

# FREE VENICE

## SINCE 1968

# BEACHHEAD

January 2005

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# It Can't Happen Here?

By John Davis

Tsunamis can be viewed from space or high ground. But the worst possible viewing location is on the beach with no plan of escape. Only after the Indian Ocean wave is the world paying attention again, and hopefully learning.

Native coastal peoples pass down legends from father to son and mother to daughter about great waves. But our contemporary society views them as more of a Hollywood undertaking than reality.

In Venice and Marina del Rey we are not Tsunami Ready. The City and County of Los Angeles downplay the risk by hoping only a three-foot wave may come. Even a three footer can travel inland up to three-quarters of a mile. You could not stand in that fast wave full of debris. And if that wave happened at a very high tide in conjunction with an El Niño year the damage could be far worse.

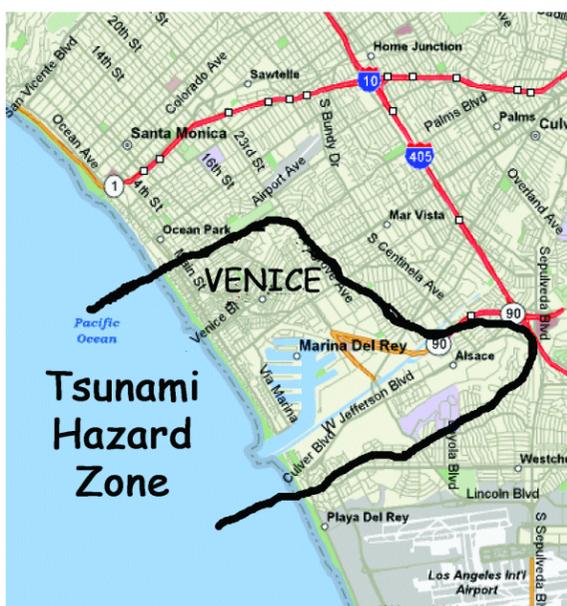
In fact, the risk of much bigger waves are presented by the Malibu, Palos Verdes, Redondo, Santa Barbara, and San Clemente faults, to name but a few. These are the most dangerous for Venice and MDR. While the U.S. does have the world's best tsunami early warning system, it is only geared to give us hours of advance warning from seismic waves generated further away. Locally generated tsunamis can arrive in mere minutes. The only warning will be the quake itself.

### It has happened here!

- On Dec. 21, 1812 an earthquake offshore of Santa Barbara spawned the largest recorded tsunami waves ever in California. The 8.3 quake produced five destructive seismic waves. One wave even reached the Santa Barbara Presidio after ripping through everything else in its path. The U.S. Geological survey gauged the highest wave at 48-50 ft above sea level.
- In 1964 the Alaskan wave swept down the Pacific seaboard, wiping out a lot of the proto-Marina del Rey.
- In 1998 on the other side of the world an onshore earthquake caused an undersea canyon to slump down (like an avalanche) causing a localized 50 ft wave that wiped out 2200 people. But only on that island; other nearby islands were not affected.

Scientists investigating this unusual event realized for the first time that very localized seismic waves could occur. They also determined the geologic conditions in Santa Monica Bay are no different except for one. Local tsunami waves would bounce around or reflect around the bay like a giant pinball machine so waves could be even more damaging, hammering away for hours.

—continued on page seven



## Personal Effects: An Alliance of Killers

By Francisco Letelier

When I read that General Augusto Pinochet, the 89-year-old former leader of Chile, had been placed under house arrest earlier this week and declared competent to stand trial for his many crimes, it was no abstract issue for me. This was a man, after all, who had a tremendous influence on my life, who robbed me of my father, who tore my family apart.

I met him first in the days before the military coup that put him in power. He was a guest for dinner at our home in Santiago, Chile. I was 14 years old. I can see him now in my father's study, the Andes visible in the windows behind him. He looked strangely disconcerted in my father's study, amidst the bookcases and leather-backed tomes. But then, perhaps he was already making plans for the future.

During the time my family lived at the Chilean Embassy in Washington DC in the early 70's. Henry Kissinger dropped by for a cocktail reception. I was only twelve, and had only a vague notion of who he was. During these affairs my brothers and I would peek over the edge of the second floor balconies and catch glimpses of the guests. I remember listening for Kissinger's voice, and peeking down towards the glitzy looking crowd.

I remember big hands and cologne, polite questions and encouraging chuckles. Mr. Kissinger at that time was just another man in a suit, but later I learned he was a clever, cruel and devious suit.

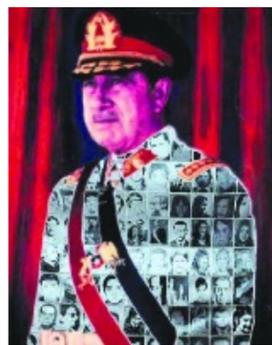
Shaking my hand, he may have recognized my young voice from the wire taps and surveillance instruments that were surely in operation at the time. He may have known about the girls I liked, my best friends, about the secrets I would innocently whisper into the phone.

A declassified secret memorandum of a private conversation with Gen. Augusto Pinochet that took place in Santiago, Chile, in June 1976, shows the kind of relationship Henry Kissinger had with Augusto Pinochet.

Released when the former Chilean dictator was under house arrest in England for crimes against humanity, the transcript reveals Kissinger's expressions of "friendship," "sympathetic" understanding and wishes for success to Pinochet at the height of his repression, when crimes – torture, disappearances, international terrorism – were being committed. The document also shows that Pinochet raised the name of my father, former Chilean Ambassador to the United States, Orlando Letelier, twice, accusing him of giving "false information" to Congress.

In response, Kissinger said nothing, forgoing the opportunity to defend free speech and dissent in the United States – comments that might have deterred the act of terrorism to follow.

—continued on page six



Gen. Pinochet and a few of his victims



Henry Kissinger

Casualties in Iraq  
U.S. 1,350 Dead – 10,252 Wounded  
Civilian Dead: 15,094 to 17,299  
(some sources say 100,000 Iraqi dead)



## Boardwalk Ordinance Solution

Dear Beachhead,

Remove items that may not be proper representations of the city ordinance.

**Henna:** Remove all persons who are not using proper henna paste. Simply put, henna paste is made of herbs and oils and will never take on the color black. Currently the most widely used ink for henna on the Venice boardwalk is black hair dye, which is poisonous and can have serious negative reactions with the skin and can also bring forth lawsuits against the city for liability. More info. [hennapage.com](http://hennapage.com)

**Incense:** No massed produced, prepackaged items whatsoever. Remove all persons selling incense, aromatherapy, soap, or oil items if the items are not hand-made by the persons selling them, or unless the persons selling the items are part of an organization, or group within the parameters of the ordinance, who are selling assembled and/or created wares.

**Bob Marley:** No image of Bob Marley shall be sold on the boardwalk, unless it is art, handmade by the person selling it. Bob Marley was not a prophet of any religion.

**Crystals, rocks and stones:** commercial vending for this subject would be a person traveling to the quartzite, Arizona rock and gem show and not knowing anything about stones, buy a large amount of stones at wholesale and bring them here to sell them. These items are an important part of many areas within the parameters of the ordinance and should have a place on the boardwalk, but the persons selling the items must have good amounts of knowledge in these fields, or they are not valid persons in that area of knowledge and should not be allowed to have space here.

**Art:** The general opinion is that anything made by a person is art. All art performs a function. A painting cultivates the mind. A stained glass lamp is beautiful and provides light. A glass paperweight, well it's obvious the point. Today we can even go to college for culinary arts.

It is also popular belief that whoever is making items that they offer, cannot take up a huge amount of space and do not take monies away from business on the east side of the boardwalk, but add to peoples spending at local businesses. When they can't afford the askings for artists' wares, they opt for stores' merchandise, because they have buying power on like items.

Also, the persons who do properly utilize these lands for correct purposes shall be called upon to form a committee, which will perpetuate the city ordinance 42.15 and communicate to new persons, nothing more than what is permitted on these lands. The committee will comprise of no less than 12 persons, but may consist of many more. Persons who are asked to not display wares on these lands, based on non-compliance with the city ordinance, may ask for more opinions from others who do take up space there, but the decision shall be left to the people to decide democratically. Then, if the persons in question do not leave after majority decision, law enforcement will be summoned to remove them.

Removing the persons who are "commercial vending" in the above areas will also alleviate the problem of the homeless vagrancy, because the persons who have huge amounts of wares, employ the homeless people for \$5, or \$10 a day and usually they are alcoholics, or drug addicts.

There is plenty of space on the Venice boardwalk. Simply remove certain persons who have mis-interpreted, or may not even know that a city ordinance for these lands exist and all will be well and we will see a beautiful, cultivating place that has only been forever a dream to all.

In closing, together with a group of people, applying the theory laid out above, on any average Saturday, or Sunday, we measured about 350-400 feet of space would be clear if persons were to be removed who simply were not properly representing city ordinance 42.15 as stated above.

Jeremy Gower

The collective staff of the



### BEACHHEAD COLLECTIVE:

John Davis, Carol Fondiller, Theresa Hulme, Vessy Mink, Yolanda Miranda, Lydia Ponce, Joanna Silva, Jim Smith, Alice Stek, Suzy Williams

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.

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## 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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## Not The Way It Happened

Dear Beachhead,

I just read "Time for a New Development Moratorium" on the front page of your November issue. There must be a mistake, because Ruth Galanter was remarkably hostile to a temporary moratorium on commercial development in Venice. And neither Arnold Springer nor Moe Stavnezer were part of the Venice Town Council's effort to convince Galanter that the community was being irreparably overdeveloped.

I proposed a temporary moratorium on commercial development in Venice and a cumulative impact study to tell us how much commercial development this area could take. Members of the Venice Town Council circulated petitions and they collected more than two thousand signatures.

We went to Galanter's office to present the petitions, but Galanter refused to meet with us because a newspaper reporter was present. That was the end of the story.

I am enclosing an article on this subject from the Santa Monica Evening Outlook, and a letter to the editor I wrote which was published a few days later.

Sincerely, Steve Schlein

### Response from the Beachhead's Carol Fondiller:

*From the folks that I checked with, here's what we got from the collective memories of people who were involved in the Interim Control Ordinance (ICO).*

*The ICO was approved in 1988. It ended up being the core of the Coastal Specific Plan, which was adopted around 1990. There was a ruling in Re: First English Church, wherein the Supreme Court ruled that moratoria were illegal, so the City Attorney forced the Planning Dept. to "invent" ICOs to replace them.*

*The ICO was renewed every year for about 12 years. Some people took to calling it "PICO" (Permanent Interim Control Ordinance).*

*In the early 1990s, Santa Monica passed what they called a "commercial moratorium" to slow down mini-malls, etc., in their jurisdiction.*

*Some people seized upon the phrase, "commercial moratorium," and expected Councilwoman Galanter to make all commercial developments on the Ocean Front Walk to go away.*

*The Santa Monica ICO Moratorium was brought to a VCPAC (Venice Community Planning Advisory Community) and was discussed with everyone there.*

*The Regs in the Santa Monica ordinance were less restrictive than the Venice ICO in some ways, and more restrictive in other ways. It was demonstrated to the VCPAC, that though it was called a Moratorium it was really an ICO, and that the handful of the small commercial projects that had been approved in Venice under the ICO, would have been approved of in Santa Monica also.*

*The anti-all commercial development folks didn't like this, and insisted that Santa Monica's was a real Moratorium, and that the Council Office was kowtowing to developers because a Moratorium, the way they wanted it, wasn't imposed.*

*The main thrust of all of the heat on developing the OFW was a proposal called the Blanchard Project that involved the destruction or drastic alteration of some historical buildings on the Ocean Front Walk. The development never occurred.*

*Galanter also put in place ordinances that prevented the consolidation of more than, I believe, three lots.*

*The exception was the low-income senior Safran building at 151 Ocean Front Walk, which because it was for low-income people had special exemptions, i.e., less parking than generally required, and permitted more height, width and intensity of use, and because it had been previously approved by the Coastal Commission was "grandfathered" in.*

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# BEGINNINGS

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(Isn't that pretty much all of us?)

Can I Trust God?

What happens when I die?

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January 20<sup>th</sup> -April 14<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, please call the church office at 310-391-2314 or email us: [VeniceUMC@aol.com](mailto:VeniceUMC@aol.com)

# 2005 - The Year We Stood Up For Renter Rights

By Jim Smith

*Lost: Thousands of Venice rental units of affordable housing. Last seen being abducted by greedy landlords and their political lackeys. If found, please return to the people of Venice.*

When I came to Venice in 1968, I rented a single room with an ocean view for \$15 a week. It was at a building at 14 Westminster, nicknamed the *Dungeon*, and it didn't have the greatest reputation (It has since been renamed, inaccurately, *The Morrison*). Even so, my rent was in line with most of my neighbors. One bedroom apartments, and even bungalows, could be had for \$100 a month or less.

Rents remained pretty much the same from year to year. Just for the hell of it, I moved from one apartment or house to the next about once a year. I had my pick of many

suitable and affordable accommodations in all parts of Venice. Now, about the only way to have an affordable rental is to have lived in the same place for the past 20 or more years.

As late as 1975, I was renting a one-bedroom apartment at 234 Horizon Avenue from Frank Soracco for \$95 a month. Today, thousands of units of Venice real estate are 30 years older and mostly dingier, yet they are going for 10 to 20 times the rent of bygone days. Why?

In the late 70s, President Jimmy Carter presided over the worst inflation in U.S. history, which caused rents, food and everything else to increase in price. This made it much more difficult for those on the margins to live on welfare, the G.I. Bill, doing occasional odd jobs, or selling a few lids of grass, etc. At the same time, the roller skating craze put Venice on the map. People with actual jobs who could afford higher rents began moving to the newly discovered beach.

In other parts of the city a wave of plant closings and downsizings - the beginnings of globalization - made it harder for many to afford rising rents. Groups like the Coalition for Economic Survival were formed and a tenants' movement was born. From Venice to East L.A., renters were demanding the city council put the brakes on rent increases.

In response, the big apartment owners, real estate corporations and developers teamed up to fight the growing strength of renters. At first they concentrated on preventing cities from passing rent control ordinances, or at least worked to water them down as much as possible.

Ultimately, the landlords were able to buy - or elect - many of the politicians in the state, including most of the legislature, the governor, city council members, etc. Only a few cities - Santa Monica, Berkeley, Santa Cruz - passed strong rent control provisions.

L.A.'s law was weaker primarily because it allowed vacancy decontrol. Probably nothing else accounts for the theft of affordable housing as much as this one provision. A friend of mine recently moved out of her noisy apartment on Pacific Avenue at Westminster Ave. She had been paying \$800 per month for the past few years. As soon as she was out the door, a sign went up: Apartment for Rent - \$1800/mo. There had been no improvements and the roar of traffic on Pacific had not abated. Vacancy decontrol had taken away another affordable apartment.

Landlords usually complain about government regulations and interference with local affairs. Yet in 1995, they took vacancy decontrol statewide with the Costa-Hawkins Bill, which the legislature dutifully passed. This gutted rent control in Santa Monica and gave an incentive to landlords to push long-time tenants out the door so they could raise rents.

The Costa-Hawkins Act was preceded by another landlord boondoggle, the Ellis Act, which allows them to go out of the rental business. Although they have to pay relocation expenses of \$8,000 for seniors, disabled and families and \$3,200 for everyone else, it's a cheap solution for devious developers. Once everyone is evicted, the building can be demolished and a new one built which is not subject to rent control. Only building dating from 1978 or older are subject to Los Angeles Rent Control. Another

option for landlords under the Ellis Act is to convert the apartments to condominiums which can be sold at exorbitant rates.

Tenants at Lincoln Place Apartments, Venice's largest affordable housing complex, are fearful that the corporation that owns these historic buildings will invoke Ellis in order to evict everyone.

Tenant activism has fallen off in the last few years, but it may make a comeback if rents continue to rise. In Venice, tenants are forced out of their homes every month. Venetians love their community and many would rather live in their car or camper than move to another city. Others are forced to live on the street. Contrary to the opinions of the anti-homeless, many of the people on our streets are longtime Venice residents who can no longer afford an apartment. Many more (you know who you are) are barely hanging on to their homes.

In recent years, basic human needs like housing and health care have become "profit centers" for corporations and the wealthy. Should profits come before peoples needs? Should only the wealthy be able to live by the coast?

It doesn't have to work that way. In Cuba (there he goes again!), rents are not only strictly capped at 10 percent of the tenant's income, but also rent payments apply to the purchase of the home. Because of this program, about 80 percent of all Cubans own their apartments and houses. Of course, the U.S. is much richer than Cuba and could do an even better job in providing for our housing needs.

How can we establish the right to housing for all people? Can we roll back rents to 1995 levels when landlords began making windfall profits? Or can we at least strengthen rent control and get rid of vacancy decontrol and the Ellis Act? The answer lies in organizing - both in our buildings and citywide.

Currently, there are only two tenant organizations in Venice, the Lincoln Place Tenants Association and the Holiday Venice Tenants Association. Neither of these addresses tenant issues that don't directly affect their buildings. But there are other organizations that address tenant needs. They include the Venice Community Housing Corporation (399-4100); the Coalition for Economic Survival (323-656-4410); and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (213-640-3881).

We could use our own Venice Tenants Union. Contact the Beachhead if you're interested.

Venice is full of affordable housing. We just have to reclaim it.



The Dungeon on Westminster

## In Brief...

### Neighborhood Council

Supporters and detractors of the Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council (GRVNC) turned out at a meeting of the city's Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC), Dec. 14, to debate the Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment's (DONE) contention that a quorum of the GRVNC Board does not exist and that the arbiter's letter overturning last June's election was valid. Significantly, BONC did not vote on the matter (perhaps demonstrating where the power in the council system lies), but did ask DONE to bring a proposal for calling a new election to its next meeting, Jan. 25 at L.A. City Hall.

### Land Give Away

Supporters and detractors of the GRVNC managed to find common ground in opposing a give-away of public land on Venice Blvd., just east of Abbot Kinney Blvd. When the street was realigned about 10 years ago, the center medium was reduced and the shoulders became enlarged. Now, a property owner wants to take over 3,500 square feet of right of way with the Bureau of Public Works approval. A hearing on issuing a coastal development permit was held with little notice, Dec. 17, at the Abbot Kinney Library. One of the reasons staff gave for supporting the privatization was that the owner had already encroached on the property. Crime does pay!

### Third World Venice?

What city council aide is under fire for letting contracts without regard for equal opportunity advertising and prevailing wage payment? The Beachhead has learned that embarrassing cancellations of work on the Oakwood Recreation Park and the Venice Traffic Circle had to be made.

### Lincoln Blvd. CDO

Plans for a Community Design Overlay, which the Venice Community Coalition (VCC) has been lobbying for since 2003, are coming to a head at 10AM, Jan. 11 at L.A. City Hall. "This CDO will allow the community to come up with some guidelines for development along Lincoln Boulevard in Venice," say Laura Silagi of the VCC. The idea for a CDO developed out of the so-far successful effort to block the giant shopping center at Lincoln Center.

### Not All Development is Bad

St. Joseph's Center at 204 Hampton, is trying to expand its building serving low-income and homeless Venetians but its permit has been appealed by a cabal of developers, real estate agents and property owners (including the one who evicted 88-year-old Albert Dunne). Show your support for St. Joseph's at the Coastal Commission hearing: 9AM, Jan. 13 at the Long Beach Hilton, 701 W. Ocean, L.B. 562-590-5071

## Websites

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(Includes 1 minute Video)

client supplies video - mini dv format - see site for details

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### Good News for Beachhead Readers:

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at an Elingsh uin-  
ervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the  
ltheers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoentn tihng  
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The rset can be a toatl mses and you can stll  
raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we  
do not raed ervey lteter by itslef but the wrod  
as a wlohe.

# (Advertising) Graffiti Strikes Ocean Front Walk

n. pl. graffiti (-ies)

A drawing or inscription made on a wall or other surface, usually so as to be seen by the public. Often used in the plural.



Not so long ago, Ocean Front Walk was known for its murals (among other things). Lately it seems on its way to being known for its visual pollution and alcohol ads. Are recovering alcoholics allowed to walk down our Boardwalk any longer?



Once there were whales! The Buddha has turned his back on the source of the wealth of the far right-wing Coors family. Whales used to cavort on the wall.

Charlie Chaplin's history Waldorf Hotel is plastered on both sides. A toast to money over good taste!

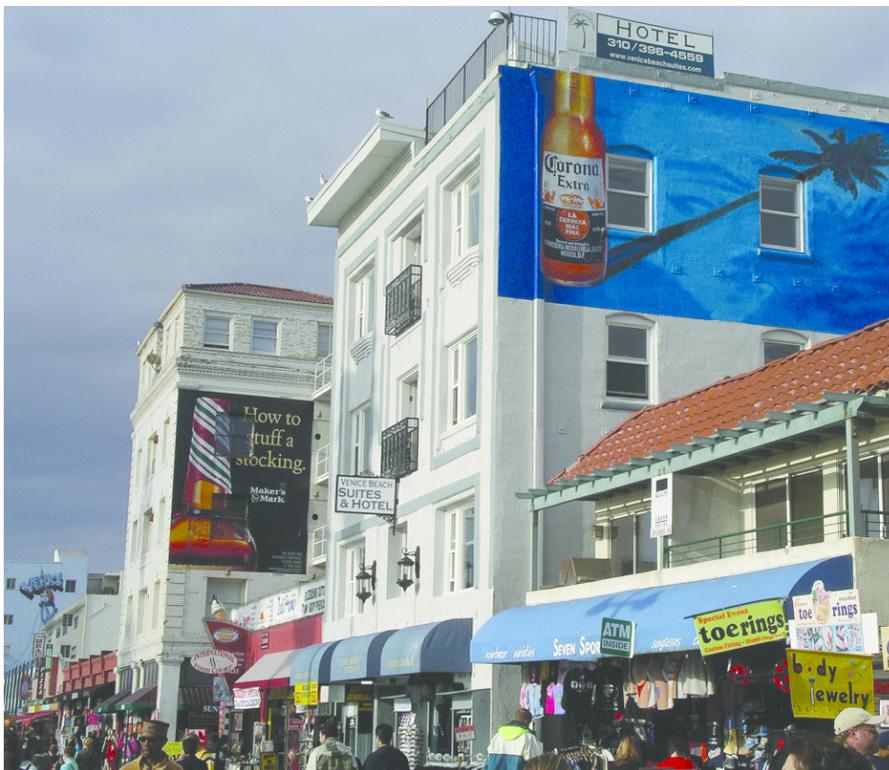
According to the city's Building and Safety Dept., the signs are most likely illegal.

An Inspector told the Beachhead that property owners will knowingly violate the law because they can make \$20,000 - \$50,000 a month allowing visual pollution.

Why aren't LAPD helicopters circling these buildings instead of harassing penny-ante drug dealers in Oakwood?



Mixed messages: Muralist Rip Cronk's Venice Reconstituted now sits below a Bacardi ad on the beach side of the St. Charles Hotel. How long before Terry Schoonhoven's mural on the other side is painted over? Oh well, it's fading out anyway.



The old "Four Floors West" apartment building (now Venice Suites) wants you to drink Corona walking one direction (left) and Pacifico (below) walking the other. Just don't try it on the OFW or the cops will take you away.



Photo Essay by Jim Smith



**Some of the ideas we've heard so far include:** Turn it back into a Lagoon with water; put in a fountain; put up a headless statue that is being donated by Robert Graham; put Abbot Kinney's head on it; the last statue, Freedom, that graced the circle for 20 years was hijacked one night about five years ago by the L.A. Public Works Dept.; dig it out to make a Greek-style amphitheater; and the most requests so far: close it to automobile traffic.

## What should be done with the Venice Traffic Circle?

Plans are afoot behind closed doors to revitalize, beautify or otherwise mess with the old Venice Circle.

Here's your opportunity, courtesy of the Beachhead, to put in your 2-cents worth.

Send us your ideas by Jan. 23 – 400 words or less – and we'll print them for all to see. Send to: Beachhead, POB 644, Venice 90294 or [Beachhead@freevenice.org](mailto:Beachhead@freevenice.org)

Feel free to include your ideas for Windward from the beach to the circle, as well.

## Venice hosts Solari founder, Catherine Austin Fitts

By Tom O'Meara

The Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council's Town Hall, December 13, featured Catherine Austin Fitts, a nationally known investment banker and a pioneer in applying modern financial wizardry to empower neighborhoods and support local business. She spoke for an hour and a half at the Venice United Methodist Church Peace and Justice Center, answering many questions from interested Venice residents.

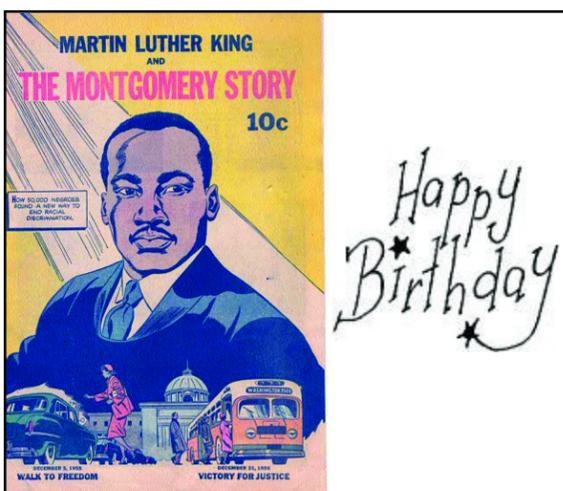
She introduced the audience to her concept of a Solari, a community-run organization that utilizes the methods of today's savviest investors to economically grow neighborhoods like Venice that are rich with both diverse local business and cultural creativity, but without compromising either.

Under conventional Wal-Mart type models for growth, neighborhoods stay unorganized and unaware that cooperation enables them to utilize the same economic leverage that is being wielded by those outside the community, allowing resources (or character) to flow out.

A Solari starts out as an investment club where civic-minded Venetians get together to find local profit-making opportunities. But the club would eventually expand into a corporation whose controlling stock would be offered only to all Venice residents. Its prime mission is simply to align the neighborhood money and people.

For example, housing built using Venice Solari funds could give occupancy priority to Venice residents. Also, local business would have access to Solari mechanized stock-market-type profit multipliers, eliminating the advantage of cookie-cutter chain stores and preventing them from getting a foothold in Venice.

More information at: [www.solari.com](http://www.solari.com)



## OFW lottery moving ahead despite protests by artists and performers (left)

Hash marks and numbers have been painted along Ocean Front Walk by the city in preparation for the start of assigned spaces for non-commercial artists and performers on the west side of the Boardwalk.

The city's plan, in which they will be assigned locations via a monthly lottery has been condemned by most of the artists, musicians, political activists and others who have utilized the OFW for years, usually choosing the same spot, year in and year out. The Neighborhood Council also opposed the lottery by unanimous votes.

The L.A. Recreation and Parks Dept. is holding two informational meetings on the new ordinance at the Westminster Senior Center, 1234 Pacific Ave. The meetings are Jan. 12 and Jan. 20 at 6:30PM. They should be interesting.

# Killers

—continued from page one

Sometimes I have a fantasy about Henry Kissinger. In it, he remembers a young boy looking up at him, shaking his hand. A disturbing worry grows in his mind. Years have passed and he has had a couple of close calls. The Homeland Security - 9/11 - appointment did not go too well, and those devious world justice people just won't leave him alone. Maybe Pinochet, after years of silence, will disclose more about his personal involvement in Chile and Latin America. He begins to wonder about what has happened to the young ones, whether they've grown up and grown teeth; a nagging suspicion grows: maybe the problem didn't stop with the killing of the fathers. He cancels his Mexican vacation, the conference in Spain, and wonders how long his actions will echo in time.

On September 11, 1973, Pinochet seized power in a coup that ousted the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende. Allende died during the coup, and life was turned inside out for my family and for my father, who had served as Allende's foreign minister and his defense minister.

In the days that followed, we watched jets fly overhead, heard bombs hit, smelled the smoke. There were bodies, shootings and tanks rolling through the streets. From the start, Pinochet's government relied on disappearances and secret executions, on arbitrary arrests. Tens of thousands of people were detained, tortured and killed during his 17 years in power. We were put under house arrest; my father spent a year in concentration camps, enduring the tortures of Dawson Island, a windswept rock off Antarctica.

After his release we left the country and moved to Washington. But that was not far enough for Pinochet and the junta he led. Because of my father's ongoing work to restore democracy in Chile, they determined to stop him, undaunted by the distance, or by the national borders that lay between them and our home in suburban Maryland.

Surveillance, of course, was nothing new for us. Such innocent details as the names of my childhood friends, notes on my childhood pet (a sheepdog named Alfie) and the sports I participated in all appear in the now declassified NSC '201' file, US intelligence agencies started on my father in 1960 because of his friendship with Salvador Allende.

In 1976, a man named Michael Townley, who worked for Pinochet, watched our family home in Maryland on orders of the junta. He and his accomplices sat in cars near the house. I imagine walking by them on the way to school; I imagine what they felt as I came close.

Before dawn one morning in mid-September, when I was 17 years old, Townley, acting on orders from Pinochet's secret police, attached plastic explosive to the underside of the Malibu Classic parked in our driveway. To this day, I think of him as an evil tooth fairy, coming at night, prowling, crawling beneath the car just a few feet away from my bedroom window.

Everyone in my family used the car. I had driven it to my senior prom. On September 21, any one of us could have been in the car with my father. As it happened, he drove it into Washington with his colleagues, Ronni Karpen and her husband Michael Moffitt.

At 9:30 a.m., the bomb shattered the peace of Embassy Row, in what was at the time the most brazen international terrorist act ever committed in the nation's capital. It severed my father's legs; he bled to death in the charred wreck. Ronni escaped onto the sidewalk and drowned in her blood, a piece of metal lodged in her neck. Only Michael Moffitt survived.

The investigations began immediately, but

proceeded at a snail's pace, even in the face of overwhelming revelations about the extent of the conspiracy. Townley eventually turned state's evidence and served three years and four months in prison. He confirmed that the order for the assassination had come from Santiago.

In 1985, Chile's Supreme Court found Manuel Contreras, the director of the Chilean secret police, guilty of ordering the assassination of my father. He served seven years and was released. Declassified documents show that Contreras received a "one-time payment of \$5,000," through which the CIA hoped to gain leverage over him. To date, the CIA has not been directly connected to the assassination, though many questions remain unanswered about the agency's role in Chilean politics.

Several other men conspired in the assassination but have continued to elude justice. One of these was Guillermo Novo, who was convicted in Washington of conspiracy in the killings and was sentenced to 40 years but whose conviction was overturned on a technicality. He later went to prison in Panama for his role in a plot to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro, but in August, as the U.S. presidential election was approaching, Novo was released from custody. With three other known terrorists, he boarded a plane to Miami, where he was admitted to the country by U.S. officials and welcomed by Florida's Cuban exile community.

And Pinochet? Last August, 31 years after the coup, the Chilean Supreme Court made a historic decision to strip him of his immunity from prosecution. Pinochet and others under his command have been accused of participating in "Operation Condor," a South America-wide intelligence-sharing network used by the dictatorships of that era to eliminate dissidents. My father's murder was a Condor mission.

Amidst revelations by US Senate investigators that Pinochet had up to \$8 million stashed in bank accounts abroad in cooperation with officials of Riggs Bank in Washington DC, Pinochet has been declared fit to stand trial.

In December, Chilean judge Juan Guzman ordered the house arrest of the former dictator on human rights charges. The judge charged Pinochet over the kidnapping of nine dissidents and the killing of one dissident during his brutal 17 year regime.

"It is not a part of American history we are proud of," conceded Secretary of State Colin L. Powell in 2003 when asked to comment on the U.S. role in Chile in the 1970s. The Pinochet regime created Operation Condor in November 1975. CIA documents acknowledge an awareness of its existence in March 1976, describing it in favorable terms as a "cooperative effort by the intelligence/security services of several South American countries to combat terrorism and subversion." Kissinger's top aide for Latin America, Harry Shlaudeman, informed him that the South American military regimes were planning to

use Condor "to find and kill terrorists . . . in their own countries and in Europe." He informed Kissinger that through Operation Condor, the Southern Cone military regimes were "joining forces to eradicate 'subversion,' a word that increasingly translates into nonviolent dissent from the left and center left."

Until the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001, terrorism was, for many Americans, something they watched on television. Now there are many more people who, like me, have lost members of their families to terrorism. We continue to search for a long-awaited measure of justice. Our heroes emerge from courtrooms, from smoldering



Salvador Allende

wreckage and fallen towers.

Justice in these cases must go beyond the incarceration of individuals. The true historical record should be made public and

U.S. foreign policy must reflect the lessons learned

I hope that a public trial of Augusto Pinochet will serve as an important step, and that it will lead to the re-energizing of the long-dormant Letelier case in the United States. It is here in this country where the facts remain shrouded and where individuals involved in the tragic murders of my father and Ronni Karpen remain untouched.

Portions of this OP/ED article appeared in the Los Angeles Times on December 12, 2004 under the title of "My Case against Pinochet." Francisco Letelier is a Venice artist and neighborhood council officer.



Orlando Letelier



Pinochet



**If you liked the idea for a University of Venice, as described by Pastor Tom Ziegert in last month's Beachhead, then come to a planning meeting:**

**2PM, Sunday Jan. 16  
At the Venice Center for Peace with Justice and The Arts,  
2210 Lincoln Blvd.**

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# It Can't Happen

Here? – continued from page 1

The City and County do not want to depress the fast-growing real estate prices in Venice by admitting these risks exist. Other newspapers do not want to offend real estate companies who advertise with them. And Playa Vista sure as hell wants this hard science buried so they can get federally subsidized FEMA flood insurance. So who wins and who loses?

Money is exchanged for public safety. I have personally pleaded with the California Coastal Commission to help Venice and MDR at least create evacuation routes to higher ground and to post signs on the beach so people know what to do when a temblor hits. All to no avail, they just sat there eating sandwiches and listening to their cell phone marching orders.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration supports *Tsunami Ready Communities*. Of all the prepared communities in the U.S. there is only one in California, Crescent City. Its waterfront was wiped out by the 1964 Alaskan event.

Venice should lead the way and be the first Southern California community to implement the recommendations of the federal government to prepare for Tsunami emergencies. And we must demand our elected officials not downplay the worst case.

If you live in a low-lying coastal area and a quake hits so hard you cannot stand, seek high ground and wait till the coast is clear, so to speak. Listen to radio reports.

If a large quake occurs while you are at the beach seek high ground. Do not watch the water recede far from shore. And do not walk to the sea to investigate. Follow evacuation signs if any are in place.

The danger here is not digital Hollywood waves, but real big, bad ass, thundering Venice Tsunamis. Just get outta their way.

### TSUNAMI READY

<http://wcatwc.gov/tsunamiready/tready.htm>

### LOTS OF TSUNAMI PICTURES

<http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/seg/hazard/slideset/tsunamis>

In the SPIRIT OF Venice

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EL DORADO -  
HAPPY BELATED CHRISTMAS  
FROM YOUR DAD

# POETRY

## Venice Beach, Venice Beach

take it or leave it  
Keep your spirits high  
Don't let the deadbeats steal  
a moment of your time  
heed not the bullshit lies  
honor the truth, the true ones  
Contribute to Karmic accounts  
but don't pay with the collapse of your confidence

Venice Beach is washed out tonight  
the sky is clear, the air is cool and clean  
the homeless are driven, early to their crooked rest  
the daytimes are nice  
familiar acquaintances marveling  
making plans on seeing each other again  
Sure to be around  
but cometh the night, much hope in the night  
don't overexpect the night, it's sure to disappoint  
you'll be walking alone, sure to be a critic  
Singing, fighting, dreaming until your day of deliverance

-p. rogue

## VENICE ORGANIZATIONS

- Abbot Kinney Library - 501 Venice Bl. 821-1769
- Boys & Girls Club - 2232 Lincoln Bl. 390-4477
- Beyond Baroque - 681 Venice Blvd.  
<[www.beyondbaroque.org](http://www.beyondbaroque.org)>
- Food not Bombs - POB 2881, Venice 90294 - 892-8799
- Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council - 610 California Ave. - <[www.grvnc.org](http://www.grvnc.org)> - 821-6030 - [info@grvnc.org](mailto:info@grvnc.org).
- Inside / Out Community Arts - 2210 Lincoln Blvd 397-8820 [www.OutOfCA.org](http://www.OutOfCA.org)
- LAFCO (L.A. Film Co-op) 2210 Lincoln Blvd. 574-4733
- LPBN (Linux Public Broadcasting Network) 636-1815
- Oakwood Recreation Center - 767 California Ave. - 452-7479
- Peace and Justice Center - 2210 Lincoln Blvd
- Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) - 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560
- St Joseph's Center - Rose & 4th - 396-6468
- Venice 2000 - 610 California Ave. -823-6100
- Venice Arts - 610 California Ave. 578-1745.
- Venice Community Housing Corporation - 399-4100 or <[www.vchcorp.org](http://www.vchcorp.org)>. 720 Rose Ave. Venice.
- Venice Family Clinic - 604 Rose Ave. 392-8636.
- Venice Health Center - 905 Venice Blvd. 392-8636.
- Venice High Alumni Assoc. - [www.venicehighalumni.com](http://www.venicehighalumni.com)
- Venice Historical Society - POB 12844, Venice 90295 or <[www.veniceofamerica.org](http://www.veniceofamerica.org)>
- Venice Peace & Freedom Party - 399-2215 -<[pfp@freevenice.org](mailto:pfp@freevenice.org)>.
- Venice Skills Center - 611 5th Ave. 392-4153.

• Vera Davis  
McClendon Center -  
610 California Ave. -  
305-1865.



## Suffering in America is like dying twice in one day

By Hillary Kaye

I'm so sick of wealth and power  
sick of loveless little cowards  
Tired half to death of dreaming.  
No more do I like the scheming.  
All this toil and no returns  
seems this world is here to burn  
except of course if you have money  
then perhaps it all seems so damn funny.

## Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council

All meetings begin at 7 PM, at Vera Davis McClendon Center, 610 California Ave. unless otherwise noted. 821-6030 - [www.grvnc.org](http://www.grvnc.org)

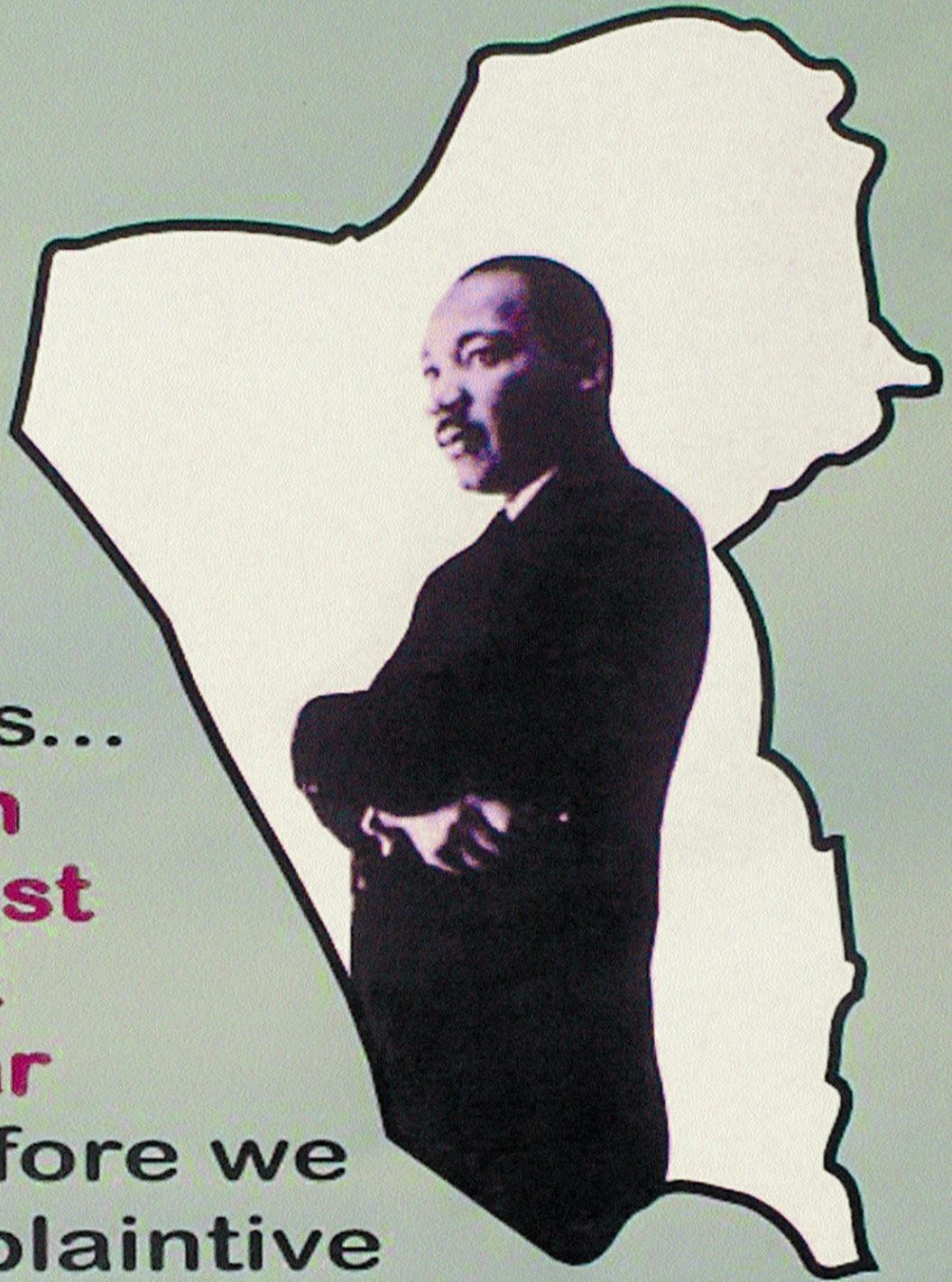
- Jan 10 - Monday - Board meeting
- Jan. 12 - Arts Committee Mtg. @ SPRAC, 685 Venice Blvd.
- Jan 24 - Monday - Board meeting
- Jan. 25 - Tuesday - Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) - 6:30PM @ L.A. City Hall (GRVNC on the agenda)
- January - Special meeting of Arts/LUPC on beautifying the Circle at Windward/Main - call for info
- Feb. 7 - Tuesday - Land Use & Planning Committee @ Boys & Girls Club, 2232 Lincoln Blvd.

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**“Wars  
are  
poor  
chisels  
for  
carving  
out  
peaceful  
tomorrows...**

**How much  
longer must  
we play at  
deadly war  
games** before we  
heed the plaintive  
pleas of the unnumbered dead  
and maimed of past wars?”

—Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.



End the War  
in Iraq, Now!

Make 2005 The Year When Peace Broke Out!

