

A Labyrinth in Oakwood
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FREE VENICE
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BEACHHEAD

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May 2010 #343

Friend or Foe?

Food Trucks on Abbot Kinney Blvd.

By C.J. Gronner

So ... we all need to have a little chat. How do you feel about the Mobile Food Vendor trucks that swarm into Venice each First Friday (and lots of other days too, just not as many)? In talking to store owners, neighbors, FF revelers, and friends, there appears to be many mixed feelings about them. It's an issue that's getting pretty heated, so we need to address it and come up with positive solutions, instead of just freaking out about it.

First Fridays started as a way to drum up business when the economy started its downturn. It worked. Gone are the free wine and loud music for the locals days, but that jump start did the trick, and now you can barely move at the beginning of each month, as crowded as it is.

With the increased popularity of that night each month, word got out among food truck operators (beginning with the Kogi one, that currently has 61,729 Followers on Twitter!) and where there's

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BEACHHEAD EXCLUSIVE:

Settlement Reached in Overnight Parking Lawsuit

Negotiators for the Coastal Commission, the city of Los Angeles and Mark Ryavec's "Venice Stakeholders Association" have reached a tentative agreement on a lawsuit concerning the Coastal Commission's right to regulate overnight parking in Venice, according to Beachhead sources. Details of the closed-door negotiations have not been released. However, the Beachhead has learned that they most likely include housed residents being able to petition to ban "over-height" vehicles from their blocks from 2am - 6am. The height and length restrictions would likely be 22 feet long or 84 inches high, which would effectively prohibit RVs from parking. Housed residents could purchase a permit.

Another element of the settlement would be taking three parking lots away from general overnight parking and reserving them for RVs. The three lots would be at Rose and Main, Windward and Pacific and in the center divider on Venice Blvd. at Pacific. The three lots would accommodate 52 vehicles. They would most likely be fee parking. North Beach residents protested against losing the Rose Avenue lot when overnight parking districts (OPDs) were being considered a year ago. Parking is difficult to find in this area which is mostly walk streets.

There may also be a fall-back agreement to allow OPDs (or one parking district for all of Venice) if the over-height restrictions do not work to the parties' satisfaction.

In anticipation of the settlement, Assembly member Ted Lieu's bill, AB2228 (see last month's Beachhead), has been dropped. A Lieu representative, Jennifer Zivkovic, said that because of the settlement, the bill "was no longer needed."

Councilmember Bill Rosendahl told the Beachhead he hasn't seen the settlement yet, since he is not personally a party to the suit.

Venetians would have ample time to protest such a tentative settlement. It would have to be ratified by the Los Angeles City Council and be the subject of a hearing before the Coastal Commission. In addition, opponents of the settlement would be free to sue.



You were expecting something larger?

New Myrna Loy statue unveiled April 10 at Venice High School. —see page 7

Rosendahl's "Carrot and Stick" means a knock on the door at 5 am

By Rune Girschfeld

In his April 14th letter, L.A. City Councilman Bill Rosendahl laid out his "carrot and stick" approach to people who are unlawfully sleeping in their vehicles on Venice city streets. He stated his goal is to "rid the streets of unsightly cars and campers that impact our quality of life." He proposes a "measured, balanced, and humane" approach which would balance services and a Safe Parking Program, the "carrot," with "aggressive" police enforcement, pursuing "whichever restricted parking measures are legally permissible," the "stick."

Rosendahl's approach is far from "measured, balanced, and humane." As someone who is a mobile-homed Venice resident, I have felt the stick. I have experienced first-hand the practice behind the pretense. I wonder whether the "residents" know what "aggressive enforcement" looks like?

Aggressive enforcement is targeting the mobile-homed through the use of "sweeps." It typically happens late at night, with no witnesses, just the police and their victims. I have personally experienced these sweeps, involving intimidation and outright threats of arrest, vehicle confiscation and other "legal" measures

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CASUALTIES IN AFGHANISTAN:
1,050 U.S. Dead
15 this month

IRAQ:
4,394 U.S. Dead - 9 this month
31,790 U.S. Wounded
Iraqi Dead: 1.4 million
Cost of wars: \$988+ billion

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Beachhead Collective Staff: Karl Abrams, Greta Cobar, Don Geagan, C.J. Gronner, Roger Linnett, Lydia Poncé, Krista Schwimmer, Jim Smith, Erica Snowlake, Alice Stek

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

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Mail: P.O. Box 2, Venice, CA 90294.

Email: Beachhead@freevenice.org

Web: www.freevenice.org

Twitter: twitter.com/VeniceBeachhead

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Gardens of Gratitude Dig It in Venice

By Joey Marie Soto

Last weekend 170 volunteers installed 66 edible gardens at neighbors' homes, schools, businesses, churches and one rehab center. Gardens of Gratitude just had it's second annual event. This group, founded by Sean Jennings, consists of committed community leaders with members who planned for two months leading up to the weekend. All over the West Side with many sites in Venice there were people helping people getting vegetables into the ground.

What a concept? Let's get together to take back our health and community! It was such fun! With the event on Saturday and Sunday one can devote the whole weekend to the transition or simply an hour. I found it was nice to garden on Saturday, do a little on Sunday and then simply rove around from one site to another. In a matter of hours we were able to visit five in all. One of my favorite stops was the United Methodist Church with its skate ramp in the back and veggie garden along the sidewalk. This church and its Pastor's gotta love them!

Stroller White delivered seven loads of compost. "I loved hanging out with the people, their enthusiasm, their gratitude. It felt good being a part of this whole thing," White said. He helped Aaron Nichols get his raised beds started by planting lettuces, tomatoes, strawberries, cabbage, cauliflower, herbs, eggplant and squash. Aaron "felt super grateful for the free labor but really dug the connection of meeting like-minded people and watching the community coming together for a common goal, in service to one another. A dream come true!"

Sonya Pritzker, a Venice resident mentioned she was "overwhelmed by the volunteer turn out. I posted it on my Facebook, told my family, everyone supported the idea, but when it came to the work this amazing group of volunteers showed up." Sonia and her husband Jeffrey are happy their beautiful newborn Nayda Rose will grow up with fresh veggies.

Last year 14 people showed up to my home in Venice, with tools, ready to work. I kept it going and all year I have been eating veggies out of the garden last year's event installed. That is why I decided to get involved again this year! It has been an easy sell getting folks interested in the event. I am so grateful for all the support and interest. From the five sites to the after party, there was an overall feeling of pride and love. Together we made a difference last weekend!

Arpod Kaali organized a fundraising party that was held in Venice at the home of two lovely young female artists several weeks before the event. Having a large garden of their own, they decided to put in a community garden on the sidewalk on Cabrillo. This gave many of us the idea to plan a series of garden parties in the future. There is talk about doing the main event twice a year. Imagine planting a nutritious garden on a Sunday afternoon instead of the usual barbecue and beer; or wine and cheese! Why not sign up to volunteer and get your garden going today?!

For more information please visit :

www.gardensofgratitude.com

overnight) as part of a monitored and supervised program that provides counseling, and housing referral services. Combining parking restrictions and a Safe Parking program, Santa Barbara has significantly reduced the problem of vehicular living on city streets – and they did so in a humane and sensible manner. The similarly successful program in Eugene has different requirements and services, and has a great track record of moving people into housing.

My staff is working with community leaders, with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority,

and with other service providers to craft a similar program that will work for Venice.

Why do we need a Safe Parking program?

Why can't we just force outsiders from our neighborhoods?

We need to understand that the population of people living in their vehicles is diverse. Many people living in their cars are veterans and senior citizens who need a safe place to park

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Councilmember Rosendahl's Letter on OPDs and the Venice Surplus Property Fund

Dear Friends,
 I am writing to update you on one of the most contentious issues in Venice -- the proliferation of homeless people living in cars and campers.

For the last couple years, I have been working on a two-pronged, "carrot and stick" strategy. My goal has been simple: through both enforcement and social services, rid our streets of the non-resident cars and campers that impact our quality of life. To be successful, we will need an approach that is measured, balanced, and humane.

In pursuit of this goal, I have fought for increased enforcement against vehicular living, and pursued establishment of Overnight Parking Districts (OPDs) that would ban non-residents from certain streets from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. At the same time, I have been working to create a Safe Parking program, which would create designated areas where people living in vehicles could sleep lawfully, obtain counseling and social services, and begin the transition to permanent housing.

Last week, I introduced a council motion that would help fund the Safe Parking program – just as I identified funding two years ago to start the creation of the OPDs. In the overheated political environment that accompanies this issue, the motion has generated a lot of attention and misunderstanding.

Let me respond to the most common questions and misperceptions I have heard:

What would your motions do?

I have introduced two motions, which allocate money for various programs and projects.

The first motion allocates money exclusively from the Venice Area Surplus Real Property Trust Fund for: improvements to the LAPD Substation at Venice Beach, after-school programs at Penmar Park and the Oakwood Recreation Center, recycling bins at Venice Beach, additional staffing for Recreation & Parks at Venice Beach, facility improvements at Venice Beach, maintenance and steam cleaning of bathrooms at Venice Beach, and design and construction of a new park at Driftwood Avenue on the Marina Peninsula.

The second motion allocates money from the Venice Area Surplus Real Property Trust Fund and other sources for a Safe Parking program for Venice and Council District 11.

What is the Safe Parking program?

When we implement the OPDs, it is imperative that we also find a place for people to go, and give them an opportunity to move into housing and social services. To do that, we need a Safe Parking program, similar to successful programs in the beach communities of Santa Barbara and Eugene, Oregon.

In Santa Barbara, more than 20 different lots in scattered locations each allow a handful of people to park legally overnight (and only



A Labyrinth Grows in Oakwood

By Krista
Schwimmer

On a small lot next to the Bethel Tabernacle Church, corner of San Juan Avenue and 6th Street, there is now an ancient symbol marked on the earth itself. Found in a multitude of cultures as early as 4,000 years ago, this circular design invites you to pause, to look and to walk. With a symbolism that incorporates themes of life and death, inner revelations and communal gatherings, you could call it a thumbprint of the gods. Most people, however, call it a labyrinth.

Sometimes confused with a maze, a labyrinth is usually circular, with a unicursal path to the center. There is one way in and one way out, with no tricks or dead ends like a maze. In the 1990s, labyrinths became popular once more. Suddenly, people wanted to build them, walk them and talk about them. As a result, you can find them in churches, parks, hospitals and private homes either as permanent fixtures or portable art.

Who is behind the Oakwood labyrinth? The trail begins with Venice Public Art and its project called "The Venice Corner Ball Park Projects." The goal of this project, according to VPA's website, is to transform underutilized or blighted street corners in Venice into unique landscaped parks with sculptural seating. Lead artist to the Corner Ball Park Projects is Robin Murez, a Venice artist whose studio is right on Abbot Kinney Boulevard. The Oakwood Labyrinth Park is one of the parks in Venice that Robin is work-



building dates from 1927. One member of this aging congregation recalls it was first a dance hall. It has been used as a church now for over 50 years. Fitting with the time period and the structure, the church has been painted in traditional, craftsmen style colors.

Past and present, labyrinths bring community together. So, how has Venice responded so far? Robin says that the project has met with tremendous support, both from Venice at large and the immediate community. The Reverend Harold Smith, Pastor for the neighboring Bethel Tabernacle Church, agrees. He says he is overwhelmed with enthusiasm already with the kind of attention and attraction that this has brought his church. There were a few congregation members who were uneasy about it at first, wondering if the labyrinth was a sort of cultural thing inviting idolatry. "What we don't understand, we don't always make room for," the Pastor said. Once his people understood how the community wanted not only to put in the labyrinth, but help them with repairs the church has not been able to afford, the few uncertain members were also convinced of its benefit.

Some cultures believe it is possible to reconnect with those who have died by walking a labyrinth. Maybe that's why Robin muses out loud about the Irving Tabor home right down the street. Once the home of Abbot Kinney himself, he bequeathed it to Irving Tabor, his art director, chauffeur and close friend. First located on 1 Grand Canal, (currently the Postal Annex), Tabor had to move the home to Oakwood because he was an African-American and was not welcomed in Abbot Kinney's part of town. Robin likes to think that Abbot himself would approve of not only the Oakwood Labyrinth Park, but the series of parks planned throughout the rest of Venice -- like the in-grown maze, poetry corner, or sundial park - all still in the works. She sees them linked together, with people walking from place to place. Each park has its own palos. The Pastor sees the labyrinth as a chance for the community to re-discover a devout and enduring congregation.

Whatever the future holds for the Oakwood labyrinth, there is little doubt that its creation and its birth already have brought the Venice community together.

C'mon out May 1, from 10 am to 5 pm, and join the community in celebrating the birth of the Oakwood Labyrinth Park.



The group reaches the center of the labyrinth. This 2nd stage is often referred to "Illumination." Here, you reflect and stay open to any inner guidance you may receive. Labyrinth photos by Krista Schwimmer

ing on right now. It has the honor, however, of being the first completed one, with the Grand Opening day set for Saturday, May 1st, a day coinciding with International Labyrinth day.

Why a labyrinth there? Throughout time the labyrinth has meant different things to different people. In Scandinavian and Baltic cultures labyrinths were built next to the ocean. Wives would run them for their husbands at sea to bring them good fortune. The Hopi cultures associated them with new life and reincarnation. Christians placed them in churches such as Chartres, and saw them as part of pilgrimage. Many people today have embraced it as a symbol of the goddess. Seeing this association with the spiritual, Robin thought a labyrinth fit well next to the neighboring church.

Besides being spiritual, the park is also ecological in design. Five hundred cement cylinders, recycled from landfills, mark the circuits of the labyrinth. Newly-planted palm trees create a boundary between the church and a neighboring home. Community members are still donating drought-resistant plants to plant in the front of the church. Other modifications include an irrigation system, an overseeding of grass on the whole area, and the addition of thyme and chamomile in the labyrinth itself, creating a pleasing aroma for the walking pilgrim. Finally, a palos, a single concrete sphere encased in black and white marble, serves as both a unique marker for this location, as well as a place for a visitor to rest.

The overall beautification also included repainting the outside of the Bethel Tabernacle church. The

Neighborhood Council Final Election Results

By Jim Smith

Venice voters elected two women April 11 - Linda Lucks and Carolyn Rios - to lead its neighborhood council for the next two years. Both are long-time activists in Venice and have held office in the VNC. On the other hand, a relatively unknown candidate for Land Use Committee Chair, Jacob Kaufman, eked out a victory of 19 votes over Adam Glick.

The big question leading up to the election was whether Mark Ryavec, a candidate for vice president and Jim Hubbard, who was running for president, could parlay their support for Venice overnight permit parking districts (OPDs) into success in the election. In spite of a flyer from Ryavec that was distributed all over Venice a couple of days before the election, their hoped-for hordes did not turn out at the Oakwood Recreation Center's polling place. Both Hubbard and Ryavec ran as write-in candidates (what were they thinking?). In the end, efforts by some of their supporters to portray Lucks and Rios as irresponsible and inexperienced backfired as even some OPD supporters told the Beachhead that they were voting for the two women.

The hotly contested at-large community officer positions, with 29 candidates battling for 13 slots, resulted in a mostly new crew who will take their seats at the June VNC meeting. Only three of the 13, Ira Koslow, Cynthia Rogers and Kris Valentine are incumbents. Mariana Aguilar, the top vote getter, and write-in Scot Kramarich, were endorsed by Ryavec. Another write-in, Peter Thottam, who is also running for state Assembly, was elected to an at-large position. Ivonne Guzmán, who is an articulate supporter of humane treatment of homeless people, had the second largest number of votes after Aguilar, who is her ideological opposite. Whether the sharp division of opinion on OPDs will carry over to other issues remains to be seen.

Amanda Seward, who was strongly recommended by the Beachhead, won with 72 percent, the most decisive victory of any candidate who had ballot opposition. Except for three close calls, all other candidates recommended in last month's paper won.

Other victors who had little or no opposition included: Marc Saltzberg, outreach officer; Hugh Harrison, treasurer; Joe Murphy, secretary; and Brennan Linder, communications officer. All are incumbents except for Lindner. Former president Mike Newhouse will now become the non-voting president emeritus.

Diversity took another beating in the final results. Only nine of the 21 who were elected are women. Two of the 21 are Latinas, and only one is African American. It may not be entirely the fault of the voters that the new board is so white and male. When voters were allowed to vote for more at-large candidates, the board was much more diverse. When the by-laws were changed to prevent voters from voting for more than one of the 14 (now 13) at-large candidates, the result was disastrous for women, African-Americans and Latinos.

Here are the final results:

Total voters: 1225

PRESIDENT: **Linda Lucks** - 719 66% - Jim Hubbard - 378 (write in)

VICE PRESIDENT: **Carolyn Rios** - 649 61% - Mark Ryavec - 421 (write in)

LAND USE COMMITTEE CHAIR: **Jacob Kaufman** - 367 51% - Adam Glick - 348

OUTREACH OFFICER: **Marc Saltzberg** - 634 92% - Anthony Perez - 53 (write in)

AT-LARGE COMMUNITY OFFICERS: (13 top voter getters are elected):

1. **Mariana Aguilar** - 173 17% (of total votes for community officers)
2. **Ivonne Guzmán** - 112 11%
3. **Jed Pauker** - 81 8%
4. **Ira Koslow** - 80 8%
5. **Scot Kramarich** - 66 (write in) 6%
6. **Cynthia Rogers** - 49 5%
7. **Kris Valentine** - 46 4%
7. **Peter Thottam** - 46 (write in) 4%
9. **Clark McCutchen** - 45 4%
10. **Kelley Willis** - 44 4%
11. **Cindy Chambers** - 39 4%
12. **Daffodil Tyminski** - 30 3%
13. **Stasia Patwell** - 28 3%

FACTUAL BASIS COMMUNITY OFFICER: **Amanda Seward** - 555 72% - Therese Dietlin - 110 - David Bradt - 102

UNOPPOSED: Treasurer - **Hugh Harrison** - 646;

Secretary - **Joe Murphy** - 666;

Communications Officer -

Brennan Lindner - 587



"The Candidate" at the VNC forum by Emily Winters

State Assembly Candidates Respond to the Beachhead!s Questions

Seven candidates for Ted Lieu's vacant state Assembly seat responded to the Beachhead's questions. These are excerpts from their sometimes wordy answers. To read the full responses, go to www.freevenice.org/candidates.html

Beachhead!s Questions	LISA ANN GREEN Green Party Venice Organic Product Creator	NICK KARNO Democrat Venice Prosecutor/Environmental Advocate	JAMES LAU Democrat Venice Environmental Education Director	EDGAR SANEZ Democrat El Segundo Congressional Deputy/Attorney	DIANE WALLACE Democrat Manhattan Beach Educator	MITCH WARD Democrat Manhattan Beach Mayor	NATHAN MINTZ Republican Hermosa Beach Systems Engineer
1. Why should voters in Venice, specifically, support your candidacy?	We must change our behavior and recognize that the same old "business as usual" approach isn't going to position us for the future. I represent a path to bring us back in balance with our natural resources.	As a long-time resident of Venice, boardmember of the Neighborhood Council and co-chair of the Environmental Committee, and someone whose family has had a well-known local business (Groundwork Coffee), I have always been committed to improving our community.	I am a long-time Venice resident, and member of the Chamber of Commerce. As Director of the California League of Conservation Voters, I have dedicated my life to a clean environment.		I have lived in the 53rd for nearly all of my adult life. I support the establishment of identifiable communities with Los Angeles. Venice is certainly one of those communities.	As Mayor of Manhattan Beach I view my job as one focused on solving local problems. Many in the Venice area share with me the feeling of a disconnection from downtown Los Angeles' governance. I will work very hard to immediately establish an open and accessible form of communication.	If elected, I will work tirelessly to get our economy moving again. In order to do this, we need to change how government does business by cutting red tape, restoring local control and redirecting misplaced spending priorities in Sacramento.
2. Ted Lieu has introduced AB 2228 in the Assembly. It would ban overnight parking by RVs, regardless of the Coastal Commission's position. If you were voting, would it be yes or no?	No, I will not support AB2228 or any attempt to make the Coastal Commission less effective under the people's request to protect, preserve and retain coast access for all.	I support other means to remove the RVs. We need to make it easier for police officers to enforce our existing law that makes lodging in a vehicle on residential streets illegal, rather than create an opportunity for developers to dismantle Environmental laws.	As currently written, I would oppose AB 2228 primarily because it circumvents local control. I generally support measures that provide local communities with local authority to address local issues.		This is an issue that is made more complicated by legislation/bureaucracy. The solution is to first convene residents to clearly articulate the issues. No legislation is needed - yet.	I would vote YES. As a matter of fact I have already acted locally with our Manhattan Beach City Council regarding these oversized vehicles. I introduced the local measure for public discussion to ban boats and large RVs in the city several months ago.	I would vote no. I believe that local communities should have the right to choose what's appropriate for them, not the state, particularly on matters that are most relevant locally.
3. Do you support or oppose the "Tax Cannabis 2010" initiative on the November ballot and/or Assembly Bill 2254? Both would ease prohibition of marijuana.	Tax Cannabis 2010 is a step in the right direction because marijuana is arguably the safest medically therapeutic reactive substance (with not one death in 5,000 years on record).	At this time I am not supporting either above-referenced laws. I've worked with many law enforcement agencies dealing with gangs and drug cartels affecting our State, and the level of violence perpetuated by these incredibly sophisticated organizations is astounding.	According to recent polls, it is highly likely the Tax Cannabis 2010 initiative will be approved by voters before I take office. Once adopted by the voters, I will support implementation of the initiative.	Support.	This legislation is a step towards decriminalization. However, I also would support additional legislation that would address "driving stoned."	I would support these measures. I believe the tax revenues generated from a regulated Marijuana market are part of the long-term solution to the state's budget woes.	I feel that drug abuse is a community and a family problem, not a government one. So I support efforts to liberalize drug laws at the federal level. Legalization could jeopardize funding coming to the state from the federal government.
4. What are your top pro-environment priorities, if elected?	Shift to organic farming/ecologically sustainable agriculture that conserves water, soil and energy with a minimum of pollution. Fully deregulating the growth and production of industrial hemp.	Climate change is the most serious threat our planet has ever faced. I will work tirelessly to make sure we seek every possible solution to the climate crisis and water shortage.	Jumpstart green technologies and provide incentives for the development and manufacturing of smart green technology. Designate the Ballona Wetlands as a state park to ensure the preservation of this valuable ecosystem.	Curb jets and associated pollution at SMO; Green Line to LAX and Torrance; Rapid buses from Venice/Westside to Expo Line; Bullet Train; North-south light rail; Careful restoration of Ballona Wetlands; More open space/parks; Protecting AB 32 (greenhouse gas law); Phasing out plastic bags.	Protecting the ocean, especially preventing the trash from storm drains. Conservation of water. Clean energy. A water plan that is locally sustained for Southern California.	Clean up the watershed that affects Ballona Creek and the Santa Monica Bay, provide tax incentives for Green and Social Entrepreneurs, and push to have portions of the Santa Monica Bay designated as a Marine Protected Areas.	Keeping our beaches clean and reducing the amount of particulate pollution and smog constituents in the air. Encourage community action and create smart tax incentives to modernize equipment and get dirty diesel engines off the road.
5. With the recession/depression more people are becoming homeless. What would you do as a member of the Assembly to provide housing, services and jobs for this population?	Let's get immediate needs addressed first. Remove all laws criminalizing the homeless. Get resources, increase access to public bathrooms, providing storage facilities for personal belongings, and allocating public funds to the grassroots organizations.	We could save billions by redirecting nonviolent homeless and mentally ill individuals out of our criminal justice system and into housing assistance and treatment programs. As a prosecutor, I have seen how these cases clog our courts and jails.	My first priority is to stabilize the State Budget. Many programs for those most impacted by the recession have been cut or eliminated. I support funding for these programs. Generate new jobs through the development of green technology.	Support programs like PATH.	If appropriate/needed, the chronic homeless should be in the mental health system again. We need job training and temporary housing for the recent and temporarily homeless, which includes many mothers and children.	As part of my efforts to clean up Ballona Creek and the Santa Monica Bay, I believe we can create many Green Collar jobs. We should have local programs to make those jobs accessible to the working poor of our area including homeless families and individuals.	We need to bring back manufacturing jobs to the state by reducing regulatory barriers and changing tax incentives. Every manufacturing job we create needs at least three more jobs to support it. More jobs will give people an exit plan from homelessness.
6. The state of California is nearly bankrupt. Do you believe in raising more revenue or cutting services? If the former, would you increase taxes on corporations and the wealthy?	Eliminate corporate welfare. Shift to a progressive tax structure meaning those with more economic wealth must pay their fair share. Create a State Bank that partners with local banks & credit unions.	We simply cannot cut our way out of our budget mess. Through an aggressive tax amnesty program for back-owed balances, the Board of Equalization estimates the state could take in over \$10 billion in revenues that have gone unpaid for years.	The State loses between \$6-20 billion every year because of the underground economy. It must be reined in. I will vote for measures that will generate revenue for necessary services.	Find efficiencies and raise revenue. State government can't cut its way of this hole and it cannot and must not balance on the backs of the most vulnerable.	I support responsible fiscal management. There are ways to reduce expenditures without cutting services. And there are ways to increase our revenues, with taxes on alcohol, wine and tobacco.	Adjust the threshold for passing a state budget from 2/3rds to 55%, closing corporate loopholes on property tax reassessments, and providing local jurisdictions to pass bond and revenue measures by a vote of 55% in the same way that local school districts can.	I choose a third path. We need to change how Sacramento spends our money. We need to get public employee pensions and salaries under control and make government work more efficiently--that's how we should close the budget, not by cutting services or raising taxes.
7. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?	My office will be located in Venice. I will always be part of and available within my community and throughout the district. I am one of the people, never above, always equal to all life, including our loving and caring Green planet Earth.	Provided there are funds to establish a Venice/Mar Vista office, the answer is Yes. And, I can say that I will be a constant presence in my home town, holding regular town halls and meeting with constituents in the North of the district, without a doubt.	Once a month, I will set up weekend office hours in a public venue in Venice/Mar Vista for constituents to talk to me and my staff about state issues. In addition, I will hold town hall meetings in every community.		I plan to establish an office in the middle of the district. I plan to hold regular town hall meetings in all areas of the district, including Venice.	The answer is an emphatic Yes and Yes! I am a fanatic about local involvement.	I want to do everything possible to make Venice/Mar Vista residents feel like their voice is being heard in Sacramento. People need to know my door is always open-- I plan on making it a priority to meet with residents.

CAST AN INFORMED VOTE ON JUNE 8TH

Congressional Candidates Respond to the Beachhead!s Questions

Three candidates for Congress responded to the Beachhead's questions. Unfortunately, incumbent Jane Harman was not among them. Even so, we have provided her with our version of the empty chair. These are excerpts from the candidate's sometimes wordy answers. To read the full responses, go to www.freevenice.org/candidates.html

Beachhead!s Questions	JANE HARMAN Democrat Torrance Congresswoman	MARCY WINOGRAD Democrat Marina del Rey Educator	HERB PETERS Libertarian Carson Retired Aero-space Engineer	ANDREW SHARP Republican Long Beach Consultant
1. Do you favor a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan? If so, when?		I favor immediate steps to withdraw our forces from both Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as end the air wars on Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. We should engage in diplomatic efforts, rather than multiplying our enemies with perpetual wars and occupations.	I agree with Ron Paul on this question – we should <u>march out</u> of both Iraq and Afghanistan as soon as possible.	Yes, our troops should come home when the mission is completed. It looks like the mission in Iraq is nearly finished. We need to stabilize Afghanistan so that Al-Qaeda & Taliban won't have a safe haven.
2. Will you work to shift funding from the military to schools, housing, health care, job creation, and other needed services?		Cut our bloated military budget to transition from a war economy to a new green economy. Put America back to work in productive ways - building mass transit (which includes bike lanes), bolstering our public schools, staffing our hospitals and community health clinics.	NO. We must reduce spending. Today the government is spending about \$5 billion per day MORE than it takes in. Government funding of schools is similar to nepotism. Housing, health care and job creation are private sector functions.	I will work to reduce Federal taxes. Spending on schools, health care & other needed services should be at the State level.
3. How important do you believe it is to end global climate change? What do you propose?		It is imperative that we take dramatic steps to stop global warming before our coastline erodes and famine sweeps across Africa. We must invest massive resources for wind and solar energy, building mass transit, and conserve energy while building local communities.	It's the wrong thing to do. Climate change, including global warming or cooling, are natural phenomena brought about by the sun. Cap and trade is yet another effort to create more government.	The global climate has been changing throughout its history. We see natural environmental change with the Iceland volcano. We need a clean & safe environment.
4. With the recession/ depression more people are becoming homeless. What would do as a member of the Congress to provide housing, services and jobs for this population?		Repeal the 2005 bankruptcy bill, which my opponent Jane Harman supported. Help homeowners facing foreclosure. Expand affordable housing, apprenticeship programs and job retooling for those laid-off.	Government attempts to solve these significant problems is counterproductive and wrong. The recession/ depression is largely a result of bad government actions over the last 112 years; such as needless wars, excessive taxation and regulation.	The Federal government should set the economic environment for a thriving economy. This would create jobs and people could provide their own housing, not the government.
5. What is your position on the new Health Care Act? Do you also favor government programs such as the public option, extending Medicare and/or single payer?		I would have voted for the health insurance reform legislation. I would continue to push for protection for states wishing to enact single-payer health care. Allow anyone to opt in to Medicare for a reasonable fee.	I have signed the "repeal it" Pledge. As already claimed, anytime we ask the government to do for us what we should do for ourselves; costs go up! I believe that the Churches and Private Charities will be there to help the poor.	I would vote to repeal it. Health care should be managed at the state level. That way each state can make the best choices for its needs.
6. How would you reverse the ongoing income shift from the poor to the rich that has caused widespread poverty and excessive salaries and bonuses?		Your Street, not Wall Street. Preserve our neighborhoods and enrich our communities: 1) Roll back the Bush tax cuts for the rich 2) Cut the bloated military budget and end the squandering of our resources on perpetual war 3) Impose fees on Wall Street stock trades 4) Invest in a New Green Deal.	Who are the rich? One group; the government employees are paid double the private sector and produce little or no wealth. Another group are the bankers behind the Federal Reserve System. Both are supported by our tax dollars. To shift that money back to us we must <u>reduce federal taxes balance our federal budget</u> and reduce regulations.	I would work to keep taxes low (a flat tax or the FairTax), this would create opportunity for economic growth and would reduce poverty.
7. If elected, will you establish an office in the Venice/Mar Vista area? Will you hold regular town halls to get input from your constituents?		Yes, I will establish an office in the Venice/Mar Vista/ West L.A. area and hold regular town halls to hear my constituents concerns and address key issues like homelessness and the need for housing, jet exhaust pollution, and school cuts.	I plan to email all who wish to receive emails; I would share what is going on in Washington. I would also have at least an annual – Venice hosted - town hall meeting. I would offer the same for the other cities in the district.	I will have a minimum of 6 town hall meetings a year! I would have an office that would work to service the whole district.

The Propositions on the June Ballot

- Prop. 13 – Seismic Retrofitting – YES**
- Prop. 14 – Top Two Primaries – NO**
- Prop. 15 – Public Funding of Elections – Yes**
- Prop. 16 – Two-thirds vote requirement for local public electricity providers - NO**
- Prop. 17 – Car Insurance - NO**

Recommended by Americans for Democratic Action, Southern California Chapter

Vote No on Proposition 14



- It will destroy California's independent parties and erode democracy because of fewer choices for voters.
- It will increase the cost of elections and make them more about personalities.

**Register and Vote
Peace and Freedom
California's Democratic Socialist Party**



Our old Venice City Hall, on left, home of Beyond Baroque and the old jail and police headquarters, on right, home of SPARC (The Social and Public Arts Resource Center), the mural center of California.

Save Beyond Baroque and SPARC from Money Grubbing City Bureaucrats

A proposal by the Los Angeles City Administrator's office would eliminate the \$1.00 per-year leases for Beyond Baroque and SPARC as well as 116 non-profit organizations (approximately 16 arts organizations) working in the interest of the public. No economic analysis was conducted on the long term costs of this short-term fix and no non-profits were consulted on its impact. The proposal will go before the full LA City Council sometime in the next two weeks.

This could be devastating for many Venice non-profits including: Beyond Baroque, SPARC, just to name a few.

Make your voice heard by taking action below. Send a letter to the L.A. City Council urging them to have a full hearing on the fiscal, human and community impact this policy will have on the lives of Angelenos.

For more information: www.artsforla.org
www.BeyondBaroque.org
www.SPARCmurals.org

Nearly half of Venice homeless have serious health problems

St. Joseph's Center has released a one-year update on its health vulnerability report on Venice homeless people. The study has been expanded to include those living in vehicles. Interviews show that 31 percent had been housed in Venice before becoming homeless.

Last year, St. Joseph's surveyed 222 people living on Venice streets and determined that 44 percent of them were medically vulnerable. Medical problems included frostbite/hypothermia from exposure (20 individuals), cirrhosis/end stage liver disease (15), end stage renal disease or dialysis (10), HIV/AIDS (2), more than three emergency room visits in last three months (66), and the dreaded tri-morbid, that is, simultaneous psychiatric, substance abuse and chronic medical conditions (75).

This year's report included those living in vehicles, and surprisingly showed a greater proportion, 46 percent, were medically vulnerable, that is, had a high mortality risk. The sample size was smaller, just 48 individuals. The new report found that only 2 percent of veterans living in vehicles receive Veterans Administration benefits. But 40 percent of those interviewed reported being the victim of a violent attack since becoming homeless. Slightly more than 30 percent received some income from social security programs, while nearly 15 percent earned payments for recycling cans and bottles.

St. Joseph's Center

PREVALANCE OF RISK INDICATORS		
RISK INDICATORS	VENICE STREET	VENICE VEHICLE
Sample Size	222	48
Tri-morbid	34%	25%
3x hospital last year	32%	4%
3x ER last 3 months	30%	4%
> 60 years old	7%	19%
HIV+/AIDS	1%	2%
Cirrhosis/End Stage Liver Disease	7%	2%
End Stage Renal Disease or Dialysis	5%	2%
Frostbite/Hypothermia (Exposure Related)	9%	8%
Heart Condition	14%	5%
Cancer	7%	9%
Diabetes	7%	8%
Emphysema	3%	6%
HEP C	11%	8%
Asthma	17%	21%
Tuberculosis	5%	0%
Serious Head Injury/Brain Disease	22%	15%
% vulnerable	44%	46%

Even with only preliminary findings, the St. Joseph's survey contradicts those who have the image of homeless people as outsiders who are a threat to the better off population of Venice. Instead, an image emerges of a physically ill group who are often the victims of violence in the community.

In addition to the exposure to the elements that comes with homelessness, they are also coping with serious medical and mental conditions, while fending off har-

assment from police and irate homeowners. In light of this report, those who advocate a "carrot and stick" approach to men, women and children, including the seriously ill, should think twice about their hostility and change their policy to a "carrot and care" approach.

You can view the St. Joseph's report at: <http://tinyurl.com/29rzan7>

-Jim Smith

Jack Herer, a former Venice resident, who is credited by many with starting the Hemp movement, died from heart failure on April 15 in Eugene, Oregon. He had suffered a serious heart attack the previous September only moments after delivering a fiery speech at Portland's Hempstalk festival. Herer's Hemp booth was a familiar fixture on Ocean Front Walk in the 1980s. He took his crusade for hemp around the country and into the bowels of the federal government.

Hemp, Herer pointed out to anyone who would listen, could solve the energy crisis, make clothes and plastics and bring the world back from the brink of global climate change. Officials turned a deaf ear to Herer because hemp was the genetic source of cannabis, which was illegal. However, millions of people listened to Herer, and soon cottage industries were making hemp clothes, paper, health foods and other products.

Jack Herer, Emperor of Hemp, dies

"He was the king who put hemp on the map," says Boardwalk vendor Jingles. "We would set up our booths next to each other back in the 80s." Jingles, who still has a "meat is murder" booth on Ocean Front Walk on weekends, and Herer's hemp booth were both colorful and bigger than is allowed under the current regulations. Jingles recalls that Herer had an apartment right off the Boardwalk. One day, undercover police did a sting operation on him at his apartment. They asked to buy some pot and when Herer agreed, he was arrested. In spite of their friendship, Jingles was critical of Herer's eating habits. "He would eat anything. That probably contributed to his stroke and heart attack."

Herer became widely known with the publication of his book about hemp, "The Emperor Wears No Clothes." Subtitled "Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy," it ultimately sold more than 600,000 copies and earned Herer the appellation "Emperor of Hemp." For more information, visit www.jackherer.com, which is being maintained by his wife, Jeannie.

-Jim Smith



Photo and article by Jim Smith

Poetry Bomb Goes Off in Venice

A real bomb filled with explosive poetry began a nationwide tour at Beyond Baroque, April 25. The bomb, now named Elsie, is a brainchild of poet S.A. Griffith.

It began life as a 100-pound Vietnam era weapon. Griffith obtained it about two years ago and enlisted help to begin extensive remodeling of the interior and painting and striping of the exterior. As word of the bomb leaked out, letters with poems began arriving from around the world. The kickoff event in Venice ensured that poems by Venetians would be well represented. Among those attending were well-known poets including Frank T. Rios (who set fire to a poem in honor of The Lady), Ellyn Maybe, Michael C. Ford, Lynne Bronstein, Richard Modiano, Susan Hayden, Linda Albertano and Yvonne de la Vega.

Griffith says more than 400 poems are now in the bomb and that he anticipates another 400 being added at stops around the country. Submissions by email are now closed.

The first poem he received was from a veteran in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It is a haiku: *Ex Marine/contemplates Nagasaki/atop Mt. Fuji.*

Griffith says he has been looking for a bomb to remodel for five or six years. His dream of a Poetry Bomb Tour became a reality April 28, when he climbed into an old Ford Econoline Van and set off with the bomb for a 55 day trek to coffee houses around the country.

Learn more about the Poetry Bomb on Facebook.

Chains Be Gone



Three years after a boycott was begun by Venice Unchained as part of a campaign to keep chain stores off Abbot Kinney Blvd., Pinkberry, at 1410 AKB, has thrown in the towel.

The Pinkberry franchise owner, Patrick Cheh, will not be going broke. He owns ten other Pinkberry stores, more than anyone else.

Venice Unchained's boycott was helped by the opening of a locally owned store, Nice Cream, next door. The store often has a line of customers while Pinkberry has been lonely except on weekends when more tourists are in the area.

In addition to the Pinkberry boycott, Venice Unchained has promoted an ordinance, with Councilmember Bill Rosendahl's support, that would prohibit "formula retail" stores in the central Venice area. Except for one hearing on Feb. 20, 2008 at the Westminster Auditorium, it has been languishing in the L.A. Planning Dept. Planning staff say this is due to a lack of funding and staffing in the department. Perhaps the Pinkberry victory will create pressure on city government to get moving.



"I'm delighted the owner finally understood the boycott was not going away," said Dawn Hollier, who with Melissa Bechtel founded Venice Unchained. "I think other chain stores should see this as a cautionary lesson if they are thinking about coming to Abbot Kinney," she added.

About a year ago, another chain store, The Coffee Bean, gave up its Venice roost in mid-lease at the corner of Windward and Pacific, just across the street from a popular local hangout, Cafe Collage.

In its July, 2004, issue the Beachhead ran a front-page photoshopped picture by Eric Ahlberg of Abbot Kinney Blvd. with chain stores, including Taco Bell, Starbucks and Dominos replacing local stores.

See VeniceUnchained.org for more information and see Ahlberg's nightmare vision of Abbot Kinney Blvd. at <http://tinyurl.com/2v98guw>

—Jim Smith

The Return of Myrna Loy



Photos this page by Jim Smith



Nearly 1,800 Venetians and former Venetians turned out at Venice High School, April 10, to see the new statue, *Inspiration*, better known as the Myrna Loy statue, unveiled. Most were alumni of the school who had spent their years of study near the old cement statue which suffered from 70 years of vandalism and the elements, and ultimately fell apart. The new bronze statue was the fruit of years of fundraising by the alumni association. It will not be white like the previous statue - in fact, it is already turning green - but should last much longer.

A short program moderated by Laura Ferre, alumni president, included cheerleaders and band members and featured a parade of principals and ex-principals (no teachers or students), actor Beau Bridges (class of '59), top donor Peter Schwab, and an introduction of the sculptor Ernest Shelton. Oddly, no representatives of Venice organizations or institutions were invited to speak. For more information, visit the alumni website: www.venicehighalumni.com.

Ferre says she doesn't expect the new statue to suffer the vandalism that befell the old one. "We do not intend on any kind of cage or railing around the base of the statue. We have built the pedestal hopefully high enough, and narrow enough so that it will not be accessible to stand on," said Ferre. "We have layered the plants around her to keep everyone as far away as possible. The lights at night on the buildings light her up fully. And...we have 24 hour video surveillance on her," she added.

Myrna would have enjoyed the attention!

—Jim Smith

SWAMI X SPEAKS



Swami X photo by Rich Mann

There is only one Absolute, to attempt to define. It is a form of insanity. Yes, of course, most everyone is insane. The author being no exception, however, I do know all public gatherings are sexually motivated and self-interestedly financed. Sex is the not answer, it's the question. The answer is Yes -- Yes, Yes, Yes if you're really into it.

Everyone, whether they are conscious of it or not, is searching for Absolute Fulfillment. Big Business and Religions have been exploiting these people for eons and a day. And God bless them in their blindness to Light.

"Anyway," as my friend used to say, "we're only here for an day of eternity, enjoy yourself, and don't get caught." I really have no dog in this race, so I'm just trying to make a little clever conversation to entertain you, 'cause I love you.

Everyone loves everyone, however, many are confused inside with unadaptable belief systems, which results in anti-social behavior and murder in all the degrees. The truth, if I may, is that everyone and everything is essentially spirit, and inevitably returns to that Absolute Supreme Spirit, called by any name you wish. We are Co-creators with the Supreme Creator, until we become One with the Absolute Supreme Creator. We are all members of a divine play. The Hindus call it Maya. They should know something, they've been around for a long time.

And so, the only problem we really have is the challenge we face in getting to know and realize our essential, spiritual nature. Subjective meditation is the way. AUM is the Word and mantra.

Peace.

THOUSANDS OF CALIFORNIANS MISSING

—From the News

By Margot Pepper

Sacramento, Calif. — César Chávez Day came and went without acknowledgment from most mainstream print media of a Chávez-inspired 365-mile march that lasted 48 days and culminated in thousands of Californians converging upon the State Capitol April 21. Wave after wave of union workers, educators, students and parents demanded funding for basic public services that citizens in developed nations expect for their tax dollars, such as functioning schools, roads and parks. The route was twenty-five miles longer than the one originally led by César Chávez in 1966 from Delano to Sacramento to protest growers' deliberate spraying of striking farm workers with lethal pesticides. "Most of the farm-workers' energy was focused on the grape boycott. At its height, more than 14 million Americans helped by not buying grapes. The pressure was irresistible, and the Delano growers signed historic contracts with UFWOC in 1969," observed PBS film-maker Rick Tejada-Flores in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas.

The recent March for California's Future began in Bakersfield on March 5 with the aim of safeguarding the future of California's students, the infirm and elderly, and to protest the severely deteriorated quality of life of the majority of Californians. The core group of marchers that reached the finish line included a San Diego college professor, a Los Angeles probation officer and a Bay Area community organizer. They endured rain and heat, slept in churches, schools and RV parks, according to Lori Abbott (PNS) in the San Jose Mercury News.

While mention of the march can be found on the web at the Huffington Post and KPBS, the San Jose Mercury News was the only established print media outlet that followed the story in any depth.

Before Governor Schwarzenegger's latest cuts, California ranked 47th in the nation per pupil spending. Now critics predict it will be closer to 49th. Adult schools, the last safety net for those who "have been left behind" are being closed throughout the state, increasing the likelihood of more costly incarceration, noted Berkeley Adult School Educator Lynn Kalmar at Wednesday's rally. Among other cuts to parks and public services affecting children, the poor and elderly, the governor has threatened to eliminate the state's In-Home Supportive Services Program employing 65,000 of the state's in-home care workers and jeopardizing the lives of the disabled they care for. Yet this is "the richest state in the richest country in the world," says the Berkeley Federation of Teachers. The math doesn't add up.

According to Alternet's David DeGraw, "The poorest one-fifth of the population pay more than 11 percent of their income in taxes, whereas the top 1 percent earning an average of more than two mil-

lion dollars a year, are paying about seven percent." Over the last sixty years, the federal income tax level levied on those earning more than \$400,000 has dropped nearly 20 percent from 91 percent to 70 percent, according to a recent report by the Institute for Policy Studies.

Apparently, not everyone in our nation is suffering from the recession. DeGraw points out that the United States has the highest inequality in the industrialized world. According to Forbes, the first full year of the economic crisis, the wealth of the 400 richest U.S. men increased by \$30 billion, "bringing their total combined wealth to \$1.56 trillion, which is more than the combined net worth of 50% of the U.S. population," observes DeGraw.

In 2007, the top 1% held 43% of U.S. financial wealth, according to UC Santa Cruz Professor G. William Domhoff. It is tempting to reason that were this wealth divided among the remaining 90 percent, it would likely be almost twice as wealthy. Instead, Governor Schwarzenegger and Republican lawmakers recently led the charge in recent budget negotiations to further cut corporate taxes by \$2 billion a year, according to Judy Lin (AP) in the San Jose Mercury News.

To help remedy this situation, State Assembly representative Alberto Torrico has authored AB 656 that will levy a 12.5 percent extraction fee on oil companies that currently don't pay a dime in taxes to extract California's oil. The revenues would generate nearly \$2 billion a year for the state's public colleges and universities. "Even Sarah Palin's Alaska and George W. Bush's Texas levy an oil severance fee," says Torrico in an opinion piece in the San Jose Mercury News. "California is the only oil-producing state that continues to miss the opportunity to generate funds with a fair oil severance fee."

At present, the Assembly Bill is likely to fall short of the two-thirds majority votes needed to raise taxes since Proposition 13 passed in 1978. This is why rally organizers are calling on citizens to sign UC Berkeley Professor George Lakoff's petition for a ballot measure that will change the two-thirds voting threshold to a simple majority for the Legislature to pass budgets and to impose higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy.

But while this legislation is desperately needed as a quick fix, were César Chávez still alive, he might caution its supporters about turning over all their power to the legislature instead of building a movement willing to engage in direct action, strikes, sit-ins and boycotts. When the California Legislature created the Agricultural Labor Relations Board in 1975, the United Farm Workers (UFW) was forced to give up wildcat strikes and secondary boycotts. Growers used legal loopholes in the union election rules to drag out negotiations for years and avoid signing contracts with the UFW.

As for the media blackout on the story, one need only inquire whether the owners of the newspapers and stations are in that top one-percent earning more than 1.6 million dollars a year to know whether they stand for a more equitable tax distribution or prefer that this story disappear.



Where's Arnold?

Photo by Mark Coplan



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regardless
as it rejuvenates itself
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– erica snowlake

Conspiracies Debunked

By Jim Smith

I don't believe in UFOs
except the ones on the moon.

I don't believe Bush knew
about 9/11, but Cheney did.

I don't believe Oswald was a pasty,
the CIA doesn't kill people.

I don't believe in mind control,
never seen it on TV.

I don't believe in chem trails in the sky,
a Happy Meal is all I need.

I don't believe in parasites in the brain,
I'm actin' crazy because it's fun.

I don't believe the world will end
in 2012, it'll be much sooner.

13:33 Thursday, April 15, 2010, inside the Talking Stick.....Bi-polar world, two sides to the same coin, I might as well just go ahead and join. What difference does it make? Let us adjourn, Just re-attach both halves and be reborn. This hybrid combination of two parts Is two-toned, hemispheric, and alerts The separation to the binary. Twin universes, alternate and free. Pygmalion resurfaces, imports Dichotomy of purpose. How it hurts To sense this perforation. Should I mourn? Have I been so affected as to burn And freeze in the same breath? Should I resign Myself to being torn asunder, or rejoin?.....Roger Houston

Still too dark to see

By Karl Abrams

Lightning at sunrise,
first warning of an omnipresent thunder
where deep rolling drums beyond my reach
wake me from a peculiar and hidden dream,
crawling in anger and symbol
in a dead and moonless night,
that's still too dark to resolve or comprehend.

Even here I could once worship
your dreamy tropical presence,
in a bamboo bed
floating as an unsinkable raft
far from any known or definable shore.

Now I obsess in your absence,
one that won't go away,
one that always pulls in more
of what never really arrives.

Laying exhausted,
on a chilly night road alone,
I see how my cries and words will,
as they must,
slowly bend and twist,
eventually crushed
under the timeless weight
of losing you.

fruit gallery

smoothies juices salads wraps

OPEN DAILY

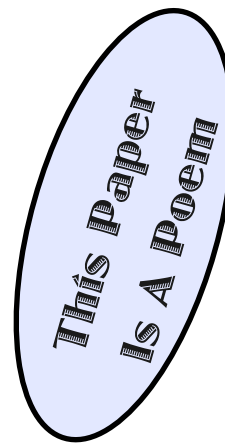
Your local organic juice bar
by the beach.

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310-452-3034 • fruitgalleryofvenice.com

Ode to My Soul

My soul is
a farmer dressed in
muddy overalls.
He is standing
leaning over his hoe
pointing at a row
of perfect, delicate
bib lettuce.
"Look," he calls to me,
"look at the seeds
you once planted.
And i, i have tended
faithfully. Don't
turn away
from your past.
It is growing, growing
into a divine and
sumptuous feast."

–krista schwimmer



Follow the adventures of the Poetry Bomb and S.A. Griffith across the continent on Facebook.

Farewell American Poet Steve Richmond

I could hear him before I saw him
in room 5 New Vista Hospital
for post-acute care
he thrashed and groaned non-stop

I talked to him
blanked eyes didn't register
he stopped thrashing some at my touch
continued to groan

nurse slipped in gave pain-killer
his eyes flicker
why doesn't he answer me

couldn't know if he heard . . .
heard me say you're an original
a damn good poet yeah now in a bind
a word guy with no more words

I didn't stay long

---Panos Douvos

On The Beach

I blew into my bottle, because
I wanted to hear
the horns of the ships.
Then I drunk the entire
Atlantic Ocean
with my straw

- Virág Vida

Is There No Justice?

"Sure it makes perfect sense.
Import the breadfruit from Tahiti
To feed slaves in Jamaica.
Cheaper than bananas
If slaves must eat at all.
Makes sense to import
Slaves from Africa
Train them to drive
The red natives from this land.
A century later we send the black men
And the red men
To kill the yellow men in Asia.
We play chess
And the world is full of our little dolls.
Our motto is:
From each
According to what we need
To each
According to what we choose.

"And it makes sense
To those of us who run the machine
To keep the best for us
And mete out the rest in tiny segments
To the ones who bear the weight.
Money is earned
By those who love money.
Those who rule
Deserve their pay for ruling.
And can our pleasure be denied us?
We are exhausted from our struggle
To lead the ignorant flocks.
Excuse us our frolics in Vegas.
Yes we've heard our employees
Live through evictions
And debts and unpaid medical bills.
But they are not deserving.
Had they been meant to earn money
They would be earning it.
It makes sense to us.
The poor are poor
Because it is their destiny.

"There are winners
And there are losers.
If you are one of the losers
Don't cry to us.
What helps us to keep winning
Is that we promulgate the notion
That you can become as we are
And win.
The truth is
You never can.
We won't let you
And your losing keeps us rich.

"Justice? Why do you ask?
What is that word?
Is there no justice?
Of course there is.
Like any commodity
It is always paid for.
Medieval millionaires
Did not burn at the stake.
The moneyed ones
Never hung from a rope or a cross.
It makes perfect sense. At least to us."

So they said. So they said.

And one being, with an active mind,
Stomped upon and almost crushed to the ground,
Felt the wind of another world
Entering her almost broken frame,
Bringing the revival.
And from what miracle she could not know
She began to grow.
She raised her head,
Threw up her arms
Like two branches.
Her arms grew wide
And her hands formed fists
That clenched the air,
Pulling her clear from the wreckage
Dealt her by the talking pride machines.

Up and she threw
That wreckage. The machines
Crumpled, pushed back,
Cracked, whimpered, as she dealt them
The terminal blow:

"It makes perfect sense! Our lives, our creed
Make perfect sense! What are you doing?
Help us, don't hurt us. We'll change!
We'll give you what you want. Only
Let us go. Don't crush us. How
Can you do this to us?"

She pushed them hard.
They did not die
But they did not shine.
Left alone, feeble, unable to move,
Unable to touch the millions
At last freed from their interminable excuses,
Only able to watch
As the world got on
So much better without them.
The last they heard
Was what was shouted
As she left them to rust:
"It makes sense to me!
Is there no justice?"

–Lynne Bronstein

Food Trucks on Abbot Kinney –continued from page 1

a buck to be made ... they will come. With them came a slew of issues of which each could - and should - be its own separate item on the Neighborhood Council agenda: Trash. Parking. Safety. etc., etc.

There are pros and cons of the Food Truck epidemic. They offer affordable food - pro. They leave nowhere for anyone to park on First Fridays - con. They bring new customers to Abbot Kinney - pro. Those new customers throw their trash on the ground (or in my bike basket) - con. They create a Carnival atmosphere - pro AND con.

One business owner says they hurt their business ... customers can't park or get past the line of people waiting for their "gourmet" taco to get inside, and they want to punch the rude truck worker out. Another says it's been great for business, and they give the truck a "Bathroom Letter" to use their restroom facilities.

In calls and emails to our Councilmember Rosendahl, Venice Officer Skinner, the LA County Health Inspectors, and City Hall, it appears that there is only ONE regulation at the moment - that is the trucks must be parked within 200 feet of a bathroom facility for the workers in the truck to use if they're going to be parked over one hour, and have a letter from the permanent business offering the use of their bathroom. That's it.

The Health Department Inspector I spoke to said that with 14,000 registered vehicles to keep up with (never mind the as many as 28,000 ones operating illegally), it's hard to strictly regulate them all (especially in a State that's pretty much broke). Eight trucks were shut down for Health violations at the March First Friday, and there is no rating system for food trucks (yet), so the Bathroom Letter is really the only weapon those opposed to them have to brandish.

I have no problem with the old time-y Mexican food trucks, like the great Taco one that is usually around Lincoln and Rose. Those have been a big and important part of L.A. culture for years, and whatever regulations or crackdowns are to be implemented to keep the peace, I hope those original ones can somehow be grandfathered out of the loop, so they can stay in business. It's the flashy (some corporate) new ones that we're talking about here.

Some of my friends love the new trucks. Many of them abhor them. I personally feel like I do about Chain businesses ... they don't really seem to fit in Venice. It bothered me to see a Pizza slice truck parked a half block away from Abbot's Pizza Co., who have served up their delicious slices for years and years.

It irked me to see a guy in a wheelchair not able to navigate the narrow sidewalk because of the line swarming in front of one of the trucks. It concerns me that with all the trucks parked on the street, it's difficult to see around them to cross an already sketchy crosswalk at Palms. It bugged me to return to my bike to see the basket filled with trash from the 11 (!) Food Trucks parked in The Brig parking lot across the street last First Friday. But these are all things that can be addressed and dealt with. Right? Especially if they do indeed increase business for our local merchants whom we love. But DO they? I've heard many locals say that they now avoid First Friday because it's turned into such a madhouse of Food Trucks and "Bridge and Tunnelers." What do YOU think? There's another First Friday right around the corner ... observe and report!

The Food Trucks will be an agenda item at the next Neighborhood Council meeting, so attend and make yourselves heard. Communicate openly about your concerns with the Food Truck Vendors themselves. Write to the Beachhead (and become a Sustainer while you're at it!) to offer your own creative solutions. But above all, please continue to support your LOCAL businesses, who made Abbot Kinney into a destination in the first place.
Word.

Rosendahl's Letter to the Community – continued from page 2

and the right connection to services. Many are economically disadvantaged, in need of help getting back on their feet. And, yes, a sizable number are taking advantage of free rent in a beautiful community, and need to be cited and told to move on.

A carrot and stick approach makes sense. A Safe Parking program will provide services and shelter to those who need it, while the OPDs will give us the tool we need to force from our neighborhoods those who have no need of services.

What is the Venice Area Surplus Real Property Trust Fund?

The trust fund, established in the 1970s, contains monies collected from the sale of surplus city properties in Venice. The money has restricted uses, and can be spent only on projects in Venice that benefit Venice and the entire City. In the past, the fund has been used to renovate Venice Beach, rebuild the Venice Pier, rehabilitate the Venice Canals and Ballona Lagoon, build the LAPD substation, create public art, create additional parking spaces, fund programs for at-risk youth, and pay for the initial studies to create OPDs....

Still, the Venice monies can be spent only in Venice. How can you use this money for this purpose?

The money from the Venice fund is only one of many sources that will be used to be pay for the Safe Parking program. I am also tapping other accounts that can be used for district wide or citywide programs, and we are also going to aggressively seek

money from grants and other levels of government. LAHSA itself will bring resources to bear for the program. The percent of money spent from Venice will be commensurate with the services provided in Venice, and the number of vehicles from Venice neighborhoods that are moved off the streets and into the program. Leftover monies from Venice will revert back to the Venice property fund.

Does this mean that the Safe Parking Program will be in effect only in Venice? Won't this attract people living in their cars to Venice?

The program will serve the entire 11th District, and I hope will be a model for the entire City. I anticipate we will have lots in other parts of the district, as well as in Venice. Money from other sources will be used to help pay for the program in the non-Venice parts of CD11.

The purpose of the Safe Parking program will be to draw those living in their vehicles off our residential streets, into a service continuum, and eventually into housing. Our intention is to demonstrably reduce the number of people living in their cars in Venice and in CD11.

Why don't you use the money to hire more cops for Venice or for CD11?

Venice is getting more police. I am pleased to report that between the end of April and Memorial Day Weekend, the Venice Beach detail will be augmented by 36 additional officers....

What is happening with parking restrictions to help combat vehicular living?

As you may know, I supported the creation of Overnight Permit Parking Districts, and funded our application for those districts before the California Coastal Commission. The Commission denied those applications. The commission decision is facing a legal challenge, and I hope it will be resolved in a way that allows us to implement the OPDs.

In the meantime, I recently submitted a motion directing our City Attorney and our Department of Transportation to amend the City's Oversized Vehicle Ordinance. This Ordinance currently restricts parking vehicles that are 22 feet long and 84 inches high from 2 am to 6 am. My motion, Council File 09-3036, requests that the municipal code be amended to restrict parking of Oversized Vehicles that are 22 feet long OR 84 inches high from 2 am to 6 am.

This amendment, in addition to my support of Overnight Parking Permit Districts, will provide our law enforcement entities with additional tools they can utilize as a means to address the large number of Oversized Vehicles that consistently park on Venice streets in the late and early morning hours.

Many people think you are allocating too much from the Venice Property Fund to this program. How do you respond?

I always listen to my constituents and try to strike a balanced and fair approach, especially on this issue....

Rosendahl's "Carrot and Stick" means a knock on the door at 5 am

–continued from page 1

meant to induce fear, nearly every month, the most recent occurrence on April 13th, the day before Rosendahl's letter.

The police target everyone within an area where the mobile-homed are more concentrated, typically streets that are not heavily residential. Sleeping citizens are ordered out of their vehicles. They are put off balance with rapid-fire questions. They are lied to and told they must answer questions; that the police "know" they are hiding something, that they can forcefully open doors if not opened voluntarily and that they can take away their children. Actually, some of those might not be lies, but who can be sure at 4 a.m.? We are ganged up on; surrounded by officers taunting, threatening, laughing. Numerous officers have said to me that Rosendahl, Venice residents, police leaders, and the city council have met and decided that we are a problem to be "swept" and "cleaned" from the streets of Venice. I don't understand how some people in all good conscience can call others names like "criminal" or "garbage" (as implied by the expressions "cleaning" or "sweeping" the street). I can't believe everyone who gets swept up is worthy of the title "criminal."

During one instance, I was handcuffed when I invoked my Fifth Amendment rights, determined not to be interrogated so cruelly yet again. I have been ticketed for the misdemeanor crime of sleeping in a vehicle. Wouldn't it be great if we could all be magically decriminalized by paying someone every month for the right to sleep? Personally, I work full-time and still cannot afford to decriminalize myself. I do not

understand where the idea came from that someone who is living in a vehicle is "taking advantage," as though they had chosen to live in third-world America at the expense of the housed.

Rosendahl also has in a mind utilizing a few more "tools" to "force from our neighborhoods" the people of which he speaks. First, there is the pending lawsuit with the Coastal Commission over jurisdiction so that the Overnight Parking Districts can be used to force out "non-residents." Second, there is his move to amend the Oversized Vehicle Ordinance to give a more inclusive definition of the vehicle sizes which can be outlawed on streets during prime sleeping hours. And finally, 36 additional police officers assigned to the area are arriving by Memorial Day Weekend who can then give more tickets for sleeping, do more sweeps, wreak more intimidation.

And what is the "carrot" that is being offered? Well-meaning Venetians assume that the "carrot" is the services that will help people into houses and jobs, so they too can become residents and legal sleepers. Unfortunately, the Homeless Outreach officers are handing out resource packets full of bogus, outdated and irrelevant information. They show up in tandem with police who are actively ticketing. They are here to help, they say. Their carrot is not very enticing.

Then there is the much talked about Safe Parking Program, which is woefully inadequate to serve the number of mobile-homed residents needing to be decriminalized. The program is awash in regulations ignorant of the demographic in question. The stays

would be restricted to three months. So, in practice, six wheeled homes could be decriminalized for a token three months before they might have to choose between the hard legality of the sidewalk and the soft but illegal embrace of an actual bed. This program looks a lot like subterfuge, a rotten carrot with a stick inside.

Rosendahl's goal to rid the streets of certain vehicles is riddled with negations of the humanity and dignity of those whose homes are vehicles. Rather than "residents" of Venice, they are "non-residents," whose lack of such a title has political, social, psychological, and human repercussions. Even the metaphor of "carrot and stick," is demeaning and dehumanizing, equating the homeless with animals, like beasts in dumb resistance to their master. The vernacular, the particular language, used by Rosendahl to speak "about" the mobile-homed recognizes neither their humanity, nor their due voice in laws, strategies, and programs which will have the greatest impact upon them. Rather, it recognizes the factions that exist. Sadly, the simplistic language has already separated their humanity from that of the community around them.

Rosendahl must be challenged to represent all constituents, to solicit the voices of all Venetians, whether he deigns to call them "residents," and their sleep lawful, or not. As it is and may be, in the practice behind the pretense, we are left with Rosendahl's true approach: a burro being beaten in the street at 2 AM with none to bear witness to this inhumane injustice. The stick is a stick, but the carrot is rotten.

CommUnity Events - day by day

Saturday, May 1

- 8am-Noon - **Pancake Breakfast** at the Venice Fire Dept., Venice and Shell. \$5.
- 10am-5pm - **Venice Garden and Home Tour** of Oakwood, Palms and Milwood starting at 804 Broadway. Benefits Las Doradas Children's Center. Advance \$60, Day of \$70. venicegardentour@ca.rr.com
- 10am - 2pm - **International Worker's Day/May Day March**. Downtown Los Angeles. Broadway and Olympic. Join in Solidarity to support Immigration Reform and to protest Ariz. Gov. recent signing of anti-immigrant bill.
- 8-10pm - **The Joint-Juke Gang** playing incredible and original Acoustic Roots Music. Talking Stick.
- 8-10pm - Venice singer **Simone White** supporting Mia Doi Todd at McCabes. 3101 Pico Boulevard SM, 310-828-4497. \$15.

Sunday, May 2

- 5 pm - **Open Reading** with poet **RD Armstrong, aka Raindog**, editor/publisher of Lummo Press and **Peggy Dobreer**, co-author of "64 Ways to Practice Nonviolence". Beyond Baroque. Sign up at 4:45 PM. Free.
- 7pm - **The Shoo Flies** - Blue Grass, Folk, etc. The Talking Stick. Free.

Monday, May 3

- 7-10pm - **Open Mic on "MoZaic Monday"**. Sign up at 6:30 pm. Hosted by Matt Sedillo, DJ Noj, and Nickie Black. The Talking Stick. Free.

Wednesday, May 5

Happy Cinco de Mayo!

Thursday, May 6

- 7-10pm - Come in and hear **The 805 Blues**. Talking Stick. Free.
- 7-10pm - **Ellyn Maybe and Band**, Poetry Rodeo with Lynne Bronstein and Jaimes Palacios. Pier 212. Free.

Friday, May 7

- 7-10pm - **Java With Javelyn**. Talking Stick. \$3.

Saturday, May 8

- 10am-4pm - **Machado Day** - Venice's first owner! Tour the Centinela Adobe and learn the Machado family history. 7634 Midfield, L.A.
- 11am-1pm - It's time for the bunch who play the **Klezmar Brunch**. Talking Stick. Free.
- 1-3pm - Bake a peace pie and donate it to the **Code Pink Mother's Day Bakesale!** OFW and Windward. Contact: whitneycodepink@gmail.com
- 7-10pm - Drop in for the fantastic **Grassroots Acoustica Charity** fundraiser. Talking Stick. Free.

Sunday, May 9

- 7-10pm - **The Enzymes** with guests. Talking Stick.

Monday, May 10

- 6-10pm - **"Documental"** shows **"The Folksinger"**, Killer blues film at the Unurban Coffeehouse. Free.

Tuesday, May 11

- 7pm - Film premiere **"Madcap Mabel"** about Mabel Normand. Venice Historical Society. Venice Library.
- 7-10pm - **"Musical Goodness"** hosted by Danny Moynahan. Talking Stick. Free.

Wednesday, May 12

- 7:30-10:30pm - **Suzy Williams** at Danny's Deli in Venice. Free.

Thursday, May 13

- 7:45pm - **Six String Night** with **Tracy Newman and the Reinforcements**. Talking Stick. Free.

Friday, May 14

- 5-6:30pm - Music by **David Dodson**. Talking Stick.
- 7-10pm - **"Nette Radio Night"** Talking Stick.

Saturday, May 15

- **Vis-à-vis** - Three Venice venues - For info. see visavisa.blogspot.com - with 10 prominent contemporary French/Francophone and American writers, workshops for kids to discover French and literature all day long. Free and open to the public.

Sunday, May 16

- 5-10pm - Blues! Featuring **Tom Gramlich and Mystic Miles**. Talking Stick. Free.

Monday, May 17

- 6 and 8-10pm - **7 Dudley Cinema** presents **Antero Ali & Blues Films** at the Talking Stick. Free.

Tuesday, May 18

- 7pm - Singer **Christopher Bothers**; 7:45pm - **Rich Podgur** playing Guthrie/Dylan-esque American Folk; 8:30pm - The music of **Scott Wohajn**. Talking Stick. Free.

Wednesday, May 19

- 7-10pm - **Open Mic** (15 min. early signup). Hosted by **Gramlich and Pfeifer**. Talking Stick. Free.

Thursday, May 20

- 5 - 6:30 pm - Opening reception: **Emily Winters** painting from the April Beachhead will be exhibited at the Santa Monica Emeritus College Art Gallery, 1227 2nd Street in Santa Monica (Free parking). Ongoing event until June 18. Free.

Friday, May 21

- 7-11pm - **Venice MoZaic** presents a CD entitled "Singer/Songwriter: Welcome 2 The Talking Stick" - Talking Stick. Donation.

Saturday, May 22

- 7-10pm - **Singer/Songwriter Night**. Come in, compare notes, make new friends. Talking Stick. Free.
- 7-12pm - **Fundraising Party** for **"Vietnam: People's Victory"** - 3983 Shedd Terrance, CC. Donation.
- 7:30pm - **Paintings and Poetry** by **Antonio Guerrero**, poet, painter and political prisoner. One of The Cuban Five imprisoned by U.S. Reception at SPARC followed by poetry readings and documentary film. Special guests: Danny Glover and Edward Asner. SPARC and Beyond Baroque. Free.

Sunday, May 23

- 7:30pm - **Diane Wakoski** has since published over 40 books of poetry including Emerald Ice: Selected Poems 1962-1987 (Black Sparrow) and the four volumes of her The Archaeology of Movies and Books sequence. This reading will honor her new book. Beyond Baroque. \$7

Monday, May 24

- 6-10pm - **The Venice Song Fest** - Talking Stick. Free.

Tuesday, May 25

- 5-10pm - **Jazz Rock Showcase** from the **New West Charter**. Talking Stick. Free.

Wednesday, May 26

- 7-10pm - A very **Open Mike**. Talking Stick. Free.

Thursday, May 27

- 7:30 - 10pm - **Suzy, Steven and Don** - Industry Café. 6039 Washington Blvd CC. Free.

Friday, May 28

- 7-10pm - Venice MoZaic's **"Still Bill"**, a movie featuring Unit Posse. Talking Stick. Free.
- 7-10pm - **Subversive Cinema** at 212 Pier. Free.

Saturday, May 29

- 7-10pm - **Suzy and Her Solid Senders** at the Talking Stick. Free.
- 10am - **5th Annual Small Press Book Festival**. Church in Ocean Park, 235 Hill St.

Monday, May 31

- 7-10pm - **"TK Promo Presents"** Talking Stick.

Get Your Local Event Listed

Email your time, date and a brief description to Calendar@freevenice.org by the May 20.

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- 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
- Good Hurt, 12249 Venice Blvd. www.goodhurt.com
- Hal's Bar and Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., 396-3105 - www.halsbarandgrill.com
- Oakwood Recreation Center, 757 California Avenue.
- Pacific Resident Theatre, 703 1/2 Venice Blvd. 822-8392. pacificresidenttheatre.com
- SPARC - Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 Venice Blvd. 822-9560 x15.
- Talking Stick Coffee Lounge, 1411 Lincoln Blvd. 450-6052 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.

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 - **Los Angeles Monthly Review Discussion** 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 to register. Lauren Deck, 310.397.8820x109. Inside Out Community Arts, Venice Center for Peace with Justice and the Arts, 2210 Lincoln Blvd.
- **Venice Library Movie Night**. Wednesday evenings at 5:30pm. Each month different theme. Call 310-821-1769 for the upcoming movie.
- **Venice Library Children's Pajama Storytime**. Second and fourth Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm.
- **Free Food Distribution** at Vera Davis Center. Every Friday. 3pm.
- **Free Meals**. Bring your own plates and utensils. Dudley and Ocean Front Walk. Daily. 4pm. Also fresh veggies distribution. Fridays. 5pm.

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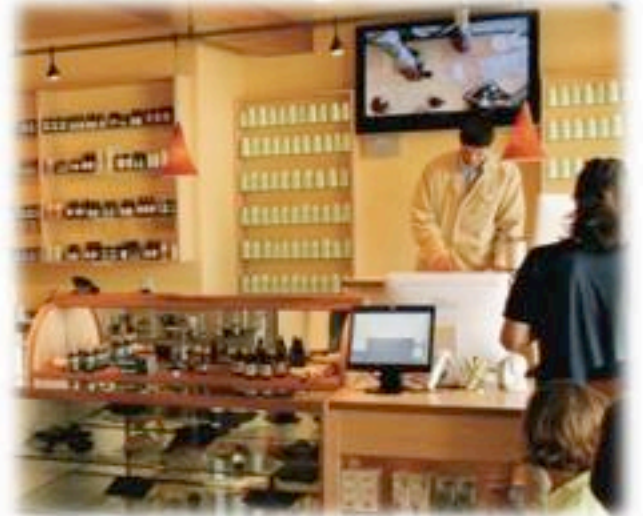


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