful com-

munity mural was destroyed one month after it was painted. [www.icuarts.com/com-murals/lml/](http://www.icuarts.com/com-murals/lml/)

Actually this is not uncommon, there have been many cases in which works that were controversial perhaps only to one person who complained have been removed without notification to the artist by the Department of Building and Safety. A beautiful mural of a Zapatista was removed from a wall in East Los Angeles a couple of years ago because it did not have a permit while many banal murals which are used for decorating pizza houses or little markets with purely advertising intent are not enforced. Has the Department of Building and Safety become a mind-policing agency?

The City of Los Angeles has a sign ordinance that is written ambiguously enough to make it possible to confuse a mural with a sign. Since the percentage of language was one of the methods the city used to distinguish a sign from fine art (is it really that hard?) the advertising companies seized the opportunity to reduce language on supergraphics and declare them fine art. Today every inch of the public's eye space is being filled with advertising and art is disappearing. Most Angelenos would advocate for control of advertising particularly supergraphics as the chosen images to dominate the urban landscape. Who wants to drive through the city and see a

ten-story cell phone or Mickey Mouse as the definer of the downtown skyline? Sign legislation seems to be controlling only artists and not the creators of corporate graffiti by advertising agencies who essentially are ignoring the law and polluting the urban landscape with what amounts to corporate vandalism.

The most outrageous acts of permit violations are perpetrated by the super graphic advertising companies who often do not seek permits at all and simply pay the fines associated with illegal advertising if they are caught at all. The city does not seem to have the means or perhaps the will to enforce the law on advertising agencies consistently. What is occurring as a result is that super graphics are proliferating and art is not.

All public funding for murals in Los Angeles has ended and the SPARC mural program, which existed for 20 years, is gone. This program through a city and nonprofit partnership provided public and private monies to produce hundreds of murals in our city. SPARC is working to reinstate this program.

Is Los Angeles fast becoming an environment hostile to murals?

*Judith F. Baca is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC).*



*The Fall of Icarus, by John Wehrle, 1978, at 46 Market St.*

**GONE**

Here are a few of the murals that no longer grace the walls of Venice buildings

**GONE**



*Venice in the Snow, L.A. Fine Arts Squad, 1970, 1903 Ocean Front Walk.*



**GONE**

*Another Venice, circa 1970s, Ocean Front Walk at Clubhouse Ave.*



**GONE**

*Becoming the Circle, Francisco Letelier, 2002, 5th St. at Rose Avenue. (Some of the panels were saved when the building was torn down, and may reappear soon.)*

# THE VENICE BEACH MARCHING SOCIETY

By Kathy Leonardo

You may remember seeing The Venice Beach Marching Society creating quite a spectacle, singing on the Venice Beach Boardwalk. They created a Venice ritual every Saturday afternoon, following the horrific devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

The much loved Venice Beach Marching Society was created by Venice Resident Bruce Langhorne (who played with Bob Dylan and was the inspiration for Mr. Tambourine Man). When Katrina seemed to be old news and possibly forgotten, Bruce decided to get out there and make a difference. His goal was to merely bring attention, once again to the situation of the people affected by Katrina. He called many of his talented Venice Musician friends and proposed his endeavor. Every single one of

them jumped in...."Who could refuse Bruce Langhorne?" If you knew Bruce you would understand. Bruce is a very loving charismatic individual, as well as being incredibly talented performer in his own right.

The core members of The Venice



Mr. Tambourine Man, Bruce Langhorne



Beach Marching Society include Bruce Langhorne, Vinnie Caggiano, Alfred Johnson, Debbie Green, Erica Katzin, Kathy Leonardo, Leon Rubenhold and Suzy Williams, but there were many guest singers and musicians as well as people who wanted to participate and march for the cause.

People would cheer as VBMS, with their keyboard and drum kit laden cart, rolled down the Boardwalk, with guitar, bass players and singers adorned in New Orleans Mardi Gras outfits, strutting alongside, all plugged in to a sound system. This was pulled by many different volunteers who adored Bruce and would show up every weekend.

Well, speaking for The Venice Beach Marching Society, we would want to give a shout out to Bruce Langhorne. Bruce has been ill, and unable to march. We would all like to say thank you for your talent, tenacity and vision...Get Well soon. We will march again!

## The Seeker

Before the pulsing crowd returns  
he sweeps  
his magic instrument  
over the beach,  
picks up a signal  
in his headphones  
and he abides.  
So do the clouds  
and the birds.

He bends down,  
sifts sand through a perforated pail  
and examines  
what he has found.

If it's of any value  
he stores it in a pouch  
fastened around his belly.  
If not, he tosses it aside  
and moves along.

-R.H. Dolman

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## Prop. 98's Hidden Agenda

-continued from page 4

make it possible - something others were not willing to do." Apparently, it's okay to berate the state's 14 million tenants because they "obviously" did not work hard enough to buy property themselves.

Does the fight over Prop 98 match the battle against Nazis and fascists in World War II? Dan Faller seems to think that it does. "There were big signs and advertisements that read 'Uncle Sam Needs You!' during WWII," he writes. "There's a big AOA sign today that says 'Freedom Loving Americans Need You!' We need your support to win this War to protect your property rights!"

Dan Faller is the president and founder of the American Owners Association - a national trade association of landlords that boasts more members in California than any other group. The AOA's monthly newsletter - which printed his "Yes on 98" screed - is the most widely read landlord publication in the country.

Under Faller's watch, the AOA has provided crucial seed money for Prop 98 to get on the ballot. The group has already put \$325,000 towards the effort - and Faller has urged members to give even more.

With such a fundraising appeal, the "Yes on 98" campaign should have plenty of funds to hoodwink voters into thinking that their extreme ballot measure is about eminent domain. Opponents of Prop. 98 must be vigilant, fund-raise and get out the message to expose it as the Hidden Agendas Scheme that it really is. Only by doing so can we save such essential programs in California that 14 million renters rely on.

Was Faller joking when he called pro-tenant elected officials "suicide bombers," accused tenants of being lazy, and compared the fight to pass Prop. 98 with fighting the Axis in World War II? Apparently not. That should give us all pause about how dangerous Prop. 98 really is.

Paul Hogarth is the Managing Editor of Beyond Chron - [www.beyondchron.org](http://www.beyondchron.org) - an alternative online daily newspaper.

For more information, contact Coalition for Economic Survival: 213-252-4411 or POWER: 310-392-9700.

## NAFTA - That Giant Sucking Sound -continued from page 4

In the last several months, tariffs on US corn, beans, sugar and powdered milk coming into Mexico have also been eliminated. This is going to further wipe out the livelihoods of a million more rural Mexicans.

Farmers from across the country gathered in Mexico City last February to protest NAFTA, demanding renegotiation of NAFTA, restoration of grain self-sufficiency, and wage increases.

US factories in Mexico can now take advantage of cheap Mexican labor to produce cheaper cars. US companies such as General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler can now ship cars and car parts anywhere in the US in just a few days. By some estimates, 60,000 US car related jobs have been lost since the NAFTA agreement began.

We must continue to challenge NAFTA as the root cause of Mexican immigration even as the Bush administration refuses to renegotiate the treaty.

It should be understood by all how NAFTA has forced millions of rural farmers off their land, decreased Mexican manufacturing job income and increased general unemployment. According to Harvard trade-economist Dani Rodrik, as the wages of Mexican workers continue to fall, they will continue to migrate northward.

The resulting migration into the US has yet to be understood by the average person in the US. Instead of understanding the bigger picture, there has been a dramatic rise in xenophobic hate groups that turn a blind eye to NAFTA as the true cause behind the erosion of worker's rights on both sides of the border.

If American investment has flooded into Mexico to finance such factories and provide new jobs, why has the number of illegal immigrants continued to rise?

According to Robert A. Blecker, an American University economist, the actual number of manufacturing jobs has actually been decreasing (by almost 40%) since a high of 4.1 million was reached in 2000.

According to the latest annual report from the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of hate groups in the US has increased almost 50%

over the last eight years.

Groups like the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which claim more than 250,000 members, continue to have strong connections to underground white supremacist groups that have emphasized racist conspiracy theories about immigrants poised to "take over America".

At the same time however, a recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) shows that "immigrants are far less likely than the average US native to commit crimes" showing clearly that "long standing fears of immigration as a threat to public safety are unjustified."

In fact, the PPIC has shown that while the the number of "illegal" immigrants has doubled since the 1994 enactment of NAFTA, violent crime have actually declined by nearly 35%. Last month, Time Magazine has also verified that there is "no correlation between immigrants and crime."

But immigrant hate groups like FAIR, hiding under the usual flag-draped guise of patriotism and main stream pundits like Lou Dobbs, continue to misrepresent these facts through propaganda and disinformation on TV and radio. So far, it has been a rare occurrence for our politicians and law makers to make any connection whatsoever to the flawed policies of NAFTA and its connection to increased immigration.

As usual, the biggest economic benefits are going to major transnational corporations like Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, General Electric and Wal-Mart.

Let us demand from our political leaders a complete review and renegotiation of NAFTA (including labor and environmental provisions) and a freeze on new trade pacts.

Let us put pressure on US corporations doing business in Mexico to contribute generously towards the billions of dollars needed to stimulate new job growth in Mexico just as the European Union is doing for members of its union.

Let us welcome our newly immigrated Latino brothers and sisters with love and respect.



**what i worry about**

by krista schwimmer

that the squirrel i feed daily  
will be hit by a passing car  
in front of me --  
that my husband will walk the liquor store  
& never return --  
that i will accidentally kill  
my pet crow in a fit of rage --  
that i will be largely right about people's  
indifference --  
that the toilet will be dirty  
when a stranger comes to visit --  
that i will hate my old age body  
with all its aches and pains --  
that i will spend time in prison  
for no apparent reason, arrested  
for a crime i don't remember --  
that i will wake up too late  
to my own beautiful life --  
that i will not be able to prevent  
what i am able to prevent --  
that this worry will wind me up  
& choke me --  
that i will be writing poems  
when i should be writing songs --  
that at the end i will not matter  
even to my self.

**this paper is a  
poem**

**Environmental Angels**

By Jim Smith

The environmental angels are coming  
They'll be watching you, and waiting

They'll see you when you dump your plastic  
In our beautiful and living ocean

They'll see you hide your nuclear waste -  
it's a time bomb sent to the future

They'll see you when you burn carbon -  
wood, coal, paper, gasoline - without think-  
ing

They'll see it all - your high crimes and mis-  
demeanors  
Don't think that you can get away with it

They are coming from the bowels of the  
Earth  
They are coming from the apartment down  
the street

They are coming from a bedroom in subur-  
bia  
They are coming from within you.

They'll work in your offices, on your ships,  
in your factories and fields

Day after day, for years on end  
acting so innocent and dumb.

Then they'll come at you - oh, yes  
When you least expect it

They'll take you at night and in broad day-  
light  
No tears! Your case is closed, your deed is  
done.

The crime is ecocide  
Your punishment is our salvation

Some might call them terrorists  
others will cheer them as saviors

They're angels, all right,  
coming to save us from ourselves



**EARTH DAY**  
April 22

**FOUR POEMS BY  
JAMES RYAN MORRIS****She Said**

there is a time  
for us, & a place  
for that - the poem.

such conflict, between  
the lady & the poem  
that separation is

today, we look one  
at the other, both  
aware that in

the final love  
there is no allowance  
for tomorrow

**The Hope**

softly, woman  
softly,  
your voice  
my hand,

Our collaboration  
of detail -

the way it is.

Quiet & softly  
on the ledge  
of night.

**Face To Face**

In the cellar  
I come  
face to face  
with a rat, brown  
cornered

like myself...  
if I move he moves,

and all I want is my stash  
& to get  
back upstairs

to my ol lady.

Just which one  
of us  
knows  
the rules  
of survival & need

best?

**The Relief**

Living with the poem  
is very, very difficult.

It can't cook, make a bed  
or yield bread...

it does nothing for me.

But wait: my immense lies  
are stabilized, & to be

relieved of that self  
is accomplishment

outside of poetry.

**The Venice Beat Poets****-The Great River Outside the Mainstream -****JAMES RYAN MORRIS**

By Shanna Moore

Winter of 1959 and the boardwalk was bare, riding my bicycle  
along the boardwalk from Santa Monica down the coast. I'd stop at the  
Carousel, a gay bar on the Venice boardwalk where all the dudes and  
dudettes did a line dance...I loved joining in. One day this guy with  
the eyes of the ocean was sitting on a table watching me dance...our  
eyes met and never moved away, this poet taking me in as I was dig-  
ging those eyes. Later we talked and walked, my bicycle between us,  
from Venice to Santa Monica. He just blew in  
from New York, this man of many words; I had a  
suitcase full of poetry I had written and never  
showed anyone and I wanted to show him.

This was only the beginning; we were con-  
stantly together and finally he hocked his type-  
writer and rented the whole basement of what is  
now the Morrison, just kitty corner from the Gas  
House where I worked as the art director. We  
lived in the basement, Tony Scibella, and Bruce  
Boyd Jimmy and myself. We rented four apart-  
ments, two were water-logged at high tide; 20  
dollars a month, what a deal.



James Ryan Morris

photo by Shanna Moore

the rhythm  
of the beat poetry  
wail of a soprano sax

Billie Holliday was Jimmy's muse - he wrote for her, he wrote of  
her, he dried her tears and set them to paper; the lady, the inhumanity  
of the men in her life, man and the system and their wars, the blues .  
Jimmy blew bare fist to bone but softly, he cared. Tony was softer still  
and Stu bellowed it out. The Venice West, the other end of the tram  
ride, had more poetry... fingers snappin' instead of applause...one  
hand clapping... so the establishment wouldn't shut us down..The  
words a warning - would they listen?

the first drumming  
echoes across  
the sands of time

Jimmy wrote a story for Hollywood of Billie but they weren't ready  
for such stark reality. Instead the story Diana Ross played was so far  
from what he knew and saw. He lived in her neighborhood, he new  
her blues, he felt her pain, he lived for Billie Holiday and it was her  
essence that traveled the cobblestone breezeway, her song. He wrote  
the blues, blowing ever so soft the fragrance of a white gardenia.

We were all destined to meet, the Lady brought us there, to cry out  
to each other, the poets with their ax's honed, their words like acid  
rain, their humanity showing...break/straight.. ah yes ringside with  
the off the wall poets and the lady. Man and the system and their  
wars..the blues and reaching for the stars..touching the face of god..all  
part of the movement..these poets of Venice set out to change..  
...Jimmy blew

Lawrence Lipton  
sold us out  
the tourists came

We exploded into the minds of many. They came wanting to see  
these bards of protest, huarache's flappin' on the cobblestone breeze-  
way. Tourists who rode the tram pay a dime see the freaks. From the  
Gas House to the Venice West they rode, we laughed at them and  
walked, our dimes were for a cup of coffee and a table to sit and write.

bare self to bone  
in search  
of the answers

I've planted a Koa tree in your honor, oh Venice poets,  
on the top of the mountain in Hawaii next to madam Pele  
"The Poet Tree"  
where sun and mist live  
and the tradewinds blow.  
I hang poetry on the limbs  
and sometimes they blow away  
words on the wind.

I always said the eyes have it, your eyes and the fetch of a wave.  
You said, "it's the legs, baby, riding through my dreams"...what a win-  
ter of love and no one but us on the boardwalk, the poets waitin' on  
the pome...a few locals and the surf and sand...

so many words  
inspired by the lady  
dance through the pages of time  
the "Lady" walked with us...  
held our hands  
sang with us.

and then ...  
there were those  
that would bring us to our knees..  
The Killer Summer  
drugs and death  
but that's another story



## Operation Oakwood - 2

Dear Beachhead,

I happened to pick up a copy of the Beachhead last night and read your account of the LAPD raid in Oakwood. An internet search for more information about the raid did not lead me to an online version of your article. Instead, a google search produced nothing but references and repostings of the LAPD-loving LA Times article and similarly slanted reports. The perspectives you presented in your article were unrepresented in my cursory search. Unfortunately, the raid may be remembered by most as a successful LAPD incursion into a gang-ridden area, not as a scummy, intrusive, and offensive attempt to speed gentrification through intimidation and by playing to the public's willingness to condone any law enforcement measure that makes mention of the word "gang."

You seem to have been the only publication to paint the raid as anything by a successful and worthwhile LAPD mission, and that unfairly places on you a burden to spread your story as widely as possible. I've visited your website, and I know you have an online presence, but I wish that presence were more immediately visible. I don't know much about the technology involved, but I'm wondering if you've considered working with the Venice Neighborhood Council or the Venice Forum, both of which have visible online manifestations, to have your articles reprinted on their pages.

Thank you. *Nancy Kolocotronis*

*(From the Collective: Any non-profit paper or website is free to use articles, with attribution, in the Beachhead. For profit media, please contact us first.)*

## Operation Oakwood - 3

Dear Beachhead,

"LAPD, Feds kick down doors, terrorize seniors in early morning "Iraq-style" para-military operation Feb.19. The 300-plus invasion force said they were looking for gang members but found mostly elderly women, children and babies in the homes after kicking down the front doors."

Pretty inflammatory sub-head, for your headline. As far as I'm concerned, "A new broom sweeps clean", but then, everyone has a "right" to know when the LAPD is conducting a raid, correct? WRONG!!! That's why they call it a "raid"! Granted, whenever these type of "raids" occur, no matter where you live in the world, there are always innocent people who are hurt. Not like the "innocent" that continue to get shot in drive-by's and those who are miss-identified by the "gang bangers." It is interesting how the police are always such "monsters", but then you bitch about them for not being around when YOU need them.

Let's be honest and admit that many of you know some of the "grand mothers" and "mothers" who accept "cash" from their children or grandchildren who deal in drugs. They turn a blind eye because it behooves them. If you live in Venice, you have seen what some of these crack heads and metha-drones, who walk around in this neighborhood, look like. Still, there are those who continue to pretend it is O.K. to sell this "garbage". But then, some parents have never recovered from their own addictions, let alone make decisions with the brain cells they have left! To me it is analogues to some of the men and women of Islam who want their children to be suicide bombers. Worshiping death and not life.

In all the years I have lived in Venice it continues to vex me as to how many people continue to be "victims". It is always someone else's fault or responsibility. The government will take care of it, but stay out of business!

There are many wonderful people who live in this "multi-cultural" environment and over-all this is a pretty great community. But why is it necessary for someone to make the statement "The gentrification that started back in the 1980's still continues to perpetuate ethnic cleansing", as stated under "Two anonymous Comments from the Community?". This person is either brain dead or just plain stupid. It didn't really start to change around here until the mid nineties. There were still kids being shot in the street by their peers, in 1999. I hate to say it, but I can't recall a "white kid" being shot by another "white kid" in the street. The person who made this statement probably prefers to live a hovel with trash all around them. Personally, I am sick and tired of individuals who "reside" in the alley behind my house, smoking crack, defecating any where they please and leaving trash everywhere they go and all the brainless little gang bangers who paint their unreadable monikers all over the Venice. All of sudden everyone is innocent - their hypocrisy is sickening. They all know their rights and none of them, their responsibilities!

Consider me sick of hypocrisy and the "victorats" of Venice!

*Ingrid Boon*

## Operation Oakwood - 4

Dear Beachhead,

Your OPERATION OAKWOOD article quite bothered me in your March issue of the newspaper. I find your seemingly liberal and feministic newspaper harder and harder to read each month. The only real reason I guess I pick the newspaper up is for torture. I like torturing myself into finding all the ways you can justify your idealistic thought process.

I assume you live in the Oakwood area: north of California, east of Abbot Kinney, south of Rose and west of Lincoln. I guess it is safe to say that you never hear of any criminal mischief taking place within those boundaries. You never see drug addicts come in from La Brea and Venice to the Oakwood area looking to by meth, rock cocaine, heroin and marijuana. I guess you can say that you have never heard the gunshots that ring out between rival gangs in the area and gang members shooting at police officers. I guess you personally know the lady who's niece had a "gun pointed at her head" because she is "African American" and know that her son is not on parole or selling drugs. How about the same citizen that tries to play at the park but can't because it is overrun with gang members, transients and drug addicts passed out on the grass.

Well I am a resident. I do see the crack heads riding their bikes into my neighborhood to look for drugs. But before that I see them break into my neighbors car, take her GPS and then give it to the drug dealers for a 20. How about those rival gangs coming into Venice looking for their next victim, whether gang affiliated or not. How about those terrorists that live with their poor auntie or grandmother that has been grandfathered into the Venice neighborhood and hasn't paid rent for 50 years. This shit happens here in Venice.

Here you blame it on the police. We whine and cry when the police do do anything because they are so over worked, overrun and understaffed. We cry and complain when the police do things like issue citations to transients for possessing a shopping cart that is not theirs and in fact stole. It's all the LAPD's fault and you let these residents believe that by encouraging them to go into the police department and fill out a criminal complaint on an officer because he/she is doing their best job to keep this community drug, gun and gangbanger free. The officer points their gun at people because these people have guns.

Tell the whole story. Your newspaper is so one sided that I torture myself trying understand the world these story tellers live in.

You have to use violence to fight violence. That is the biggest, hardest thing for people to grasp. You are not going to solve the problems created by these savages unless you grasp them by the throat. There is no reasoning, pleading or begging. There is no ignoring the problem, hoping it will go away. Go out and get at it.

Damned if you do, damned if you don't. Personally, I love what the LAPD and the FEDS did. Maybe this is just the first of many to come. And if you think they are going to stop because of one little meaningless, one-sided newspaper--come again.

*C. Grant*

*(From the Collective: Normally we would not print a letter that calls fellow human beings - and neighbors - "savages." But the rant against this newspaper just made our day. We are happy to be associated with the hard-working and community-minded residents of Oakwood who this letter writer should get to know.)*

## 31-Story Building

Dear Beachhead:

As debate continues on the proposed 31 story condo tower on Lincoln, one extremely important fact seems to have been overlooked. The Marina Pointe Drive and neighboring areas have been hit by more than a dozen power outages and dramatic fluctuations (brown outs) over the past two months. LADWP has admitted off the record that they do not fully understand the reason why but speculate that the volume of new construction in the area (especially the Del Rey Arts district) has overburdened the power grid for this neighborhood with little likelihood this can be easily remedied short term.

If there is ANY truth to this concern, then the 31 story condo tower should not only be opposed by all area residents (these outages are damaging appliances and electronics in many homes and businesses) but also denied by the local review board for practicality reasons alone. If LADWP cannot consistently supply power to this area now (its not winter or summer) how could it possibly handle another oversized condo building? We haven't even seen what the newly occupied Del Rey Arts district influx of residents will do to the local power grid come summer. Be prepared for more outages.

Sincerely, *J. Elias*

## Rest Rooms on Ocean Front Walk

Dear Beachhead,

The artists, performers, business owners and general public would like bring to your attention the existence of a public health hazard currently existing adjacent to the large Rose Avenue public lot at Venice Beach. If you would please read the enclosed petition, this should give you the information you need to consider a course of action.

I obtained 300 signatures in support of this petition, and could have gotten many, many more. However, I felt it was more important to bring this matter to your attention as quickly as possible, since the spring and summer season is rapidly approaching. As you know, the advent of good weather brings thousands of people to Venice Beach on a daily basis.

There seems to be a great deal of confusion concerning all the public rest room facilities along the Boardwalk. In the case of the Rose Avenue facilities, they have been locked for over a year now. Other facilities are partially open at what seem to be inconsistent intervals. There have been rumors about plumbing problems, money problems, and contractor problems. I don't know what the truth is, and it seems nobody else does either.

Please take action on this matter as soon as possible and provide acknowledgment of this letter and enclosed petition.

Respectfully, *Gina Michel*

## RV Parking

Dear Beachhead,

I believe that the beach parking lots should be dedicated to campers and RVs. They should either be allowed to park free or, perhaps, pay an incredibly low or nominal amount each day.

I agree that it is inappropriate and wrong for campers and RVs to simply drive to a street in Venice and park their vehicle as a permanent "fixture" adjacent to someone's home or apartment. This is wrong.

I wish to compliment your newspaper for addressing this very important issue. Throughout Venice, there appear to be hundreds of campers and RVs illegally parked. From time to time, these streets are going to apply to the Council office for a permit for restrictive overnight parking. This seems ridiculous.

*Michael Millman*



The Oakwood Basketball Clinic youth celebrate receiving new basketball sneakers from a corporate donor. The event was also co-sponsored by Venice 2000/HELPER to encourage at risk youth in the Oakwood area to develop positive self-esteem, physical conditioning, good sportsmanship and citizenship while promoting educational excellence.

The Oakwood Basketball Clinic trains from 10-Noon on Saturdays at the Venice Boys and Girls Club. Parents include Lise Smith, Cynthia Jackson, Byron and Estella Jones and Lou Boyland.

# Whole Foods Chops Down Whole Trees

—continued from page 4

isms that oftentimes have been around for generations and add untold value to a space. We already live in such a diminished natural environment, here in Venice, and particularly at that intersection, - which makes incidents like this all the more egregious.

Granted, sometimes you have compelling reasons for tree removal, but it appears that Whole Foods plans only to 're-landscape' the parking lot, which seems a little less than compelling. Equally disturbing is the fact that this type of behavior stands in direct opposition to the Whole Foods Market philosophy as environmental stewards: "We see the necessity of active environmental stewardship so that the earth continues to flourish for generations to come," they boldly assert in their Declaration of Interdependence on their website.

It's also a very curious way to say hello to a neighborhood where you expect to do business for the next 50 years; or perhaps that particular part of Venice is not in their target demographic of upscale shoppers paying upscale prices for upscale produce, so local residents with an opinion were not consulted. Some of us will be senior citizens before we see trees there the same size as some of the ones that were cut down.

I attempted to contact Whole Foods Market for an explanation, but couldn't get past a public relations consultant who basically told me that the trees were removed to make room for the new trees: "The tree removal was actually a step in the process of re-landscaping the site," said Shawn Glasser of Mirror Mirror Public Relations in an e-mail response to my questions; "At the completion of this project, the site will have an abundance of trees, shrubs, and vines."

As a regular visitor to that strip mall I can tell you first hand that I consider this an aggressive act of ignorance and hypocrisy of the highest order from a company that boasts of itself as environmental stewards. Despite their best 're-landscaping' intentions, they deserve to be taken to task for their anti-environmental actions.

## Results of the March Beachhead Poll

March's poll was on whether Venetians approve of oppose the city ordinance that limits a property's front fence to 3.5 feet. 54% said they opposed it, while 27% said they supported it, and 8% didn't care or were unsure.

Some of your comments included:

- Venice lots are substandard and it's a security issue as well.
- We can have overnight parking districts to eliminate legal parking, but illegal fences are OK?
- 100 feet high fences and with barbed wire and electrified in keeping with the spirit of the times.
- It only seems to apply to certain addresses and not everyone.
- If you don't like an ordinance, have it changed. Don't break the law.
- Why hide your front yard, it's part of the warmth of your welcome.

**NEW**

## Beachhead Poll

**Do You Feel Safe in Venice?**

**Tell us why, or why not**

To Vote, clip & mail, or go to:

[www.freevenice.org](http://www.freevenice.org)

Poll ends April 29

## CommUnity Events — day by day

### Wednesday, April 2

- 9:30am - Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners. **Venice Beach Ordinance Discussion.** Westwood Recreation Complex. 1350 S. Sepulveda Blvd. Los Angeles.
- 2pm - City Council's **Arts, Parks, Health & Aging Committee.** Room 1010, City Hall, 200 N. Spring St, Los Angeles.

### Thursday, April 3

- 7pm - Mess presents **Jammin' the Jammers.** Event on the ways 1950s comedy/music laid groundwork for contemporary culture jammers. Beyond Baroque. \$7.

### Friday, April 4

- 6-10pm - **Fools Fest Art Show.** New paintings, photography and assemblages by various artists. Sponto. FREE.

### Saturday, April 5

- 7-10pm - **Fools Fest Live Performance.** Sponto.
- 7:30pm - **Richard Milazzo, Robert Burke and Annie Reiner.** Beyond Baroque. \$5.
- 7:30pm-10:30pm - **Reinterpretation** - Closing Reception. Doors open with songs of freedom by locals Angi, Erika and Ann. Suggested donation \$10. SPARC.

### Sunday, April 6

- 2pm - 4:45pm - **Spring Picnic Poetry Fundraiser.** Impromptu poetry readings and art-making in the poetry garden. Suggested donation \$10. Beyond Baroque.
- 5pm - Open Reading with Re/verb. Featuring **Kevin Lee, Sachary Locklin & Gerald Locklin.** Beyond Baroque. FREE.

### Friday, April 11

- 7:30pm - Barbara T. Smith's **Century Odyssey:** A Performance Documentary 1991-93. Film is 3 1/2 hours with an intermission. Beyond Baroque. \$10.

### Saturday, April 12

- 7:30pm - **Ara Shirinyan, Joseph Thomas and Dan Machlin.** Beyond Baroque. Members free, Students/seniors \$5.

### Tuesday, April 15

- 6:30pm - Movin' on Up - **The Music and Message of Curtis Mayfield** and the Impressions. Unurban Coffeehouse.
- 7pm - **Neighborhood Council Board** - Westminster Auditorium.

### Wednesday, April 16

- 6:30pm - **Blues and Jazz Voices.** Rare performance films of Bessie Smith and many others. Unurban Coffeehouse.

### Friday, April 18

- 7:30pm - **Teresa Carmoday, Stan Apps and Axel Thhormahlen.** Beyond Baroque. \$5. Members free.

### Saturday, April 19

- 7:30pm - Calque & Friends: **Literature in Translation.** Beyond Baroque. Members free.

### Monday, April 21

- 7pm - Live music preshow with **The Backboners.** Paul Krassner - Features Gerry Fialka's LIVE interview with Krassner. Unurban Coffeehouse.

### Tuesday, April 22

- All Day - Join people around the world in celebrating **Earth Day.** Stop Global Climate Change.

### Wednesday, April 23

- 7pm - Neighborhood Council **Land Use Committee** - Westminster Auditorium.

### Thursday, April 24

- All Day - In 1942, west coast **Japanese people were rounded up** and taken to camps for the duration of World War II. On this date in 1942, Japanese-Venetians were gathered at Lincoln and Venice Blvds. and sent off to the camps.

### Friday, April 25

- All Day - **Arbor Day** - The tree you save may save your atmosphere.
- 7:30pm - 20th Anniversary Party for the **Santa Monica Review** with Jim Krusoe, Lee Montgomery and Andrew Tonkovich. Live Music from The Fancies, prose, cake, music. \$7, Seniors \$5. Members free. Beyond Baroque.

### Friday, April 25

- 7:30-9:30pm - **LifeCycle Songs** - Benefit performance for AIDS LifeCycle - Church in Ocean Park - 235 Hill St., Ocean Park. \$25 suggested minimum donation, kids free.

### Saturday, April 26

- 7:30pm - **Poet's Passover Seder.** Beyond Baroque. Members free.

### Sunday, April 27

- 4pm - An Afternoon with the **Pedestal Magazine.** Readers will include John Amen, Timothy Green, Judy Konenfeld, Florence Weinberger, Ed Frankel and David Dannov. \$7. Seniors \$4. members free. Beyond Baroque.

### Monday, April 28

- 7pm - Neighborhood Council meeting to organize the **Venice Neighborhood BBQ and Picnic.** Oakwood Recreation Center.

—Calendar by Della Franco

## Ongoing Events

- **7:30-10pm. First Friday** of every month. Abbot Kinney Blvd. is open!
- 5-7pm, Wednesdays - Eat Sushi and **Dance Salsa** at the Canal Club. 2025 Pacific Ave. 7:30pm- Salsa lesson with Ana Maria Alvarez. Six session salsa workshops \$75/6 classes or \$15 per-class. Dancing and DJ afterwards.
- 8pm, Thurs., Fri., and Sat. - 3pm Sundays - **Alice Sit-by-the-Fire** by J.M. Barrie - Pacific Resident Theater, 705 1/2 Venice Blvd. 822-8392.
- 8pm, Thurs., Fri., and Sat. - 3pm Sundays - **The Time of Your Life** by William Saroyan - Coop Theater, 707 Venice Blvd. 460-2508 - \$12.
- 7:30 & 9:30pm, Sundays - **Cafe Plays** - Ruskin Theater, 3000 Airport Ave., S.M. 305-7888.
- **Live Music at The Good Hurt**, 12249 Venice Blvd, See week of events at - events@goodhurt.net
- **10am - 12pm, Sundays** - "The People's Voice"- Stand up for freedom of speech. Santa Monica Palisades Park. Ocean Ave at Santa Monica Blvd.
- 8-10pm, every 2nd Thursday - **Suzy Williams** and Her Solid Senders - at Dannys Deli.
- 6-9pm, Mondays - **Intermediate Conversational Spanish Class.** Venice High School. 13000 Venice Blvd. \$20, seniors free.
- 6pm - Monday and Thursdays - **Hatha Yoga** - Vera Davis Center. Donation.
- 8pm -Sunday - **Open Mic poetry**, spoken word, storytelling & performance. Abbot's Habit.
- 8pm - Sunday and Monday - **Live jazz.** Hal's Bar and Grill.
- 6pm - Wednesday. **Singer/guitarist Evyn Charles.** Sidewalk Cafe. 1401 Ocean Front Walk.
- 7:30pm - Wednesday, **Open Mic night.** Talking Stick Coffee Lounge. 1630 Ocean Park Blvd.
- 8pm - Friday and Saturday, March 14 - April 12 & 2pm, Sundays - **The Full Monty** - Santa Monica Theatre Guild. \$23, \$18 seniors.
- Every Sunday, 10:30am - **Mommy and Me Yoga.** On the beach in front of Windward Plaza.

Get your local event listed in the Beachhead. Send information to [Calendar@freevenice.org](mailto:Calendar@freevenice.org) by the 25th of the month. (If you can afford an advertisement, please take one out - \$25)

## Location Guide

- Abbot Kinney Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd, 821-1769
- Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 822-3006
- Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave, 306-1854, max10@electriclodge.org
- Hal's Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 396-3105 - [www.halsbarandgrill.com](http://www.halsbarandgrill.com)
- Pacific Resident Theatre, 703 Venice Blvd. 822-8392 - [www.pacificresidenttheatre.com](http://www.pacificresidenttheatre.com)
- SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x 15.
- Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave, 399-2078
- Westminster Elementary School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (enter auditorium from San Juan Ave.) 606-2015



Photo by Alexandria

# The Saloon mural is back!

Eyeballs by Chase, Wavecrest Ave. at Speedway, and all over Venice!

It's been covered with corporate graffiti (a Toyota ad) for the past couple of years. It's at the Townhouse, 52 Windward Avenue.



Photo by Alexandria

## Hidden Murals of Venice

Small streets and alleys of Venice are full of murals that most Venetians have never seen. If you have a favorite, please send us a photo or file to Beachhead, P.O. Box 2, Venice 90294 or Beachhead@freevenice.org

Photos by Jim Smith



Venice mural on Sunset Ave.



Somewhere near Rose Avenue



A Central Venice alley. Painted in 1996



### Venice Garden & Home Tour

Saturday, May 3, 2008  
10am-5pm

Benefiting the Neighborhood Youth Association's Las Doradas Children's Center

**VENICE**  
GARDEN & HOME TOUR

www.venicegardentour.org  
310.821.1857



Photo credits: Eric Staedemeyer



A Francisco Letelier mural hiding off Machado Avenue

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