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August  
2009

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An artists' protest was held on the beach, July 25, to call attention to the flea market atmosphere on Ocean Front Walk that discriminates against local artists. Photos by Pegarty Long.

# Artists Protest Commercial Vending on Ocean Front Walk

By Barbara Ransom

I attended the Venice Beach Boardwalk Lottery, July 21, as an observer. A fascinating eclectic mix of people stood around chatting, drinking coffee, and waiting, waiting for their chance to claim a ten by ten spot on the Venice Boardwalk for the coming week or weekend. Each person put their seller's card into a green tumbler and, precisely at 8:30 am, the drawing for the weekend began.

As the official from Parks and Recreation drew the cards from the tumbler fifteen at a time, talking would hush as he announced the vendors' names through a speaker system. The chosen vendors would then go sign up for the available spaces. There are 100 "I zone" spots and 100 "P zone" spots on the boardwalk, each zone with different vending rules, and each with a separate lottery.

About 300 people were gathered for the "I zone" lottery and perhaps 200 for the "P zone" – seemingly, not very good chances for either one. But, at least everyone has a fair chance. Just like Abbot Kinney, back in 1902, when he won his half of the city of Ocean Park that we now call Venice with a coin toss.

—continued on page 4

# Live Free Or Drive!

By Jennifer Smith and Jim Smith

The recent battle over permit parking has kept a spotlight on Venetians' continuing dilemma of where to stash their cars. Yet, no solutions have yet been proposed that would address the problem – with or without pay parking – with a long-term solution. Much of the dialogue has centered on having not enough parking. But what if we look at it from the perspective of too many cars?

Unlike most of Southern California, Venice began as a planned city that did not exalt the role of the automobile. In the first years of the 20th century, it was unclear whether the car would become king. At that time, most visitors traveled to and from Venice via the Pacific Electric Railway,

also known as the Red Cars. Once in Venice, short distances made walking convenient and prevalent. In addition, there was a miniature train that traveled around central Venice and there were trams on the Ocean Front Walk

—continued on page 10

**CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN:**  
**756 U.S. Dead - 40 this month**  
**IRAQ:**  
**4,330 U.S. Dead - 7 this month**  
**31,446 U.S. Wounded**  
**Iraqi Dead: 1,339,771 Cost of wars: \$892+ Billion**  
**Sources: [costofwar.com](http://costofwar.com) • [antiwar.com](http://antiwar.com) • [icasualties.org](http://icasualties.org)**



Created by Damon Boyd. See more at [damonboydsart.multiply.com](http://damonboydsart.multiply.com)  
Photo by Krista Schwimmer.





Beachhead Collective Staff:

Karl Abrams, Amy Dewhurst,  
Carol Fondiller, Don Geagan,  
Peggy Lee Kennedy, Ian Lovett,  
Lydia Poncé, Krista Schwimmer,  
Jim Smith, Alice Stek

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

Mail: P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294.  
Web: www.freevenice.org Email: Beachhead@freevenice.org  
Twitter: twitter.com/VeniceBeachhead

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LETTERS

What a life indeed

Dear Beachhead,

I'm sitting at Abbot's Habit, enjoying my first of what I imagine will be many of their delicious sandwiches, and today marks officially one week that I've lived in venice.

I picked up the beachhead as I was waiting for my order, and was greeted with Eino Hill's inspiring first-ever article about all the possibilities that this city has to offer.

I consider myself incredibly fortunate that my life has brought me here at this point, and I look forward to discovering all the magic the place has to offer.

Kudos to Eino on a great article and an even better outlook, and I look forward to becoming a regular beachhead reader.

Thank you both!  
*Tim Dybvig*

Camping Area Needed for RVs

Dear Beachhead,

With a new city attorney, Mr. Trutanich, many feel that "quality of life" issues, such as the invasion of Neighborhoods by Campers/RVs will be immediately addressed.

If people sleep in their cars or vehicles, they will be apprehended and prosecuted. After all, you agree that people who convert their motor vehicles into "living quarters" either overnight or day by day are otherwise in violation of the Los Angeles Municipal Code 85.2.

I oppose OPDs. I also feel that your community should locate some land or area which is an appropriate venue for these residents, and make some arrangements so that they can have a safe and secure location.

Let's work together. We both are opposed to OPDs and we both agree that camping in front of someone's home indefinitely is also wrong, inappropriate and unlawful.

Happy Summer, *Michael Millman*

Why Doesn't Obama Tell It Like It Is?

The Actually Existing Health Care System

By Carl Ginsburg

There is nothing inherently wrong with spending 17 per cent of GDP on health care if the result is a really healthy population. Just like there is nothing wrong with a “big” budget deficit if the money goes to making good jobs for working people, cleaning up their cities and environment and bettering schools instead of making rich financiers richer. But given the fact that countless pregnant women go without sonograms, diabetes is near epidemic proportions, dialysis patients on average die within five years (in Japan they live 20) and, most significantly, the number of primary care doctors remains very low -- taking preventive care off the agenda for most -- the US health care system is a travesty.

Medicare is the point only if you let private health care off the hook. We know that President Obama did exactly that when he invited in insurers earlier this spring and announced their voluntary commitment to cost containment (only to have them repudiate his interpretation of their comments within days) and you go before the nation in a news conference, July 22, and devote the presentation to existing government programs.

American health care is reeling because it is a profit center where gouging is the

norm. For-profit clinics and hospitals print money, paying out hefty dividends and huge salaries to management. Not-for-profits operate along similar lines. Ask Michelle Obama, who pulled down a reported \$400,000 a year at a Chicago hospital doing non-medical work. But that's just a small piece of the action.

There is so much gouging, so much greed and gross profiteering, that you have to wonder why Bernie Madoff didn't go that route and save himself a lifetime in prison.

Among the worst abuses was the conversion of non-profit insurance companies to for-profit institutions over the last decade. The CEOs of numerous insurers walked away with hundreds of millions of dollars, each.

United Healthcare's boss got close to a billion bucks for handing over the reins... until an outcry by consumer groups led to a reduction-- to \$800,000,000. That's a lot of money not going to underserved children.

The sale of one Preferred Provider Network, Multiplan -- nothing more than a sophisticated referral system -- to private equity firm, Carlyle Group, a few years back netted the owner close to a billion bucks.

The top HMO chiefs have pulled down hundreds of millions of dollars year after  
--continued on page 11



# As the Crow Caws

## (One Sassy Bird's Opinion)

Well, I suppose I should first introduce myself before I start mouthing off. My name is Lily Crow and I live here in Venice.

Anyway, there has been a lot of hoopla over those big RV's parking in the streets. Now ordinarily, we crows stay out of human affairs for a flock of reasons. One: humans are stupid. Two: their affairs are predictable and repetitive. Three: we are busy ourselves with plotting the take over of the Universe. And many other reasons I cannot tell you without breaking the corvid's oath.

It was difficult, however, to ignore the war against the RV's and the dwellers in them. So much rushing around on both sides -- meetings and flyers and voting and voting again. From an aerial view point, we crows were quite perplexed: What was the big deal? Why were the humans battling so hard? And more importantly, would we get any carcasses out of it?

Thank the Morrigan for the Beachhead! One of our clan managed to steal a copy and find out what exactly had happened. We were so impressed by the Beachhead's coverage of the OPD battle that we decided you would be the perfect place to air our own important parking battle.

To tell you the truth, as I must (being a crow and all), this new battle I think is so important hatches out of a strong bias I have towards one of you humans. He is so well-trained by us crows that we could almost call him a slave to us -- but we hate that word. He admires, respects, and most importantly FEEDS us lots and lots of peanuts. So we have decided to take up one of his personal battles. Besides, he drives a beautiful, shiny black car with a HUGE bird on the hood. Something even a crow can admire.

Anyway, this fellow's car keeps getting smacked while it is parked. Time after time after time. Front bumper, back bumper and even occasionally, the door. It's especially entertaining when his wife catches the person hitting his car! We think she is part banshee. This brings me to the next parking battle: whether to allow people, at any hour of the day or night, to park in the streets who do not know how to parallel park. You know, those people who think bumpers are for bumping into. I wish I could tell you these Bumper People come in one color, one sex, one class, or one type of car. They exist EVERYWHERE.

One idea we had is to have all Venetians tested to see if they can parallel park.

We figure there could be a special zone created by the City where humans could prove their parking prowess. Those who pass would receive a special sticker, preferably with a picture of a crow on it. We crows like to see our image everywhere.

Those who fail the parking test can then be removed by the City to Bumperville, where they can bump their hearts and heads away with one another. Oh -- and Bumperville should be miles and miles away so as not to create a stigma in Venice.

We crows feel that if Bumper People were forbidden to park here in Venice there would be such an enormous wave of goodwill from our man's heart that it may very well spread through all of Venice. And, although you may feel this has nothing to do with OPDs and RVs, Bumper People have something in common with RV haters: they look in their rear view car mirrors and see only themselves!

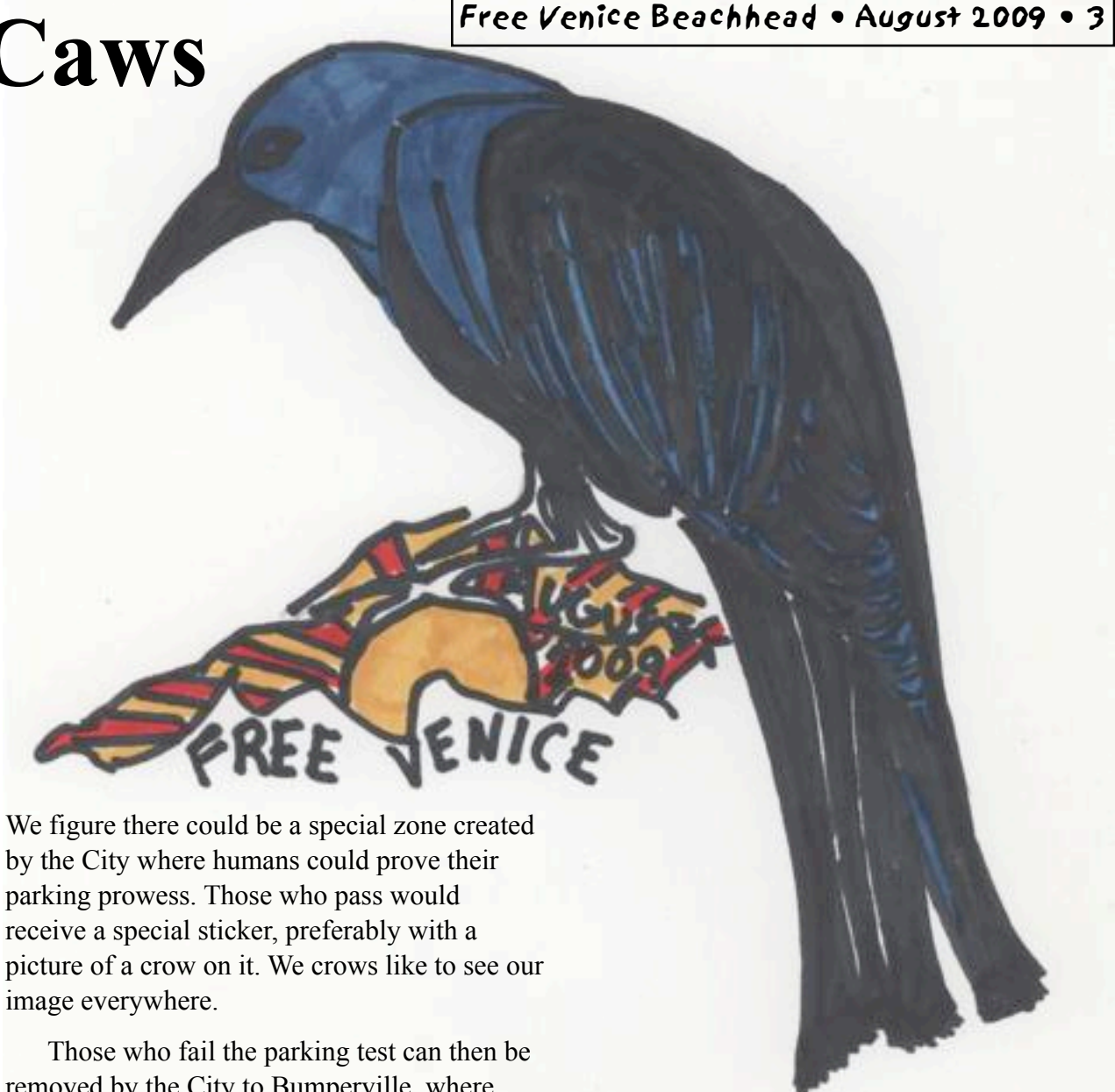
So, Bumper People Be Gone! And another thing, could someone please tell me why people

are worried about human waste on the street when the evidence points to big, steaming piles of dog shit? (which my other human ally, typing my thoughts, suddenly realized she had stepped in by the horrific odor coming from her sandals.)

Ok, enough time wasted in human affairs. And remember -- we crows are all around you, watching you when you think we are not, prepared to tell the truth no matter what it sounds like.

Time to fly!

Lily Crow





# Volleyball Without A Net

By Amy V. Dewhurst

Where Are Our Volleyball Nets???

There are a total of three volleyball nets north of the Breakwater on the 600 block of Ocean Front Walk (eight total in Venice). For more than a month one third of them have been missing.

Whether from natural wear and tear, an act of vandalism or simply a lack of maintenance, the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation has disappointed the citizens of Venice. Despite several calls to their office, two ineffectual posts still stand netless. A subculture staple who preferred not to be named cried that he is outraged at the lack of attention to this basic fundamental aspect of our community."

Multimedia writer/director Peter Tahoe is despondent because of the city's lack of response citing "I look forward to Sundays because that's our weekly community get together. The unfortunate destruction of one of the nets has inhibited that."

Enervated by this equivocation, five year Venice residents Brooke and Jelani Lawson purchased a net for neighborhood use. Jelani, a lawyer, declared "It's a shame that in the current economic crisis, the city of Los Angeles seems to lack the resources to maintain the public space and that private citizens have to do the job of the city."

To join in the cause to replace the net please call 310-305-9511.

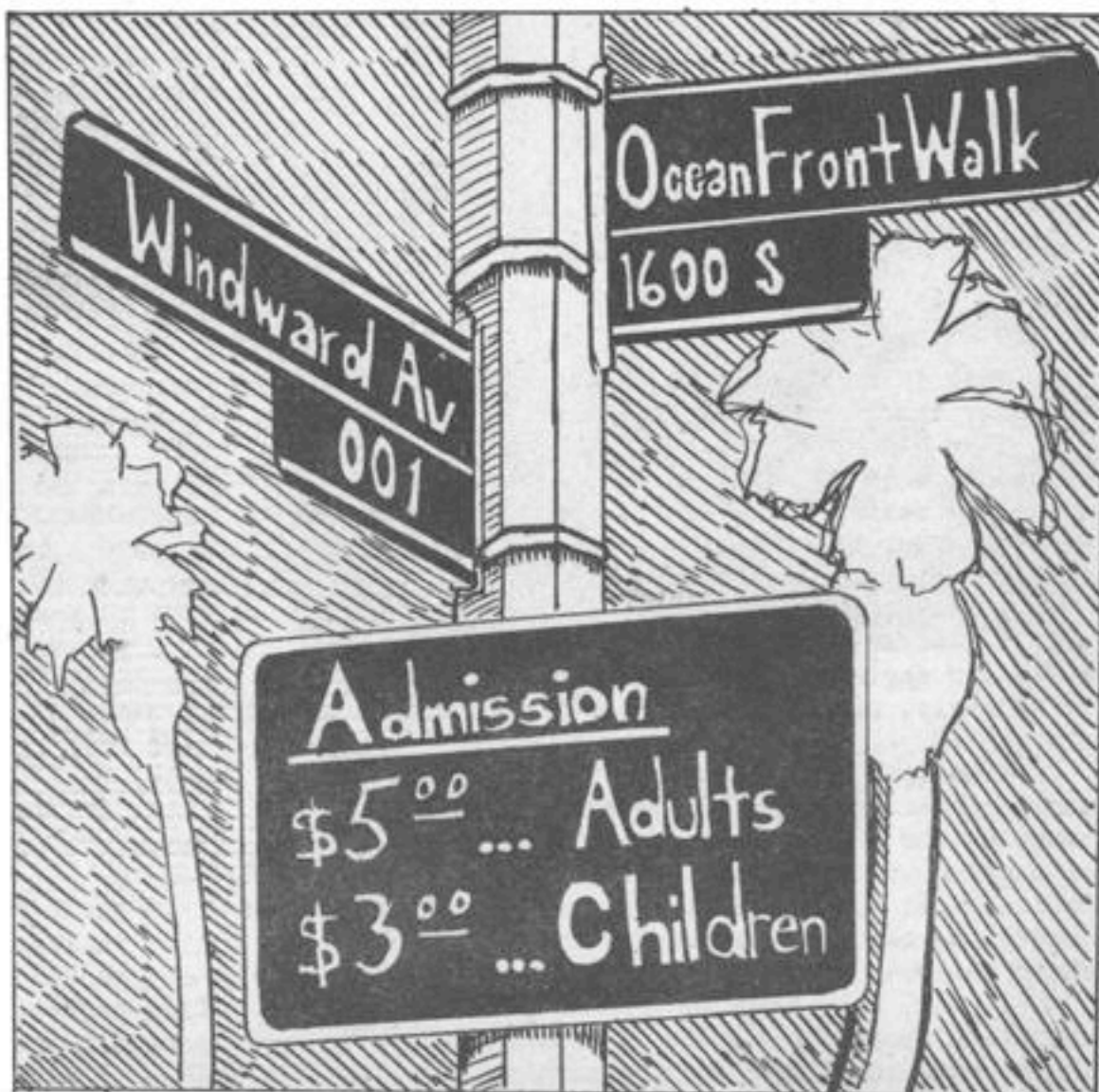


Volleyball with a net is definitely more fun (above), than Volleyball without a net (right).  
Photos by Mike Ponce



## Artists Protest Commercial Vending on Ocean Front Walk

—continued from page 1



Mark Goldman

But as time went on, the rumblings of frustration began in the crowd. I walked around and listened in. Many of the vendors are disheartened with the lottery process for two main reasons.

First, apparently, there are people cheating to get a spot. Some people are supposedly getting their family members seller's permits and then entering all of them in the lottery to improve their chances of getting a spot. The rumor is that there are families of ten doing this and people are even getting cards for their children. And then there are apparently people who don't plan on selling anything on the boardwalk who enter cards into the lottery. When they get a spot, they then sell their spots to others for cash.

But, most frustrating to many, is the commercial vending. Anyone, as they walk down the boardwalk, can see the large amount of commercial vending. In one block, there are several different spots selling the same mass produced made-in-china necklaces, bracelets, or plastic encased insects. These items are obviously inexpensive, easy to get, and sell well. They are a quick and simple way to gain income in a down economy. So, what's wrong with that?

According to a group of local artists, it is not only against the ordinances of the boardwalk to sell these items, but it is also offensive to the "spirit" of Venice. They feel that the boardwalk is becoming a "flea market" or "swap meet" instead of the free speech zone it was intended to be. They'd like to see local artists with handmade items get priority in the lottery over the commercial vendors. They would like to see the ordinances enforced by someone, and they would like to see those who

—continued on page 11



# Rotary Club Returns to Venice

By Don Culton

To many, a Rotary Club means a group of conservative old men in suits having lunch and badly singing patriotic songs.

That image may have fit the Rotary Club of Venice when it was founded in 1942. But, for the past several months a reborn club has been having weekly breakfasts on Thursdays at the venerable Firehouse Restaurant at Main and Rose. Only occasionally has a suit been seen, and nobody has sung a song yet.

For many years the club was the Venice Marina Club and met at various restaurants in Marina del Rey. But, with a motto of “Service Above Self,” the local organization has concentrated most of its service projects in recent years in Venice.

Annually it sponsors a Crafts Awards program, an Awards of Excellence Luncheon, where honors students receive letterman type jackets, and a Career Day, all at Venice High School.

This past year more than \$20,000 was granted to local schools as part of the Adiba Shaby Memorial Grant Program. Senior citizen lunches, a Christmas party for the handicapped students at McBride School, scholarships for graduating seniors, and sponsorship of the Culmination Ceremony at Mark Twain Middle School, have kept members busy.

A recent pancake breakfast for Los Angeles Fire Department Company 63 raised more than \$4000 to assist in upgrading facilities.

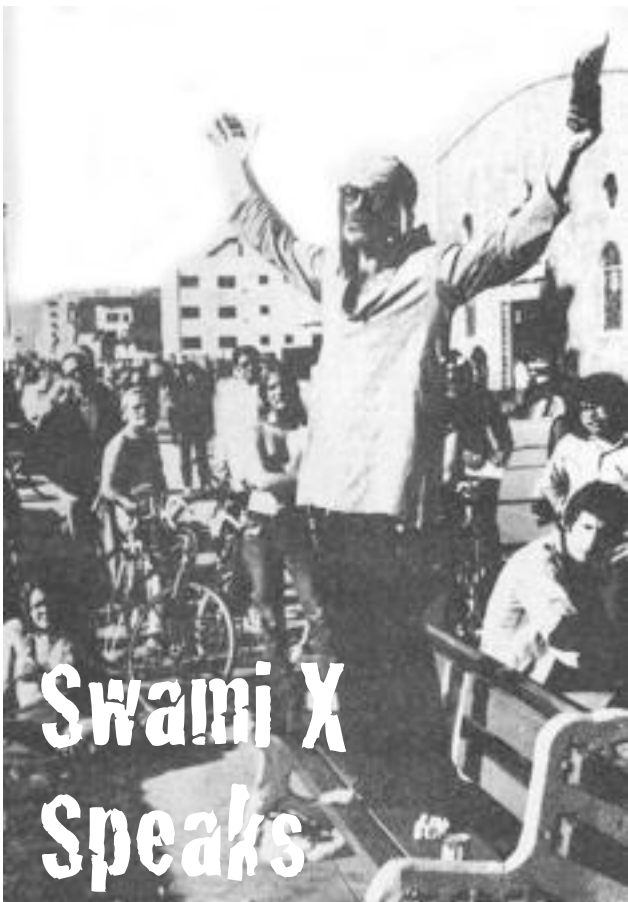
The club admits to having fun to go along with the service projects. They won an award this past year with its entry in the Marina del Rey Boat Parade, had a fund raising Bingo Night, a wine tasting, and a members only cruise in the Marina.

Club President Armando Diaz, Associate Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Venice, has vowed to keep meetings on time, beginning at 7:30 am, over by 8:45, and including a short program featuring guest speakers, usually on a topic of relevance primarily to Venice.

Rotary is an international organization of over 1.2 million members in 200 countries.

With a matching grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary's Polio Plus campaign is close to its goal of eliminating this crippling ailment from the world.

Worldwide, the Rotary wheel can be seen on parks, playgrounds, schools, and clubhouses that have been built by Rotarians. Members do not worry about being labeled “Do-gooders.” Guests are welcome at meetings.



The wonder and beauty of Life in this section of the Cosmos is that it is all connected with Love. I’m not sure how It works in the other sections. I hope to understand It all someday. In the meantime, I’ll cultivate gratitude for the endless blessings that daily come my way.

A lot of people seem to be short on gratitude. Plenty of ego out there. However, we seem to be short on gratitude. Why is that? I don’t know, but ego could eliminate gratitude, and vice versa.

Gratitude could commence with a pure, joyous, fearless love of Life. With that foundation a thousand opportunities for gratitude would rise up in daily living, I feel sure. I’m certainly looking forward to it.

In the meantime, I’ll be spending my time attempting to out maneuver my ego, that cunning rascal, who pops up everywhere I appear.

G-d damn him to Sausalito, and I say that with all due respect. If you are wise and kind, ego will eventually serve the good with its own dissolution.

It’s always reassuring to remember that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. The center, foundation and essence of spiritual life, is subjective meditation. Herein lies the answer to world peace, if you have any questions about that. It all starts, and ends, with I; and there is no I. There is no ego as well. Go figure. Maybe it is all Maya. And then again, maybe It’s just an illusion. Who knows?

Send in those letters and post cards with your answers. There may be prizes, but don’t count on it. If you’re happy, content, at peace, creatively active, socially fulfilled, evolving emotionally and sexually viable, what’s your problem? If you’re not, never mind those cards and/or letters.



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# Car Show Stops Traffic on Rose Avenue

By Greta Cobar

More than a hundred sparkly cars, motorcycles and bicycles rolled onto Rose Ave, June 30, as the Venice Community Housing Corporation (VCHC) successfully put on its first "Venice Beach Rides for the Community" Car and Motorcycle Show.

The event was awesome, to be surpassed only by its mission of raising money for low-income housing in Venice and Mar Vista.

While strolling between Lincoln and Main Street, Venetians and out-of-towners found it almost impossible to decide on the winner of the event: the perfect beach weather, cherried vintage cars, beautiful people, art rides, street food, hot rods, bands, muscle cars, Venice's world-famous street performers, motorcycles, custom-built bicycles or eco rides.

Trophies were awarded to several participants in different categories, but Venice itself was the true winner of the event, as the money raised will be used by VCHC to fulfill its mission of "preserving the economic, racial and social diversity of Venice and the surrounding area by maximizing affordable housing, community and economic development opportunities and by providing needed social services to low-income residents."

Although we Venetians get a chance to breathe

fresh air every day, even to us this event felt refreshing after the nasty Overnight Parking District battles, the harassment of the car dwellers by the LAPD, and the ongoing yuppies' efforts to transform the city into another gated community.

As VCHC proved at this event, reaching out and helping each other, raising money for one another as opposed to trying to get rid of each other is a lot more fun, constructive and good-karma-providing than the bitter clashes could ever be. Let's let this event serve as an inspiration for what we can and do accomplish here to persevere the true spirit of Venice, which can never be defeated.

Photos by  
Krista Schwimmer




*The Blues Brothers come to Venice*



*Red Enough? VW Vans and Venice have had a long-time romance*




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# I Became a Communist in Venice

By Mark Lipman

While attending the opening of the 2nd Biannual San Francisco International Poetry Festival (July 23-26), I had the opportunity to speak with its organizer, San Francisco's poet laureate, Jack Hirschman.

Sitting in his white linoleum kitchen, around a bottle of Russian vodka – all he'll drink – we started reading poems to each other, swapping stories and debating just who Lenin's true heir really was. Jack said Stalin. I said Trotsky.

"I grew up in New York during the Second World War," Jack continued. "I remember my mother telling me back then that if Russia fell to the Nazis, England would be next and then the rest of the world. She was terrified that fascism would come to America."

"But fascism has come to America," I answered. "Hitler may have been defeated, but what about his backers? It was the same Rockefellers and Bushes back then that financed and supported Hitler that have brought fascism to America today."

"Well, that we all know," Jack replied. "Vietnam was my war," he continued after a pause.

"You're anti-war," I offered.

Looking up, he shook his head. "Yes, that's right. I was teaching poetry at the time at UCLA. 250 kids in one class, 400 in another and I found out that if you got A's in school, you wouldn't get drafted."

"So everyone got an A?"

"That's right," he smiled. "Only I couldn't give everyone an A, or the school would know what was going on, so they all thought I was sexist. You see, girls weren't being drafted for Vietnam, so I gave them B's."

"How did you get involved in communism?" I asked. "Oh well, that was in Venice. I was translating this book, *Rainbow for the Christian West*, by Rene de Pestre and it just opened my eyes.

I became a communist in Venice, California."

In Venice? Could that be true? Does Venice have that much of an impact on people? Well, knowing Venice, I guess it does.

"Then you must know about the Beachhead?" I asked.

"The Beachhead!" Jack's eyes lit up.

"Of course I know about the Beachhead. I love that paper. My son used to write for the Beachhead."

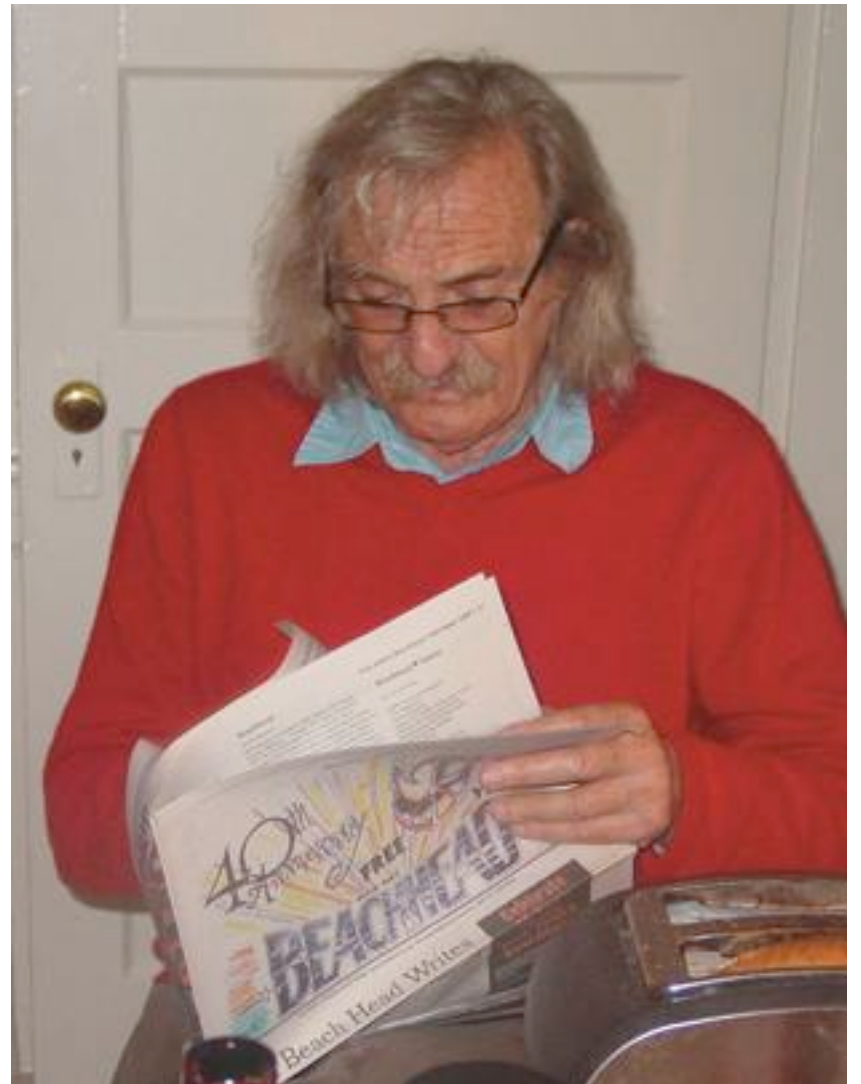
What a small world and Venice keeps winding up at the center of it. Just then I remembered that I had some copies of the Beachhead with me. We started going through them and sure enough, on page 12 of the November 2008 issue, we had printed a list of all the collective members from present and past and about half way down the first column was his name, David Hirschman.

A smile grew on Jack's face as the memories came

back. Venice touches all of us in its own way.

*David Hirschman, former Beachhead collective member, died of leukemia a few years back. He is remembered and missed by all his friends at the paper.*

**Interview  
with San Francisco  
Poet Laureate  
Jack Hirschman**



*Jack Hirschman reading the Beachhead  
Photo by Mark Lipman*

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this paper  
is  
a poem

## ALL THAT'S LEFT

By Jack Hirschman

All that's Left  
in the world  
—whether in Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia  
as well as in China, Japan, the United States,  
Europe, the Middle East, Africa—  
all of them cannot,  
despite their resistance,  
despite their refusal,  
stop this march of death  
because they,  
as well as all that's Right  
in the world,  
despite their refusal,  
despite their resistance,  
already are counted among these  
in this last parade.  
Communists and progressives,  
nazis, fascists and reactionaries,  
zionists and anarchists of every stripe—  
none are excluded, none can evade the march.

This one's not coming  
with hammer and sickles or swastikas  
or flags of any land.

This one's the march  
all wars surrender to.

But when?! comes the unanimous cry.  
When will it happen?  
If death is peace,  
when can I truly die?

You will never know, and yet you do,  
because you may already have,  
and this life is your way  
of paying homage to the power  
that loves you enough  
to have taken your life away  
and left you with the taste  
of immortality on your lips.

Nothing mystical: no Christ,  
Allah, Jahweh or Buddha in the wings.  
Even lying on your back you're marching.

This is not a cynical or pessimist  
or nihilist poem. Join death  
to your life and you will live  
as if there were no drum to march to.

There is no march at all.

You're there. All will be well for all.

We went down to the ocean, had a walk  
Along the concrete barrier, to talk In  
language inexpressible, we two Just let the  
ocean speak, as though we knew What we  
would say before the words came forth.  
Intuitive, I guess. I think it's worth My  
mentioning, and so I duly note Our silent  
conversation. There's a lot That never gets  
recorded, such as growth Of our  
transcendent bonding, or the hearth That  
blazes here, between us. In a few Short  
years that we've been partners, ever true  
Your character, as noble as the milk And  
honey of the scriptures, when we walk

— Roger Houston, Venice

## City of Dreams

By Hillary Kaye

City of dreams  
workers imagining themselves  
in good hands a new President- the lies  
the greed the fascist tv fades into  
the back of our skulls the easier softer world  
appears magically before our eyes  
The rhythm of sucked up resources the  
sky's the limit mentality the war  
ravaged countries — the armless faceless  
legless bodies — not adding up the souls  
The victims — the victims but you  
don't think about yourself that way  
You have achieved self satisfaction  
in a dying world  
megaton bombs  
created out of the fury of demented  
cultures  
indigenous ways of life  
torn off the face of the earth  
No crying now no crying  
No faceless no voiceless crying  
out any more  
the perfect scene now is silence.

## EVERY POEM I WRITE

By Philomene Long

Every poem I write  
Is a suicide

It will say  
“I am your death  
Hidden in a spasm  
Of clay  
Dazzling, ferocious  
Now only a  
Flame in your hand.”

## CHARLIE WOLF, MUSICOLOGICAL BOY WONDER

Why, he has misplaced more songs  
than most people have ever written.  
Cut another slice of humble pie.  
The moon must rise.  
A scribe must scribble.  
Strike a melodic, harmonic octave.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have seen Bob  
Dylan.  
He is no Bob Dylan.  
A chip off the old Guthrie.  
Weisenheimer accordion hero.  
Guitar and harmonica stalwart.  
Catfish virtuoso.  
Lampooning Village Glen personalities.

Digging fingernails into angst of heartsick  
migratory waterfowl.  
Sound Effects. Strumming.  
Lyrics. Lighting.  
Let the show begin.

— Hal Bogotch

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COLD ELLISON VI

By Philomene Long

*"As for me, I delight in the everyday way,  
Amidst wrapped vines and rocky caves.  
Here in the wilderness I am completely free."  
Cold Mountain -- Han Shan*

Silver days at the Ellison  
Longest rainstorm in ten years  
Beneath the slippery sky  
The Ellison glistening  
Dangling raindrops  
Silver sounds

Sunset  
I slip out to the sea  
I am the only person  
On Venice Beach  
Grey sea, grey sky, grey seagulls  
I am wearing a bright pink raincoat  
The seagulls believe *I* am the sunset  
They turn their backs to the sea and face me  
They assume their sunset viewing positions  
Chests forward  
Motionless. Except for  
An occasional scratch of the ear  
The flutter of a wing  
We watch each other  
I act like the sunset for them  
I raise my glowing pink arms  
I stand motionless for a long time  
Kneel, then recline upon my heels  
Alone on Venice Beach  
It is all so slow, so simple  
Being a sunset

Back at the Ellison  
Alone at the black iron gate  
I look up  
Soft rain sliding  
Over the red bricks  
Two red brick wings open  
As if to embrace me  
Two ghostly shimmering red wings  
We watch each other  
I look at the Ellison  
As the sea gulls looked at me  
I love this old building!  
I love this old building!

Ah! yes, Kukai, the gulls and  
Yes! Even these stones  
Will become Buddhas

THE GHOSTS OF VENICE WEST

By Philomene Long

They are already ghosts  
John and Philomene  
As they pass  
Along the Boardwalk  
This highway of poetry and death  
Where ghosts and poets overlap  
As they pass, the gulls  
Ghosting above their shadows

Everything's haunting everything

Already ghosts  
John and Philomene  
Under the ghostly lamp posts  
Of Venice West  
Their cadence  
The breath of sleep  
At rest  
Lost at the edge of America  
Already ghosts  
And each poem  
Already a farewell

Everything's haunting everything  
The sea is the ghost of the world

To Philomene

There is a miniature portrait  
of you, in black & white  
that perches on my desk  
containing a single  
poem of yours.  
i keep it there  
this tiny chapbook --  
conscience musing over  
my own work.

We never met in life.  
i learned of you only in  
your death, only through your poems.  
Poems that pierce through  
the reader,  
that generate a presence  
that is of you  
not about you.

i wish i could tell you  
in person how  
you made me howl with laughter  
by becoming a pink sunset for the seagulls;  
or cry silently on LA Transit buses  
as you wrote mercilessly about  
Cold Ellison & its roaches.

Now, you are among  
the immortals, having made the Great Escape  
first in life, then in death;  
your spirit no different  
than Han Shan's spirit,  
your words on Venice walls  
like his on the rocks of Tientai Mountains.

You'll be happy to know,  
the Lady still resides in Venice  
(though i have yet to see her)  
and that you are remembered  
deeply, sweetly  
by those who you knew  
and those who wish  
they had once met you.

—Krista Schwimmer

Philomene recites a poem

By Jim Smith

Philomene stalks her prey  
She approaches the microphone  
innocently, slowly

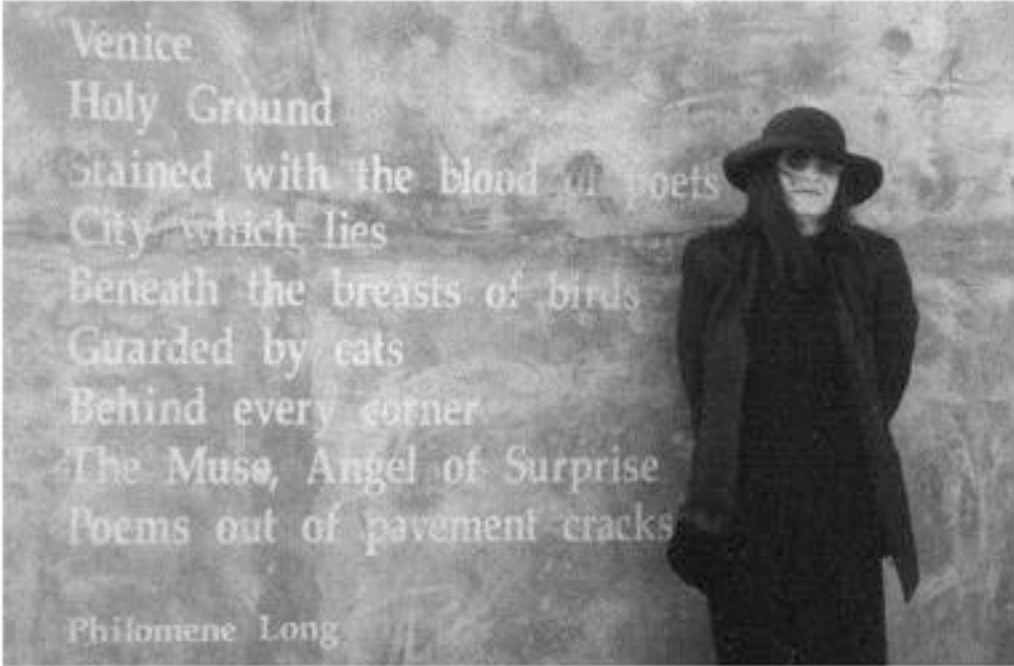
Suddenly  
like a lioness  
her mane flying

she pounces on the unsuspecting poem  
teeth flashing,  
she bites, tears and slashes  
the flesh of every word  
every phrase,  
every nuance  
is ripped from the page  
and floats in midair  
for all to see

even letters are not immune  
from being stretched  
across long moments of time

Her bite goes deep,  
sucking out every morsel of meaning  
no wonder she was cast to play a vampire

when she is through feasting on the poem  
it will forever be hers  
never again can it be read  
without thinking of Philomene



The 2nd Annual Philomenian

Celebrating the poetry  
of Venice's late, great poet laureate, Philomene Long

7:30 PM Friday, August 21

Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. • 822-3006

Readings of her poetry • tributes • films

With Wanda Coleman, Mariana Diefl, Susan Hayden, Hillary Kaye, Pegarty Long,  
Harry Northrup, Jim Smith, Mariano Zaro



# Live Free Or Drive! –continued from page 1

that carried passengers all the way to Santa Monica. Cars were a luxury that few could afford. Even as late as the 1960s, fully half of Venice residents had incomes beneath the poverty line. Many Venetians at that time could not afford a car or had at most one old car for an entire family.

As Venice became gentrified, incomes soared as did the number and size of vehicles per household. A full-scale parking problem became part of life at the beach. At the same time, visitors to the beach from other parts of Los Angeles County, and beyond, were more likely to drive than take the bus. The Red Car was destroyed by the 1950s in a proven conspiracy by the auto makers and oil companies. Today, Venetians are often marooned without a car on summer weekends, since they are not able to return to a convenient parking place after their outing.

We believe Venice would be better off with less cars, or none. It could lead California and the nation in withdrawing from the addiction of car dome. However, with any addiction there has to be a cure available. Weaning ourselves from cars is necessary both because there is no place to put any more of them, and because the earth is suffering from global warming, much of which is caused by carbon pollution from millions of vehicles.

There exist some alternatives at present to automobiles. They include the superb Santa Monica Blue Bus, the MTA, bicycles and walking. But none of these have enticed the majority of drivers to abandon their cars. There are several reasons for this.

First,

notwithstanding the parking problem and more and more traffic, cars are convenient. You can hop in your car and usually find free parking at your destination. Secondly, cars are cool. Even Venice had a recent car show. Millions of dollars are spent on advertising to convince you that you'll be a better, more attractive person in a new car. The auto industry has followed the advertising gimmicks pioneered by the cigarette manufactures.

For years after the Surgeon General's cancer warning began appearing on cigarette packs, tobacco companies continued to tout the "coolness" of smoking. It was only with the gradual curtailment of advertisements and a growing public opposition to smoking that cigarette use nose-dived.

Are automobiles as dangerous as tobacco? Cars are one of the biggest direct killers of people. Last year 37,017 people

were killed in auto accidents. But cars also kill indirectly through pollution. According to a Common Dreams report, citing a recent European study, auto emissions kill 40,000 people annually in Austria, Switzerland and France. If these three countries are typical, then auto pollution could account for more than three million deaths annually world-wide. Tobacco is estimated to account for five million annual deaths worldwide. However, it is a much smaller cause of pollution and global warming than is the automobile industry. Also, childhood obesity is linked to transportation options that do not also provide exercise.

How can we, in Venice, begin to back off from our addiction to automobiles?

## HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS:

1. **MAKE SOME STREETS PEDESTRIAN ONLY.** This will begin to show other uses for the huge amount of our city that is paved. Windward Avenue from Pacific to Speedway would be an excellent place to start. Restaurants could add outdoor tables. A farmers market could be held, as well as numerous festivals during the year.
2. **TURN SOME STREETS INTO PARKING LOTS.** Diagonal parking would fit on



Main Street from Rose Avenue to the "Traffic" Circle and on parts of Venice and Washington Blvds.

3. **CREATE LOCAL ALTERNATIVES TO CARS.** Legalize pedaled and electric rickshaws, revive the OFW tram on Speedway (This would also open up the public beach on the peninsula to swimmers and sun bathers). Create a shuttle that circles Venice for the benefit of visitors and residents, alike.
4. **USE A BIKE FOR CONVENIENCE AND EXERCISE.** All of Venice can be reached in 10 minutes or less on a bicycle (See Typical Travel Times Around Venice, Nov. 2002, (<http://tinyurl.com/lg5sxj>). The only problems are that it can be dangerous (try biking down Lincoln Blvd.) and there is a lack of bike parking. Many streets are wide enough for separate bike and car areas. Abbot Kinney Blvd. is a good example of

the anti-bicycle attitude that prevails at the city's Dept. of Transportation. When traffic lines were repainted a couple of years ago, the result was that a center lane was created that is virtually unused. Instead, the parallel parking could have been moved far enough away from the curb to allow bike lanes that separated them from car traffic.

Venice is the perfect place to ride a bicycle. Flat terrain, excellent weather, mixed use developments, and limited parking all contribute to the sense of using your own power to get from here to there. Infrastructure improvements must keep up with the community's desire to have transportation options. Infrastructure improvements send a signal that alternative modes are valued and encouraged. The more bicycles there are on the road, the safer bicycling becomes. Venetians need to pressure local governments and transportation planners to make bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure a priority.

5. **STOP REQUIRING PARKING IN NEW CONSTRUCTION.** This increases the cost of construction and lessens the possibility of affordable housing. Low and very low

income residents are less likely to need large amounts, of vehicle parking if any. Requiring expensive parking areas makes buildings much more expensive to erect and is a disincentive to building affordable housing. Even middle-income housing and most commercial

construction should not have a parking requirement.

Not only does it increase the cost of the building, but it also forces landlords to charge higher rents which can only be afforded by chain stores and upscale businesses. Parking requirements and more parking lots are driving (pardon the pun) gentrification. If businesses on Abbot Kinney Blvd., for instance, were not able to offer parking to their customers, it is more likely that over time more and more businesses would cater to the thousands of Venetians who live within walking or biking distance of the boulevard.

Each off-street parking space uses 300-400 square feet of land. Land in Venice is expensive. Using space for parking results in missed opportunities, such as renting or selling the land, which would result in more tax revenue. When looking to park, it's nice

–continued on page 11



# Artists Protest Commercial Vending —continued from page 4

“cheat” in the lottery banned. Local artist Joel Harris said, “We want to see the free speech zone protected by local authorities because without this, commercial vending will keep growing.” So, what can they do?

When the lottery ended, and this group of about eight artists had not received spots for the upcoming weekend, they formulated a “Painters Protest” for Saturday July 25th. They gathered at 8am in the Rose Avenue parking lot, and set up their booths west of the bike path – in the sand. It was a classy display of well made, unique, beautiful artwork by about twelve local artists. They had a few protest signs and one black banner that simply said “Painters Protest.” It was a nice set up – much nicer and more interesting than some of what was set up on the boardwalk just in front of them.

Of course, the police showed up around 12:30 pm on a complaint. There was a small meeting of the group of artists and the five officers. Two artists took down their work as the officers tried to decide if any laws were being broken, or if any

permits were needed. The artists were merely showing their artwork, and not selling anything; selling being the main offense the police could unquestionably cite on the beach.

After about three hours of discussion, and close observation by the police that truly nothing was being sold, a captain from the beach patrol was called out. He didn’t have any answers as he wasn’t able to access the ordinance book since it was a weekend. So instead he took pictures of the event with his phone so he could consult with Los Angeles County Beaches on Monday in regards to the displays.

The police left, and the remaining artists packed up around 4:30, pleased with their protest. They hoped they were able to bring more attention to the boardwalk problems, and that they showed the shoppers along the boardwalk the quality of work they were missing by supporting commercial vending.

The vendors hoped the protest effectively passed along their vision, “To have a community of artists, free speech advocates, performers, and

musicians who can depend on the Venice free speech zone to share their message and talent with the public.” They haven’t planned a repeat protest, nor do they feel setting up on the beach is a permanent solution.

So, what is the solution here? Ask any Venetian, or vendor, or tourist, and each will have a different idea: more enforcement, less enforcement, petitions, marches, protests, walk outs, meetings, law suits, letters, a new system for selecting vendors. But how about a cultural revolution instead? How about, instead of division, or instead of sinking to the level of selling bugs to feed your family, or instead of arresting those who do, find your own spirit of Venice.

If you are lucky enough to get a boardwalk spot, access your own creativity and inspiration and become an artist. Inspire us! Everyone can create and it is about time for another Renaissance. Put Venice back on the map for culture instead of crap. Maybe we will produce the next Michelangelo right here in Venice.

# The Actually Existing Health Care System —continued from page 2

year -- again, nothing directly to do with getting people medical care. If you start adding up the fees, options, salaries and other bounty extracted from the health care system by the top one hundred individuals associated with it over the last decade, some good portion of the \$1 trillion now cited as needed by President Obama would be tallied.

To add insult to injury, a new Harvard study reports that the majority of people going bankrupt from medical costs are, in fact, insured. What makes them go bust is that their insurance policies are “an umbrella full of holes.”

Fraud is pervasive in health care. No surprise in a country where, according to Monthly Review, a hefty percentage of rents and dividends go unreported to the IRS. Or where armies of accountants figure out how to shift income off balance sheets. Or where bond raters created a AAA-rating for subprime loans (when they were, in fact, junk bonds) and brokers traveled the world selling these debt instruments as top-rated.

But even if the system were cleansed of all the health fraud we would still be in a terrible mess in a despicably stratified health care system where discrepancies in longevity

within our population run to 20 per cent. The fact is that more and more data come out proving that in the US more care does not equate to better health. Talk about a can of worms.

This brings us to Medicare, a system of reimbursement to medical institutions and professionals. When made into law there were howls against it. Over time it caught on. The medical establishment does not like Medicare because it pays 20 per cent less than private insurance. Pure and simple. Medicare is actually the best thing going and were the White House to spearhead a plan to expand Medicare coverage much could be accomplished.

It doesn't help Medicare when Congress passes a law forbidding it to negotiate for lower prices from the pharmaceutical industry. Even JP Morgan/Chase's Jamie Dimon would salute that lobbying effort. No other industrial country in the world holds back from using its market power to get drugs cheaper. And it doesn't help when a company like Amgen, the preeminent biomed firm, introduces a drug like Epoetin -- an enhancer of red blood cell growth -- and charges Medicare billions and billions for it,

making Amgen investors ridiculously rich, and our Treasury a lot poorer. Why did Medicare agree to pay Amgen such lofty prices for that drug? Suffice it to say that the door between industry and the upper echelons of Medicare is a revolving one.

In principle, Medicare makes the most sense of anything going in the US health system. And if it were to be run more efficiently, and the prices charged by the health industry strictly controlled, progress would be made. But to simplistically suggest that the country is going broke because of Medicare (and its sister legislation, Medicaid) without identifying the culprits, without looking over the payable invoices does us all a disservice.

With his fanatic commitment to free markets President Obama's stated commitment to working families unravels with every passing day. Word is that the good people in Washington are starting to glaze over, as this president's capacity for talk -- and serving corporate interests -- seems to have no bounds.

*Carl Ginsburg is a New York journalist who still misses Venice. He can be reached at carlginsburg@gmail.com*

# Live Free Or Drive! —continued from page 10

when it seems to be free. But free parking is not really free. Someone is paying for the land – between the owner who is providing parking for residents or employees, to the local government who is missing out on tax revenue, to everyone else who is missing out on the benefits of increased density. Indirect costs of free parking are higher taxes and retail prices, reduced wages, and reduced benefits.

Minimum parking requirements are usually set by local jurisdictions based on the highest predicted demand at single-use suburban sites. So, the minimum amount of parking a mall is required to provide is calculated based on demand on Christmas Eve. The result is obvious – a large supply of vacant, paved land is unused for nearly every other day of the year. Suburbs are built around ample free parking because there are

few or no transportation alternatives available. This model of minimum parking requirements is not appropriate in denser urban communities – yet it persists.

Communities are forcing their planners to evolve. The wasted, paved space is no longer acceptable in many municipalities. Newer models of determining parking requirements are based on what other communities have developed, independently of the traditional car-centric model. New standards, for shared parking, bicycle parking, and maximum parking, better fit the goals and uses in the community.

6. **PAY PEOPLE NOT TO DRIVE.** The government (federal, state and local) subsidizes auto travel to the tune of billions of dollars. Use some of that money to reward people for giving up their car or

buying an electric car. While electric cars still cause pollution in their manufacture, and their non-biodegradable parts such as tires, they are a step in the right direction.

7. **MAKE MASS TRANSIT FREE.** This is also beyond the reach of we Venetians, but it is a concept that could cause a massive shift away from cars. As it is fares account for only about 15 percent of operating costs.

Some of these suggestions are modest and others are far reaching. All of them are likely to draw opposition from someone. Yet, if we don't begin to face our addiction to cars and work to eliminate it, we'll soon choke on our own pollution. On the other hand, we can make Venice a walking and biking community that is a pleasure to live in. The choice is up to us.

8.



# CommUnity Events – day by day

## Saturday, August 1

12-5pm - Venice Community **BBQ Potluck Picnic & Cookout** - Prizes for the best BBQ, side dishes & desserts. Games and bounce house. VNC hosts the grill & entertainment. Community potluck. Oakwood Park [Oakwoodbbq@venice.org](mailto:Oakwoodbbq@venice.org) 606-2015  
Parillada comunitaria de Venice, Evento gratis para toda la familia en Oakwood Parque. Musica para todos. Traiga su platillo favorito y participe en un concurso, actividades para todos, concursos y primios. Los Bomberos cocinan para todos. Vengan a divertirse con la familia en este evento. [Oakwoodbbq@venice.org](mailto:Oakwoodbbq@venice.org) 606-2015

## Sunday, August 2

11am - **Festival of Chariots** - Hare Krishna parade down Ocean Front Walk, followed by a festival at Windward Ave. and the beach.  
2-5 pm. - Fisherman's Village- Bob DeSena **Latin Jazz Band** - free - 13755 Fiji Way, Marina del Rey, 822-6866.

## Tuesday, August 4

6:30pm - **Science Fiction Book Club** - Abbot Kinney Library - 821-1763.

## Thursday, August 6

6:30pm – Prevent & control **diabetes & heart disease** without medicine - Dr. Ben Weitz, Chiropractor & Nutritionist – Abbot Kinney Library - 821-1769.

## Friday, August 7

7-11pm - **First Friday** on Abbot Kinney Blvd. - Shops open late - Drinks, snacks and entertainment.

## Saturday, August 8

7:30pm - A Summer Night with **Maureen Cotter** - How Charles Manson got caught, as told by the guard and the inmate. Part of Cotter's autobiography. Tickets \$7, \$5 students/ seniors. Beyond Baroque.



Maureen Cotter

## Saturday, August 8 and Sunday, August 9 (2 day event)

### 11:30am- 7:30pm - Venice Beach Music Fest

The 4th annual event continues its tradition of celebrating music, art, and the eclectic - at the west end of Windward Avenue - free.  
[www.myspace.com/venicebeachmusicfest](http://www.myspace.com/venicebeachmusicfest) Saturday's musical acts include The Hard Goodbye, Horny Toad, Steve Watts Band with Michael Hinton.

## Wednesday, August 12

7:30PM - Is the economy getting you down in the dumps? Come hear some Strong Woman Blues with **Kathy Leonardo**. Also Greg Cruz, country/ blues guitarist - extended happy hour till 8pm for this show only! 23 Windward Ave. - 566-5610.

## Friday, August 14

7:30pm - Movie night - "**Vietnam: American Holocaust**" - Venice United Methodist Church - Donations.

## Monday, August 17

6-10pm - **Films** - Forgotten Tenor with Clark Terry, Art Farmer, Teddy Edwards. 6pm- rare Jimmy Smith & Jaki Byrd films - 7 Dudley Cinema at The Talking Stick - free - [myspace.com/sevendudleycinema](http://myspace.com/sevendudleycinema) - 306-7330

## Tuesday, August 18

7-10pm - **Neighborhood Council** Board Meeting - Westminster Auditorium.

## Friday, August 21

7:30pm - **The 2nd Annual Philomenian** - the poetry of Venice's poet laureate, Philomene Long (see page 9) - Beyond Baroque.

## Saturday, August 29

7pm - **Billy Bragg Meets Beethoven** - a new interpretation of Beethoven's 9th - The Broadway Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica [www.beethovenbragg.com](http://www.beethovenbragg.com) 430-1954

## Monday August 31

5-8pm - Got Caught Out There - **photography by homeless women**. Last chance to see! Venice Arts Gallery 1702 Lincoln Blvd. [www.venice-arts.org](http://www.venice-arts.org)

## Location Guide

- Abbot Kinney Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd, 821-1769
- Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 822-3006
- Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey. [marinadelrey.lacounty.gov](http://marinadelrey.lacounty.gov)
- Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave, 306-1854, [max10@electriclodge.org](mailto:max10@electriclodge.org)
- The Good Hurt, 12249 Venice Blvd, [www.goodhurt.com](http://www.goodhurt.com)
- Hal's Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 396-3105 - [www.halsbarandgrill.com](http://www.halsbarandgrill.com)
- Oakwood Recreation Center, 757 California Avenue.
- Pacific Resident Theatre, 703 1/2 Venice Blvd. 822-8392 - [www.pacificresidenttheatre.com](http://www.pacificresidenttheatre.com)
- SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x15.
- Talking Stick Coffee Lounge, 1411c Lincoln Blvd. 450-6052 [www.thetalkingstick.net](http://www.thetalkingstick.net)
- United Methodist Church and Auditorium, 2210 Lincoln Blvd. (at Victoria).
- Unurban Coffee House, 3301 Pico Blvd Santa Monica.
- Vera Davis Center, 610 California Avenue. (310) 305-1865. Fax 305-0146.
- Westminster Elementary School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (enter auditorium from Westminster Ave.) 606-2015



**August 6:** Americana Rockers! **Dave Alvin & the Guilty Women** (Downey) - Paul Thorn (Tupelo, Mississippi)

**August 13:** Multi-ethnic, Multi-lingual **World Beats** - Idan Raichel Project (Israel) - Elijah Emanuel (Bilingual Reggae from Panama)

**August 20:** Social Action and Surfboards **Venice** - Lukas Nelson & The Promise of the Real

**August 27:** **Latina Diva & Latino Roots** Lila Downs (Oaxaca, Mexico) Very Be Careful (Colombian Vallenato)

**September 3:** **Patti Smith** and her Band.



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