

37th  
Anniversary  
Issue

December  
2005

# FREE VENICE SINCE 1968 BEACHHEAD

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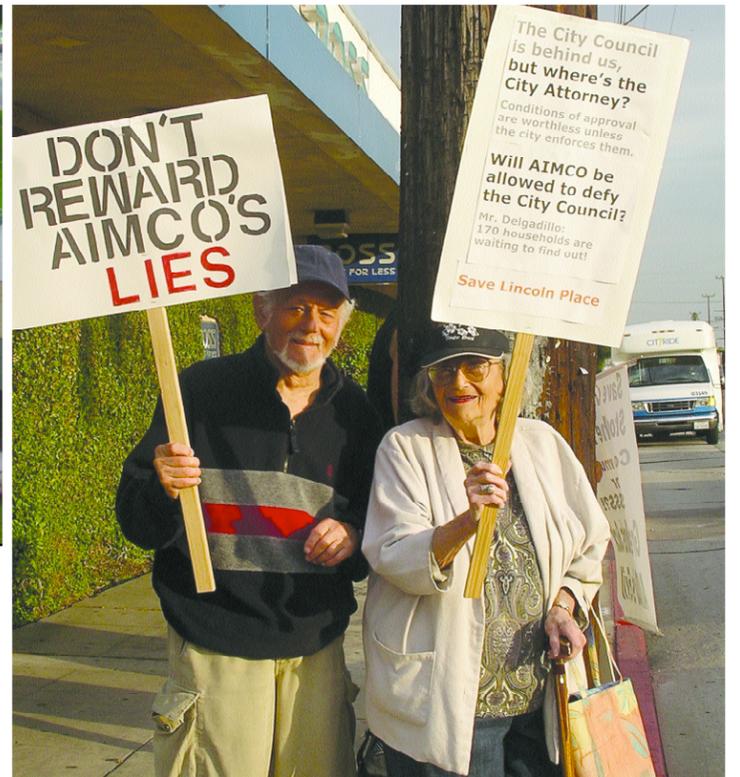
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Left: Lincoln Place tenants set up a tent city, Nov. 25, in front of Rocky Delgadillo's home to protest his lack of action on their behalf.  
Photo by Aiken Weiss



Above: Joe Gross and Frieda Marlin join Lincoln Place tenants and supporters, Nov. 23, at a rush-hour picketline on Lincoln Blvd.  
Photo by Jim Smith

## Tenants Fight Back Against Eviction Threat at Lincoln Place

By C.V. Beck

**SUPERFICIALLY, LOOKS GOOD**

**ON PAPER BUT...**in real life, throwing people away because they are either past their peak earning years, (and therefore, financially all used up) or retired, or tired, or seniors or disabled, or "workforce" families with children, is a stinking thing to do!

Lincoln Place was made for the World War II veterans and their families to have a "home" to come home to after the "Big War" because there had been a wartime housing shortage, which apparently does continue to this day. (Now, why is that?)

Ask Frieda Marlin about this housing shortage and what her family had to endure, she'll tell you all about it. She'll also tell you about how her family had to move from Brentwood to Lincoln Place when the current rash or is it an epidemic (?) of destruction of affordable housing to be replaced by "high ticket," "high-end," "luxury housing" – when what they really mean is "unaffordable," "not-worth-it" cheap crap, rabbit warrens being made out of decent, sturdy, basic housing stock or "luxury" replacements which are substandard crapola being only built to last about 20 years, with no maintenance, not even "deferred" in the picture. See, it's cheaper to let it fail, than to have a program of planned maintenance and replacement.

It's odd to me to see the "dissing" of Lincoln Place continue at the same time that 50's style modern remodeling – from the ground up, continues to replace the 50's style traditional or modern perfectly serviceable, still good for – at least another 100 years – housing all around us. What is disappearing also is the open space, the green grass, the flowers, trees and little bits of wild space. This is being replaced with "to the lot line" development or redevelopment, simultaneously taking away from what the people next door had, the sunlight, air, warmth, shrub-

bery, bushes, plants and nature, birds, bees, butterflies habitat-- GONE, almost overnight.

On November 23rd and 25th there were two demonstrations about Lincoln Place, a unique treasure of Venice. The demonstration on Nov. 23, attended by about 50 people from Lincoln Place and the surrounding neighborhoods, at the intersection of Lincoln Blvd. and California Ave. and was vigorous and enthusiastically supported by Venetians of all stripes, spots and polka-dots! All were shouting in support of preserving Lincoln Place as well as the residences as promised and required by the City's Vesting Tract qualifying conditions. (Usually referred to as "Q" (Qualifying) conditions, as insiders-only really knew what this meant and I am so glad now I finally found out.) I do believe it is important from now on to refer to "QUALIFYING CONDITIONS" as just that...the conditions qualify the project, one with the other, inseparably.

On Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, another strategic demonstration was held at City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's home in the Arlington Heights area of Los Angeles for about three hours. Approximately 35 residents and supportive neighbors of our world-famous Lincoln Place Garden Apartments, (finally, after so much work by people who really love and care for this place, it is now a California Historic Resource), found it necessary, unfortunately, to interrupt Delgadillo on a family holiday, in order to get his attention, prompting him to do his duty, as required in his job description, of "enforcing the law."

After much "sturm und drang," yelling and shouting, marching and displaying of signs and tents in the now apparently de rigeur "dog and pony show" necessary to get our pols to do their jobs...he finally came out.

(I heard this later, I had left as it was getting dark and cold.) Others reported that, after a goodly period of discussion with Sheila Bernard, President of the Lincoln Place Tenant's Association, Laura Burns, resident and negotiator, and joined by Amanda Seward, attorney and negotiator, that Delgadillo has now decided to make an effort to restart the negotiations between all the parties involved to ensure the "qualifying conditions" of the Vesting Tentative Tract approval are enforced as required by the law. Whew! More to come, no doubt. Stay tuned!

## More Evictions Planned at Venice and Lincoln Blvds.

A Brentwood developer plans to throw 30 to 40 Venetians out of their affordable housing units at 1101 through 1109 Venice Blvd. (just east of Lincoln) in order to destroy the buildings and replace them with 19 luxury condominiums and 48 underground parking spaces. Traffic out of the building would flow on to a residential street, Superior Avenue, and then to Lincoln and Venice Blvds.

This "stealth" project nearly had a hearing without anyone knowing about it. However, Councilmember Bill Rosendahl asked for and received a one-month postponement at the Nov. 30 hearing. The project has NOT been vetted by the Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC) of the neighborhood council. Many of the targeted evictees at 1101 were not even notified.

Maureen Cotter, who was honored recently as a Venice Diva and who is facing eviction, is attempting to organize opposition to the replacement of affordable units with luxury condos.

The project site is just outside the Coastal Zone and the Venice Specific Plan, making it exempt from the requirement to provide affordable housing in the new construction.

At press time, a date for consideration of the project by the GRVNC's Land Use Committee had not been set.

### CASUALTIES IN IRAQ

**U.S. 2,127 Dead – 72 this month**

**U.S. Wounded 15,704 – 227 this month**

**Iraqi Dead: 27,295 – 30,789**

**This month: 364 – 471**

**(some sources say 100,000+ Iraqi dead)**

Source: antiwar.com

Happy Holidays  
from the Beachhead  
Collective

John Davis  
Erin Grayson  
C.V. Beck  
Carol Fondiller  
Yolanda Miranda  
Rich Mann  
Alice Stek  
Jim Smith



### The Venice Arts Council

Dear Beachhead,  
I am writing in response to the letter from a "Venetian" in your Nov. edition, giving me many accolades, though it is nice to be appreciated, but, unfortunately, untrue.

The Venice Arts Council was started as a committee of the GRVNC, promoted by the then President, Suzanne Thompson, and the Progressives. When I was elected to District 5, by a very large margin, I promised to create an Arts Committee, and I did. That was due to the support of many people besides myself.

Our vision of the Venice Peoples Centennial was shared by many especially the Venice Arts Council, the Beachhead Collective, Suzanne Thompson, SPARC, community members, etc. Many donated their time and energy to make this work. Events of this magnitude cannot take place without the participation of everyone. I found Suzanne Thompson instrumental in all of this happening. She is a very well organized, experienced and talented producer, and taught me much. Eric Ahlberg is also a very talented visionary, and gave us his vast electronic experience, not to mention the many hours and ways he helped when needed. Don Geagan's generous spirit has helped VAC, and many other Venice organizations, Arlington West, etc., always steps up to help when he sees a need.

For Artists who refused to participate because the money was going to the facilities, and not VAC, is simply not true to my knowledge. Several artists voluntarily donated to the VAC, and we requested upon any sales, that 10% be donated to VAC, which was. We do not begrudge the facilities their share.

Please join us for our next event at SPARC, the Pastorela, produced by Martha Ramirez, a traditional Mexican Christmas play about good and evil with political humor, performed by community children and adults. Dec. 17th in the parking lot.

"Art is an important way to create social change."  
- SPARC

Sincerely,  
Emily Winters

### On the Front Lines in New Orleans

Dear Beachhead,  
Calvin and I are in New Orleans in the St Bernard Parish. There was a 24-hour kitchen and tent community center by the French Quarter in Washington Square Park, but it has now closed down and moved to St Bernard. There is no power or water in this community yet, but porta-potties were delivered tonight for the Community Center! The army is good for something, it turns out.

St Bernard Parish was destroyed by both the storm wind and water and the levee. We spoke to a man working on clearing debris who said that the two tides about 20-25 feet high of storm water and levee water came together here in this parish, there was a terrible oil spill and the water(?) sat for a long time. You can see the actual lines on the buildings [that are still standing]. There are stray dogs running around, debris piled everywhere, crashed up buildings, and we saw a boat sitting on the freeway on the way in that has not been claimed or hauled off! The attached picture is of the canal across from the lot we are in. Most of these homes are standing, but they will need to be gutted. This appears to be big business here - gutting buildings.

The Community Center is not quite up and running yet and the kitchen will not start until Monday next week - I think. They are preparing for when the people are let back into this parish.

If there is money to donate, now might be a good time. Calvin and I could use it to go out and find more bulk food to help get them started. They will be serving a lot of people here. They need more dry goods, like rice and beans.

We brought about \$80.00 of rice and beans and other stuff we got on the way, but we cannot spend more of our own money.

I sent out one email blast before asking for people to donate by making deposits into our Venice/Santa Monica Food Not Bombs bank account at Wells Fargo.

If you have some money you want us to buy food dry goods with, please let us know and I will let you know how to make a deposit. PLEASE call 310-365-0985. Or I can give you the number of a main organizer here if you want to organize something on your own.

Peace,  
Peggy Lee Kennedy  
Venice/Santa Monica Food Not Bombs

### Save Tookie Williams

Dear Friends,  
On Nov. 25, I met with Stan Tookie Williams, reformed gang leader, Nobel Peace prize nominee, and acclaimed author, who is scheduled to be executed in the state of California at 12:01AM on Tuesday, December 13, 2005. I left our meeting with the certainty that Mr. Williams offers more in life than in death and have committed the full support of the NAACP in his fight for clemency.

Having exhausted his appeals, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is the only person who can grant Mr. Williams clemency. At this critical time, I am asking for your help by signing our petition in support of Stan Tookie Williams. Every petition makes a difference and I promise each one will be delivered to Governor Schwarzenegger.

Sign the petition on the internet today:  
<http://www.petitionthem.com/default.asp?sect=detail&pet=2240>

It is important that we come together to save the life of Stan Tookie Williams because he has saved the lives of over 150,000 youth, as reported by them, their parents, teachers and law enforcement officials. While on death row, Stan has written a highly acclaimed children's book series that educates young people to avoid gangs, crime and incarceration. He has also worked to end gang violence through his peace protocol and Internet Project for Street Peace, an international peer-mentoring program.

Our goal is to generate 100,000 signatures and phone calls by December 8, when Governor Schwarzenegger has scheduled a clemency hearing in Sacramento, California. Together, we can save the life of Stan Tookie Williams. I am counting on you to help make the difference.

Call Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today:  
Phone: 916-445-2841  
We thank you in advance for your support in this noble effort. God bless you,  
Bruce S. Gordon, NAACP President

The collective staff of the



BEACHHEAD COLLECTIVE:  
John Davis, C.V. Beck, Carol Fondiller, Erin Grayson, Rich Mann, Yolanda Miranda, Jim Smith, Alice Stek

The FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD is published monthly by the Beachhead Collective as a vehicle for the people of Venice to communicate their ideas and opinions to the community at large.

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.

To submit material, include your name and telephone number. Anonymous material will not be printed, but your name will be withheld on request. If return of material is desired, a stamped self-addressed envelope is required. No payment is made for material used. Mail to: P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294. Web: <[www.freevenice.org](http://www.freevenice.org)> Email: <[Beachhead@freevenice.org](mailto:Beachhead@freevenice.org)>

### Our Mission Statement

Oh Holy Shit  
The Thought Police are rising  
It is the Time  
for the Beachhead's rebirth  
Now is the Time to get your thoughts together  
If you care whether you have a thought of any worth.  
Thoughts left of Center  
Homeowner or Renter  
Put your Head where your Pen\* is  
Send it to us use your wits  
and if we like it  
We'll print or plagiarize it  
or tear it into teeny tiny bits

- by the Slumgoddess

\*Pen: Antique Term for Word Processor or Computer

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### Illegal Evictions at Lincoln Place

Dear Beachhead,  
On November 25, a meeting and gathering was held by Lincoln Place tenants at City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's residence in Los Angeles.

The tenants told the City Attorney that AIMCO Company was evicting tenants from Lincoln Place illegally instead of relocating them on the property.

Under the Vesting Tentative Tract map ruled as valid by the appellate court, all tenants were to be relocated on the Venice property and then the City could approve demolition/development permits as would be deemed to fit in with present architectural designs.

The Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council and Venice Community Coalition groups are opposed to the evictions and support the tenants in their efforts to save both the tenancies and property.

Rose Mary Murphy, Lincoln Place

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MENS women's KIDS & BABIES

# Cell Tower planned next to Mark Twain School

By Paul Hargrave

Cingular Wireless is proposing to install a cellular base station antenna at the Venice Baptist Church located at Walgrove and Lucille. The cellular phone industry has been specifically seeking churches to locate its antennas in residential areas since they generally have the highest buildings and they can hide the array in the steeples. This method has also provided them a way around the "eyesore" argument. What hasn't been sidestepped is the potential health risks associated with these radiation-emitting towers.

We, as a community, should be very concerned about the placement of these structures in our neighborhood.

This site is directly across the street from Mark Twain Middle School. Studies have shown that of all the potential health risks associated therein, children are the most susceptible. A vast number of the health and scientific community are vehemently opposed to the location of such antenna near people and study upon study show there is a risk of cancer, lymphoma, DNA alterations, decreased memory and attention in school children, etc. The reality is that no one knows for sure if these sites are safe, although the wireless industry will have you believe otherwise. We do not want to be guinea pigs in this experiment.

Also, there is evidence that property values can be affected by as much as 10-15 percent for

homes located near these cell towers. This is extremely unfair to us.

The same situation was attempted in 2002 at the Venice New Life Church and was successfully thwarted because of the public outcry. We need the same thing to occur here.

Venice Baptist Church Pastor Craig Henson has agreed to hold a community meeting to address this issue on Tuesday, December 6, at 7 pm. at the church located at 2241 Walgrove Avenue at the corner of Lucille. Your attendance could mean everything.

**Community meeting:  
7PM, Tuesday, Dec. 6  
Venice Baptist Church  
2241 Walgrove Avenue  
at Lucille Ave.**

Then, the City of Los Angeles Department of Zoning Administration is holding a public hearing on the matter on Thursday December 15 at 10:30 AM. The location of this hearing is the West Los Angeles Municipal Building, Second Floor Hearing Room, 1645

Corinth Avenue, L.A. 90025. A strong turnout here as well can make a great difference. But, be forewarned that health concerns cannot be addressed at the City hearing since the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 prohibits State or local government from regulating these devices based on concerns such as emissions; there we can only object for other reasons.

Your support and attendance of these meetings is the only chance we have to let the cellular industry, and those property owners that are willing to sell out, know that we do not want this in our neighborhood. The voice of the people has succeeded before and we need to do it again.

## The Case for Eminent Domain at Lincoln Place

By Jim Smith

Eminent Domain – the government's taking of private property – has usually been used against tenants and homeowners. A famous example is the uprooting of an entire community at Chavez Ravine in the 50s in order to build a sports stadium.

However, the essence of Eminent Domain is quite different, and I believe, quite appropriate for the current situation at Lincoln Place.

AIMCO, the largest housing corporation in the U.S., is attempting to destroy a large and valued tract of affordable garden apartments, and in the process, evict all its residents. The reason AIMCO is doing this is not to benefit the Venice community, but to maximize its profits by building luxury condominiums at the site.

Eminent Domain is enshrined in both the U.S. and California Constitutions. They allow private property to be taken, but only for a "public use."

However, "public use," has been interpreted very broadly by the Courts. Elimination of blight through redevelopment projects is but one example of a public benefit which satisfies the requirements for Eminent Domain.

What could be more in the public benefit than preserving 800 units of affordable housing and the homes of the existing tenants? Because of AIMCO's refusal to rent units to new tenants, many of them stand empty at a time when Venice's lack of affordable housing is undeniable.

By taking this valuable housing resource away from a rogue owner that is interested only in more profits, government would indeed be providing a public benefit.

Both the City of Los Angeles and the State of California have the authority to save Lincoln Place. Most eyes are turned on the City where both the Councilmember and the Mayor have been sympathetic. The silence of our representatives in Sacramento and Washington has been deafening.

When Eminent Domain is invoked, the owner is entitled to "just compensation." A property assessor would have to determine the value of Lincoln Place, taking into account AIMCO's lack of proper maintenance on many of the buildings.

The final compensation could come out of the \$5 Billion dollar city budget or the \$100 Billion state budget, possibly with the federal Housing and Urban Development Department picking up part of the tab. The money could be recouped from the affordable rents of 800 families, singles and seniors.

In all likelihood, AIMCO would sue in an attempt to keep the property. This could drag out the realization of Eminent Domain, but in the meantime, evictions would halt. The outcome of such a suit could be a landmark case in the development of the rights of tenants. A favorable decision by the Courts could be as earthshaking in the housing arena as *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Row v. Wade* are for civil rights and women's rights.

It remains to be seen if any city or state office holders have the courage to say "No more evictions!" to a real estate giant, and by so doing, take their place in the history of the struggle for human rights.



### In Brief...

#### MTA/RAD Project Hearing is Dec. 8

Despite overwhelming community opposition, the MTA/RAD gated fortress at the bus maintenance yard, Sunset Ave. and Main St. has made only minor changes. A City Planning Department hearing on the project will be held around Noon, Dec. 8 at City Hall, 10th floor. Everyone who is concerned about this project should trek downtown. You might even be able to lend a hand to Lincoln Place tenants who may still be camped out there.

#### LAX Expansion Plan is Grounded

The new regime at City Hall has shot down former Mayor Hahn's grandiose plans for a multi-billion dollar expansion of the already bloated airport. Bill Rosendahl and Antonio Villaraigosa delivered the coup de grace at a press conference, Nov. 30. "This is a great beginning of a new era of partnership between LAX and its neighbors," predicted Rosendahl. In truth, the withdrawal of lawsuits in exchange for dropping the expansion preserves the status quo. Once the euphoria wears off, no one will be pleased.

#### Venice Progressives endorse moratorium

A petition campaign has been launched by the Venice Progressives, who run candidates in the GRVNC elections (see advertisement on page 5). The group was spurred into action, in part, by the front page Planning Dept. chart that shows Venice as ground zero for new building projects. The group plans to present the petitions to the GRVNC and to Councilmember Rosendahl.

#### 'Circle the Wagons' is new Iraq policy

George Bush's new prescription for Victory in Iraq is to reduce the number of troops so they won't be so noticeable to insurgents. While old movie cowboys often were victorious against Native American insurgents, it doesn't work so well in real life, as witnessed by the hurried escape for U.S. Embassy personnel by helicopter on April 30, 1975.

Meanwhile, House Democrats obligingly gave Bush cover, a few days earlier, by voting unanimously, save three, against an immediate ending of the occupation that is costing \$6 Billion a month and has resulted in 2,127 deaths of U.S. soldiers.

**South Beach Cafe'**

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Venetians  
say goodbye  
to another  
perfect day  
in paradise.



from Left to Right: Rory Johnston, Kathy Leonardo, Suzy Williams, Catherine De La Casas and Jon Preston

## The Off Their Jingle Bell Rockers

are back again this year to spread good tidings and Christmas cheer in and around the Los Angeles area. The Rockers, a local group of professional singers add a different slant to Christmas Caroling. Their offbeat harmonies and original arrangements bring a zany twist to the classic Christmas Carol. They are a different brand of Caroler.

The Jingle Bell Rockers include David Barlia, Catherine De La Casas, Rory Johnston, Marianne Lewis, Kathy Leonardo, Jon Preston, and Suzy Williams.

You can catch the Rockers singing once again at local holiday events such as the Circle of Color at Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave. on Dec 17 at 6:30 pm.

Invite the Rockers to your event. Email <kathy@kathyleonardo.com> or <catherine@madamechocolate.com>

## Lincoln Place tenants take to the streets



Lincoln Place tenants and supporters took their struggle to save their homes to the streets, beginning last month.

In addition to braving the traffic on Lincoln Blvd., tenants set up their own tent city near City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's home in Arlington Heights. Delgadillo has been unwilling to enforce "conditions" set by the L.A. City Council which would prevent corporate owner, AIMCO, from proceeding with evictions. After a meeting with tenant leaders, Delgadillo said he would "look into it."

Then it was on to City Hall for the tenants. They set up tent cities on several days, once joining forces with South Central Farmers who are fighting a developer who wants to take away their community gardens which allow them to subsist on low incomes, and which provides a community space.

The City Council was supposed to take up the Lincoln Place issue in closed session on Dec. 2, but three councilmembers conveniently slipped out the back door so there couldn't be a quorum.

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## KENPO MAN

By Sean F. Lynch

A cold winter night, on dirty Dorchester streets,  
Reeks a gang The Sharks - trouble they seek.  
No choice but to join the gang against my will.  
If I choose to side against them, I will be killed.

Tonight is the night the initiation begins,  
To jump a man and put his life to an end.  
Fellow Sharks won't let me do the job on my own,  
Sharks creed, "Blood Brothers Do Not Stand Alone!"

It's late as we wait, hiding in alleyways for prey,  
I pray to God that no one walks down our way.  
But magically appearing, on the graffiti street,  
An old man in a black gi with no shoes on his feet.

It's him, many who refer to as Kenpo Man.  
For his style is Kenpo, it means open hand.  
It is said he could kill a man with a single blow.  
Although a living soul never witnessed these tales told.

Recently, a Shark had quit and walked away.  
To start a good life and leave behind the bad days.  
Roach, our leader, considered this treason.  
He beat this traitor to death for no other reason.

Unaware of at that time, traitor was nephew of Kenpo Man.  
Who's here now, to come and avenge the blood of his clan.  
Carrying chains, knives, baseball bats, and Billy clubs,  
Roach approaches very slowly, followed by his thugs.

Kenpo Man softly says with squinted eyes,  
"Roach, you drew first blood, prepare to die!"  
Roach just smiles and does not break sweat.  
He lives for the challenge of the fight to the death.

Quietly, these two warriors collide head to head.  
Quickly, one is dropped, who clearly is dead.  
Kenpo Man stands tall and remains untouched.  
For he applied to the punk's throat, a Death Touch!

Angry and shocked, all Sharks jump in to attack.  
And one by one, they get thrown onto their backs.  
The old man blocks strikes with quick reflexes,  
Countering thrust punches to the gang's solar plexus.

Rugged hands which are callused so thick,  
Move lightning fast and hit hard like bricks.  
The combat has ended as I look all around.  
Every Shark is laying dead on the ground.

The action displayed leaves me breathless.  
To see the deadliest weapon ever witnessed.  
He now stands before me, remaining still and calm.  
Then rapidly unleashing to my face - an open palm.

Not certain if I'm dead, I slowly open my eyes,  
Slowly and surely I realize I'm still alive.  
His leather open mitt is set an inch from my nose.  
Why didn't he follow through with the lethal blow?

Resolutely, he places his hands on his lapels.  
And I ask him a question if he could please tell.  
"Why did you choose to let me live and not die?"  
He replied "I saw a good man as I looked into your eyes."

So now I live to tell the tale and repeat it I will.  
Of this legend, this fable, this great man of myth.  
Who had granted The Shark's last request.  
A Death Wish!



## Stray Cat on Speedball Alley

Some times she hovers in the doorway,  
waiting to pounce,  
lets you walk on by  
if you don't have  
what she needs.  
Other times, like now,  
her howls are bouncing off the walls and the  
closed windows of the buildings above.  
Once upon a time those guys would all fuck her;  
now no one even lets her come up.  
People eat at cafes  
next to the dumpster,  
stuffing their faces  
full of the Hedra  
watching, like it was another  
Hollywood scene, and thinking,  
She shouldn't get so upset;  
it's bad for the baby.

– Joy Bashew

## from the Beachhead Archives

Dec. 1987

### Little Chapel of the Speedway

So Doc and me went on a pilgrimage  
To the Little Chapel of the Speedway  
Down by the Ocean.  
The aisle was crowded  
With skateboarding grandmas  
And rollerskating clowns,  
A rooster toodling on a kazoo  
Steel guitar Willy kept on trying.  
People with dogs and dogs with people  
All visiting the holy shrines:  
Ice cream parlors and pizza stands.  
In the temple courtyard  
The sellers held sway -  
Buy sunglasses and a T-shirt  
To appease the Gods.  
Beneath the hallowed portals of the Cadillac  
The hippies spread their buffalo robe  
with quartz crystals and elk horn pipes.  
Have your fortune told  
Your back massaged  
Your karma cleansed  
All at the Little Chapel of the Speedway.  
As the sacred rites ended  
We sat under the Fig Tree  
And watched the finest sunset  
We could remember.

– M.W. Lindenmeyer

## POETRY

When the thugs hold you by the throat  
and threaten  
then offer to break only one leg  
instead of both

then you have to thank them  
and wash their dirty laundry,  
make it look clean and  
make it smell flowery sickly sweet  
with your held-back tears

and you have to be good  
and tell their lies as if  
they were your own truths  
make them sound pretty tinkly trite  
with your silenced cries

they'll give you a cast for that  
broken leg  
and a cane to get around  
and have their picture taken  
standing next to you, smiling  
and shaking your hand

then they'll show it to everyone  
see how we help the handicapped  
but the others like yourself  
will see the real picture  
see the venom in the smile  
see the warning  
and will know how to behave

and you'll hate yourself in the morning

– Paul Hershfield



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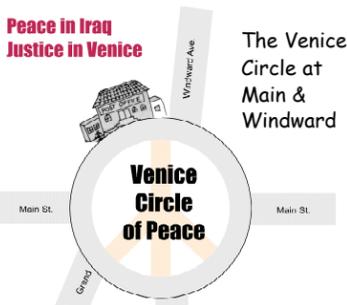


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The Circle of Peace  
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By Jim Smith

The ever-vigilant Justice Department has approved a merger of two "alternative" media corporations, New Times Corp. and Village Voice Media, publisher of the *L.A. Weekly*. It wasn't long ago that "alternative," meant alternative to the corporate media. Now many "alternative" newspapers are just another excuse for raking in dough on soft porn and entertainment ads. New Times Corp. bought up two alternative newspapers in the late 90s, the *L.A. Reader* and the *Village View*. It promptly shut them down and came out with a rag called New Times. Apparently, press competition with the *L.A. Weekly* wasn't to the liking of the suits in Phoenix who ran New Times. They folded their unlamented publication in 2002. Now, it's one big, happy merged family - except for the readers.

Not to be outdone, the publication formerly known as the *Los Angeles Times*, aka, the *Chicago Tribune*, continues to commit slow suicide with the firing of its house radical, Robert Scheer. (In response, Author/Historian and sometimes Beachhead contributor, Mike Davis, turned down a Times offer to be a frequent OpEd writer.) Scheer's termination was the latest in the slow motion destruction of a once prominent newspaper, which in the early 90s housed more than 1,000 top-notch reporters. It's now down to a few hundred. The Tribune, Inc. purchase of *The Times* in 2000 was the final nail in the coffin. Since then, careful readers may note more midwestern news items, a rightward bias in editorials and foreign news coverage and a general malaise.

There is no major locally-owned daily paper in the Los Angeles area anymore. The Valley-owned *Daily News* and the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* have been gobbled up by Media News, Inc., which is controlled by eccentric billionaire William Dean Singleton. Unknown to most readers, Singleton also owns quite a few L.A.-area papers including the *Pasadena Star-News*, *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, *Redlands Daily*

*Facts*, *The San Bernardino Sun*, *Whittier Daily News*, and the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*. The *Torrance Daily Breeze* is owned by the San Diego-based Copley chain. Copley also bought the *Santa Monica Evening Outlook* (dubbed the Evening Outrage by many Venetians) a few years ago, and promptly closed it. Since then, quite a few locally-owned startups have been trying to fill the void left by the Outlook, including the *Santa Monica Daily News*, the *Mirror*, the *Observer*, the *Star* and a few news websites. The weekly *Marina del Rey Argonaut* has expanded its coverage over the years to include everything from Santa Monica to LAX. While its efforts to cover such a broad area with a small staff have prevented consistent and in-depth focus, it does have a good classified section. The irregularly-published, but locally-owned *Venice Paper* has found a niche by covering the doings of architects and high-end restaurants.

The *Beachhead* is one of the few papers that deserves the title, alternative, without the quotes. Founded in December 1968 (37 years ago this issue), it is still a not-for-profit publication run by an all-volunteer Collective. There are no editors - or minions - at the paper. Its financial plan, if you can call it that, calls for funding to be 1/3 advertisements, 1/3 sustainers, and 1/3 fund-raising events. No one makes a profit from the *Beachhead* - not one penny - except for our printer, who insists on payment.

If you'd like to keep the *Beachhead* chugging along for another 37 years, please consider taking out an advertisement - starting at \$25. You don't have to own a business to advertise. How about birthday greetings (surprise!) or a remembrance for a Venetian who is no longer with us. You can become a Beachhead Sustainer, and have your name listed on page two for \$100 a year - a small investment in press freedom. If you are an event planner, musician, own a venue in Venice, or just want to help put on a Beachhead fun-raiser, please let us know. And of course, we always need writers, photographers, cartoonists and poets. This is a community paper, so get with it!

## WORLD AIDS DAY: How Many Millions More Will Die?

By Haider Rizvi, Independent Press Service

Millions of people living with HIV/AIDS in poor parts of the world could lose their lives in the next few years if governments fail to keep their promises to fight the deadly pandemic, warn U.N. officials and health advocacy groups.

In the absence of treatment, as many as 74 million people could die from HIV/AIDS-related causes by 2015, according to the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation (ILO), which notes that young workers are the ones who are most at risk.

Though acknowledging that the international community has made some progress in the past few years, U.N. officials and independent groups say governments must do more to combat HIV/AIDS.

"The world has made considerable promises," said U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the eve of World AIDS Day, Dec. 1. "The time has come to keep them."

There are more than 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS today, according to the United Nations. The disease has already claimed some 25 million lives.

Though HIV/AIDS cases have been reported in all parts of the world, studies show that most people living with the disease reside in low-and-middle-income countries, where most new HIV infections and deaths are occurring. Among them, sub-Saharan Africa has been hardest-hit, and is home to nearly 26 million people living with HIV/AIDS.

In South and Southeast Asia, there are more than seven million people suffering from HIV/AIDS. In Latin America, the number of patients is estimated to be around two million, and almost the same number of people are infected in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Research shows that in developing countries, it is working class people who are disproportionately threatened by death from HIV/AIDS.

"Nearly 90 percent of AIDS-related fatalities occur among people of working age, making it the leading cause of death worldwide for people between the age of 15 and 49," according to the Worldwatch Institute, an independent think-tank based in Washington.

The group estimates that due to HIV/AIDS, Africa loses at least 10 percent of its working age adults every five years. By contrast, industrial countries lose about 1 percent of this age group to all deaths in the same period of time.

Last September, while attending a major U.N. summit on development, world leaders pledged to implement the Declaration of Commitments they had adopted in 2001, by intensifying efforts for prevention, treatment, care and support.

But those campaigning for international action against AIDS doubt if governments will take their promises seriously. "The U.S. has created an artificial condom shortage in Uganda; it refuses to fund comprehensive sex education for youth; and it gags comprehensive family planning services and simultaneously undermines efforts to work with sex workers by requiring an anti-prostitution oath by service providers," said Sharonann Lynch of Health GAP.

"We have been asked to stomach year after year of rhetorical statements disguised as commitments on AIDS," says Marcel Van Soest, executive director of the World AIDS Campaign based in Europe.

"The litany of broken promises now rings hollow against unrelenting advance of the epidemic throughout the world," he adds.

In a new report titled "Promises, Promises... But How Many Get Delivered," the group notes that many declarations on AIDS have been seen as "commitments and promises", but simply restate the current understanding of the epidemic and avoid committing to concrete deliveries.

Halting and reversing HIV/AIDS by 2015 is also one of the Millennium Development Goals world leaders had agreed on at a major U.N. summit held in New York in 2000.

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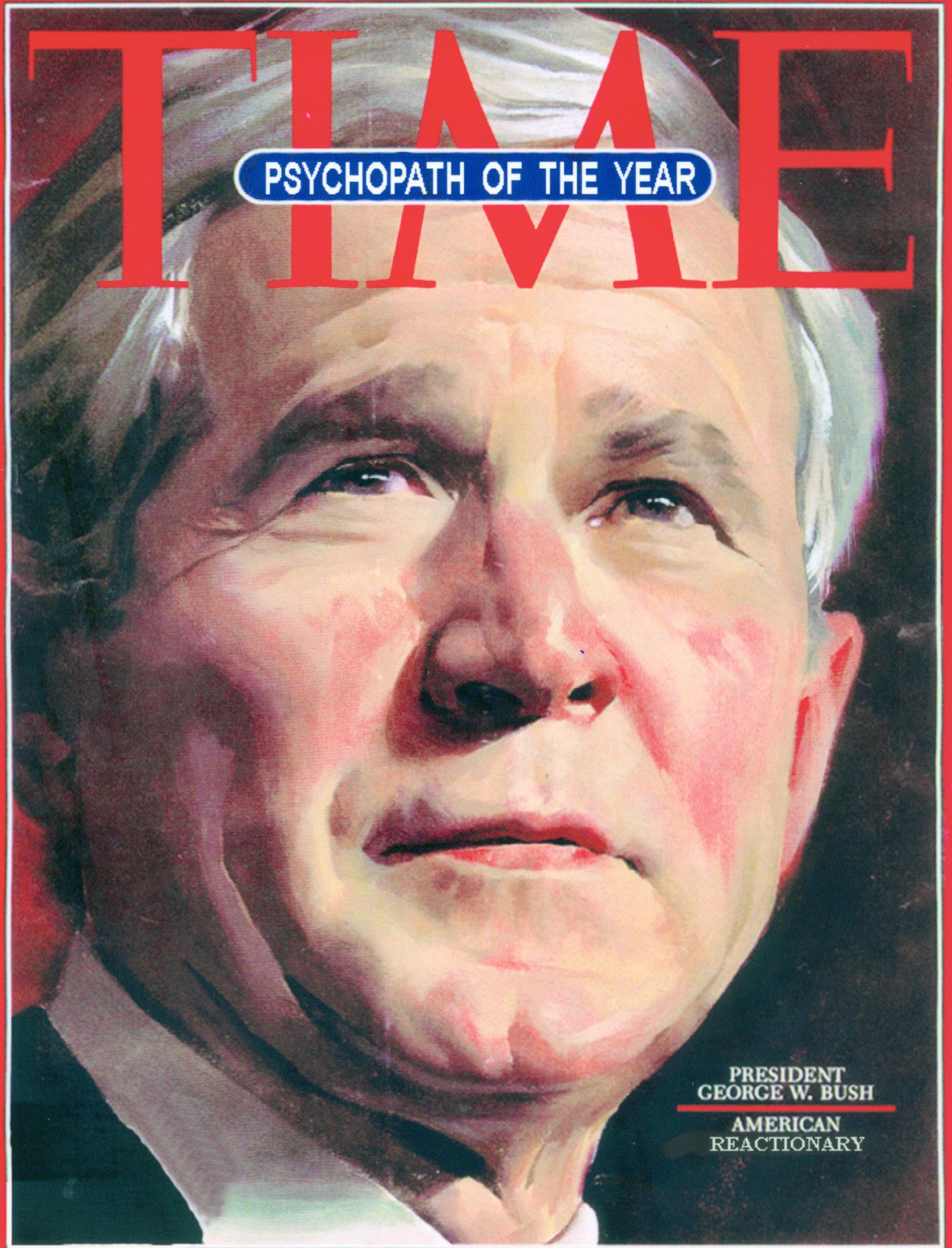
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PSYCHOPATH OF THE YEAR

PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH  
AMERICAN  
REACTIONARY

Art by Jeffrey Hirsch

### The Curse of the Working Class?

Is this the face of a drinker? The always reliable National Enquirer is the latest rag to publish reports that George W. Bush is off the wagon.

The article claims that the double stress of Katrina and Iraq pushed the one-time drunk driver over the edge.

The paper quotes an unnamed Washington source as saying, "The sad fact is that he has

been sneaking drinks for weeks now. Laura may have only just caught him — but the word is his drinking has been going on for a while in the capital. He's been in a pressure cooker for months."

Just before his first presidential election, Bush announced that he was arrested, and pleaded guilty, for driving under the influence of alcohol in 1976. Bush also stated that he had stopped using cocaine.

The Beachhead can neither confirm nor deny the allegations against the leader of the free world.

However, it seems to the Beachhead Collective, that George Bush, drunk or sober, high or straight, cannot justify his actions that have led to the deaths of tens of thousands and the creation of countless numbers of terrorists in Iraq and elsewhere.