

39th Anniversary Issue

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FREE VENICE

SINCE 1968

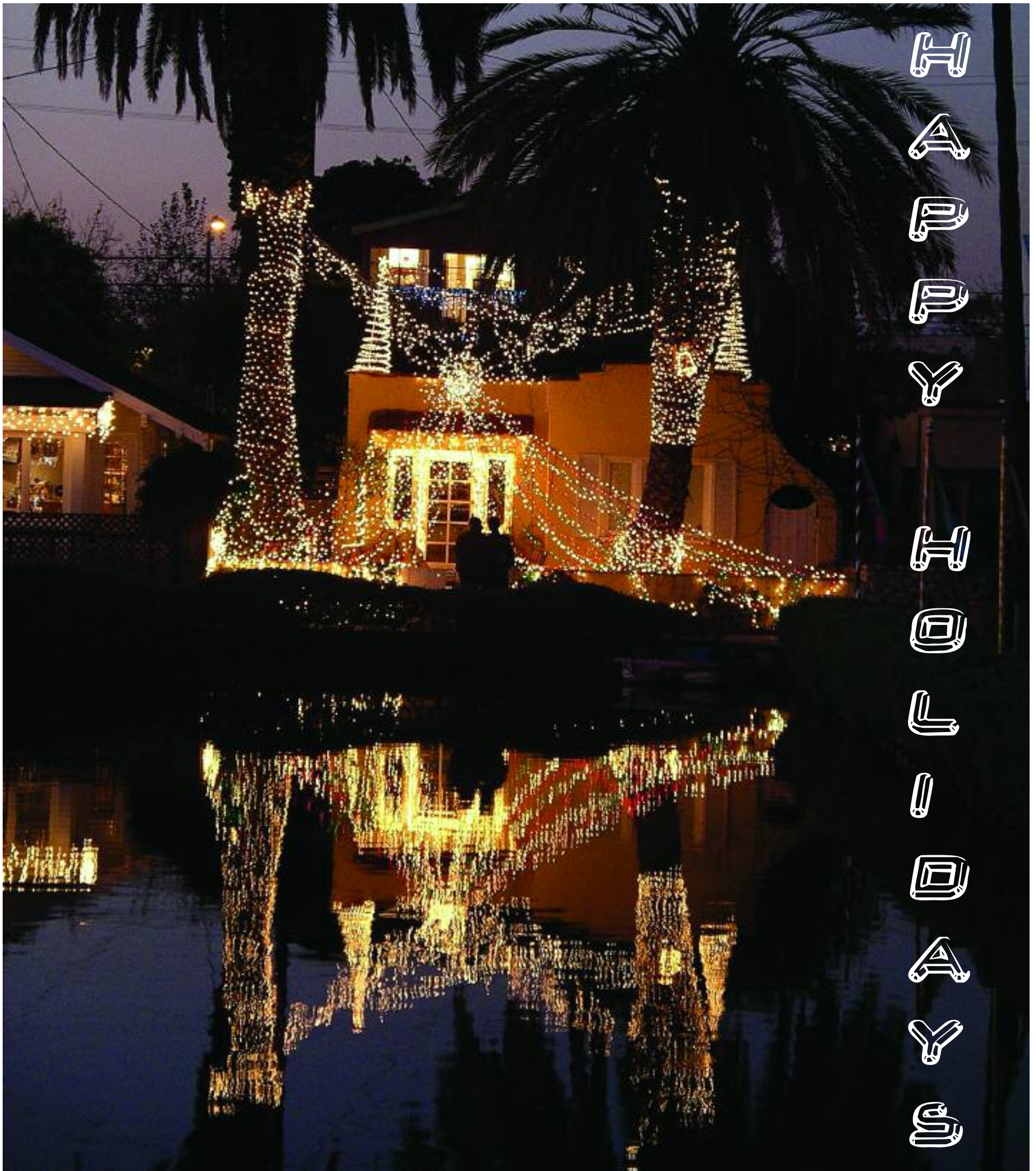
BEACHHEAD



December
2007

#314

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CASUALTIES IN IRAQ

U.S. 3,878 Dead – 34 this month
U.S. 28,530 Wounded – 145 this month
Iraqi Dead: 1,118,846
Sources: antiwar.com • justforeignpolicy.org
Cost: **\$472+ Billion** Source: costofwar.com

- ✓ Canals Get Lit for the Holidays – Dec. 8 at twilight
- ✓ Beachhead Readings & Party – Dec. 15, 7pm
- ✓ Canal Boat Parade – Dec. 16, 4pm
- ✓ Winter Solstice Celebration – Dec. 22, 5-10pm

See inside
for
details



From a Beachhead Founder

Dear Beachhead,

I have just had lunch today (in a pub in Suffolk, England) with my old mate Mick Flaum who I emigrated to Canada and then on to California with in 1966. Mick still lives in Santa Monica. When we were talking he showed me an article about the death of John Haag.

This brought back amazing memories for me, of my time in Venice. What a time to be there in late 1967-70.

I was lucky to be involved with John, his ex-wife Anna and the start of the Beachhead (circa 1968). I lived with Anna (Haag) and her kids, Thomas and Duanna, until I came back to the UK in May 1970. I designed the original 'logo' for the paper, which when I look at it now seems a little crude, but was in keeping with the time. I was also lucky enough to do the version in 1969 that was based on the Iwo Jima image.

I was working in a place in Venice called the 'Earth Rose,' run by Steve Rose (poet), on the boardwalk. There were a bunch of us there, but only two of us used to actually live there. I was silk screen printing my own art, together with a Canadian silversmith named Davic Knox. We used to get massive aggravation from....in those days.....'the pigs', because the 'City'LA were trying to 'clean' the area up from Hippies, Blacks, Mexican Americans, Bongo Players, Surfers, Old Jewish people who had survived the concentration camps....in fact anyone who was not a WASP.

Good luck with the work you are doing.

All the best, *Bill Olive*

Open Letter to Nancy Pelosi

Ms. Pelosi,

I and all my friends and family are horrified that you should condemn Pete Stark's honesty on the floor of the house when he contrasted the failure of legislation to give healthcare to poorer children against the massive waste of Iraq. It was unbelievably refreshing to hear the uncensored truth from a Democrat, but having been uplifted by his courage, our hopes were then dashed to the floor by your criticism of his candor. You know very well that his words were not at all "inappropriate" as you so tepidly stated. It is not at all inappropriate that, in the face of millions of American children being denied healthcare, and some dying as a result, he should contrast that with the incredible feeding frenzy of the corporations and their pals in government around the trough of Iraq & the suffering of troops, their families and countless Iraqis. Was any statement ever more appropriate!?! This isn't some university group debating political abstracts here, children are dying in the 'Good ol' USA' from neglect! Five thousand American families are in mourning and at least one million Iraqis are dead!

Now, with an election coming up whose importance cannot be overstated, you have chosen to reinforce the public perception that 'Democrats are spineless'. Let me tell you that that is undoubtedly my perception too when looking at the party in general and it is not an illusion. People like Pete Stark & John Conyers should be leading the charge for you, not being pilloried by their own side; shame on you. These are the True Patriots, those willing to tell the truth regardless of the cost to themselves. As a father trying to teach my children fundamental values I am so disgusted that it is hard to articulate. Please, please, start telling the truth too, if not out of true moral courage then simply out of cold political expediency to safeguard your own position and to win an election. The American people are not jaded Washington sophisticates; they do not think in terms of 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate', we are way beyond that. They will think about your words in terms of courage and candor or cowardice and subterfuge and, if spoken from truth, will celebrate them wherever or whenever you speak them. Help put America in a position of moral leadership in this world for, like it or not, without America's participation, we are heading for much worse than has already come to pass,

Sincerely, *Terence Pearce*

The Lighted Way

A dear friend died recently and this letter is dedicated to her. She knew all this and had a peaceful passing.

People fail to relate death and sleep. Death is a longer interval from the physical plane than is sleep; one "goes abroad" for a longer period of time in the death experience.

Death is essentially a matter of consciousness. We are conscious one moment on the physical plane, and a moment later we have withdrawn onto another plane and are actively conscious there.

There is no death, there is only a release of the physical body and entrance into a fuller life and higher state of consciousness.

You have reached a plateau of comfort. Things are OK, but you intuit there is more. No doubt you have worked on yourself; you have meditated, affirmed, visualized, wired two crystals to your nose, stuffed alfalfa sprouts in your ears, jogged around the block and kissed Swami on the toe. But still, the glorious energy of higher consciousness and bliss eludes you. What goes? Still the mind and get rid of negative thoughts running around in your head. Remain in the present moment, which contains all past and future moments.

Possessions are becoming progressively burdensome and wasteful and therefore obsolete.

Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee.

Think of all the beauty around you and be happy. Soulmates are compatible on all levels; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Charity is the voluntary giving of one's wealth or labor to another in need.

Slow down the movie that is playing inside your head.

In the movie Star Wars, Luke Skywalker's adventure begins when a beam of light shoots out of the robot R2D2 and projects a miniature three-dimensional image of Princess Leia. This image is a hologram. A hologram is a specially constructed image which, when illuminated by a laser beam seems eerily suspended in three dimensional space. The most incredible feature of a hologram is that any piece of it, if illuminated with coherent light, provides an image of the entire hologram. The information of the whole is contained in the part.

We must understand that a totally new society is coming into being, one that rejects our old values, conditions, responses, attitudes and institutions.

Our inner goals and strivings create a sort of magnet which attracts the outer possibilities.

Pure thought has the power to resist the most harmful vibrations.

There are still people that insist there is no life except on earth - billions of galaxies with billions of planets and no inhabitants. How preposterous!

Religion you get in a church. Spirituality you get within yourself.

Invisible realities exist beyond physical sight. Thoughts are objects in the invisible world. Anyone want to say there aren't thoughts?

"I quit school when I were sixteen."

We all know what light is, but it is not that easy to tell what it is.

You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.

Wishes are recollections coming from the future.

Flying saucer phenomena is not all imaginary. Something really is flying around up there. There is a multitude of other life in the universe and extraterrestrial civilizations are far in advance of ours.

The universe is full of magical things waiting for our vision to grow sensitive enough to see them.

Creative work is play; it is free speculation using the materials of one's choosing.

Beyond that which you think is that what you are. All that is needed to find the soul is a change of viewpoint, which you bring about yourself.

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.

Reality is nothing but a collective hunch.

Life is a great big canvas and you should throw all the paint on it you can.

Success is the child of audacity.

Let your work remain a mystery; just show people the results.

Ron Lowe



BEACHHEAD COLLECTIVE:
Karl Abrams, Rex Butters, Carol Fondiller, Della Franco, Don Geagan, Hillary Kaye, Yolanda Miranda, Jim Smith, Erica Snowlake, 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: P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294.

Web: <www.freevenice.org>

Email: <Beachhead@freevenice.org>

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Check out back issues of the Free Venice Beachhead, cover art and the text of articles, letters and poems at
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Photos By

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WWW.PHOTOSBYALEXANDRIA.COM

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Who's Stealing Venice Parking Spaces?

By Jim Smith

Who's Stealing Venice Parking Spaces? It's the city of Los Angeles, according to a complaint filed Nov. 27 by Venice resident Peggy Lee Kennedy with the California Coast Commission. The complaint alleges that the city is removing and restricting hundreds of parking spaces without Venice Coastal Commission permission (and without the knowledge of parking-deficient Venetians). As a result, not only Venice residents are finding it more difficult to park, but beach access is also being curtailed.

Many of the parking restrictions have been the result of efforts by the city of Los Angeles to pacify some Venice homeowners, business owners, or others who are opposed to poorer residents who are sleeping in their vehicles. According to Kennedy, who conducted the survey of lost parking, "it is simply a waste of city money that could be much better spent on actual solutions to parking or poverty. And it is wrong to value the wishes of those few (who may have property in Venice) over the needs or wishes of human beings living with a lower economic status."

The list, below, is only a partial example of recently created parking restrictions that limit public access in the Venice coastal zone. Not only streets, but parking lots, have been hit by the restrictions in parking. For instance, in the Rose Avenue beach parking lot, a concession/rental stand was built in the middle/back of the parking lot that removed pay parking spaces for the beach. Kennedy is asking other Venice residents and visitors to contact her at <HumanRights@freevenice.org> if they know of any parking restrictions that are not on the list.

List of Los Angeles City Street Signs, Meters, or Painted Curbs in Venice that limit coastal access and parking for residents.

- Rose Ave 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Lincoln Blvd and 6th Ave, includes multiple blocks on both sides of the street
- Rose Ave 1-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by 5th Ave and Hampton Drive, includes multiple blocks on both sides of the street
- Hampton Drive 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sat & Sun Signs, bordered by Rose Ave and Navy or the Santa Monica city limits, includes one long block or block ? on both sides of the street
- Rose Ave 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Daily Signs, bordered by Hampton Drive and Main Street, includes one Block on both sides of the street
- Hampton Drive 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Rose Ave and Sunset Ave, one long block on both sides of the street
- Hampton Drive No Parking 2AM to 4AM Nightly Signs (same as above block)
- 3rd Ave No Parking 2AM to 4AM Nightly Signs, bordered by Rose Ave and Sunset Ave, includes one long block on both sides of the street
- Sunset Ave 4-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sat/Sun Signs, bordered by 4th Ave and 5th Ave, includes one block, signs on south side of street
- 4th Ave 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sat & Sun Signs, bordered by Sunset Ave and Vernon Ave, includes one block, signs on east side of street
- Vernon Ave 4-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sat/Sun Signs, bordered by 4th Ave and 5th Ave, includes one block, signs on north side of street
- Abbot Kinney 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Brooks/Main Street and California Ave, includes multiple blocks on both sides of the street
- Abbot Kinney 4-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Rialto/Palms Blvd and Venice Blvd, includes one long block on both sides of the street
- Venice Blvd North 1-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Lincoln Blvd and Brenta Place, multiple blocks, signs on north side of Blvd
- Venice Blvd North No Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Meade Place and Victoria Ave, includes one long block
- Lot # 613 No Parking 2AM to 4AM Nightly Sign by older 10-Hour Parking Sign, located at the end of Pisani Place (behind SPARC, 685 Venice Blvd)
- Venice Blvd North No Parking 10PM to 5AM Nightly Signs, bordered by Electric Ave and Abbot Kinney, includes one long block
- Venice Blvd North 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Daily Signs, bordered by Abbot Kinney and Venice Way, includes multiple Blocks
- Ave. 17 Tow Away No Stopping Anytime Signs, bordered by Pacific Ave and Speedway, includes north side of very wide street, One long block
- Ave. 17 Red Painted Curbing (same as above street), bordered by Pacific Ave and Speedway, includes north side of very wide street, one long block
- Ave. 18 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sat & Sun Signs, bordered by Pacific and Speedway, both sides of a long block
- Strongs Drive No Parking Anytime Signs, bordered by Mildred Ave and North Venice Blvd, includes only on 2/3 of block, west side of street
- Strongs Drive Red Painted Curbing (same as above street), bordered by Mildred Ave and North Venice Blvd, includes the middle of the block, west side of street
- Venice Blvd North 1-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM with Meters, bordered by Pacific and Speedway, one Long Block, north side of one way street
- Venice Blvd North No Parking Anytime (same as above street), bordered by Pacific and Speedway, one Long Block, south side of one way street
(Note: the same block of South Venice Blvd is open to parking on both sides of a one way street.)
- Venice Blvd South 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Daily Signs, bordered by Washington Way and Abbot Kinney, includes multiple blocks
- Venice Blvd South No Parking 11PM to 5AM Nightly, bordered by Abbot Kinney and 670 Venice Blvd, includes multiple blocks
- Washington Blvd 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Except Sunday Signs, bordered by Yale Ave and Abbot Kinney, multiple Blocks, both side of street
- Washington Blvd White & Green Painted Curbs, bordered by Marr St and 727 Washington Blvd, includes 2/3 of one long block
- Harbor Street No Parking 8PM to 6PM Nightly, bordered by Clark Ave and Wilson Ave, multiple blocks
- Washington Blvd 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Daily Signs & Meters, bordered by Dell Ave and Beach Ave/Palawan Way, multiple blocks
- Washington Blvd 1-Hour Parking 8AM to 6PM Daily Signs & Meters, bordered by Speedway and Pacific, includes one long block, both sides of street
- Washington Blvd Loading Zone 6PM to 12Midnight (same as above street), bordered by Speedway, multiple parking spaces, given to C&O Restaurant for Valet Parking
- Washington Blvd 2-Hour Parking 8AM to 12Midnight Daily, bordered by Palawan Way and Mildred Ave, multiple blocks, south side of street
- Mildred Ave Tow Away 10PM to 6AM Nightly, bordered by Washington Blvd and Boone Ave, multiple blocks, one side of street

Here come the thought police

By Ralph E. Shaffer and R. William Robinson

With overwhelming bipartisan support, Rep. Jane Harman's "Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act" passed the House 404-6 late last month and now rests in Sen. Joe Lieberman's Homeland Security Committee. Swift Senate passage appears certain.

Not since the "Patriot Act" of 2001 has any bill so threatened our constitutionally guaranteed rights.

The historian Henry Steele Commager, denouncing President John Adams' suppression of free speech in the 1790s, argued that the Bill of Rights was not written to protect government from dissenters but to provide a legal means for citizens to oppose a government they didn't trust. Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence not only proclaimed the right to dissent but declared it a people's duty, under certain conditions, to alter or abolish their government.

In that vein, diverse groups vigorously oppose Ms. Harman's effort to stifle dissent. Unfortunately, the mainstream press and leading presidential candidates remain silent.

Ms. Harman, a California Democrat, thinks it likely that the U.S. will face a native brand of terrorism in the immediate future and offers a plan to deal with ideologically-based violence.

But her plan is a greater danger to us than the threats she fears. Her bill tramples constitutional rights by creating a commission with sweeping investigative power and a mandate to propose laws prohibiting whatever the commission labels "homegrown terrorism."

The proposed commission is a menace through its power to hold hearings, take testimony and administer oaths, an authority granted to even individual members of the commission - lit-

tle Joe McCarthys - who will tour the country to hold their own private hearings. An aura of authority will automatically accompany this congressionally authorized mandate to expose native terrorism.

Ms. Harman's proposal includes an absurd attack on the Internet, criticizing it for providing Americans with "access to broad and constant streams of terrorist-related propaganda," and legalizes an insidious infiltration of targeted organizations. The misnamed "Center of Excellence," which would function after the commission is disbanded in 18 months,

gives the semblance of intellectual research to what is otherwise the suppression of dissent.

While its purpose is to prevent terrorism, the bill doesn't criminalize any specific conduct or contain penalties. But the commission's findings will be cited by those who see a terrorist under every bed and who will demand enactment of criminal penalties that further restrict free speech and other civil liberties. Action contrary to the commission's findings will be interpreted as a sign of treason at worst or a lack of patriotism at the least.

While Ms. Harman denies that her proposal creates "thought police," it defines "homegrown terrorism" as "planned" or "threatened" use of force to coerce the government or the people in the promotion of "political or social objectives." That means that no force need actually have occurred as long as the government charges that the individual or group thought about doing it.

Any social or economic reform is fair game. Have a march of 100 or 100,000 people to demand a reform - amnesty for illegal immigrants or overturning Roe v. Wade - and some-

one can perceive that to be a use of force to intimidate the people, courts or government.

The bill defines "violent radicalization" as promoting an "extremist belief system." But American governments have a long history of interpreting radical "belief systems" as inevitably leading to violence to facilitate change.

Examples of the resulting crackdowns on such protests include the conviction and execution of anarchists tied to Chicago's 1886 Haymarket Riot. Hearings conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee for several decades during the Cold War and the solo hearings by that committee's Senate counterpart, Joseph McCarthy, demonstrate the dangers inherent in Harman's legislation.

Harman denies that her bill is a threat to the First Amendment. It clearly states that no measure to prevent homegrown terrorism should violate "constitutional rights, civil rights or civil liberties."


But the present administration has demonstrated, in its response to criticism regarding torture, that it can't be trusted to honor those rights.

Ralph E. Shaffer, professor emeritus of history at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and R. William Robinson, an elected director of a Southern California water district, wrote this article for the History News Service.

This bill (S. 1959) has not yet passed in the Senate. Contact your senators to express your opposition.



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The Greatest Generation? Not who you think

By Jim Smith

They stopped a war, ended racial segregation, set off an explosion of creativity in arts and music, and changed the world.

The World War II generation? Think again. It was the much maligned generation of the 60s that did all this, and more.

While we respect the generation of our fathers and grandfathers, we cannot pretend that their

achievements had the breath or depth of the achievements of the generation of their sons and daughters. Every nation invents myths about itself. Some of the biggest whoppers have to do with World War II. It's true that the generation called the greatest fought fascism and were on the winning side. Yet 90 percent of the war against Germany was fought on the eastern front by the Soviet Union. The Russians, beginning in 1941, fought, retreated, and ultimately overcame the greatest war machine in the world, the German army. The U.S. and the British fought on the European continent against the Germans for scarcely 11 months. The U.S. did bear the brunt in the Pacific against a much inferior foe, Japan. That engagement ended not in glory, but in the shame of using atomic weapons against a civilian population for the only time in history.

Of course the WWII generation should be praised for playing a role in the defeat of fascism, but here at home they left racial segregation and jim crow laws untouched, and allowed home-grown fascism in the guise of McCarthyism to grow into the biggest threat to our civil liberties of all time, the Bush regime notwithstanding.

Why is the 60s generation the greatest? Because it tore down a lot of walls that needed tearing down. The Freedom Riders - both Black and white - invaded Mississippi without the support of the U.S. Army or National Guard. Some were killed, many were beaten. Yet they were the vanguard of a movement that succeeded in changing laws, and the way people think. They exhibited just as much courage and heroism as did many WWII troops being ordered to advance on enemy positions.



The same thing happened in the fields and barrios of the Southwest. Tens of thousands joined Cesar Chavez's struggle for the rights of farmworkers. And in the cities, mass marches, strikes and demonstrations did for Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans what the civil rights movement did for Blacks.

Gay Liberation began on June 28, 1968 when gay and transgender people stood up to police harassment at the Stonewall Inn in New York.

The Women's movement flowed from millions of women entering the workforce in the 60s, and from women intellectuals taking on the male establishment.

The American Indian Movement was reminding the rest of us that they had not all been victims of genocide and were again capable of fighting for their land and traditions.

The student movement began at UC Berkeley in the early 60s with militant demonstrations against the House Un-American Activities

Committee (HUAC), and went on to fight for free speech on campus.

Thousands of 60s students turned universities into democratic institutions, at least for a time. By 1970, students staged the largest strike wave in U.S. history by shutting down more than 500 colleges and universities in opposition to the war in Vietnam. Students became the backbone of the struggle to end the war in Vietnam. The 60s generation drove

one president (Lyndon Johnson) from office, and in one of its last acts, created an atmosphere in which another president (Richard Nixon) had no



The 60s generation demanded an end to racial segregation.

choice but to resign. Scarcely a few months later, the 60s generation in Vietnam liberated their entire country, finally ending the war on April 30, 1975.

The 60s generation made one mistake, and it was a whopper. We thought the millennium had arrived, that the Age of Aquarius was upon us, where peace would replace war and love would replace hate. We underestimated those who had a vested interest in keeping millions working meaningless jobs to feed their burgeoning profits.

In large parts of the U.S., especially the mid-west and the south, the 60s cultural revolution had hardly penetrated. Here a love-it-or-leave-it silent majority remained that could easily be manipulated by conniving politicians and corporations. The few "heads" in these small towns were "California Dreamin'" and soon joined a great migration to the coast. A bohemian necklace of communities, including Venice, formed along the Pacific from Canada to Mexico, where alternate ways of living were the norms and "straight" people were an oddity. This coalescing of the "tribes," and a "back to nature" movement assumed that the battle was over with corporate Amerika, and that we had won. While we dropped-out to enjoy art, life, and each other, think tanks were plotting how to smash our longing for freedom.

In truth, we had not won, we had only begun to change society and humankind. The empire struck back by creating inflation that forced people to go back to work to pay the bills. They flooded our beautiful new communities with drugs that numbed us instead of providing visions. They cranked up the scare machine: don't pick up hitchhikers, don't sleep with your friends, don't trust other races, and don't listen to people who live a different lifestyle.

In the end, the 60s generation had stopped a war, made racism a dirty word, and showed us how to dream of peace, equality and a better world. We may not have set the world free, but our greatness lies in the fact that we tried. Oh, how we tried! And we left a subversive blueprint for any future generation to follow.

Now, 40 years down the road, the environment - Mother Earth - is conspiring with us to force a profound change on the world. We may well be entering a period where giant corporations, chain stores and extravagant consumption are like dinosaurs stumbling to their end.

It may be time for a new generation to capture the title of "greatest," by finishing what we of the 60s generation started, and by saving the planet in the process.



Robert Kennedy and Cesar Chavez, founder of the farmworkers union.

The Free Venice Beachhead - 39 Years Later

Venice was right in the thick of things in the 60s. If there was a golden age here in Abbot Kinney's day, there was certainly another golden age in Venice in the 60s. One might say it all started here in the 1950s with the Beat poets and artists. There was a direct link with them - through John and Anna Haag and many others - to the turmoil of the 60s.

While Jim Morrison and the Doors were translating his Venice poetry into music that would be consumed by millions, the Haags were abandoning their Venice West coffee house and initiating marches down Ocean Front Walk against the war and police brutality. The Free Venice movement that was created spun off community organizations for theater groups, art shows, a food co-op, a survival committee, a political party and a newspaper.

The newspaper founded in 1968 was the Free Venice Beachhead. From its first gleam in John Haag's eye, it was conceived as a way to tie the community of Venice together. There was no thought of getting rich or making a journalistic reputation. And so it has gone since that first Beachhead rolled off the press 39 years ago on Dec. 1, 1968.

The fact that we're still alive and kickin' means that the values of the 60s are still alive. And if the reports from our readers are accurate, they resonate with many who were not even alive then.

On Dec. 15, we're going to take a step back from the daily grind of raising money for the next issue, and PARTY! We're returning to that famous landmark of our community, the Venice West coffee house, now Sponto Gallery, where legendary poets held forth and where John might have thought up the Beachhead.

We'll start with short readings from our regular contributors and segue into a party befitting the occasion.



Counter-cultural art and lifestyles created in the 60s are still with us in Venice.

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Writers Put Down Their Pencils

By Carol Gronner

The whole country pretty much knows by now that the Writer's Guild is on strike. To most of them, it just means all of a sudden there's only repeats of Letterman on, and why do those fancy-pants rich writers need more money, just give us our shows back. But to the members of the Guild (and for those trying to be in the Guild, ahem), it really is about Respect.

Last Friday saw a phenomenal gathering of writers (and those who support them) come together to show their force, their solidarity, their wit, and their UNION - in every sense of the word. The call went out to meet at the Fox studios in Century City en masse, on Day 5 of the Writer's Guild Strike. The call was answered, by the thousands. As writing is a mostly solitary endeavor, it was extremely moving to see so many come together (even as many squinted from being unused to the sun).

I soon figured out that it was a BIG deal ... first, from how far away I had to park, and second, from the many helicopters hovering over the site (which I later found interesting that it didn't seem to be covered in the "news" - much like the national peace protests ...hmm).

People decked out in the strike colors of red, black and white, streamed from all directions towards the growing roar from Century Park East. I weaved my way through the dense crowds, looking for faces I knew, but it didn't really matter if I found them, all the faces were friendly. Even the cops.

Yes, this was not your May Day in L.A. protest, to be sure. The Fuzz (some of them even Hot) were super-polite. Reps from the agencies in town and other guilds had people going through the ruly crowds with snacks on trays - oddly, mostly churros - and bottled drinks. There was a lot of laughter. It was evident that rubber bullets were not about to fly. About the only thing in common was the principle of it all, and that the Bat (Night?) Signal had gone out from both to The Nightwatchman.

I squished through the picket signs and bodies just in time to hear The Nightwatchman belting out his "Union Song" ("Standing UP, and standing STRONG!") to the cheering throngs. Then half of Rage Against The Machine (Tom and Zack) performed an acoustic version of "Bulls On Parade"! Trust me, it is still as powerful, if not more, unplugged. The image of the docile writer was shattered then and there - the place was PUMPED.

Then the Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke, throwing down some good old fashioned call and response. He too enjoys a good strike/fight. WGA President Patric Verrone spoke to the fired up crowd, as did Chief Negotiator John Bowman; WGA Executive Director David Young; SAG (Screen Actors Guild - a strong presence and ally) President, Alan Rosenberg; the television legend, Norman Lear; and Seth MacFarlane (Family Guy) gave a humorous speech, ending in the voice of his character, Stewie, shouting, "Victory will be ours!"

And that has to be true. Because it's not about some wealthy TV writer that makes \$200,000 (the number being thrown about for some reason) and wanting more, because all those "Hollywood People" are greedy. It's about stories, and the people who create them. I still don't at all get why, but writers have not been properly respected since the earliest days of film and television. There's even jokes about it (which I won't perpetuate here). Without the writers, the \$25 million per picture movie star would have nothing to say. The Hot Shot director would have no action to shout over. Every last person that makes this a "Company Town" would have no company, because the company would have no content Dig? You can already feel the wells drying up all over town. After one week.

People can gripe about the "selfish" writers, and how they're "causing" other people in the industry to be laid off from their jobs, and all that. But that's what happens in a strike. Hotel

workers know that rooms will not be cleaned if they strike, and that loses the Hotel Owner money. Airline workers know that flights will not depart without them, and that will lose the Airline Companies their money. It is a desperate tool, for desperate circumstances, and one of the few things that can work. Strikes are ugly, which is why they should be prevented through fair bargaining in the first place. That did not happen in this case, so any who want to blame the writers for anything, really need to look at the bigger picture, the bigger pockets = The Studio Heads.

In 1988, Writers, well, bent over. They agreed to a deal that screwed them royally on cable and video royalties, while the studios made BANK. They've whimpered about it, sure, over the years, but now that their last contract ended, and there's a whole new and future world of DVD's, internet, and whatever comes next (Brain chips for movies on demand when you shut your eyes? You never know ...)

they're just not going to make the same mistake twice/thrice. As one of the speakers said, even if the studios/corporate Man agreed to EVERY point the WGA is going for (which would never happen, that's why they're The Man), it would still not come close - as a whole GUILD - to what the Corporate CEO's take home. And what did they create?

In a drastic analogy, it's a bit like our soldiers out there, busting ass for little pay amid holy hell, trying to create a new country out of the remnants of Iraq ... to come home to shoddy benefits, meager pensions, little respect for an unpopular (and, um, illegal) war ... only to see the heads of Halliburton robbing our treasury blind to fatten themselves up even fatter. Only writers are trying to create a new idea, new stories (amid development hell) that will entertain and inform (I exclude, of course, people that contribute to the likes of "Nacho Libre" and its ilk) the entire world - but the studios who earn BILLIONS can't cough up an extra 3 cents per DVD (just one crazy example among many) to the person/s who created the entire thing out of their imagination, alone at their writing desk. It's disgusting. And ridiculous.

When you start to think it's a fight between a bunch of spoiled babies ... consider the writer, who let's say DID make \$200,000 per project (not the majority of the Guild, p.s.). Judging from my own personal experience at how maddeningly LOOOOOONG it takes to get anywhere NEAR your project getting made ... if they made that on one job, and it takes them, oh, five years to get the next thing made - then they're not living off very much to feed, clothe, and educate



Photos by Deverill Weekes

their families, to drive, go to a movie someone else wrote (grrrr!), get a new computer to replace your ancient one that always crashes before a deadline ... necessary life stuff that makes the residuals and tiny rate bumps EXTREMELY important.

I realized while standing up the other day for a Guild I'm not even a part of yet (YET, People!), surrounded by all the cool people who make up your favorite shows, who wrote that line from "Caddyshack" your husband always quotes, who made you cry like a little kid, laugh til you almost wet your pants, feel pride, feel angry, simply who made you FEEL - that they could be substituted for WE. Our whole country is being/has been taken over by CORPORATIONS. The middle class (most of whom present at this rally are part of) is disappearing. It is increasingly a scenario of Rich vs. Poor. But not if we can FINALLY Stand UP! Stand STRONG! DEMAND CHANGE! Together.

Find out how you can support the
Writers Guild strike
Call (323) 782-4833
or go to: www.wga.org

blue: the transit store

223 Broadway @ 3rd St. Promenade
in Santa Monica
www.bigbluebus.com



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Autumn Venice



Thanksgiving Meals Served on Westminster

The Fruit Gallery, at 1 Westminster Avenue, organized a free dinner in the street next to Ocean Front Walk.

Nearly 400 people were served in a two-hour period, in what Nina Merced, owner of the Fruit Gallery, hopes will be an annual event. In addition to pies (see photo), the buffet included traditional thanksgiving food like turkey, stuffing, mash potatoes, gravy, plus Thai food, Indian food, Italian food, and Mexican food.



All photos on this page by Alexandria



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Post Office Mural Dedication – 66 Years Later!

While Venetians have a reputation for lateness, the dedication, Nov. 15, of the mural in the post office lobby which was painted in 1941 must take the cake.

The event honored the artist, the late Edward Biberman, who created Venice's oldest surviving mural as part of a Work Projects Administration (WPA) assignment.

The dedication was also an opportunity for the distribution of a free 2008 calendar with photos of Venice murals. The calendar was put together by Stephen Pouliot and Paul Tanck, with the assistance of SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center). A free copy of the calendar can be obtained by calling Betsy Goldman at 396-2600.

Others speaking at the event included Betsy Goldman, MC; City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl; Suzanne Zada, Edward Biberman estate representative; Venice Postmaster Art Santana; Musician Brad Kay and the Venice Community Choir, who sang a new song about Venice; Brandon Maggart, who read a poem about Venice; and Westminster Elementary students.

Notably absent from the podium were any of today's Venice muralists.

A canvas replica of the mural was hung above the front door of the post office and was unveiled at the end of the program. In addition, the Venice cancellation stamp, which hasn't been seen for a few years, was used to hand cancel envelopes commemorating the event.

Edward Biberman was a noted authority on murals in his day. He became an advocate of public art after becoming acquainted with the great Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Jose Clemente Orozco. However, the Venice mural is the only one of his that is currently on display. He also painted two murals in the old Los Angeles federal building which have been in storage since the building was dismantled.

The muralist was the brother of Herbert Biberman, the Hollywood screenwriter and director who was blacklisted as one of the Hollywood Ten. Despite the blacklist, Herbert Biberman directed the classic film, *Salt of the Earth*, about a New Mexico miners strike. The blacklist also affected Edward Biberman, who lost work because of the notoriety about his brother.

Howard Fast, once the most read author in the world, wrote a forward to Biberman's 1953 art book, *The Best Untold*. A film, *Brush With Life: The Art of Being Edward Biberman*, was released in 2006. The artist died in 1986.

–Jim Smith



The mural dedication, on the front steps of the Post Office, attracted art lovers and the curious.

All photos on this page by Jim Smith



The mural, in the Post Office lobby, painted by Edward Biberman in 1941.



Venice Postmaster Art Santana, and Betsy Goldman, who helped organize the dedication.



City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl (on left with sunglasses) looks on as the choir performs.

Edward Biberman and the painting of the post office mural

By Suzanne W. Zada

After working and studying in Paris during the late twenties, Edward Biberman returned to the United States. The European critics had discovered him and it did not take long for the New York art writers to detect his skill and talent. Then he moved to California.

Although he is in major museums, like the Smithsonian and LACMA with several paintings, Biberman was a very, very private artist, strange when you consider his political activism.

Even though Biberman was one of the most important expert in murals, he had painted few of them. This one was completed in 1941 for the post office, installed during the night just before the beginning of the war.

He used a wax and oil mixture to paint this mural. "The wax gives the mural a kind of egg shell gloss, but doesn't give it a big shine that you get if you work with oil directly," he said. And then he further remarked that "the technique comes from ancient Egypt," and "it does give you a beautiful surface."

He was paid the going price of \$20/square foot for his work. Doesn't it give you a thrill to get the price per square foot?

What does it matter if the work of art is priceless?



Biberman was fascinated by the story of Abbot Kinney, a member of a wealthy tobacco family, and his dream to build another Venice on the West Coast. Kinney studied in Europe and fell in love with Venice, Italy. Since Venice, Italy, is an example of great dreams, a place that attracts me back every year – you have to dream a big dream to build a church of the Santa Maria della Salute on a thousand stakes, for heaven's sakes.

Speaking about Kinney, Biberman said "The story of a man's dream and what the dream turned into was so fascinating that I decided that this would be a very interesting sociological study."

Biberman decided to give back the atmosphere, and of the people, at the time of the creation of Venice on this mural, what Venice really looked like at that stage.

Kinney did pursue that dream. He brought in Italian architects and built canals and Venetian buildings, and then brought in gondoliers from Italy, and then invited Sarah Bernhardt and the finest symphony orchestra of his day for the opening. He was on his way to create a new cultural metropolis.

Then the slimy oil stuff showed up. Yes, Venice, California became an oil town.

The gondoliers went home. They got homesick. Everybody knows that gondoliers and oil don't mix.

The dream is not completely interrupted, though. Venice shows the beginning of that dreamed artistic metropolis, with more and more writers, architects, artists and art galleries around, a true artistic Renaissance.

Suzanne W. Zada is the representative of the Edward Biberman Estate.

Don't Forget the Beachhead this Holiday Season!

It's also the Beachhead's 39th Birthday this month. And even though we're getting up there in age, we still like to be surprised by presents from our beloved community.

Our favorite presents are Dead Presidents pictures.

Washington and Lincoln are cool, but we love to look at Andrew Jackson and U. S.

Grant, and – although he's not technically a Dead President – Benjamin Franklin, our favorite. Alas, we don't get to keep our Dead Presidents for long. Our printer loves to look at them even more than we do.

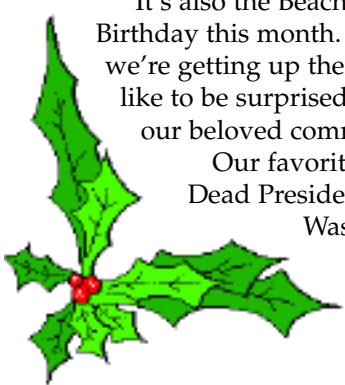
We also love to look at your beauti-



fully designed checks. The ones with lots of zeros just drive us crazy. Please don't think we're greedy. You see, it's all for a good cause – serving the Venice community.

We donate all our time and work to this little paper, and we hope you'll send us a treat for the holidays!

Support a free press! Become a Beachhead Sustainer for 100 Washingtons. Get 4 free business card-sized ads and your name on page two. Subscriptions are \$35/yr. Mail to: PO Box 2, Venice 90294.



Close-out at the Army/Navy Store

Imagine who'd you be in one of these uniforms—the sailor who won WWII with that celebrated kiss or a soldier standing honor guard on Memorial Day. Or you'd parade down Main Street in those marine dress blues, bombarded by confetti. Plus we've got tons of memorabilia in the back room, a veritable museum—helmets with bullet holes, bayonets stained by genuine blood, boots that trampled our enemies, enemy ears preserved in jars. We've got medals of honor, half-price today; and swords that pointed the way in wars that were matters of honor, settled by the blades of gentlemen. And racks of fatigues all dry-cleaned and pressed, all colors, all sizes. Try one on, mister, and you'll trade that suit for an outfit that shows what you're made of (epaulets thrown in free). Can't you see yourself camouflaged in some remote jungle, sniping away at the rebels? Think how great you'll look for the ladies, how they'll love the new you.

-Sherman Pearl

Field of Play

I count not virtue gained, but brother lost remembering the one who was so dear release of friends has weighed too great a cost but those are flown from me that once were near

Today, alone, against the wind I stand and listen to faint murmurings of hope: familiar footfall in a promised land—his measured tread that broke into a lope

"Sustain the time to find a way within. Man, lightly toss your weary blues away!" we seek a common god beneath the skin we're headed for a different field of play.

I wait for you and watch each day roll on—the earth consumes me now that you are gone.

-Alan Rodman

Thinking of Milton Bratton on Veterans Day

Today is Veterans Day and also my dad's birthday. Milton Bratton would have been 84 today if only he had survived 1987.

In his 63 years he had lived all over Venice Beach, and had a bookstore there, on Dudley for years.

He knew so many people and was so loved, his ending just did not fit that life.

He stayed at 517 Ocean Front Walk from '68 till '85, when the building was suddenly sold, with only a couple days to put his things in storage and find somewhere to live, it was unreal, we did the best we could, but it was such a shock at the time, I did not know the Boardwalk was for sale. And nowadays it happens all the time, progress instead of people, greed instead of good.

So my dad drifted from place to place, among our small family, sometimes staying in cars or with friends.

One time some mental health group found him on the beach, and forced him into a shelter, they called me and said I had better pick him up or he was going to jail, or a hospital. These folks were going to put a stop to homeless, broke people living on the beach. Where are they now?

Most of the time I had housing and my father stayed with me and his four grandkids.

We would take breaks here and there, we were on one of those breaks when his, and therefore, our tragedy happened.

He was, unknown to me at the time, just sleeping out on the sand, at the same beach he had met and married my mother, the same beach we had rode the tram countless times to POP (Pacific Ocean Park), the same beach we had strolled on daily to Harold's Bakery, Al's Deli, the Lafayette Cafe, or Nupars Restaurant. It was the same beach the drummers played on and old friends met on. And those who cared, tried to get him in somewhere out of the elements, in those last days of May.

A bus became available to sleep in and the owner was in jail. But some warned there were drug people with an axe to grind. Dad did not heed the warning, he had lived outdoors in Mexico during the 50s, he had survived the army, he was known for his inner strength and calm manner.

In Memory of
Hector M. Miranda
Vietnam Veteran
5/20/1947 - 11/15/2007



FOR THE LAST TIME

Welcome Back, Soldier! You'll hear for the last time. Your war is finally over, you fought a brave fight.

Only eighteen, drafted, trained in combat To fight against a small country far across the sea. You went as your country asked you to do. Unknowing what to expect and what you'd see.

It didn't take long losing close friends right before your eyes. Hurting deeply for those who fell by your side. The jungle was a prison although it held no bars. You were used to sidewalk lights to guide you in the night. Carrying a loaded M-16 rifle, buddies in back or front of you prepared to shoot if you heard rustling through the tall trees or movement among the tropical dense bushes resembling a carpet covering the ground. No wind or breeze could be the reason as you kept wiping the sweat of your eyes, fear you'd cough or sneeze for a clear target you'd be. The only light to guide was your instinct to survive. The camaraderie with your buddies gave you courageous during those long scary nights. You looked out for each other as you went on patrol not once so you stopped counting for it never seemed to stop.

An oath was taken among you during rests in camp. I'll take a bullet for you on me you can be sure for we're all in this together we need to stay alive. Your friend Joe, stepped in a land mine as you walked single file and heard the deafening sound. He is here waiting all these years to tell you he knows you tried to save him but there was nothing you could do.

I took you home to finally be at peace. To end your pain, flashbacks and nightmares disabling you for more than forty years. No longer will you fill the pangs of guilt for walking out alive. For all your buddies that died fighting in the country, across the sea known to you all as Nam. They are waiting to salute you and open up their arms.

Welcome Back Soldier! For the last time. You're home to heal your wounded soul, heartache, tears erasing all the bad memories you carried all these years.

The war is finally over, you conquered all your fears. I brought you home to have peace and happiness back to being eighteen the innocence in you heart the Vietnam War robbed is now restored.

Your parents, your four brothers rejoice, they've been waiting for you, your Army companions too.

You, Joe, and buddies are now united hearing the 60s songs you played in base camp when you were off patrol. I smile upon you as you joke, laugh dancing to the tunes you did then and now.

You're all bounded for timeless, endless life, forever young. Gone are the dark days for the illuminating light will will always shine to guide you all as you dance into eternity side by side.

-Yolanda (Landi) Miranda



Joe and Hector



He just wanted to lie down somewhere comfortable, the arthritis of his knees made it hard to get around.

I was back in Escondido, thinking about the couch I would soon be getting for him, and how I would welcome him into my new apartment in grand style, when I got an urgent call from the police. The insane drug people had gone thru with their plans. My dad was horribly burned by their firebombing of the bus. He only lived five days longer, and pulled out his breathing tube himself, because enough is enough.

Homelessness can and will happen to anyone, we all need compassion and help.

We also need mental hospitals/healing hospices open again instead of passing folks around, getting nothing real done, just prescribing chemical restraints.

Meanwhile, my kids and I strive to recall the good times we had with my dad;

There was a time when he knew everybody on the beach, and the future looked bright. I spent those

golden summers with him, going to the bookstores, movies, the Apple Pan restaurant...I guess I am trying to say to cherish your loved ones now, lend a hand, because they can be gone tomorrow.

Until my next inspiration, best regards to all,

-Kitty Bratton



Manuella Theiss, Milton Bratton, and Shanna Baldwin. Milton owned the bookstore next to the Venice West Cafe. Courtesy of Shanna Baldwin.

Tallest Building in Venice

Plans for Venice's tallest building are available for review. The 158 unit, 31-story, 366-foot high, mixed-use retail and condominium project at 4363 Lincoln, plans to use SB1818, a state law that gives density bonuses.

Comments can be presented until Jan. 10 to David Somers, L.A. Planning Department, 200 N. Spring Street, Room 750, Los Angeles 90012. The Abbot Kinney Library at 501 Venice Blvd, has copies. www.lacity.org/PLN. Click on "Environmental" and then "Draft."

Surfing Cowboys

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this paper is a poem

Elkgrove

I know it's not about the money
but still...
still.
with justice I see
busy streets again
moving vans double parked
with trucks from furniture stores
crowding newly acquired hybrids

Those who cleaned and lifted for others,
hiring.

-Doug Eisenstark

Save The Trees

By Hillary Kaye

The flesh of the tree is its bark....like the flesh of any
human
like the gray beautiful flesh of the elephant...ancient
and old
telling us of life
this flesh is meaningless to commerce
meaningless to progress which
marches on but tells us nothing
the flesh of the tree is it now aware of its fate
is it not worth saving like a child
like the mother like the father like the son
like the holy moment and being that it is.

Mr. Price has come to town

with a smile on his face
and a wad of bills in his hand.
With just a hint of pity, he says:
I have big plans for you!
A new suit of clothes
just like they wear uptown.
And the finest shopping
you can ever imagine.
If you still think the old days were grand
Perhaps this check for your favorite cause
will make you forget that nonsense.
And a little more under the table
will make you betray those bums
who have overstayed their welcome.
You can't beat our PR machine
but if you do, we've got the police.

-Jim Smith

Will's Crusade

It was Will's Crusade
the first in hundreds of years
he felt obliged to knock on every door
walk every street
converge on the Holy Land
not so close as Palestine, not so far
as the center of the earth
where the sun boiled black.

As Will knocked on doors
doctors and orderlies appeared in white
ready to follow
the sun all night and summer all winter
according to the tenets of Will
all children be free of the cold, hunger, and war
all men love their mothers
wives and children.

Where they walked gardens loomed
when they entered a town
songs of cheer touched their fingers.

For a hundred years this march continued
until waters were clear
air so clean a breath felt like silk.

And when the century of foot goodness
came to an end
laughter
forgot the evildoers.

-Lily Tanner

reflection

I looked for you, you were not there.
All the birds flew away at sunset. Were you
awake then?
Seemed everything got really quiet. I was well
aware of the approaching
insanity.

I've seen tomorrow, so how to live today?
Pull me down and I will bless you as the saint.
Big men, with big talk have less to say. In fact
they said "it's over."
But if you scream at the sun, we can hold our
position in time. Rip its
hands off, laugh at the day.

We will eat tomorrow and sing the songs
to commemorate what she said.

-Rebecca M. Frey

Mendocino Haiku

medicine crystal
rolling clean sticky fingers
wicked zombie stone.

-erica snowlake

**The Venice Beat Poets
– The Great River Outside
the Mainstream**

By Hillary Kaye

Tony Scibella was both poet and painter. Growing up
working class, all he could see ahead was dead end jobs in
conventional postwar America, and he wondered where
his true path lay. Following clues he got from the freedom
and creativity he saw in jazz clubs and in the paintings of
abstract expressionist and working class hero Franz Kline,
he found it as an artist.

Tony got out of the army in
1952, briefly worked at an aircraft
plant and attended SMCC before
discovering Venice. There he also
discovered Stuart Perkoff. Scibella
encouraged his friend to paint and
Perkoff taught Scibella to write
down the words swirling in his
imagination. The two of them along
with Frank Rios roamed the Venice
oceanfront sharing poetry making
and camaraderie.



Tony Scibella

It was a different Venice then. It
was a breathing space between real estate booms. No bike
path, no skate rentals, no sunglass vendors, no upscale
restaurants, no valet service, no Hollywood celebrities, no
gentrification, no ego sized mansions lining the canals.
Venice was as simple as a Taoist dream. It was sufficiently
primitive enough to pass for a seedy border town for
Orson Welles' classic film *Touch of Evil*.

Scibella's auto-
biography, *The Kid
In America*, owes
much to Joyce and
Kerouac but in ways
surpasses both in
being more real than
Kerouac and more
spontaneous than
Joyce. In it he says
this about his new
digs:

"...Venice was a
summertown the
locals rented rooms
to vacationers from
the city & then it
closed in winter
showed some snow-
cone life on week-
ends& drowsed u cd
rent a whole house
for 65\$...the people
flee the city for the
burbs forgetting the
entire beach (bless
em) a cheap pursuit
of craft a place to do
it described as a
slum I never saw it
thus: it is a bleedin
paradise I reckoned
salts on the sun
oceanmotion gull-
quiet beach"

Scibella helped Stuart Perkoff open the Venice West
Café. They all made the scene they were the scene, they
lived it....used in itused it till they were part of its
"bleedin."

Always it was about making art....money a necessary
evil was not easy to come by, as no one of them wanted to
give their valuable time to it...everything was about the
muse.

poetry is the game

who worked hardest
abt the poem
it
was supposed
to say yr heart
simply-
in all that
whirls abt u
u pluck
what u can eat only
not wasting
a syllable
u learned
to walk on
knowing
most of us
are punished
for hoping
too much

the gratitude
sung to her
is habitual
as the breath:
take
all u want
: u must
give it back
& a song
to her is this

Beyond Baroque presents:

**A TRIBUTE TO VENICE POET LAUREATE
PHILOMENE LONG**

Friday, December 7 - 7:30 PM

Join your fellow Venetians in a memorial tribute to
the great Venice Poet Laureate Philomene Long, who
died unexpectedly, August 21.

Beachhead contributor, prolific
author and poet, Long defined the
Venice spirit.

In addition to being partner to
Venice West legend Stuart Perkoff, then
longtime wife and partner to poet John
Thomas, she was a worldwide Beat luminary.

Her books include *American Zen Bones: Maezumi
Roshi Stories*, and *The California Mission Poems*. Her
Book of Sleep, *Bukowski in the Bathtub*, and *The Ghosts of
Venice West* were written with John Thomas.

Her own poetry collections are *The Queen of
Bohemia* and *Cold Eye Burning*, and her films include
The Beats: An Existential Comedy.

Join family, friends,
and noted poets, writers,
actors and artists for this
tribute to our inspiration
and friend who will live
forever as the symbol of
Venice and the Queen of
Bohemia. Co-sponsored
by the Venice Arts
Council.



Philomene Long

Philomene with Allen Ginsberg



**THERE IS NO SURE
PROTECTION FROM
POETRY**

(submitted by Philomene Long)

Wet sand, small
quiet breakers.

A hundred yards out,
the shark breaks water

briefly, his flank a perfect
curve of living white,

gone and deep before
doubt can erase him.

This was his moment
to be a metaphor,

but he had been there,
cold, tireless and unseen,

all along.

--John Thomas

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

Douglas Eisenstark L.Ac.
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Are Cell Towers, Phone and Laptops Bad for Your Health?

By Stan Cox, AlterNet

In the wee hours of July 14, a 45-year-old Australian named John Patterson climbed into a tank and drove it through the streets of Sydney, knocking down six cell-phone towers and an electrical substation along the way. Patterson, a former telecommunications worker, reportedly had mapped out the locations of the towers, which he claimed were harming his health.

In recent years, protesters in England and Northern Ireland have brought down cell towers by sawing, removing bolts, and pulling with tow trucks and ropes. In one such case, locals bought the structure and sold off pieces of it as souvenirs to help with funding of future protests. In attempts to fend off objections to towers in Germany, some churches have taken to disguising them as giant crucifixes.

Opposition to towers usually finds more socially acceptable outlets, and protests are being heard more often than ever in meetings of city councils, planning commissions, and other government bodies. This summer alone, citizen efforts to block cell towers have sprouted in, among a host of other places, including California, New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, North Dakota and north of the border in Ontario and British Columbia. Transmitters are already banned from the roofs of schools in many districts.

Most opponents cite not only aesthetics but also concerns over potential health effects of electromagnetic (EM) fields generated by towers. Once ridiculed as crackpots and Luddites, they're starting to get backup from the scientific community.

It's not just cell phones they're worried about. The Tottenham area of London is considering the suspension of all wireless technology in its schools. Last year, Fred Gilbert, a respected scientist and president of Lakehead University in Ontario, banned wireless internet on his campus. And resident groups in San Francisco are currently battling Earthlink and Google over a proposed city-wide Wi-Fi system.

Picking Up Some Interference?

For decades, concerns have been raised about the health effects of "extremely low frequency" fields that are produced by electrical equipment or power lines. People living close to large power lines or working next to heavy electrical equipment are spending a lot of time in electromagnetic fields generated by those sources. Others of us can be exposed briefly to very strong fields each day.

But in the past decade, suspicion has spread to cell phones and other wireless technologies, which operate at frequencies that are millions to tens of millions higher but at low power and "pulsed."

Then there's your cell phone, laptop, or other wireless device, which not only receives but also sends pulsed signals at high frequencies. Because it's usually very close to your head (or lap) when in use, the fields experienced by your body are stronger than those from a cell tower down the street.

A growing number of scientists, along with a diverse collection of technology critics, are pointing out that our bodies constantly generate electrical pulses as part of their normal functioning. They maintain that incoming radiation from modern technology may be fouling those signals.

But with hundreds of billions in sales at stake, the communications industry (and more than a few scientists) insist that radio-frequency radiation can't have biological effects unless it's intense enough to heat your flesh or organs, in the way a microwave oven cooks meat.

It's also turning out that when scientific studies are funded by industry, the results are a lot less likely to show that EM fields are a health hazard.

Low Frequency, More Frequent Disease?

Before the digital revolution, a long line of epidemiological studies compared people who were exposed to strong low-frequency fields - people living in the shadow of power lines, for example, or long-time military radar operators - to similar but unexposed groups.

One solid outcome of that research was to show that rates of childhood leukemia are associated with low-frequency EM exposure; as a result, the International Agency for Research on Cancer has

labeled that type of energy as a possible carcinogen, just as they might label a chemical compound.

Other studies have found increased incidence of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease), higher rates of breast cancer among both men and women, and immune-system dysfunction in occupations with high exposure.

Five years ago, the California Public Utilities Commission asked three epidemiologists in the state Department of Health Services to review and evaluate the scientific literature on health effects of low-frequency EM fields.

The epidemiologists, who had expertise in physics, medicine, and genetics, agreed in their report that they were "inclined to believe that EMFs can cause some degree of increased risk of childhood leukemia, adult brain cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease, and miscarriage" and were open to the possibility that they raise the risks of adult leukemia and suicide. They did not see associations with other cancer types, heart disease, or Alzheimer's disease.

High Resistance

Now the most intense debate is focused on radio-frequency fields. As soon as cell phones came into common usage, there was widespread concern that holding an electronic device against the side of your head many hours a month for the rest of your life might be harmful, and researchers went to work looking for links to health problems, often zeroing in on the possibility of brain tumors.

Some lab studies have found short-term harm as well. Treatment with cell-phone frequencies has disrupted thyroid-gland functioning in lab rats, for example. And at Lund University in Sweden, rats were exposed to cell-phone EM fields of varying strengths for two hours; 50 days later, exposed rats showed significant brain damage relative to non-exposed controls.

Even more recently, health concerns have been raised about the antenna masts that serve cell phones and other wireless devices. EM fields at, say, a couple of blocks from a tower are not as strong as those from a wireless device held close to the body; nevertheless many city-dwellers are now continuously bathed in emissions that will only grow in their coverage and intensity.

Last year, the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia closed off the top two floors of its 17-story business school for a time because five employees working on its upper floors had been diagnosed with brain tumors in a single month, and seven since 1999. Cell phone towers had been placed on the building's roof a decade earlier and, although there was no proven link between them and the tumors, university officials were taking no chances.

San Francisco, one of the world's most technology-happy cities, is home to more than 2400 cell-phone antennas, and many of those transmitters are due to be replaced with more powerful models that can better handle text messaging and photographs, and possibly a new generation of even higher-frequency phones.

In support of the appeal, Magda Havas, professor of environmental and resource studies at Trent University in Ontario submitted an analysis of radio-frequency effects found in more than 50 human, animal, and cellular-level studies published in scientific journals.

Havas has specialized in investigating the effects of both low- and high-frequency EM radiation. She says most of the research in the field is properly done, but that alone won't guarantee that all studies will give similar results. "Natural variability in biological populations is the norm," she said.

And, she says, informative research takes time and focus: "For example, studies that consider all kinds of brain tumors in people who've only used cell phones for, say, five years don't show an association. But those studies that consider only tumors on the same side of the head where the phone is held and include only people who've used a phone for ten years or more give the same answer very consistently: there's an increased risk of tumors." In other research, wireless frequencies have been associated with higher rates of miscarriage, testicular

cancer, and low sperm counts.

Direct current from a battery can be used to encourage healing of broken bones. EM fields of various frequencies have also been shown to reduce tissue damage from heart attacks, help heal wounds, reduce pain, improve sleep, and relieve depression and anxiety. If they are biologically active enough to promote health, are they also active enough to degrade it?

At the 2006 meeting of the International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety in Benevento, Italy, 42 scientists from 16 countries signed a resolution arguing for much stricter regulation of EM fields from wireless communication.

But in this country, industry has pushed for and gotten exemption from strict regulation, most notably through the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Libby Kelley, director of the Council on Wireless Technology Impacts in Novato says, "The technology always comes first, the scientific and environmental questions later. EM trails chemicals by about 10 years, but I hope we'll catch up."

Kelley says a major problem is that the Telecommunications Act does not permit state or local governments to block the siting of towers based on health concerns: "We'll go to hearings and try to bring up health issues, and officials will tell us, 'We can't talk about that. We could get sued in federal court!'"

High-Voltage Influence?

Industry officials are correct when they say the scientific literature contains many studies that did not find power lines or telecommunication devices to have significant health effects. But when, as often happens, a range of studies give some positive and some negative results, industry people usually make statements like, "Technology A has not been proven to cause disease B."

Scientists and groups concerned about current standards for EM fields have criticized the World Health Organization (WHO) and other for downplaying the risks. And some emphasize the risk of financial influence when such intense interest is being shown by huge utilities and a global communications industry that's expected to sell \$250 billion worth of wireless handsets per year by 2011 (that's just for the instruments, not counting monthly bills). Microwave News cited Belgian reports in late 2006 that two industry groups - the GSM Association and Mobile Manufacturers Forum - accounted for more than 40 percent of the budget for WHO's EM fields project in 2005-06.

When a US National Academy of Sciences committee was formed earlier this year to look into health effects of wireless communication devices, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Sage Associates wrote a letter to the Academy charging that the appointment of two of the committee's six members was improper under federal conflict-of-interest laws.

A paper published in January in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that when studies of cell phone use and health problems were funded by industry, they were much less likely to find a statistically significant relationship than were publicly funded studies.

The authors categorized the titles of the papers they surveyed as either negative (as in "Cellular phones have no effect on sleep patterns"), or neutral (e.g., "Sleep patterns of adolescents using cellular phones"), or positive, (e.g., "Cellular phones disrupt sleep"). Fully 42 percent of the privately funded studies had negative titles and none had positive ones. In public or nonprofit studies, titles were 18 percent negative and 46 percent positive.

Alluding to previous studies in the pharmaceutical and tobacco industries, the authors concluded, "Our findings add to the existing evidence that single-source sponsorship is associated with outcomes that favor the sponsors' products."

By email, I asked Dr. John Moulder, a senior editor of the journal *Radiation Research*, for his reaction to the study. Moulder, who is Professor and Director of Radiation Biology in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Wisconsin, did not think the analysis was adequate to conclusively demonstrate industry influence and told me that in his capacity as an editor, "I have not noted such an effect, but I have not



CommUnity Events – by the numbers



- Saturday, December 1**
- 12-1:30pm - **Code Pink** house meeting. 2010 Linden Ave, Venice. Contact: Sarah 827-3046.
 - 4:30pm - Had to Be Productions, with the support of Electric Lodge, presents *The Perfect Sister*. (December 8 too) A solo play written and performed by Carrie Gibson. \$12.
 - 7:30pm - **Anne Tardos**, a poet and visual artist, author of several books of poetry. **Simone Forti** is a writer, an internationally acclaimed choreographer and dancer. **Steve Roden** has exhibited his work internationally. Beyond Baroque.

- Sunday, December 2**
- 8-11pm - **Jazz** at Hal's Bar and Grill
 - 5pm - **Open Reading** with Betsy Kenoo-Boyd, Terry McCarty and Michael Slobotzky. Hosted by Marie Lecrivain. Open sign up 4:45pm. 2 poem limit. Beyond Baroque. Free.
 - 7pm - A Reading and Project Room show: Viz. Inter-Arts, **A Trans Genre Anthology**. Beyond Baroque.

- Monday, December 3**
- 6pm - Discussion - **Finnegans Wake** Discussion Club. Abbot Kinney Library.
 - 9pm-12am - **Jazz** at Hal's.

- Tuesday, December 4**
- 9:30am - **Westside Quilters** - All quilters, beginners to experts welcome. Abbot Kinney Library.

- Wednesday, December 5**
- 6pm - All **films and videos** from Sponto and the Venice West Cafe from the last 40 years. Rare footage. Sponto.
 - 7pm - Venice Neighborhood Council's **Land Use and Planning** Committee - Westminster Auditorium.

- Thursday, December 6**
- 6:00pm - **Winter Puppet Extravaganza**, Swazzle Pupperty presents a holiday program: Buggy Brown: Private Fly. Abbot Kinney Library.
 - 6:30pm - Bill Rosendahl, Jack Weiss to hold **Transportation Improvement Project** - Open House. Public invited. W.L.A. Muni building, 1645 Cornith Ave, 2nd Floor.

- Friday, December 7**
- 6-10pm - **First Friday** on Abbot Kinney Blvd. Stores open late.
 - 7:30pm - **A Tribute to Venice Poet Laureate Philomene Long**. Prolific author, poet and muse. Beyond Baroque.

- Saturday, December 8**
- 9am - **Book Sale**. Friends of Venice Library. Special selection for holiday giving. Excellent books at bargain prices. Abbot Kinney Library.

- 11:30am - Discussion - **Westside Writers**. Share and discuss your work in progress. Abbot Kinney Library.
- 5-10pm - **Twilight Bridge Lighting** and Holiday Party - Sherman Canal - Sponsored by Voice of the Canals. Contributions requested for Venice Community Housing Corp.
- 6 - 10pm - Reception for Brazilian artist **Vania Brandao**. Universal Art Gallery, 2001 Lincoln Bl.
- 7:30pm - **Holiday Mason and Richard Garcia**. Beyond Baroque.



Artist: Vania Brandao

- Sunday, December 9**
- 5-11pm - **Winter Holiday Celebration** and Fun-Raiser. Impromptu poetry readings, community art projects, storytelling and FUN for all. \$10 admission to benefit Beyond Baroque.
 - 6:30- 8pm. Live music and comedy. **Eric Alberg's "Shoe Flies"** (6pm). Bluegrass music. Sponto.
 - 7pm - **M.S. Garvey's Letters to the President**. A brand-new theatrical staging with live musical accompaniment by the Hootenanny All-Stars. \$20. Electric Lodge.

- Tuesday, December 11**
- 10:30am - **Toddler Storytime**. Stories and songs. Abbot Kinney Library.
 - 7:00pm - **Pajama Storytime** - Alphabet stories - Hunting for H - Abbot Kinney Library.

- Friday, December 14**
- 7:30pm - An evening with **recently published members** of the Saturday and Wednesday workshops. Beyond Baroque.
 - 6-10pm - **Oh Seven Art Show** - Closing Bash. Sponto.

- Saturday, December 15**
- 7pm - **Beachhead Poets and Writers** read their works. Followed by a party featuring the Eric Ahlberg band at 9pm. Sponto.
 - All Day - **Oaxacan Holiday Sale** - SPARC.

- Sunday, December 16**
- 4pm - 26th annual **Canal Boat Parade** - begins at Eastern and Carroll Canals. Venice Canal Assn.

- 6pm - Tribute to **Rumi** - 800-year tribute to Sufi Poet. Live music, poetry, rare film. Sponto.

- Tuesday, December 18**
- 7-10pm - **Venice Neighborhood Council** Board meets. Westminster School Auditorium, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd.

- Saturday, December 22**
- 5-10pm - **Winter Solstice Celebration** - Circle of Color. Art and music. Sponto.

- Tuesday, January 1**
- Noon - **Annual New Years Day Swim** - On the beach, south of Windward - Venice Penguins.

Location Guide

- Abbot Kinney Public Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd, 821-1769
- Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd. 822-3006
- Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave, 306-1854, max10@electriclodge.org
- Hal's Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 396-3105 - www.halsbarandgrill.com
- Pacific Resident Theatre, 703 Venice Blvd. 822-8392 - www.pacificresidenttheatre.com
- SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x 15.
- Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave, Free, 306-7330, pfsuzy@aol.com
- Westminster Elementary School, 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd. 310-606-2015

Ongoing Events

- November 30 - December 14 **Oh Seven Art Show** - Hillary Kaye, Theresa Hulme, MX Farina, Gerry Fialka, Frank Lane, Doran Marold, Bruce Meade, Lala McClave, Roberto Palazzo, Ned Sloane, Gina Terzino, Paul Orso, Sponto and Andrea Wittenberg. Sponto.
- **Air Conditioned Lounge**, 825 Lincoln Blvd. DJ Quickie Mart - Every **Saturday** - Old school hip-hop with original material. Every **Sunday** - Live music, fine food, cocktails. Free. Every **Tuesday** - Jazz, R&B, Funk from 50-70's. Every **Wednesday**, DJ Hoff. Every other **Thursday** - Funky in the middle. Cover \$3. Every **Friday** - Happy Hour 6-9pm. \$5.
- First Monday of every month - 7:30pm - **Max 10 Performance Lab** - 10 months a year, ten performers, ten minutes each. Electric Lodge.

Towers, Phones, Laptops –continued from page 10

systematically looked for one either. I am certainly aware that an industry bias exists in other areas of medicine, such as reporting of clinical trials."

Moulder was lead author on a 2005 paper concluding that the scientific literature to that point showed "a lack of convincing evidence for a causal association between cancer and exposure to the RF [radio-frequency] energy used for mobile telecommunications."

The Center for Science in the Public Interest has questioned Moulder's objectivity because he has served as a consultant to telecommunications firms and groups. Moulder told me, "I have not done any consulting for the electric power and telecommunications industry in years, and when I was doing consulting for these industries, the journals for which I served as an editor or reviewer were made aware of it."

A year ago, Microwave News also reported that approximately one-half of all studies looking into possible damage to DNA by communication-frequency EM fields found no effect. But three-fourths of those negative studies were industry- or military-funded; indeed, only 3 of 35 industry or military papers found an effect, whereas 32 of 37 publicly funded studies found effects.



On Dec. 5, the Venice Neighborhood Council's Land Use committee will consider the application by T-Mobile for multiple cell towers at 658 Venice Blvd. The meeting is scheduled for 7pm at Westminster School Auditorium.

Magda Havas sees a shortage of public money in the US for research on EM health effects as one of the chief factors leading to lack of a rigorous public policy, telling me, "Much of the research here ends up being funded directly or indirectly by industry. That affects both the design and the interpretation of studies." As for research done directly by company scientists, "It's the same as in any industry. They can decide what information to make public. They are free to downplay harmful effects and release information that's beneficial to their product."

Meanwhile, at Trent University where Havas works, students using laptops are exposed to radio-frequency levels that exceed international guidelines. Of that, she says, "For people who've been fully informed and decide to take the risk, that's their choice. But what about those who have no choice, who have a cell-phone tower outside their bedroom window?"

"It's the equivalent of secondhand smoke. We took a long time to get the political will to establish smoke-free environments, and we now know we should have done it sooner. How long will it take to react to secondhand radiation?"

For more information, visit *Environmental Health Perspectives*; *Microwave News*; the *National Center for Biotechnology Information*.

Dolls for Tots



Eveline Popp, the Doll Lady of Venice, is conducting dollmaking workshops with children Sunday afternoons in Venice on Rose Avenue and the beach.

Sweet Eveline, a 40-year resident of Venice and proud RV owner, well-known in art galleries and kitschy stores for her catdoll creations, puppets, and marionettes, is supplying all the crafts needed to make cute handpuppets with kids ages 4-7. The kids she's been working with feel especially sad for the children who've lost their beloved toys in the recent home fires throughout southern California. Anyone knowing a little one in need of holiday cheer in the form of a lovingly handmade doll may write Eveline c/o Beachhead P.O. Box 2, Venice 90294. -Erica Snowlake

The many friends of Diva and Queen of Venice Carol Berman Fondiller

the activist, writer extraordinaire, co-founder of the Beachhead,
Wish her a joyous **holiday** season!

Karl Abrams

Jim Bickhart

Chuck and Terry Bloomquist

Rex Butters

Mike Bonin

Debra Bowen

Steve Clare

Pam Emerson

Della Franco

Ruth Galanter

Don Geagan

Mark Antonio Grant

Ann Haskins

Hugh Harrison

Hillary Kaye

Linda Lucks

Challis Macpherson

Susan Millmann

Yolanda Miranda

Olga Palo

John Powers

Jim Smith

Erica Snowlake

Arnold Springer

Moe Staunezer

Alice Stek

Carol Tantau

Suzanne Thompson

Emily Winters



Welcome Back, Carol! (left to right) Emily Winters, Susan Millman, Carol Tantau and Carol Berman Fondiller.

The 60s



The 70s



The 80s



The 90s



The 00s



Join Beachhead Poets and Writers

Saturday, Dec. 15 at Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Avenue

as we recreate the

Venice West Coffee House

No charge, but we will warmly accept donations.

7pm – Readings 9pm – Music by Eric Ahlberg

Readers include:

- Rex Butters
- Carol Fondiller
- Della Franco
- Hillary Kaye
- Rebecca LaRue
- Yolanda Miranda
- Sherman Pearl
- Jim Smith
- Erica Snowlake

