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**March  
2010  
#341**

*Special  
Women's  
Issue*

*Photo: Krista Schwaimmer*

## A Venice Woman copes with raising a child, living in an RV, and the dreaded "sweeps"

By Rune Girshfeld

The police have been sounding out the possibilities for "sweeping" the streets since last October. October 21, 2009 was the first instance in which I personally heard usage of that inhumane and notorious metaphor to refer to removing the vehicularly

homed and sidewalk sleepers from the streets in Venice. Two policewomen came banging upon my door, shining blinding lights upon my face, before beginning the foundation of a soon to be elaborate refrain. This basic refrain was that the street would very soon be "cleaned" or "swept," because there had been complaints. They had been informed (by residents, the chief, Councilman Rosendahl, the city, or some presumably authoritative someone) that "this street" is a problem and that the police have been told to soon (at 4 a.m., next week, just plain soon) "sweep" the street. If it is a vehicle, it will be towed (though,

presumably, not the cars of Digital Domain employees or Gold's Gym clients). They always assure me (forcefully) that I could be arrested, ticketed, right now for illegally living in a vehicle (85.02 LAMC), but that has yet to happen. They say that they are constantly marking tires on my street in anticipation of 72-hour parking violations.

While the particulars of the refrain are disturbing enough on paper, the threatening and intimidating delivery of this message is truly inhumane. !

Bright lights and loud banging service for a "hello." I have often had to request numerous times before the police have identified themselves as such. The first words are usually a yelled, "come out!" The yelling and banging quickly escalates in volume and force. Within 10 seconds they are introducing an intention to break down the door. While you would think that they could only do such a thing if they have

*—continued on page 10*



## Holiday Venice tenants ask Obama administration to help them buy the apartment buildings

By Lydia Poncé

Residents of Oakwood's 15 low-income buildings known as Holiday Venice Apartments, and community members, packed the Annex Room at Oakwood Park, Feb. 23, to hear what Carol Galante Assistant Deputy Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary, had to say about preserving their homes. These apartments are homes for mostly single

working mothers, working families, and disabled seniors. "The apartments have a long history of human rights struggle to keep them affordable.

Gallante, appointed by the Obama's Administration, came to hear a panel of Venice's best: Ollie Jones; Violetta Hudson, Vice President Holiday Tenants Association; Jataun Valentine, Actionist; Rosa Arevalo, P.O.W.E.R. Board Member; and Kendra Moore, President of Tenants' Association.

Could the panel convince Galante to work with the 246 families to purchase the buildings from the owner, Gregory Perlman of GH Capital. 'Perlman is the fourth owner of Holiday Apartments.

The tenants want to purchase the complex, but need HUD to raise its subsidy per unit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month to finance the mortgage. If the tenants are unable to buy the buildings, then they want



*Carol Galante, Assistant Deputy HUD Secretary listens to the community.*

Photos: Jim Smith

*—continued on page 10*

**CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN:  
1,007 U.S. Dead - 31 this month**

**IRAQ:  
4,380 U.S. Dead - 5 this month  
31,693 U.S. Wounded  
Iraqi Dead: 1,366,350  
Cost of wars: \$966+ Billion**

costofwar.com • antiwar.com • icasualties.org



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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.

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**Is anyone else out there?**

Dear Beachhead,  
 A young man I know is in jail, partly because he is Salvadorean, and is harassed for "driving while Mexican."  
 He needs to have a new public defender, reduced bail and be bailed out.  
 Is anyone else out there?  
 Has anyone else been unfairly arrested, harassed, set up, entrapped or just plain tricked into getting a ticket? Then the ticket goes to a warrant and you're in traffic court with a very cranky judge lecturing you on the California budget. No more community service- still gotta pay the whole fine, \$640.00 bicycle ticket or a guy who obviously has a drug problem has a public defender who is trying to get him 8 years and won't do a drug deferment. Public Defender says, "Well who knows if you can stay clean or not!" This P.D. working is not working for her client! She wants him jailed for 8 years!

Liana needs to have him at the birth of their baby. Most people with money have had adult children with drug problems. But they are also able to bail them out, get them a really good lawyer, mount a credible defense, admit to having harmed oneself, get a drug deferment and go to rehab. Hopefully rehab and the birth of a new son or daughter will turn Norberto's life around. I've met Norberto, and he was a very nice, sweet young man. The family accepted him immediately.

When I was all freaked about getting evicted with last year's "new owner", he went back to work, wrote down all this information on my rights, told it to me in a very slow fashion, gave me this piece of paper with all my rights written on it- gave me a big smile, "Don't worry Mary, we'll all help you, whatever happens. You can come to O.P.C.C. and we'll get you a section 8 Housing Voucher in sixty days and help you find a new place to live."

So you know how it was in the old days- the 70's? People would go to door to door asking for \$10 to bail someone out of jail. This is how you know you are in a community or not, when you ask for help. Does anybody answer? We're asking for help. We know you all and love you all.

Thank you, Love, *Mary Getlein*

PS. I love the Beachhead!!! It helps your mind to use it!!!

**Oakwood Park**

Dear Beachhead,

As I came home from work at 4:54pm on Feb. 19, Oakwood Park was surrounded by CRASH and LAPD. Venice's young teens were being harassed and were patted down. LAPD told them they 'are in the Venice Shoreline Crips' (VSLC) and continued to treat the teens as gang members because they were at Oakwood.

Isn't this too much? Isn't this insidious? Isn't our park where teens should be? Isn't this what a class park teen program is supposed to be about? Is this Venice's Teen Program?

Many of the young men told CRASH they are in a basketball league at Oakwood. This got a response from one of LAPD Officers, "The powers inside stated that you're loitering and causing the community grief because you are standing around at the park."

We know who that is inside the park, and it needs to stop. The Oakwood Park Advisory Board (PAB) needs to speak about this so the community can let CRASH know, 'they need to go to Los Angeles where people are being killed on a daily basis.' Oakwood Park is for everyone!

*Laddie Williams*



**Police Sweep on the Beach**

Dear Beachhead,  
 On Thursday night, February 12, 2010, the day before the start of the long Valentine's Day weekend, the LAPD made a massive sweep of Venice Beach. At three o'clock in the morning anyone who was sleeping or destitute was taken into police custody - reminiscent of Oakwood 2006.

Locked away safely in cages throughout the city, counting the slow drip of time, the unlucky finding themselves in L. A. County Jail - with nothing to eat, but soggy, stale peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, for five days straight.

"I've heard of some horror stories at county," says one guy caught in the net. Later in the day the same man would wind up having an epileptic seizure, because the guards refused to give him his medicine.

As Friday was a state furlow and Monday was President's Day (now I know what it's for), the soonest anyone would be able to be processed out would be Tuesday.

"I was just sleeping in the tennis courts - sleeping," says a scruffy inmate listed as J. Smith (his real name was Mike).

"They've got us sitting around in paper pajamas," says Anthony, now in his sixties, from his perch on the cold concrete floor. He's been through the wringer a few times. This time around he was arrested for reading the newspaper. "It didn't used to be like this," he remembers. "And it's completely illegal too."

"What we need is a class action suit," chimes in another scraggly elder. "But that takes money."

"They did this once," Anthony responded. "We sued. Everyone got like \$2,500. The Supreme Court's already ruled that it's illegal, but they don't care - they keep doing it. It keeps the system going."

And going it was, with upwards of thirty, forty musky men crammed into holding cells designed for ten - "Whites and Latinos" in one cell, "Blacks and Others" in another. 16 to 20 cells in all, with women's cells included.

Officially the sweep took in fifty, however County Sheriffs were overheard saying one hundred. 100 false arrests.

And the processors didn't care. They were there to guide you through the steps and they didn't tell you twice before they reminded you of where you were. "If you don't like it," snapped one female sheriff, "stay out of jail."

Together with the regular weekend drinkers and fighters, all the way up the line, more than 600 cases needed to get through the court in one single day.

"Sure, they're going to release us," at 9PM, with no bus fare, from the LAX courthouse.

"But who's going to give me my time back?" Anthony demanded. "Our time has been stolen and no one cares!"

*Mark Lipman*

**Our Mistake**

An excellent poem in the last issue of the Beachhead, entitled *7 Dudley*, did not include its author. It was written by Rex Butters.

The Beachhead apologizes for not including his name with the poem.



# IN BRIEF

## Environmentalists versus Playa Vista

It ain't over, 'til it's over, might have been coined to describe the nearly 30 year fight to preserve the Ballona wetlands. The latest round began Feb. 24 when environmentalists submitted briefs to the Appellate Court alleging that the city of Los Angeles did not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or the California Political Reform Act.

The briefs were filed by Attorney Todd Cardiff for the Grassroots Coalition and by conservationist John Davis. The case involves Playa Vista Phase I development and its demand for state groundwater resources.

Davis alleges that some Los Angeles City Council members and the City Attorney violated the California Political Reform Act. His brief claims that some City Council members took \$126,150. from Playa Capital and individuals associated with it while the former City Attorney took \$54,150 and then advised the city council on Playa Vista without disclosing the contribution. Davis says the city council members did not step aside when the city acted in favor of Playa Vista.

Should Davis and the Grassroots Coalition be successful in their appeal, the court may order the city to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and may take action to enforce the Political Reform Act by voiding city council actions on the Playa Vista project.

The city of Los Angeles and Playa Capital, et.al. have 75 days to respond.

-Jim Smith

## Vera Davis Center in Danger of Closing?

The word on the street is that the Vera Davis Center (VDC), 610 California Ave., will shut down March 31.

At press time this was still not confirmed and no one has informed Cliff McClendon and Eddie Nuno what exactly will happen to the Center.

How can it close? The City of L.A. is broke.

Both the Venice and Mar Vista Community benefit from the services housed at the VDC such as the Latino Resource Center, Venice Neighborhood Arts, Tech Team and Venice 2000. The VDC also shares the space with the community to have meetings such as - Alcoholics Anonymous and the Venice Neighborhood Council. VDC provides food distribution twice a month (See calendar on page 11). The VDC has holiday turkey and toy distribution for families in need. There are jobs posted, other resources and information. Until recently there was free internet at the center but when Time Warner Cable became the monopoly in the Venice area, this monster conglomerate discontinued the free internet service.

Venetians should stop in, visit the VDC, and check out the resources at the front door. See how you can volunteer, be of assistance, and be part of the solution in our neighborhood to keep this community center open.

Let's get proactive and not wait until the City decision makers close this center down. Write a letter in support of the VDC and send it to Councilmember Bill Rosendahl and to Mayor Villarraigosa, let them know the VDC cannot be cut from the Venice community nor cut in the budget. We need the Vera Davis Youth & Family Center, now more than ever. Call for more information: 305-1865.

The Center is housed in the old Venice Library and is named after the late Venice activist, Vera Davis McClendon.

-Lydia Poncé

## PLASTIC BAGS, PLASTIC OCEANS, PLASTIC PEOPLE

By Jim Smith

What's wrong with plastic bags? First, they are non-biodegradable, meaning they will outlast you, and the way things are going, the entire human race. They can blow away even if you put them in a garbage can. They can end up in a tree, on a fence, or worse, in a storm drain where they will soon be swept out to sea to eventually join billions of their kind in the Texas-sized North Pacific Gyre, otherwise known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, or the Pacific Trash Vortex. The BBC reports that a similar, but smaller, trash dump has recently been discovered in the Atlantic Ocean, east of the Bermuda islands. While churning around in mid-ocean, the bags break up into smaller and smaller bits of plastic. Unfortunately, sea birds, turtles and fish think the little bits of plastic are good to eat. Illness or death is often the result. What goes around, comes around, when humans eat fish that have toxic chemicals throughout their bodies from the plastic bags, they too get sick.

Most of these alarming facts about plastic bags are well-known. One would think that Americans would curtail their current annual use of 100 billion plastic bags (and 12 million barrels of oil) which make their way to the gyre or to landfills. Unfortunately, the main reaction from the public is indifference and the reaction of the plastic bag industry is to file suit against nearly every effort to reduce the use of the bags. A few cities have heeded their constituents and have taken steps to rein in "single use bags," with varying success.

The most successful is San Francisco which has had a ban on plastic bags since 2007. San Francisco and Malibu and the only two cities in California not to feel the wrath of the plastic bag industry's litigation. Manhattan Beach was not so lucky. The city's ordinance against the bags was overturned by the courts. The industry sued on the grounds that the ordinance against plastic bags violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Another case of amoral lawyers using an environmental law against the environment and bringing in the big bucks. Since then, cities and counties have been careful to create an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) before enacting a law that either bans or charges a fee for single use bags (whether plastic or paper).

Grocery stores are the main distributors of plastic bags. Beginning in 1977, we consumers gained the choice of paper or plastic bags. A tough choice. Should we destroy a forest or should we gum up the oceans? The familiar reframe at the checkout line was "paper or plastic?" That lasted for about a decade or so. Then we started getting plastic bags unless we asked for paper. There was a good economic incentive for sticking us with plastic. Environmental Engineer Coby Skye, with the County's Dept. of Public Works says that plastic bags cost only one or two cents each while paper bags range from a nickel to eight cents.

Perhaps this is why a couple of weeks ago when I was in Ralphs Market at California and Lincoln, and again had forgotten to bring a cloth bag, I asked for paper bags, and was told that all they had was plastic. Imagine my surprise when I protested to the night manager (who I was sure would rectify the situation). Instead of sharing my alarm, she called security and had me

escorted out of the store. The indignity! Never had I been 86ed from a second-class Ralphs before. But Venice is full of environmentally-conscious residents who must badger the Ralphs managers repeatedly. She must have been at the end of her tether.

Some of the grocery chains have made token efforts to reduce single use bags. Ralphs has "incentive" programs in some corporate divisions, however, they seem to be a fairly well-kept secret. The Trader Joe's at Palms and Sepulveda has a biweekly drawing you can enter if you used a cloth bag. The grand prize is \$25! The "Captains" as the bosses are called tell me that each store has its own rules and prizes. Try to find a store that offers \$30! Whole Foods, in spite of its anti-health care and anti-union attitudes has eliminated plastic bags from its stores. Smart and Final on Lincoln Blvd., on the other hand, offers only plastic bags. No paper. And Costco has no bags at all, only recycled boxes.

Still, it seems that government regulation is going to be required. Why not have a statewide law and be done with it? That's been tried with no success so far. The last two bills were both bottled up in the Appropriations Committee. One bill, AB2449, did pass. It bans not plastic bags but instead bans local government from enacting a fee on plastic bag use. The plastic bag industry, like many large corporations, seems to be particularly strong in Sacramento.

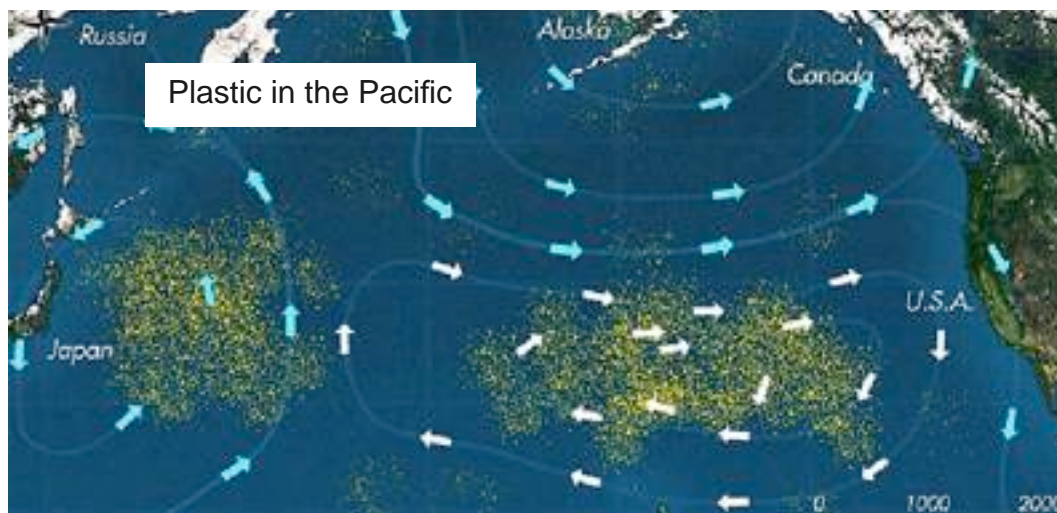
Closer to home Venice cannot restrict plastic bags since we have no government at all (the neighborhood council doesn't count). The city of Los Angeles has actually banned plastic bag use, but only in city facilities. According to City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, the city is now waiting for action by the county before it proceeds. The county is putting the finishing touches on an EIR which could be used by all 88 cities in L.A. County.

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky's Senior Deputy Susan Nissen told the Beachhead that the Board of Supervisors would likely consider an ordinance in July or August of this year. While the County's ordinance would only apply to unincorporated areas, such as Marina del Rey, it would set the tone for the city of L.A., Santa Monica and surrounding cities. A full ban in all of the county would eliminate around six billion bags per year.

Coby Skye says the county's EIR will likely begin a 45-day public comment period next month. The EIR would give legal cover to either an outright ban on plastic bags and a fee for paper bags, or a fee on both plastic and paper. Skye believes a fee of 25 cents could drastically reduce the number of single use bags. Then, we might remember to bring our reusable bags with us. Perhaps the overriding question is how much is it worth to us to begin to save the oceans - and the planet.

### What You Can Do:

1. Don't use plastic bags.
2. Keep a reusable bag.
3. Support legislation to ban or charge a fee for single use bags.



From the Beachhead Archives Nov. 1977:

## Remembering Bingo: “Daughter-of-Darkness, Sister of Light”

By Carol Fondiller

People gathered on the rocks at Brooks Avenue Beach to remember a very important person.

The people who are moving in and building Valley-sized houses on Venice lots, whimpering that less than 2,000 square feet for a family is a slum, wouldn't think “Bingo” Bingham important at all. In their eyes she was a failure -- Why? Because she did not have a Cuisanart? The city agencies and the Coastal Commission look upon people like Bingo as “unfeasible”. And certainly low income housing is “unfeasible” because the property values have been artificially driven up by paper swapping speculators who drive up the value without one cent of real money changing hands -- “All done with mirrors, folks.” But you have to be a success and success means money. Go to jail for a few months for selling out the country, write your memoirs, make a mint -- you're a success. Turn people onto LSD, snitch on your friends, jump bail, write a book -- you're a success. You can live in Venice. No others need apply.

But Venice is still an economically stable community, all economic classes still intermix. Which means it's a Home Town -- a Home Town by choice. You watch kids grow up and people grow up. We see one another getting older. The people who you left behind when you went on your search for whatever Holy Grail you had in mind will still be there when you come back. Venice is a home for the rootless. They'll find someone they know.

A Home Town is where people come back to partake in ceremonies that mark rites of passages. Births, christenings, brisses, weddings, all remind us of the fragility of human beings.

A Home Town is where people remember you after you die, even if you didn't write the Great American Novel, shoot the President or give Johnny Carson the finger.

A Home Town is where you are immortal. Venice is a Home Town. The usual pace of change and attrition of people moving out, moving in and dying has been escalated by the City Planning Department and speculators. But there were rocks at Brooks Beach to say goodbye to Benita “Bingo” Bingham, flower child, doer, dreamer, the bane of bureaucracy, Animal Regulation in particular. Bingo was thirty years old when she was murdered.

Bingo striding down the front, swathed in scarves, taking a swig from a proffered short day, moving on and traveling light. Bingo returning from the Valley, the desert Maine, running up to people, her arms outspread, shouting affectionate obscenities to her friends in a husky humorous voice.

Bingo describing another hair-raising close call with authorities or some crazy dude who picked her up hitchhiking, so that while the blood ran cold, the stomach ached from laughing.

Bingo, alley cat thin arms trashing in the garbage cans and wearing discards with the elegance of a queen. Bingo, her soft short hair curling around her small face, her eyes large and dark with fear as she was going to court to testify against the men who raped and beat her, uncomfortable in dealing with the police who had arrested her for vagrancy, now being helped by them to protect other women from similar, violent humiliation.

Bingo. A Person of the streets.

Bingo, whose veins had collapsed long ago from the needles she'd stuck in them.

Bingo was fresh and young when she came to Venice. Her skin was resilient and firm. She was pretty. She got involved with drugs. High on drugs and riding with a drugged up dope, she got into an accident. Her face was scarred, her teeth were knocked out. But heading down the Ocean Front Walk on a bike she'd borrowed from a friend with or without their knowledge, she was beautiful.

Bingo had a Samoan disregard for personal property. If she needed it, she'd take it. She didn't steal it. Sometimes she'd lose what she'd borrowed, or it would be stolen from her. She'd try and replace it with something of equal value. Sometimes she borrowed that, and things would become quite complicated. It was sort of like the operations of Bert Lance. Bingo was alive. Intense. Vulnerable. She understood other peoples grief and had a humorous objectivity about herself. Periodically she would lose her false teeth in the surf, and she'd walk around with her mouth covered until Medi-Cal would come up with another pair.

Bingo would try, off and on, to keep a pad. But she couldn't stay in four walls very long. On cold winter nights with the rain coming down in knife-sharp drops, Bingo would be seen wrapped up in blankets, her dog Beamer in her arms, fording, the ankle-deep debris-filled river that was Speed-way, looking for a warm hallway or alcove.

Bingo traveled light. She didn't take up much room.

After Bingo was raped and she'd testified in court, she moved to Ocean Park. She wanted to clean up her act. She rented an apartment. She was finally, people said, getting it together.

Bingo told the truth when she talked to people about herself. But she didn't tell the whole truth to any one person. She had different people she told different things to.

She wrote, people said. She wrote well. Bingo went to poetry readings, jazz concerts, and art openings. She knew dealers, procurers, poets, dancers, singers, and combinations of any and all of the above.

Sometimes she was less than kind to her lovers or would be lovers, people said.

People said she was abused and battered from the day she was born. Wild Thing. Our Lady of the Wild Things. Gypsy. Urchin, Harri-dan, Bitch, Crane, Mean, Clown, Sturdy, Human.

She was beaten and stabbed to death in that apartment where she was getting her act together. People say. Some people say that they loved each other. He'd come back from a stay in jail. People say, some people say they were drunk and arguing. People say. Some people say her husband did it. People say. Some people say he is in custody. People say. Some people say he isn't.

Willy Loman's sister cries out at Willy's funeral in Death of a salesman, “Attention must be paid.” John Donne wrote “No man is an island. Each man's death diminishes me.”

Friends and enemies met at the Brooks Beach rocks. We sat and stood in the warm mid-October sun. A man was crying. “I love this family.” Junkies, Poets, Philosophers, Children, all with their different conceptions of what happens after the heart and brain goes out and the body decays gave testimony for Bingo.

Bob Alexander from the temple of Man read poems by Stuart Perkoff and Marcella. Frank Rios standing tall in winged sleeves read a poem and burnt it. Flowers were strewn on the waves forming a blanket for half of Bingo's ashes. The family has the other half.

“Just like Bingo,” someone smiled, k”she was always scattered.” Flowers. Incense. Babies. The Sun. Pelicans flew in strict formation, dipping gently over the flower-covered water.



*Spray-paint epitaph on south wall of Ocean Market. Photo by B. Feldthouse.*

## Profile: Venice Singer Simone White

By Erica Snowlake

Introducing Simone White, she who wanders whither and hither around the world, charming audiences with her (encore!) prodigious gifts of singing, songwriting, and fine guitar playing. Our lithe lovely mingles the tradition of

the bard (wandering) and the chanteuse (crooning) with a voice evoking the honey-dripping bird tribes of Hawaii while boldly upholding the enlightened craftfulness of a female Dylan. It's in her genes, with a folk-singing Mother, light-sculpture artist Dad, and grandma a burlesque queen in her day.

Her inherent whimsy charmed us upon first sight, we've been friends ever since. Let's catch up! I say upon arriving at the Zen home in Venice that she shares with filmmaker boyfriend Bob, stepping gingerly across a little wooden bridge over a pond of sparkling white and golden koi. Sipping hojicha, Simone's happy to be home once again. She's been touring steadily the past three years, recently returning from a month-long engagement with singer/songwriter Victoria Williams in Spain, playing in chapels and community halls to upwards of 500 people, rapt in pin-dropping silence as she delivers songs from her new CD "Yakiimo" (delicious mountain sweet potato in Japanese). Raving of the pleasures of playing in Europe (Portugal, Basque Country, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Womad and Green Man festivals in the UK, Scotland, Ireland) and overseas in Japan, she expresses gratefulness for the respectful way in which touring artists and musicians are cherished, celebrated and honored. Many of her performances were free, subsidized by local government grants. We bemoan the financial cuts of art and music programs in public schools across America, sadly acknowledging the reason behind this country's current and ongoing downfall: addiction to War.

Simone's first CD I Am the Man, recorded in Nashville, features a peace brigade of anti-war tunes, including "The American War" "Great Imperialistic State" and "We Used to Stand So Tall", reflecting her intense disillusion with the Bush administration (I recall flowing tears while listening to the latter). She is especially touched by the appreciation German audiences demonstrate for her political songs, encouraging her to continue playing them, even as Obama has since (supposedly) replaced "the greater evil". "Why am I still haranguing America?" she ponders, while in the next moment quietly affirming "the wars are continuing...."

She shares an emotional moment she experienced in Japan, breaking down while facing the giant Kuan Yin (the Goddess of Compassion) statue marking the memorial of the Temple of the Fallen Soldiers of WWII (or the Pacific War, as they term it). It is here in Japan she first hears the haunting, atonal prayer of the Yakiimo man, praising his wares of roasted yams warming in a hand-held cart he wheels thru alleys and narrow streets. Though the cart has been mostly replaced by trucks and the nostalgic cry with recordings, the heart of the old-fashioned original inspired the title track of her CD, a beautiful rendition of the call her Japanese fans say evokes childhood memories of reverently holding the mouth-watering offering. We joke about our past lives, as Simone reckons "the parallel times happening all at once" and how matter-of-factly such beliefs are held by the people she's met in India and Japan.

Our thoughts turn to Venice, fragrant with Spring jasmines and magnolias blossoming in every garden. Simone enjoys riding her bicycle along the ocean, finding spaces with "nothing to buy" healing for the soul. She supports the Venice Farmer's Market every Friday, across the public library on Venice Blvd. and Rawesome Foods, an organic membership club at 665 Rose. She's disappointed with people trashing Venice, especially when "everyone knows better littering here eventually winds up polluting the ocean." She takes responsibility in caring for our home seriously, citing the fact the 100 million ton garbage patch, ninety percent plastic, floating in the North Pacific Gyre, is made up of individual purchases. Her gentle admonishments takes a whimsical approach as she suggests people wanting to throw something down upon the earth might find a creative release in composting, an art Simone and Bob maintain wherever they live (it's easy to do!) She likens co-creating the new black dirt rich with worms pure alchemy, the sensation of being part of the cycle of life to turning lead into gold.

Before we part, we feed Bootchii, the mama squirrel who lives in the giant palm tree, walnuts, while listening to Simone's joyful cover of Victoria Williams "You Are Loved". She mentions seeing "Love is the Change" graffiti on Rose Avenue. I think she sees love everywhere.

To hear "Yakiimo" and a listing of Simone's upcoming shows:  
[www.simonewhite.com](http://www.simonewhite.com)



Simone White  
at the Farmer's  
Market

Photo: Erica Snowlake

## Profile: Venice Activist Ivonne Guzman

Free Venice Beachhead • March 2010 • 5

By Krista Schwimmer

With even more homeless people living on the streets, it is inspiring to meet and talk with Ivonne Guzman, CEO of "Reach for the Top," a federally tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Located in Venice since 2005, this organization is dedicated to housing the homeless, as well as distributing food to the community itself.

To accomplish their main mission of housing the homeless, they have purchased two properties: a triplex and a single family home, allowing them to have 4 different households. Two of these households hold all men; one, a mix of men and women; and the fourth houses families. Due to the high cost of real estate in Venice, both households are outside of Venice itself. The people they serve, however, are from the Venice community.

Ivonne is a passionate and enthusiastic member of the Venice Community. She came to Venice with her parents when she was five and has lived on the same block since, her parents having purchased several properties together. Although she did not plan on becoming involved in "Reach for the Top", she believes in "divine intervention, divine path". This is the path she has been put on.

What is amazing about this program is that not only does it provide shelter for anyone needing it – people ranging from the very educated to those coming out of prison – but it helps them gather the tools to then move on to permanent housing. Some of this is accomplished with the help of the Department of Social Services that started a private housing program 2 years ago. This allows for some basic funds for each individual. The rest is accomplished through the contributions of the household folks themselves. Everyone contributes in some way. There is no such thing as a free ride.

Although they do not keep statistics, Ivonne says the program is very successful. The average stay is between 9 and 12 months. They can stay up to 24 months. "The truth is," Ivonne declares, "I don't kick anyone out unless they are bad, meaning they are causing problems for everyone else. Then, they have to go." She says they are particularly good at keeping clients from returning to crime; and recently, she helped a single father with amazing computer skills obtain a job at NASA. Now, he is looking for a home here in Venice.

Currently, what keeps Ivonne motivated and excited is the new facility in the works that would add 27 new beds for moms and children only. "It's really sad," Ivonne bemoans "when you see young kids out there with babies." There are some funds already allocated for this facility. They are working on developing a site for it in the West Adams District.

Ivonne has a lot of dreams. She dreams of developing affordable housing here in Venice; of greening throughout the City itself; and of employment development. All of this takes will, money and most of all time – "time and a good team", she exclaims.

Towards the end of our interview, Ivonne announces that she has decided to run for office in the Neighborhood Council. "I'm scared to death; but

by the same token, I just feel that it is time to – when I was younger we would have parades for things like Cinco de Mayo. The people were more united. We need to go back to that more, to people holding hands and saying we're not going to take this anymore. We don't want to be known as the persecutors of the people, just because you don't have a place to live."

It is people like Ivonne – with her compassion, commitment, and sense of community – that give Venice soul. If Venice is to truly be, as Ivonne herself believes, "the heartbeat of Los Angeles," then we must support her and others like her even more than ever.



Ivonne Guzman



# The Life of Euni Kang



By Chris Chanaud

It was about a week after Euni Kang was raped and murdered, that I went down to Venice to meet up with her 2 closest friends. I had never really spent a lot of time with them but I'd heard enough about them from Euni that I felt I already knew them. It wasn't really a fun or cheery sort of visit. There were a lot of harsh realities for us to face, and emotions to experience. At some point one of us mentioned being hungry so we all went next store to the local soup n' sandwich place. As the ladies went to make their orders, I sorta spaced out remembering a nice quiet lunch in that very same place with Euni a few weeks earlier. She'd gotten the french onion soup and it looked so much better than the sandwich I'd ordered. I was jealous and kept taking sips of her soup.

We always shared food when we ate together. It came my turn at the counter and I ordered the french onion soup. When my name was called the guy behind the counter was saying something about the oddity of three orders in a row of the same thing. Euni's two friends and I had all unknowingly ordered the same thing. Now most people wouldn't pay this much mind or they'd say that it was coincidence, especially if it didn't fit with their world view. But to me this was just Euni's way of saying hello from wherever her spirit had gone. It was just like her to add some warm comfort to a cold chilly occasion.

Euni was my girlfriend for 6 years, and I'd never felt so close to anyone. When I look at her footprint in the world the real tragedy to me is that more people know her for how she died than for how she lived. Her parents had her cremated with neither service nor marker. They were unfortunate enough to have to bury her only other sibling (a brother) just 7 years earlier when he died of cancer. The reason Euni moved to America was to spend time with her brother as he passed.

Euni grew up in Seoul South Korea. Her parents who had expected the traditional normal child had no idea what they were in for with Euni. She defied normality and social conditioning. She had a tendency to ditch school and go explore the city when she was young. Euni was always a few steps ahead of everybody else and smarter than most. When she was in college, she joined a commune and participated in student protests against the government. She saw her friends beaten down by riot police and tear gas. But it never mattered what you did or said to her. She was stubborn as an old oak tree, immovable and unshakable. She was always quick to see through lies and propaganda.

A few years after her brother died, Euni purchased a dry cleaning business in a big office tower on Wilshire. Most of her customers were lawyers and business executives. She got along with most of them but sometimes her clients would give her an attitude of pity like "Gee how did you end up here?". Sometimes they'd even try to offer her what they considered help "up the ladder of success". Essentially the more materialistic ones tried to make her more like them. She tended to laugh a lot at these offers. She always laughed at people's egos and insecurities. She thought it was so funny that people assumed that their criteria for success was the same as hers. But she really enjoyed her simple 6 hour a day job. It allowed her to do all the things she loved like surfing, drumming and dancing.

I always admired her ability to enjoy life. She'd wake up one day and decide that she wanted to try something new like drumming. By midday she'd be online at work looking for drumming classes. By evening she'd be in a class doing it. She found the greatest of pleasures in the simplest of things. I once asked her what was the best meal she ever had. She looked up for a moment to think and said "I made some tomato and squash soup the other

day. And it was really good!" But then tomatoes were one of her favorite things in life. Like charge bars on a cell phone or lives on a videogame, Euni had an imaginary tomato status bar floating in her head. She had to have a few every day or she'd feel incomplete.

In a lot of ways she had a pretty childlike sense of jubilation and fun. Her favorite movies were the animated films of Hayo Miyazaki. Months before his latest movie *Ponyo* came out, she had memorized the theme song in Japanese (her second of three languages) "*Ponyo ponyo sakana no ko...*" she'd sing to herself whenever she had the chance. But one of her favorite childish pleasures was annoying my cats. It became clear pretty early on in our relationship that one of them (a girl kitty) was intensely jealous of me and Euni. So, for example, when we'd be sitting there watching a movie, and kitty came over to me for petting, Euni would jump on my lap and throw her arms around me. She'd look down at the annoyed kitty and say "No... You can't have him. He's mine". I couldn't help but laugh. It was often her first thought when she came over to visit. "Where are the kitties?" she'd say in her childlike tone "I'm going to bug them! Im feeling buggy." But it was never anything mean.

Euni's death was a real tragedy for those lucky enough to have known her. But most of the time when I think of her I smile. We had so many good times and great experiences together. Those memories have helped sustain me as I deal with her departure from this world.

It's hard to see the sense or good in her transition. But I have faith in upper management. I know I've learned a lot since she left. And I rest easier knowing that she did no harm in the world and a lot of good for those around her. For me the best way to honor her memory is to be strong and appreciate the here and now. Enjoy life to the fullest, and always try to give more than you get. That's exactly how Euni Kang lived her life.

## Andrew Koenig, My Venice Neighbor and Friend

Free Venice Beachhead • March 2010 • 7

By Krista Schwimmer

On Thursday night, February 25<sup>th</sup>, my friend, Simona, found me at work to tell me that my friend and neighbor, Andrew Koenig, had been found dead in Stanley Park, Vancouver, Canada. Although he had been missing by then since the 16<sup>th</sup>, and had a history of depression, I had still held up hope for his safe return. Friends and family sweeping the park had finally found his body off a trail. The news later confirmed his death as a suicide.

I last saw him at his Venice apartment the night before he left for Montreal, Canada. As he often did, he knocked on my back door. When he told me he was moving and flying to Canada the next day, I was surprised. He had not mentioned any of this to us earlier. I said as much and then asked him his plans. He said he wasn't sure, that he was going to most likely travel for a few months. He had friends he could stay with in Canada. He wanted to know if I needed any herbs or spices from his kitchens; I told him no, and then hugged him, saying I would miss him. He told me he would miss me, too, and returned to his apartment to continue his work. Little did I know he had given away most of his possessions. He seemed calm and focused.

Although his move was a surprise, I knew he was miserable in Venice. I knew, too, how much he loved Canada (a shared love as my husband is from Nova Scotia). He had lived in Vancouver when he was younger and still visited friends up there regularly. Whenever he returned from his visits to Can-

ada, he seemed happy and refreshed. I thought that he was perhaps trying to make a dash for Canada. I had done that myself, in my 30's, when I had moved to Nova Scotia. So, I interpreted it as a man going after his dreams. I planned on checking up with him through Face Book to keep in touch with him.

In 1998, when I first moved into this neighborhood, folks still took the time to get to know each other. Andrew was no exception. I would see Andrew in passing when I threw out the trash or left cat food on my back steps for the wandering Venice cats. Being Canadian, my husband, Michael, would see Andrew and say, "Hey, come over for a beer!" Over time, Andrew would come over often for a variety of reasons -- to borrow something; to use our printer; or simply to visit on the front porch where squirrels and birds would come because of the feeders. We had many conversations on the porch ranging from politics, to meaningful work, and critters. I particularly remember how Andrew loved the idea of astral travel and had consciously tried to do it.

Andrew was a kind hearted person, sometimes in spite of himself. There was a group of cats that lived in the back of our two apartment buildings. In the beginning, there must have been at least 6 of them. They were abandoned after their owner, a woman next store, died of cancer. There was a golden tom cat named Junior that Andrew particularly helped. He was a very needy, physical cat. At first, Andrew was a bit put out by Junior's demanding way. (Believe me, we all were!) They became particularly close buddies, with Andrew regularly leaving his door open for



Photo: Krista Schwimmer

Junior to wander up and visit with him, particularly when Junior was ill. Andrew would take Junior to the vet and pay for his vet bills even when he, himself, had little money. When Junior finally died, Andrew knocked on my backdoor. He had Junior's body, knowing I would want to say my final goodbyes before he buried him.

—continued on page 10

## Venice Community Celebrates the Life of Carol Fondiller Berman

By Karl Abrams

Venetians gathered together at Beyond Baroque for a joyous memorial on February 13 to honor the wit and wisdom and amazing life of Carol Fondiller Berman who died on January 9. In a program moderated by Jim Smith of the Beachhead, speaker after speaker spoke of their deep friendship and loving respect for Carol, while others read brilliant and funny excerpts from some of her 41 years of writings for the Beachhead she helped to found.

Maryjane presented a video she made of Carol and Linda Lucks spoke first about her many years of friendship with Carol. Karl Abrams read one of Carol's numerous articles in the Beachhead about living in Venice in the 1970s.

Carol's sister, Judi Richards, talked lovingly about spending her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday with Carol. Tomito, an old friend read a poem he had written about the "early years" with Carol in the 1960's where Carol was described as "spewing volcanic truths and blazing new trails..." Moe Stravener, another old friend who wrote with Carol on the Beachhead, reminded us that "she was a light to the community" and how "no one could write like Carol."

Ruth Galanter, former L.A. councilmember spoke of how she met Carol at a Venice canal festival and has, ever since, been "honored to have known Carol."

Debra Bowen, our California Secretary of State, remembered Carol as a much respected (and sometimes feared) Venice activist with an "incredible laugh". Bowen referred to Carol as a "pure individualist" who was such a natural leader that sometimes she just walked to the front of a community meeting and "just started to chair."

Carol would later be honored in 2006 as the "Queen of Venice" by the L.A. City Council.

Pam Emerson read a Beachhead story describing how for Carol, "...living in Venice was a form of immortality." Carol will always be remembered as a humorous story teller, political guru and conscience of the community who dedicated her life – moment by moment it seemed – to the "preservation and betterment" of Venice.

Composer and pianist Brad Kaye played an original classic piece entitled "Funeral March" written for and dedicated to Carol. Venice singer Suzy Williams, accompanied by Eric Ahlberg and Sam Clay, sang "Moon Over Venice". And then, towards the end of the memorial, Suzy led the audience in singing lyrics about Venice written by Carol entitled, "Too Poor to Live Here".

Carol Copatch, Emily Winters and Larry Gross spoke of their friendship with Carol, Carol Tantau read from the Beachhead. Chuck Bloomquist read one of Carol's poems followed by Lynne Bronstein,

Don Geagan, Steve Goldman and Phyllis Korn speaking of their memorable moments with Carol.

Carol was a long time advocate of keeping benches on Ocean Front Walk. She ran against Tom Hayden for State Assembly on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket she also co-founded.

Carol was a leader who inspired. Whether it was a featured Beachhead article that would get the whole community talking - or her fearless and publicly outspoken advocacy of affordable housing and protection of the homeless and the poor. This was evident in the adoring and sad faces of the many who came to honor her.

After the memorial program, a dozen or so close friends walked past Carol's house on 5 Rose Ave and scattered her ashes on the beach. Some placed white roses in the Venice Sea.

Carol was so full of life it seemed as if everyone could feel her presence that afternoon.



Young Carol



Friends of Carol: (L to R) Ruth Galanter, Marge Buckley, Emily Winters, Moe Stavnezer, Mike Suhd, Maryjane, Arnold Sprinter, Lance Diskan, Olga Palo, Steve Clare

## Praising Howard Zinn:

# A People's History of the United States, and The People Speak

By Erica Snowlake

It is good to recall Ms. Thelma Trotty, the first teacher who blew (enlightened) my mind. She taught high school history in the late seventies in upstate New York from her unique perspective as a native Iroquois and a gay women's rights advocate. Condemning the recorded history of our textbooks "propaganda" she initiated the dissemination and discussion of versions of the past which didn't necessarily serve "liberty and justice for all". Opening our eyes to the suffering of the oppressed, and the ongoing struggle for equality in our society, she encouraged independent thought and critical analysis with the liberating anarchist mantra "Question Authority!" infusing our hearts with yearning for the dignified community of all beings in solidarity. Radical compassion! I began to shed (in layers) the skin of a privileged young white woman.

In 1980 Professor Emeritus Howard Zinn published *The People's History of the United States*, encouraged by his wife Roslyn to spread to an ever-widening audience the lectures he gave students at Boston University. The book retells American history from the point of view of "the people who have given this country whatever liberty and democracy we have"; the brave souls who have eloquently spoken out and organized resistance against genocide, slavery, war, poverty, and racial and gender inequality, while in the midsts of enduring it, often having sacrificed their very lives for it. These voices of our ancestors; Native Americans, slaves, soldiers, war dissenters, union organizers, immigrant laborers, peace marchers, yippies, feminists, resonate louder than ever today, reminding us democracy only originates and prospers by and for the people who serve to vigilantly nurture and uphold it.

Howard Zinn died in January, leaving us the inspiring legacy of his life as an educator, prolific writer, historian, playwright, social activist, remorseful WWII bombardier, and compassionate human being. He was instrumental in supporting the non-violent actions of students at Atlanta's Spelman College in fighting segregation, including the writer and poet Alice Walker. Arrested more than half a dozen times for civil disobedience, it is rumored on his last day at BU, 100 students enthusiastically accepted Zinn's invitation to join him in a picket line. He did not shy from telling the truth of the genocidal depredation of Christopher Columbus, the blood lust of Theodore Roosevelt, or the racial failings of Abraham Lincoln. His last piece was a critical expose urging President Obama to follow the policies of Dr. Martin Luther King. It is no surprise those who call him friend include Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier.

The *People's History of the United States* has now been read by over two million people! I recently discovered the graphic adaptation entitled *A People's History of American Empire*, which opens with the events of 9-11 and explores U.S. imperialism from Wounded Knee to Viet Nam, the Iran-Contra scandal to the invasion of Iraq. It chronicles Mr. Zinn's own story, the son of poor Jewish immigrants growing up in Brooklyn tenements.

A few months ago, the History Channel aired a two-hour spoken word and musical performance based on *Voices of a People's History of the United States*. "The People Speak", narrated and co-directed by Howard Zinn with Arnold Arnove, features readings from live performances at Boston's Cutler Majestic Theater and Malibu's Performing Arts Center by a variety of acclaimed actors and musicians, bringing to life the valiant speeches, poetry, dying words,

and shining integrity of those throughout history who refuse to be compromised by greed, privilege, and power. Performers channel the immortal words of Chief Joseph, Frederick Douglas, Mark Twain, Genora Dollinger, Langston Hughes, Woody Guthrie, Caesar Chavez, Marion Wright Edelman, and dozens of 'plain ol' regular folk with guts.

In an interview with Amy Goodman of Democracy Now, Howard Zinn summed up our chances for a universal peaceful co-existence: "If you want to end terrorism, you have to stop being terrorists, which is what war is." For all his insight into history's cruelties, he always held hope, reminding us human history is equally filled with acts of compassion, sacrifice, courage, and kindness. In his autobiography, *You Can't Be Neutral from a Moving Train*, he promises "If we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is a succession of presents, and to live now as we think humans should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself, a marvelous victory."

Thank-you Howard and Roslyn Zinn, you are in all hearts that are dreaming for freedom.



Howard Zinn died on Jan. 27 in Santa Monica at age 87.

## Women Speak Out! From Howard Zinn's "Voices of A People's History of the United States"

**Emma Goldman**, the Lithuanian immigrant, feminist orator, agitator, and anarchist, arrested in 1917 on conspiracy charges of "inducing persons to not register" excerpted from a 1908 speech in San Francisco before the outbreak of WW1, entitled *Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty*:

What, then, is patriotism? "Patriotism, sir, is the last resort of scoundrels." (quoting Dr. Samuel Johnson) Indeed, ignorance, conceit, arrogance, and egotism are the essentials of patriotism, which assumes our globe is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. Those who have had the fortune of being born on some particular spot, consider themselves better, nobler, grander, more intelligent than the living beings inhabiting any other spot. It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill, and die in the attempt to impose his superiority upon all the others. Yet our hearts swell with pride at the thought that America is becoming the most powerful nation on earth, and that it will eventually plant her iron foot on the necks of all other nations."

Such is the logic of patriotism.....Thinking men and women the world over are beginning to realize that patriotism is too narrow and limited a conception to meet the necessities of our time. The centralization of power has brought into being an international feeling of solidarity among the oppressed nations of the world; a solidarity which fears not foreign invasion, because it is bringing all the workers to the point when they will say to their masters, "Go and do your own killing. We have done it long enough for you."

**Sojourner Truth**, the black abolitionist, freed from slavery in 1827, at a women's convention in 1851, in which she "joins the indignation of her race to the indignation of her sex":

"That man over there says that a woman needs to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches.....Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles or gives me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I would work as much and eat as much as a man, when I could get it, and bear the lash as well. And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen em most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them!"

**Rose Chernin** on Organizing the Unemployed in the Bronx in the 1930's:

I would address the crowd gathered in the streets below: "People, fellow workers. We are the wives of unemployed men and the police are evicting us. Today we are being evicted. Tomorrow it will be you. So stand by and watch. What is happening to us will happen to you. We have no jobs. We can't afford food. Our rents are too high. The marshal has brought the police to carry out our furniture. Are you going to let it happen?" Our fight was successful. The rents came down, the evicted families returned to their apartments, the landlord would stop fighting us. Within two years we had rent control in the Bronx.



## Tumbling

By Karl Abrams

So I waited for you,  
This time completely.  
Looking only at the garden gate  
Where you would first appear.  
Something moved gracefully,  
gently in the languid afternoon.  
It was you, I thought.

Then, no, it was just a leaf  
in that sweet lonely wind...  
tumbling effortlessly

But yes, that is also you.

## (dedicated to the memory of Milton and Bunny Bratton)

I long for the beach  
I long for a beach  
The one I recall is out of reach...



Milton Bratton

The dolly with the pink hair in the Venice dept.store-gone  
The candy striped playground at windward-gone  
The 10 cent tram up and down the boardwalk-gone  
The king neptune of P O P's entrance-gone  
Jack's by the sea-gone  
The Lafayette's restaurant-gone  
The green pagodas we sat in-gone  
The Fox movie house-gone  
The old val's drug store-gone  
Hotels on the beach front full of seniors-gone  
Running into friends you know for years-gone

My parent's love was born in venice,  
and they both died there.

I long for a beach.

-kitty bratton

## Praise for a lost Woman

by hillary kaye

A life covered  
in the blood of betrayal  
A cremation of dreams  
A fire pit  
of loss  
A woman's  
life  
the life of the soul  
enmeshed  
in sorrow and joy  
She gives birth and nurtures  
and still is slandered  
by a world enthralled with  
its own destruction  
And yet she loves the very things  
that hate her  
and is buried by the  
same blood as her sons

## Life's Work



By Vecelina Minkovski

Life demands  
That we grow up and  
Teaches us to persevere  
Our independence is crucial cause  
It frees our selves and  
Gives us power to create  
It reminds us that we've had  
The choices we are learning all along...  
Unfortunately countless human beings  
Especially the women and children of this world,  
Have a limited pool from which to choose...  
Or they have no choice at all...

No thanks to  
Oppression-  
Ignorance-  
Violence-  
And Fear...  
It is our duty to make these demons  
Disappear...

It is our destiny to fulfill our utmost  
Purpose... right now.  
With the abundance of resources  
That we have so generously been  
Given...

It is our responsibility  
To make this world a better place  
One act of kindness  
At a time

So make the best choices that you can  
And help those who have no choice at all  
This is what it means me to be alive.  
The fresh breath of oxygen given...  
Had better create a happy reality that  
Flourishes and grows many other  
Happy realities...

This is purpose.  
This is life's work...  
Now come along  
And sing the song  
Of peace on earth  
And good will to all.

20:35 Friday, February 26, 2010, behind the Talking Stick, for Carol Fondiller..... I never got to meet you. Now you're lost To haunt me, and no ordinary ghost You are. Just what I needed: one more shock To waken me too late, a heavy rock Attached to my left ankle, pulling me In spirals to carve through a leaden sea. A millstone to embrace, held to my heart. A sense of sinking lingers. I report What I receive via eternity. I never got to know you. Certainty That you remain, in memories, to lock Into some private chamber, as the clock Has sounded from the tower, tolls at best, Reminding us: no ordinary ghost..... R.F.Wagner, Jr.

## During the campaign

During the campaign  
the hope rose  
an Obama Nation  
candidate Obama was a true single payer supporter  
The truth  
in the adage: "Campaign promises are meant to be broken"  
gives us an  
abomination.  
Rahm Emanuel  
"not a problem"  
unfortunately, an apparent  
role model  
Our President  
is part of the  
"Best Democracy money can buy."

-Edward Ferrer

## Changeling

By Jim Smith

She rides upon her great mare, Gladus  
From end to end this town is hers.  
The timid peek over their fences  
Others wave from their porches.  
We recognize her without a doubt  
A bit of pink or brightly blue, it's her.  
One of a kind, A Venice woman.  
Hard to predict, easy to admire  
She's up to nothing but good.  
Cooking for the sick.  
Entertaining the elderly.  
You've got to be Bad  
for Suzy not to think you're good  
...down deep.

When night falls our fair maid  
changes before our eyes  
and under the moon  
into the Vamp of the speakeasies  
and Queen of the b l u e s  
bop bop a be bop  
Yeah, sing it baby sing  
sing that song of a woman's torment  
sing that song of a woman's ecstasy.

## Prayer

Oh Goddess of the Winged Night  
let not my heart go out to all men  
as if each were a god.

Oh Goddess of the Many Moons  
let not my mind turn towards all men  
who cannot bear the brilliance of moonlight.

Oh Goddess of the Hidden Well  
let not my mouth drink from any man  
as if he were the source of life.

Now i invoke your tenderness!  
Now i invoke your luminescence!  
Now i invoke your strength!

And in the coolness of November rains  
as the dead return to their graves  
i rise up with them to return to you.

-krista schwimmer

100 →  
Thank You Beachhead Readers!  
We have gone over the top in our fund drive for 100 Sustainers!  
It's not too late to join in!  
If you would like to join our 100 Sustainers, most of whose names are on page 2, please send a check for \$100 to the Beachhead.  
Keep the free press alive!  
PO Box 2, Venice

## My Friend Andrew —continued from page 4

I always admired that Andrew put into action his philosophy of life. He was a vegan; owned a Prius; went to Burma and returned to speak up for their suffering. As an actor, writer, director and editor, he struggled; but, he also persisted, learning new skills and constantly working at something. All three of us shared a love of Halloween, with Andrew almost always coming to our annual Halloween porch party and public ritual for remembering our ancestors. That is probably why I enjoy so much Andrew's humorous short, "Good Boy" about a man who chops off his own hand to retrieve his remote control.

Although I admired Andrew's creative self, for many years we knew nothing about his early acting success as "Boner" in "Growing Pains," or that his father was Chekov on Star Trek. It was largely Andrew, the neighbor, I knew and loved. When I had my hysterectomy in 2008, he drove down to Harbor UCLA in Torrance to visit me in the hospital. He also made himself available to me while I recovered at home, so that when my husband went to work, I would have someone there if I needed. He was one of the few people I trusted to take care of my birds whenever Michael and I went up to San Francisco.

I still find myself looking out the tiny window of my backdoor to see if Andrew's door is open. I still expect to walk by him, in that alleyway with the pink bougainvillea, as he returns and I go to the local post office. Or maybe, catch him on the steps of our porch eating a lunch of organic greens and heirloom tomatoes. I think of his family and their terrible loss. I pray that his soul is at peace, that the Goddess has taken him back into her being and even now, is restoring him with her infinite compassion.

One of the teachers I admire tremendously is the Buddhist activist and monk, Thich Nhat Hahn. In his book called "No Death, No Fear", he talks about how when conditions are right, a person who has died, returns again. As a young boy, Hahn experienced this himself, after his mother died. One night, when he was sobbing in bed for her, the moonlight touched him in such a way that he knew it was his mother.

I believe in this myself. So, I will look for you, Andrew, in the world around me — the world of birds and squirrels and sky that you protected and loved; a world that you decided to return to yourself.

*For more information about Andrew's life and suicide prevention, visit his father's site at [www.walterkoenigsite.com](http://www.walterkoenigsite.com)*

## Holiday Venice

—continued from page 1

HUD to require a 55-year contract with the present owner, Perlman, to keep the buildings affordable.

Last year, Perlman was granted permission by HUD to pre-pay his current contract to HUD, an illegal transaction according to the Holiday Tenants' lawyers. This early pre-pay by Perlman to HUD resulted in three law suits that are awaiting their day in court.

Galante told the tenants that she has only been on the job for nine months as Assistant Deputy. She said "Venice's affordable housing issue is nothing new to me." But she could not make a commitment on the spot that HUD would help.

Will the results of Galante's visit to Venice be a new contract for 246 families for another 20 years? The Holiday Tenants still deserve to own their home and make a claim to their future. The struggle will no doubt continue, after all, Venice needs to keep these buildings for the Oakwood community.

## Living in an RV —continued from page 1

a reasonable suspicion of a crime occurring, this is the opening tone in my police interactions. They show up in pairs, or a gang of pairs. They fire rapid questions about who is inside, what is inside, what is being hidden. In support of the questions, they assure me that they know that I am hiding someone or something. My driver's license is sent to be checked against my criminal record. They say, again and again, that I am a problem, that I have to leave, that I am here illegally, that they know that I am here illegally.

Despite the specifics of who has sent them, the point is hammered home that I am unwanted, that everyone in power has decided that I will be gone. I, of course, am never someone with power or say.

They let me know, always, that they have the power to arrest, ticket, tow me. They question what I do all day, what I am doing now. They ask for my address, and, not having one, accuse and question rapidly in hopes (I imagine) that I admit that I am criminally living in a vehicle. They allude to the time I must spend at the beach. They ask whether I have a job by stating that I don't or giving an example of what I must do all day with my "friends" on the street. They surround me like a gang. They speak sarcastically ("why don't you park at your job?"). They laugh when I desperately repeat questions ("who ordered you to sweep?" "what does 'sweep' mean?" "who was at that meeting with Rosendahl?") that they choose not to answer. They notice and laugh when they see my hands shaking as I try to write down their names that they give me with a sneer.

This happened most recently to me on January 7. When I asked who was knocking on my door, the answer was "your best friend." There were four police surrounding me. They stated that I had been parked over 72 hours. I knew this was a lie, but I was frightened by just how insistently they kept to this fiction. I wondered whether they were hoping to tow me then and there or whether it was sufficiently useful for them to suggest they had power beyond the facts of the situation, and that they could create the story themselves.

They asked me whether I knew that I was breaking the law, and laughed when I asked them to cite the law. Only one of them knew offhand the specific number and letter of the law. They said that they were just coming from a town hall-style meeting with Bill Rosendahl in which the residents of Venice expressed that they wanted the streets to be cleaned (of the homeless). The residents were very angry. The residents don't want these vehicles here. They had been ordered to clean them (me) out. They said that they just worked their way west from Lincoln. They talked to me in this way for half an hour. I don't know why they left. I suppose that I seemed sufficiently afraid, that I would probably move. Perhaps they gave up on trying to find a pretense to ticket, tow, or arrest me, as I have no criminal record. My van is legal to park. So, they did finally leave, but not without reminding me that next time they would be ticketing, towing, and arresting, that the street would be swept, in the end.

It is with terrible difficulty that I try to remember the details of that evening. My hands tremble as I write. When I related this story to the few people of confidence that I have, the trembling returned, flowering forth from the roots of a particularly terrifying experience that has followed years of intimidation and the stress of being a closet homeless. I have slept poorly, awakening when I hear an engine idling ominously near. No one has been quite able to assure me that the law against living in a vehicle is not viable, though I can't imagine it viable to persecute people for whom living in a vehicle is a much more favorable option to living on the street. Still I have so much to lose.

I have a reason for my fear, something more precious than my self to lose. I have a child. My van is the only home that my child has known. There are toys, books, clothes, photos. My child was angry enough when the bed was switched from longways to shortways in the rectangular room of space available to us. How would my child feel if our home was towed away, perhaps right in front of us? How would my child feel to be treated, or see Mama treated the way that I was most recently? Luckily my child has managed to miss or be asleep during so many incidents of police or "residents" yelling at us from outside our home, leaving threatening notes, calling us "homeless," an identity that no child should have to shoulder.

My child has a home, a family. We have neighbors who live in similar homes. Between us we have a remarkably generous and empathetic community on our street. When we have had car trouble, they have helped us push-start it, or fix it with \$5 and ingenuity. When we forgot to lock our door, they assured us that it had been safe all day. My child goes to school. I work full-time as a teacher and mother full-time. At our school, Venice "resident" children play with my child, sans economic apartheid. My child dances to show tunes, writes first-person fictions in home-made books, sings almost constantly out of happiness. There is no lived part of my child's life where that name, "homeless," is used or useful, only potentially hurtful and traumatic.

I am not ashamed of living in a van, even as a mother. My child is well cared for. I tire my physical body daily in the good tasks that nurture human life. I do not accept that I am a criminal when I sleep, wearied and well-worn for all that I have breathed and moved. When I sleep, my body may just as well sink into that earth below us, joined underneath for all of our streets and property lines. It is in that place where the deep waters flow that nourish my seeded and rising to flourish soul. I have the grace of any human to forget the angles of myself, whereupon they may be. I have a right to dissemble in the night. I have a right to drift in that sleepy ocean that belongs to no one. I am not ashamed for sleeping, for having a home, for attempting to give safely these blessings to my child.

I am ashamed of any one who has so compromised their humanity that they could deny me, and my child, this very thing which we all need. I am ashamed of policemen who allow themselves to be used to persecute people who often suffer from the

same misfortunes and vices available to any human being. I am ashamed of police who give blatantly bogus tickets, promise to arrest, ticket, or tow even when there is no legal basis for doing so. I am ashamed of a police force which acts without honor, without factuality, without any sense of personal humanity. I am ashamed of Bill Rosendahl, who would, at best, be so simple as to be ignorant of the actions that follow from secretive "town hall" meetings, so simple as to be ignorant of how his own name is used to terrify people who have no representation, no voice, in the political arena.

I am ashamed of the residents who can live so long next to criminally-poor people and yet still be able to say it is an issue of parking, sanitation, security. Don't they know that among the unlanded people around them are some who are taking care of their children, preparing their food? Do they know how their name is used? Do those legitimate and verified "residents" know that the homeless preemptively ghettoize themselves onto streets like 7<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rose, etc. because they're afraid of the abuse that is coming from these residents? I am ashamed that, out of all of the important identities a person may have (mother, teacher, artist, Venetian, consumer, taxpayer, human being) the outwardly imposed identity of "homeless" trumps them all.

I fought so long, adamant that I would not let this "homelessness" be a knot that would twist upon the fabric of my life. I've been afraid, terrified, traumatized by my experiences with authority and angry "residents." I still tremble, but, I feel, somewhere in the vibrancy of this trembling, is arising a rhythm, making time with that primal beating of my heart. My fear, my trembling, grows firm when mixed with the rage of one who can retreat no further. I am a mother. I can be pushed quite far, but a child is a sacred being. I warn us all to examine carefully the direction in which all of this is going, the nature of the beast before us, and the dark underbelly of this overly factionalized social war. I won't stay silent. I won't submit. I will stop cowering, and when I open myself with all of my heart and integrity to what is before me, I have great hope for what may come. This intimidation by the police, the residents, is forging something strong, potent, in me, and I'm readying myself for what may come. I don't think that I'm the only one. I know that I am not the only one.

P.S. The streets have been looking sparser over the following weeks. I was unable to witness and document reported towings, as I am often away. People have been for all purposes disappeared by the removal of their homes. On Jan. 21, I observed a van towed under supervision of Officer Skinner and her partner. Later Skinner "favored" a parolee with the information that the street would be swept at 4 o'clock. I did not witness any sweeping happening although someone told me that some homeless were kicked off of the sidewalk, but I am not sure. The next day, I heard that Skinner and partner targeted one section of my street to intimidate, again giving 4 o'clock as the time of the sweeping. One gentleman on the street related that also, on this day, he was told to leave or Skinner (and partner) would return with a truck and throw his things in the garbage.

# CommUnity Events - day by day

## Monday, March 1

• 7:45pm on - Open Mic "MoZaic Monday". Sign up 6:30 pm. Hosted by Matt Sedillo, DJ Noj, and Nickie Black. The Talking Stick. Free.

## Wednesday, March 3

• 7-10pm - Open Mike, hosted by Tom Gramlich and Byron PFiefer. Talking Stick. Free.

## Thursday, March 4

• 9am - City of LA Zoning Administration hearing on "Local 1205", an organic, gourmet market and café by Other Room owner. West Los Angeles Municipal Building.  
• All Day - Strike and Day of Action in California. Los Angeles Regional Rally at 3pm, Pershing Square (5th & Hill). UCLA 12 pm Rally at Bruin Plaza. CSU Northridge/San Fernando Valley Rally and March at 3:45pm, CSU Northridge Sierra Quad. Venice High students meet on lawn to march at 3:15pm.

## Friday, March 5

• 7:30pm - Reading and Project Room Opening of "Salt Water Credentials" with Kevin Opstedal and Duncan McNaughton. Beyond Baroque. \$7, 5 students/seniors.

## Sunday, March 7

• 5pm - Open Reading with Alicia Adams and Suzanne Frost. Beyond Baroque. Free.  
• 2-3pm and 3:30-4:30pm - Lecture on "The Ancient Mysteries of Tutankhamun". SM Library.

## Monday, March 8

• All Day - International Women's Day. Join women around the world in celebration.  
• 7:30-9pm - An Evening with Marcy Winograd, hosted by Bree Walker, progressive talk show host. Please RSVP. James Beach Cafe Club Room. 60 N.Venice. Free.

## Tuesday, March 9

• 7:45pm - A Night of Festive Musical Goodness hosted by Danny Moynahan. Talking Stick. Free

## Wednesday, March 10

• 6-7:30 pm - County of LA Dept of Public Works Workshop to discuss Bikeway Master Plan. Marina Library, 4533 Admiralty Way.

## Friday, March 12

• 7:30pm - Readings by Mark Rhodes, Michael Ford, Laura Copelin. Beyond Baroque. Free.

## Saturday, March 13

• 7:30pm - Readings by Mel Nichols, Mark Wallace and Rod Smith. Beyond Baroque. Free.  
• 11am-1pm - Klezmer Brunch Music. Talking Stick. Free.

## Tuesday, March 16

• 7-10:30pm - Venice Neighborhood Council Board Meeting. (third Tuesday of the month). Westminster Elementary School Auditorium. Wednesday, March 17  
• 12:30pm - Design Control Board Meeting of the Dept. of Beaches & Harbors. (third Wednesday of the month). Barton W. Chace Park Community Bldg. 13650 Minanao, Marina del Rey.

## Friday, March 19

• 7pm on - Venice MoZaic is hosting their 3rd annual Ceasar Chavez Birthday Celebration. An evening of Art, Music, and Poetry hosted by political poet Matt Sedillo and impresario Nickie Black. DJ Noj, Zebra Party. Talking Stick. Free  
• 7:30pm - Readings by Susan Wheeler and Claudia Rankine. Beyond Baroque. Free.

## Friday, March 19

• 7pm - Mosaic Presents the "Spoken Word" on Art, Music and Poetry. The Talking Stick. Free

## Sunday, March 21

• 12-4pm - Caza de Poesia and Veterans for Peace present Poets Against War. Arlington West Memorial SM Beach. Free.

## Tuesday, March 23

• 7-10pm - "Artie's Story Birthday Benefit Concert" hosted by Lisa Nemzo. Artie Colatrella is a longtime Venice resident battling cancer. Talking Stick. \$10 donation (no one turned away).

## Wednesday March 24

• 7:30-10pm - Blues Dynamo Kathy Leonardo sings with special guests. Happy hour extended till 8pm. Danny's Deli. Free.

## Friday, March 26

• 11am-6pm - Hippie Folk Funk Art Opening, an anonymous sociopolitical expression of the 1960's and 70's. Surfing Cowboys, 450-4891. Free

## Sunday, March 28

• 4pm - The Art of Robert Branaman, a celebration of his life and work as an integral part of the Wichita Vortex group of the beat generation. Presentations by Bob, S.A. Griffin, Mike Watt and surprise guests. Hosted by Richard Modiano. Beyond Baroque. Free.

## Monday, March 29

• 8:15-11:15pm - Suzy Williams Sings. Angels. Free

## Ongoing Events

• 12-2pm - Thursdays - **Blues at Uncle Darrow's** featuring "Joe Banks and Friends" 2560 Lincoln Blvd. 310-306-4862. Free.

• 11am to 4pm - December 1 thru May 30 **Skateboard Evolution & Art Exhibit**. Admission \$8, kids under 12 free. California Heritage Museum, 2612 Main St., Santa Monica.

• 6-8pm - **McLuhan-Finnegans** Wake Reading Club. Lloyd Taber-Marina Del Rey Library, 4533 Admiralty Way. First Tuesdays of the month. Free.

• 7:30pm - **Monthly Review** Discussion Group. Community Room, 2500 Broadway. Meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Free.

• **Free Arts** programs for middle school youth! Contact Inside Out Community Arts, Lauren Deck, 310-397-8820, ext109. Inside Out Community Arts, Venice Center for Peace with Justice and the Arts, 2210 Lincoln Blvd.

• **Free Food Distribution** at Vera Davis Center. March 11, March 25. 12:30pm.

## Location Guide

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

## Get Your Local Event Listed

Email your time, date & a brief description to [Calendar@freevenice.org](mailto:Calendar@freevenice.org) by the 20th of the month.

Support Your Local Nonprofit Newspaper. The Beachhead Calendar is a public service to the community of Venice. Our goal is to list free events within Venice. If you charge for your event, please consider taking out a \$25 or larger advertisement.

## Culver City Shelter is open

Bus pickup at Westminster Park (at Pacific) is 4:45 pm & 5:15 pm. Return in the a.m. is between 6:30 & 7:15.

Political cartoon by Khalil Bendib



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