



Our
300th
Edition



Interview with Hugo Chávez

By Greg Palast

You'd think George Bush would get down on his knees and kiss Hugo Chávez's behind. Not only has Chávez delivered cheap oil to the Bronx and other poor communities in the United States. And not only did he offer to bring aid to the victims of Katrina. In my interview with the president of Venezuela on March 28, he made Bush the following astonishing offer: Chávez would drop the price of oil to \$50 a barrel, "not too high, a fair price," he said—a third less than the \$75 a barrel for oil recently posted on the spot market. That would bring down the price at the pump by about a buck, from \$3 to \$2 a gallon. But our President has basically told Chávez to take his cheaper oil and stick it up his pipeline. Before I explain why Bush has done so, let me explain why Chávez has the power to pull it off — and the method in the seeming madness of his "take-my-oil-please!" deal.

Venezuela, Chávez told me, has more oil than Saudi Arabia. A nutty boast? Not by a long shot. In fact, his surprising claim comes from a most surprising source: the U.S. Department of Energy. In an internal report, the DOE estimates that Venezuela has five times the Saudis' reserves.

However, most of Venezuela's mega-horde of crude is in the form of "extra-heavy" oil—liquid asphalt—which is ghastly expensive to pull up and refine. Oil has to sell above \$30 a barrel to make the investment in extra-heavy oil worthwhile. A big dip in oil's price—and, after all, oil cost only \$18 a barrel six years ago—would bankrupt heavy-oil investors. Hence Chávez's offer: Drop the price to \$50—and keep it there. That would guarantee Venezuela's investment in heavy oil.

But the ascendance of Venezuela within OPEC necessarily means the decline of the power of the House of Saud. And the Bush family wouldn't like that one bit. It comes down to "petro-dollars." When George W. ferried then-Crown Prince (now King) Abdullah of Saudi Arabia around the Crawford ranch in a golf cart it wasn't because America needs Arabian oil. The Saudis will always sell us their petroleum. What Bush needs is Saudi petro-dollars. Saudi Arabia has, over the past three decades, kindly recycled the cash sucked from the wallets of American SUV owners and sent much of the loot right back to New York to buy U.S. Treasury bills and other U.S. assets.

The Gulf potentates understand that in return for lending the U.S. Treasury the cash to fund George Bush's \$2 trillion rise in the nation's debt, they receive

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CASUALTIES IN IRAQ

U.S. 2,639 Dead – 62 this month
U.S. Wounded 19,890 – 1,500 this month
Iraqi Dead: 50,000 – 100,000

Source: antiwar.com

Cost: \$311+ Billion - Source: costofwar.com

Lincoln Place On The Edge

As the Beachhead is going to press, the California Appellate Court, 2nd District, is deliberating on the fate of nearly 50 households of senior and disabled tenants. If the court fails to find in their favor, they could receive eviction notices as early as Sept. 1.

The three-member panel is responding to an appeal of a ruling, Aug. 16, by Superior Court Judge David Yaffe against the tenants. Santa Monica Attorney, John B. Murdock, represented the tenants in oral arguments at that hearing. He told Judge Yaffe that the relocation benefits, required by CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) and incorporated within the city-approved Tract Map that is needed for redevelopment, precluded eviction of the tenants.

The lawsuit is on behalf of LPTA (Lincoln Place Tenants Association) and a disabled tenant, Ingrid Mueller. It charges the city of Los Angeles with illegally refusing to enforce redevelopment conditions, including comprehensive tenant protections it had worked out with the corporate owner, AIMCO (Apartment Investment and Management Co.).

The evictions are based on the state's Ellis Act, which allows landlords who are going out of the rental business to evict their tenants. However, AIMCO is the biggest landlord in the country and is hardly going out of business. Neither the L.A. City Attorney nor the state Attorney General have questioned this contradiction.

In 2005, the landlord illegally demolished five buildings on Lake Street. Other buildings were bulldozed on Frederick Street, near Ralphs Market. The number of apartments at Lincoln Place was reduced from 900 to 696. Meanwhile, units were not re-rented when tenants moved out, and others were given relocation money to move.

On December 6, 2005, 58 households were locked out of their apartments by the sheriff, and the existing 50 remaining elderly and disabled households may face the same, beginning with the filing of unlawful detainers as early as September 1. Lincoln Place has gone from the largest source of affordable housing in Venice for decades to a ghost town today.

No matter how the court decides, this is not the end of the Lincoln Place saga. There remain 696 one and two bedroom apartments that are sorely needed by low and moderate-income Venetians.

Many tenants and community leaders are convinced the only lasting solution will be to wrest the apartments from their corporate owner before they are destroyed. This may take an eminent domain action by the city or a redevelopment agency. Apparently, the Mayor too busy with the schools to listen to those in need of a place to live.

After 300 Issues, The Beachhead Is Still Alive and Kicking

By Jim Smith

Few Venetians have probably done anything not of a sexual nature 300 times. Yet here in our lay-back community we have that most unlikely of projects - the Free Venice Beachhead - celebrating its 300th issue.

This is probably a record for an all volunteer publication. When the Beachhead was young, it had lots of company: the Berkeley Barb, L.A. Free Press, the East Village Other, the Great Speckled Bird, the Georgia Straight and countless others. Even then, very few were run by a volunteer collective rather than a private owner. But in those days, everyone knew what a Collective was. Today, when someone calls and asks for the Editor, we tell them we don't have an editor, we are a collective, the response is usually "what's a collective," or "who's in charge?" Well actually, that's the whole point, no one is in charge. Everyone is equal, in theory. In reality, those who show up for meetings and are otherwise active have a bigger influence than those who don't.

Let me take you behind the scenes of a typical collective meeting. We meet at least four times a month. It can get a little frantic at the end of the month as the clock ticks toward our reserved time on the press. But the month begins with a review of the previous paper. We note all the typos we missed before it went to press. We gripe at the poor quality printing on some pages. We talk about the big stories we missed, and crow about the scoops we scored. Since no one's in charge, no one can be assigned to cover a particular story, issue or event, unless she or he wants to cover it. That's how we sometimes miss a story. Along with not having an editors, we don't have any reporters, only writers.

When articles are submitted by collective members and others, we read them aloud. This can get a little tedious if you have read the article before the meeting. But it's the way it has always been done on the Beachhead, so we do it. Then we discuss the article and try to come to a consensus on whether to print it or not. It's very rare that someone casts a dreaded veto, as any member of the collective can do, but it does happen. We never edit someone's submission, except for obvious typos. Sometimes we'll ask the author to cut it by a couple hundred words, or suggest that something isn't quite clear and should be rewritten, but the collective would

—continued on page 8



They Don't Get It

Dear Beachhead,
A certain fairly high-up City official came by our Lincoln Place Tent City the other day. Although living in the neighborhood this person has not helped us at all and basically thinks we are doomed in our efforts. Still he wished us luck. I don't get it but people are strange, me included.

What he doesn't get, the Mayor doesn't get, I don't think even Bill R. realizes, is that the first priority of any tribe leader is to house their constituents. From the cave-people through the royalty to modern day the state succeeds by keeping it's people housed within it's borders.

It isn't up to a condo converter to throw a few grand at a problem. It isn't up to the invaders to help. The conquerors move in. They kick people out. When they do, they win, and a civilized state loses.

Douglas Eisenstark

Endangered Art Fund

Dear Beachhead,

On May 2, 2006, the Venice Arts Council voted to approve the establishment of the "Endangered Art Fund" dedicated to preservation of public art works in Venice. Preliminary funds will be used to repair and remove the tagging on the Endangered Species mural by Emily Winter, and the Venice Poetry Wall and related shower walls curated by Beyond Baroque.

The focus of the preservation fund will be on public murals, sculptures, and related art works in the public realm. The goal of the fund is to help support the preservation, restoration, and protection of these works of concern to the community and neighborhoods. Specific projects will be supervised, in coordination with stakeholder input by the Venice Arts Council and the individual organizations having expertise in the concerned areas.

The Venice Arts Council is seeking funds for the "Endangered Art Fund." The first project will be preserving the Endangered Species mural. We have approached the owner of the building, elected officials, Venice Neighborhood Council, businesses and individuals to partner with us in our efforts to raise funds to repair the mural and to support the fund.

The "Endangered Art Fund" has developed a list of endangered works, and with the assistance of the Beachhead, and others, will begin mobilizing and preparing for their protection and preservation. Just last week we received a call to protect the historic JAYA mural, located near the canals on Dell Avenue at Venice Blvd. And, the graffiti walls on Venice Beach are in jeopardy of being removed.

Your initial support will help us begin an important process to protect and preserve public art in Venice. Tax deductible contributions can be made payable to SPARC.

Suzanne Thompson,
Chair, Endangered Art Fund



The collective staff of the

BEACHHEAD COLLECTIVE:

Karl Abrams, John Davis, C.V. Beck, Carol Fondiller, Don Geagan, Yolanda Miranda, Jim Smith, Erica Snowlake, Judith Martin-Straw, Alice Stek

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

The Beachhead encourages anyone to submit news stories, articles, letters, photos, poetry or graphics of interest to the Venice community. The staff reserves the right to make all decisions collectively on material published. There is no editor on the Beachhead. The printing is financed by ads and donations. The articles, poetry and art work express the opinions of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Beachhead Collective.

To submit material, include your name and telephone number. Anonymous material will not be printed, but your name will be withheld on request. If return of material is desired, a stamped self-addressed envelope is required. No payment is made for material used.

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

Web: <www.freevenice.org>

Email: <Beachhead@freevenice.org>

Our Mission Statement

Oh Holy Shit

The Thought Police are rising

It is the Time

for the Beachhead's rebirth

Now is the Time to get your thoughts together

If you care whether

you have a thought of any worth.

Thoughts left of Center

Homeowner or Renter

Put your Head where your Pen* is

Send it to us use your wits

and if we like it

We'll print or plagiarize it

or tear it into

teeny tiny

bits

— by the Slumgoddess

*Pen: Antique Term for Word Processor or Computer

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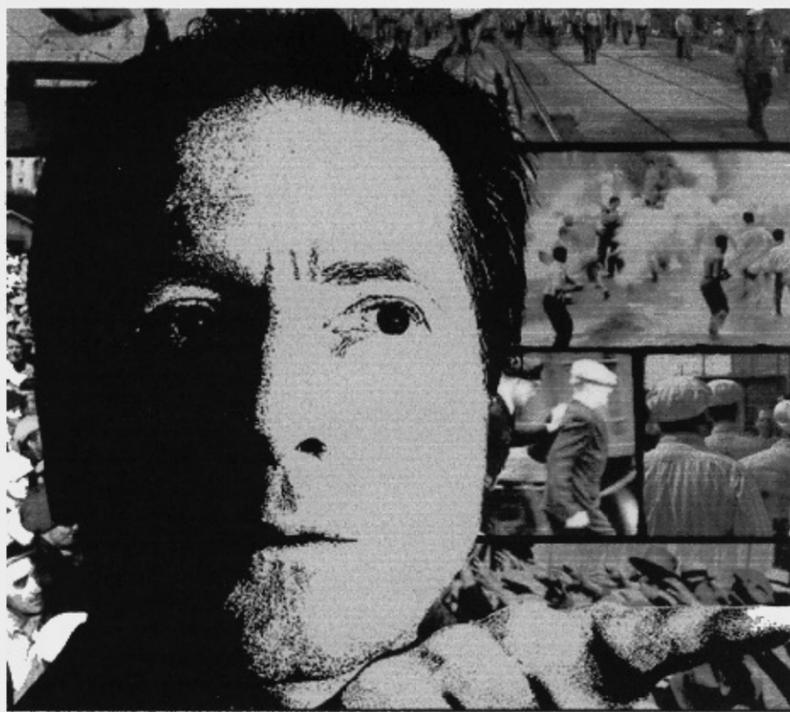
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Poets and Writers

See Page 4 for details

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Venice developer's lease Terminated: Evicted by even Bigger DEVELOPER Werner Scharff 1916–2006

By Carol Fondiller

When a long time adversary dies, it's as much of a shock as when a dear friend or relative dies.

I felt a sense of loss when I learned that long time Venice speculator/developer Werner Scharff died.

He certainly affected my life and the social ecology of Venice.

That other local semi-quarterly monthly on-line paper called him a Venice Patriot, bestowing on him the mantle of Venice founder Abbot Kinney.

I'll leave you to read the L.A. Times obit for an even more paroxysmic, paragyniacal ode to the departed Mr. Scharff and his good work, such as giving aid to artists' businesses.

To his credit, Mr. Scharff never said a mumblin' word when Emily Winters painted a highly political anti-development mural on the wall of his Park Avenue mini-mall. At one time Mr. Scharff owned about 80% of the Ocean Front Walk. It was he who led the charge for Urban Removal—whoops—Renewal in Venice. He and other developers/speculators pressured and conspired with various public and private agencies and entities, i.e., Commissioners, Saving & Loans, City Council, Banks to evict low-income tenants, and to condemn the many small cottages on the Ocean Front Walk and walk streets, and eliminating second stories from the buildings between Windward Ave and Pacific Ave. These second stories consisted of single rooms and small apartments. This also halted the integration of the western portion of Venice. In those post World War II days there were regulations called restrictive covenants that allowed people

to deny renting or selling to black people. One could be denied housing or rental in certain areas solely on the basis of race or religion.

Black people were not allowed at the beach. Those second stories were being rented to black people—one of the few places that people of colour were renting near, or on, the Ocean Front Walk! Building and Safety, and other agencies ordered the destruction of those second stories.

Mr. Scharff was, in his taking on the mantle of Abbot Kinney also responsible for the demolition of many of the old Venetian/Victorian style buildings on the O.F.W. The one remaining example of that style is the building that houses the Sidewalk Café and Small World Books.

Mr. Scharff used his old-world charm to try to widen Speedway, which would have taken away 20% of the housing in North Beach. He did not succeed in his efforts. When Mr. Scharff wanted to build his mini-mall on Park Ave., he wanted the property next to his property, one of the few remaining one-family buildings on the O.F.W. He would suggest that the O.F.W. was not suited to the elderly woman who lived there and perhaps the family should move.

His many ocean front acquisitions include the Beach House whose tenants fondly remember his thrifty ways. He replaced the toilet fixtures, but retained the old seats to save money. He still raised the rents.

One of his dreams was to build a freeway along or off the shoreline. Unfortunately, this dream was frustrated by a cabal of tree-hugging comsymp anti-progress community residents.

When Scharff bought the Cadillac Hotel on the O.F.W. it was occupied by mostly elderly tenants who had lived there for decades. After years of attempting to evict them by threats and

harassments, such as prohibiting them the use of the lobby area where they used to congregate and watch the passing parade on the O.F.W. It was a large lobby with a huge window facing the front. I remember there was a painting of a matador on the wall, a TV, a motley crew of chairs and sofas and tenants. Mr. Scharff in his love for art allowed an artist to put in an installation consisting of plastic bags cut into strips hanging from the ceiling and the floor covered in sand. The installation was taken down by orders of the Fire Department. Thanks to Legal Aid and/or Bet Tzedek, a settlement was reached where the tenants were allowed to stay, and as each unit was vacated, the rent would be raised.

Scharff was heard to say that they were old, and eventually they would all die off. Finally when all of those bothersome obstacles were rid of, he illegally turned it into a Youth Hostel and slid it in on a prior use (in the twenties it was a hotel) despite the fact that there is no parking anywhere near the building.

Perhaps he deserves the title of Venice Patriot because he clamored for a freeway that would eliminate most of Oakwood and create a barrier for the, at that time, mostly black property owners who lived there, denying them easy access to the beach, and thereby enabling his Vision of turning Venice into Miami Beach West.

His philosophy seemed to be that of his long time business partner Curt Simon who expressed his views "You feed the sparrows by feeding the horses" in a film by that name. In other words, give the rich what they want, and the poor can eat shit.

I don't deny that Werner Scharff did many acts of personal kindness to individuals.

He also sat on the board of several philanthropic organizations, among them the Venice Family Health Clinic. Perhaps the Clinic would not be so overextended helping people who were made homeless if Mr. Scharff and others like him had a little less "Vision" and a little more humanity.

Eviction Defense Network



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The Eviction Defense Network is a nonprofit, community-based organization providing access to justice to low and moderate income tenants.

Tent City Report



By C.V. Beck

At Tent City, Squirrel Square Free Speech area, Frederick/California, Venice, CA. Wednesdays/Saturdays, 10-5 we go on...with our "mission impossible"?, preserving truly affordable, rent stabilized housing for seniors/disabled/working class persons AND CHILDREN in the now overly ripe, clearly rotten "choice" westside of Los Angeles.

The pressure lately has been very intense and is coming from all sides. Certain neighbors, apparently in some kind of enchanted spell caused by their zeal in remodeling, driving an SUV, plate number 4 HYT 395, have continued their unlawful dumping at Lincoln Place and are caught in the act by security and tenants more than once. Clearly, these barbarians feel entitled.

We are bouncing off the walls (I mean trees) and snarling and snapping at each other as we struggle to understand the complex legal boilerplate of what is being done to us and for us as the hourglass begins running out of sand one more time. Some of us seem to expect to melt into a puddle on the floor as the magic witching hour of 12:00 midnight, August 31, 2006 turns into 12:01, September 1, 2006. At which time our legal tenancies at Lincoln Place are terminated(?) by the Ellis Act and we are posted; or we are NOT terminated by the Ellis Act and not posted on the 1st but maybe -- AFTER the very symbolic Labor Day long holiday weekend is over; and life returns to normalcy on September 5th. That is, the normalcy of evicting seniors and disabled working class persons and relegating them to the "you are so over!" heap of human discards now filling up the westside... (where are all these homeless people coming from? Hint, hint!)

We have filed the necessary paperwork (Case number B193235) in the Second Appellate District court for a stay or writ of supersedeas; in order to protect the remaining seniors/disabled persons from having to leave their rent stabilized homes of many years, their familiar communities and support networks for the unknown until after our other cases are heard. We are also waiting, (as we have done for so many years now) for our flaccid city officials (other than Bill Rosendahl, who has been a peach) to also step up to the plate and do the right thing, to obey their own municipal ordinances, public resource codes, etc., something so many of them are clearly loathe to do, for reasons I can only guess at...(the green reason, the hegemony reason, the old boy's network reason, the old girl's network, the you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours reason, the too-good-for-the-likes-of-you-now reason, the change-the-entire-balance-of-the-political-climate-overnight reason and the magically-fluff-up-the-rents-nearby-overnight reason).

By the time you read this, we will know "what up" for what has been referred to--by people who should know better-- but don't, as "the dregs" of Lincoln Place, your neighbors, in East Venice.

from the 100th Issue – April 1978

CANALABYSS

by Mary Lou Johnson

Come one, come all
 All you hippies, have a ball!
 Now's the time, today's the day
 Ask no questions, groove and play
 Lose your blues, pay no dues
 Style your life, discard your shoes.

In the process of a much needed desk cleanup, I came upon the above piece of doggerel jammed in the back of a drawer. Something I'd amused myself writing when I first moved to the canals. Even then it had a faint aura of nostalgia about it. THE CANALS! What emotions those words have evoked in me over a period of years; curiosity, fear, desire, passion, anger, sorrow.

My first experience of the canals was many years ago when I was in my early twenties. I had picked up (or allowed myself to be picked up by) this guy in a bar who took me to his place for a night-cap. It's all a very vague and boozy memory of California moonlight and jasmine, and walking over an incredible bridge and a funky little house. (Although "funky" was not then a hip word but a word used by Blacks meaning a bad smell.) And it was all a magical mystery tour that lingered dimly in my memory.

Years later I moved to Venice. I lived in a house trailer (not a mobile home), and I had been politely informed that my presence was no longer desired. This kept happening to me in all the trailer parks in Santa Monica. For those of you who don't know about trailer parks, they are monuments to conformity and prejudice, and are microcosms of the worst that our society offers. Anyway, here I was in a trailer park in Venice, the jumping off spot of the nation. (You would never know by looking at that black elephant Washington Square, that where it now stands housed at one time a couple hundred happy low-income people in their trailers.)

I had read about Venice - All bad - and heard from my friends about Venice - All bad - but, I

had no choice. My first impression confirmed all of these "all bads." When I stopped in the Saucy Dog (The Pelican's Catch to you nouveau-arrives) most of the customers looked like they were waiting for either a fix or a trick. After cowering in my trailer for a couple of weeks, I finally ventured out to Hinano for a beer and met some people who didn't carry switch blades or brass knuckles, and the fear gradually dissipated, but THE CANALS were something else; Bikers & Dopers & Hacks & Chicanos & Pollution & Poverty & Knives & aborted babies floating in the water & Dope...

Eventually, I moved out of the trailer park and lived on Ocean Front Walk. (Just to make you pea-green with envy, I had a perfectly elegant apartment for 125 dollars a month utilities included!) My daughter was completely happy at Florence Nightingale School (now Anchorage), even though my friends had told me "You can't send Johanna to school in Venice." And I considered myself really privileged to live on the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

Johanna was told not to go to THE CANALS, but one day she came home dripping wet because some kids had pushed her into THE CANALS in a market basket. I was sure that typhoid and pelegra were the mildest eventualities to be expected from this excursion, and examined her closely for rashes and open sores for weeks afterwards.

One day a couple of years and moves later, she came home breathless. "Mom! They're having a big party in the canals, and it's real neat Mom, and it's okay and everyone's invited and please, Mom, come with me. They've got music and corn on the cob and watermelon and come on, Mom, it's real neat!" So, I went, and it was real neat and that was the first Canal Festival.

By then the pinch, which was later to become a squeeze, was starting to be felt and we were gradually being pushed away from our beloved Pacific. But after that first festival, a sneaky thought had entered my mind. "If all else fails, I can move into THE CANALS." I wonder how

Continued

many others who had been even unaware of their existence, or who thought about them as a pox on Venice, also entertained this thought - after the hippieshipped us? Sort of like the old song, "Don't Tell Your Best Friend 'Bout Your Old Man."

Anyway, the day finally came when I had to move again. The pinch became a squeeze became a shove, and through the machinations of some canal friends, I became a resident. My second day here, I was awakened by a loud banging on my door and was told to "get my ass down to the vacant lot at the end of Howland because they're cutting down the Sapote tree!" "When in Rome" and all that, and I rushed down to see people defying bull-dozer and chain saws, to save some dumb looking tree. But it was all very exciting and I was swept along and whirled into the vortex of canal activism. Scarcely a day went by without some community activity - some political, some poofery.

There were camp-fires and Coastal Commissions; volleyball and Venice Town Council, pot-lucks and police confrontations, media and meditation. I raised chickens and rabbits and my monkey roamed free and I was inspired by the belief in self-determination. It was glorious and exhilarating and I really believed that our strength and unity and dedication to the common good would have results. Venice was the vanguard and THE CANALS would show the way. Power to the People was there for the taking!

Oh, sure, there were the troglodytes Myrtle Wilson and the Dufays and that weird looking one with the short hair, but no one could take them seriously. We were smart and strong and hard working. We had Ron Guenther, as reliable as the priest at mass, who would be at the Coastal Commission every Monday morning; we had Steve Clare who was so bright that you knew logic must prevail; we had Judy Weiner "Ms. Ecology" Herself; we had gentle, loving people interested not only in their own preservation, but dedicated to sharing with those less privileged. And, we had fun!

Then, one by one, as if planned, these people

had their homes sold from under them. Each representative of the Area Council was engaged in a struggle to remain in the area. Energy for political work was diverted into a struggle to survive. People left the canals and new people who were attracted by the canal mystique tried valiantly to pick up the torch, but to no avail.

By the eighth year the Canal Festival degenerated into a commercial tourist attraction, with young people coming from Pacific Palisades playing Hippie For a Day stoned out on downers; pissing on your lettuce! Canal people started closing their doors, and realtors started opening their offices. The stampede was on. Get your little canal fixer-upper, artsy-fartsy, cutsy-pie here! Can't lose! Bound to increase in value! THE CANALS are IN!...

The next year a last gasp effort to raise consciousness was made when the Festival was decently laid to rest by the Canal Festival Funeral of 1976, the year of the Bicentennial. The route of the funeral procession was dictated by the permits before the Coastal Commission, for the development of some 25 lots in THE CANALS. The police stopped at my house in the morning to get black arm bands to wear to the funeral. I was touched. Later that day I was to find out that these same hypocrites had amassed an army of police cars and motorcycles.

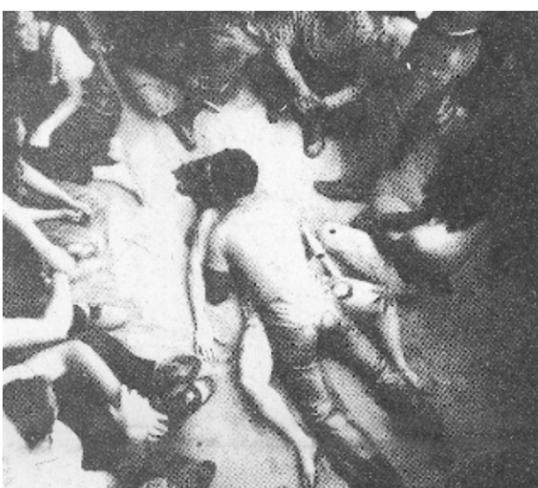
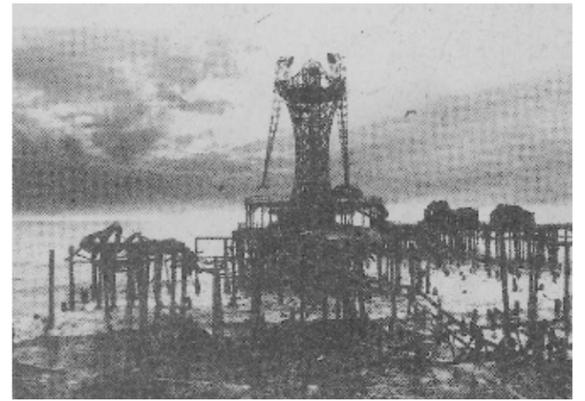
Provocateurs and collaborators laid siege to the canals; denied citizens their rights, beat people in full view of national T.V. cameras, confronted and menaced children. (Who, in the true spirit of Venice kids, managed to "pop a few wheelies" behind their backs when they were making like the Gestapo.)

I awaken to the sound of Hammers
 Mother Mary, Come to me.
 Speaking WORDS OF WISDOM:

REALTY.

Photos from the 100th issue.

Credit: (this page from top) POP pier - ned sloane; graffiti - janice yudell; parade - john haag; israel levinites - ed sievers; canal scene and nudes - lance diskan; swami x (page 7) - greg stanman; street violence - terence ford; conga player - lance diskan; beach ball - gerry goldstein.
 Facing page: feathered friends - greg stanman; umbrella women - ed sievers; town council meeting, 1974 - john haag; Kemper Apartment residents - lance diskan.



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Free Venice Beachhead

Carcinogens at the Cleaners

by MOE STAVNEZER

How many of you have ever paid the slightest attention to the odor that usually wafts from you dry cleaning establishment? Not I. Not any of the friends I asked and not any of the folks who live on the 700 block of Sunset Ave. in Venice. Why should they, why should we?

Apparently there's damn good reason. The odor may contain a very carcinogenic substance called perchloroethylene or "perc" for short.

There are three children who live on Sunset's 700 block who have cancer, the most serious of whom is a 6 year old girl who only has 3/4 of a kidney left after 3 major surgeries to remove cancerous tissues. Yet, her mother, Elvira Linarte, only a few weeks ago learned that there might be a connection between her little girl's disease and the nearby cleaners (there are now 3 dry cleaners within 500 to 1,000 feet of the Linarte's home). Recently, her older daughter, who is 8, has been diagnosed as having an abnormal thyroid, another of perc's wonderful gifts.

Janice Yudell, who lives on Sunset but does not have a child with cancer, read David Steinman's article about perc in the "L.A. Weekly" and told the mothers of the 3 children with cancer about the possible connection. They have all become involved in the problem which includes the fact that dry cleaners are among the least regulated "industries" in the country as regards health hazards posed by the chemicals it uses. (The fact that most cleaners are small businesses and almost totally un-unionized contributes to this situation). Janice discovered, by talking to Pat Galarneau who has contracted a variety of illnesses which her doctors attribute to the cleaners down the street from her So. Sherbourne Dr. apartment, that a class action law suit is being filed against the manufacturers of perc. The local attorney in this action is Jay Gould but I was not able to contact him to discuss the particulars.

Elvira Linarte has lived in Venice most of her life. She grew up with Park Lane Cleaners, which is just behind her home. There is now a cleaners across Lincoln Bl. and a new one just opened near Vernon Ave. Even when she called the Health Dept, because she thought that it was more than a coincidence that 3 kids on the same block had cancer, she didn't suspect the cleaners. Now she knows that whenever there's an odor coming from the cleaners that they are in violation of the law. You shouldn't smell anything! So now Linarte and her neighbors, when there's an odor, will call the District Attorney (who says that until they receive more complaints the case is a health, rather than a criminal matter, ph 974-6824) and the Coalition for Clean Air CCA). Kelly Hayes-Raitt, executive director for CCA, says that perc poisoning "is a wide ranging problem." In addition

to its carcinogenic effect, Hayes-Raitt ticks off an impressive list of perc connected illnesses: eye irritation, sore throat, skin irritation and rash, short term nervousness, headache, liver and kidney damage, and loss of balance, to name some of them. She suggested that people call the So. Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to report odors coming from cleaners or health problems associated with perc if you work in or live near a dry cleaning establishment (ph818-572-6416). She also suggests calling AQMD simply to request that they pass more stringent regulations for perc (the State of Vermont allows only a concentration of 10parts-per-million, in the air from a cleaners, while we allow 100ppm). "The AQMD is currently considering stronger regulations on perc. It is critical that the AQMD hear from dry cleaners' neighbors and employees who suffer from health problems or who simply smell suspicious odors. Calls right now could make a big difference," Hayes-Raitt declared. Finally, she suggests that people call CCA for information on how to get involved, 451-0651.

All of this became public through the activity of Pat Galarneau and Steinman's article about her and the AQMD. On July 11 the AQMD considered a request by Gov. Deukmejian appointee William Smiland to relax or rescind its perc standards. Smiland is chair of AQMD's small business committee and according to CCA, has been "100 percent against tougher clean-air policies on CCA-identified votes." Galarneau and the mothers from Venice went to that meeting and made their concerns and knowledge of the problem known to the Board. AQMD delayed action on Smiland's request and asked its staff to look into loopholes in the current regulations that allow violators to go unpunished. They are also waiting for the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) to add perc to its list of class B-2 carcinogens, thus getting AQMD off the hook. Galarneau says that since the article "many victims of perc have been calling me." "I didn't realize how big this is," she added with some amazement. Without the presence of a concerned and informed public it is likely that AQMD's decision might have been quite different.

The State Dept. of Health is not as sanguine as AQMD. It has issued a Hazard Alert to the 20,000 employees of California's 1,600+ dry cleaners warning them that prolonged exposure to perc can cause cancer, especially leukemia and cancer of the kidney which are the same forms of the disease that the kids on Sunset Ave have.

"People are not aware of what's going on," Elvira Linarte declares. She's very saddened about her daughter's illness and the fact that children seem to be the most affected by perc. ●

from the 250th Issue - July/August 1992

Let's Hear It for Convenient Memory Loss

By Rex Frankel

Dear Beachheads:

It's been so dang hot lately the old noggin ain't been able to squeeze out coherent newsworthy stuff. But I've recovered. With this 250th anniversary Beachhead-issue not year-we should remember how the Free Venice movement started. Due to the depression or "prolonged recovery" as the optimists would say, much of the Beachhead's history has gone full circle. In the 1960's, while City Hall planned to evict the poor people in Venice for the 2nd phase of Marina Del Rey, landlords and high rents squeezed the flourishing coffee house scene out. Now, developer-speculators across the city are going bankrupt. Good Riddance! But the coffee houses have come back, places like Psychedeli and Carousel Cafe on Dudley Ave. or Van Go's Ear on Westminster, the Bread Box and Java Beans on Kinney Blvd. Now that yuppies are financially out of style, cheap eats are in. Malls are out.

Speaking of Malls, nearly everyone involved says the Marina Place Mall project is doomed. A sure sign of this is the For-Sale sign on the next door Miami Spice restaurant. A big hitch in solving the mall's traffic impacts would have been to have a 2nd access such as from Lincoln Blvd. thru the now-closed restaurant site. Yet, nothing is happening.

For the group called COAST, the plaintiffs in the only lawsuit remaining, the court case is still dragging thru the courts but victory may mean little. "People aren't going to malls anymore" said COAST board member Terry Conner last June 3rd to a homeowners association based south of the mall site. "They probably ought to give us an award, Prudential ought to, because we've saved them a truckload of money." Conner says malls are getting clobbered by what are called "category killers", discount stores like Wal-Mart & K-Mart that cater to cost conscious consumers as opposed to 1980's yuppies with lots of disposable income. Across Washington from the mall site, the Marina Collection mall is totally vacant, while Conner says the Marina Marketplace nearby is 70% vacant.

The attorney in both the dead Venice Town Council lawsuit and COAST's, Debra Bowen, is also running as the Democratic candidate for Assembly from the Venice to Palos Verdes 53rd district. Her Republican foe is ultra right winger Brad Parton, whose first and only campaign for elected office, as Mayor of Redondo Beach, was largely paid for by developers through fascist ex-county supervisor Pete Schabarum and his political action committee called the Southern California Caucus.

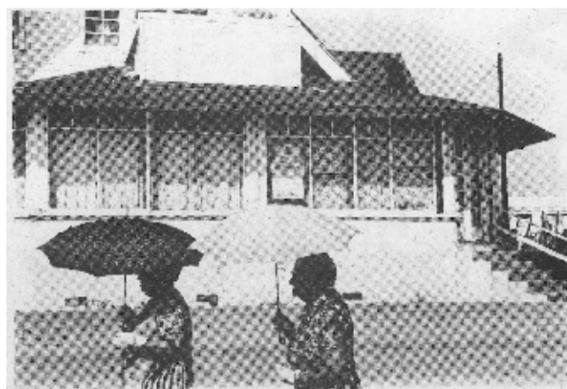
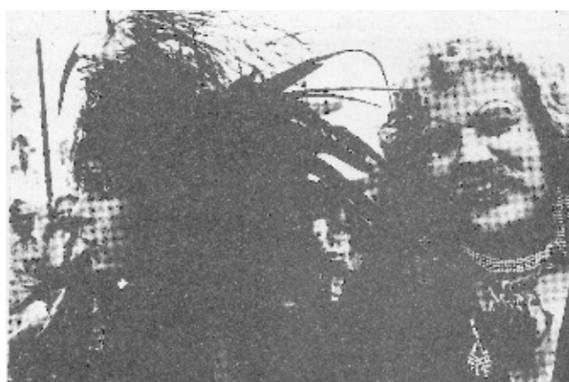
It's too bad Bowen's hands aren't too unsoiled either. While the newspapers call her an environmental lawyer, she plays both sides of the issue. She first filed the Venice Town Council's suit against the Marina Place Mall in September 1988. Seven months later she brought a rushed offer of \$12 million from the developers, which was voted down in a stormy 2 hour meeting, the only discussion the membership was allowed. But Bowen and the VTC's president were at that time forming their own private corporation separate of the VTC to help spend developer "mitigation" funds, which is what the \$12 million was offered as. Ex-President Dell Chumley-Morgan expected to one day get \$50,000 a year running the newly created "non-profit" Venice Resources Corporation. Bowen's legal fees are now being paid for the COAST lawsuit from a trust funded by the developer of the Channel Gateway project. Channel Gateway is being renamed, again folks. It's now called Marina Pointe.

Bowen now represents the land baron of Downtown Westchester, Howard Drollinger, and Werner Scharff, who owns major chunks of the Venice ocean front.

Speaking to the homeowners after Conner, Bowen called the lawsuit over the mall "A war...an out and out war." Little did the audience know that Bowen's "war" was much like George Bush's war against Saddam Hussein in which President Bush played both sides.

I had the opportunity to ask Bowen at this public forum what she as an "environmentalist" state politician would do about the biggest, most environmentally devastating project in her district, of course, I mean Playa Vista. Bowen replied, just like her mentor Ruth Galanter said almost 2 years ago at the start of her re-election campaign: "I'm waiting to see what the Environmental Impact Report says". Once Galanter was re-elected the city council began setting up tax-free bond financing for the Playa Vista mega-city, with not a word of Galanter's opposition. I pointed out to Bowen that traffic experts say Playa Vista could bring up to 250,000 more cars to our streets. "Can't you comment on that?" "No", Bowen replied, "I don't know what they are proposing yet". Well surprise surprise! Let's hear it for convenient memory loss! Bowen might succeed as a politician yet. You see, 2 and 1/2 years ago, Feb. 15th, 1990, Bowen wrote a letter to the Argonaut going into detail about how Galanter's negotiations had been the toughest anywhere on Playa Vista and the new version was much superior due to Galanter's "good" works (AKA compromises). But now that Bowen's a candidate she doesn't "know what they're proposing yet." Bowen's a slippery one. What will Bowen do if she's elected? Who knows? Does she deserve your vote? Who knows, compared to the opposition.

More on developer dirt in the next issue...



Diane and Ibrahim

by erica snowlake

ibrahim and diane blow my mind. they are out there everyday. creating art out of life, a village begins by folks taking a stand, holding ground, raising up the torch. people offering the totality of their energy for the belief that we can overcome the odds in our struggle for equality and freedom. outspoken fiery hearts. for fiery times, venice beach is literally and symbolically the edge of all freedom being challenged, being lost or won, the nexus of the crisis being pushed to the sea. they set up their paintings, signs of the times, daily at dudley and the boardwalk. they've formed a band called the Venice Beach Drum Orchestra, playing from noon to four on the week-ends. the band's divine, at times comprising up to twenty musicians jamming drums, horns, flutes, guitars, in cosmic bliss, every color, faith, walk of life representing, a healing godsend to the passersby.....



beachhead: when did you first set foot on venicebeach?

ibrahim: got here in 67.

beachhead: what's the biggest differences between now and then?

ibrahim: i don't recall so many parking lots. there was alot more beach, trees. it was one big party from san diego to san francisco, no separation. the cops then weren't all involved in this negative force, they were way more community friendly folks. katrina-they sent cops who's first reaction was the gun, not a helping hand. we've lost that, greater america. the desire for material things creates separation, the only way we can go is a spiritual way...

beachhead: you are part of the creation of a global and cultural revival.

ibrahim: resistance against the material way of life is growing all over the world. children are resisting because life for children has changed drastically. as kids we grew up without fear, we had the strength of a whole community behind us. now they've created people to hate, homeless, blacks, immigrants, gays, creating separation to increase their control. that's not the california i was brought to.

beachhead: how so?

ibrahim: the military drafted me here for nam. i am probably the only person ever got an undesirable discharge! every chance i had i'd go awol - up big sur, monterrey, hippie hill in s.f., joining the black muslims, the black panthers. over in nam i went awol, believe me i didn't volunteer. once you become a govt. slave, they come after you with 38s and 45s. venice was one great party in those days, until you stopped partying and remembered the street scene. still, nobody parties like that anymore.

beachhead: a friend of ibrahim's sitting silently on the wall listening pipes in: that was before the 60 hour workweek, the \$3000 a month mortgage, the \$1000 a month car payments!

ibrahim: i never had the desire to have those things. i grew up with land, horses, the countryside. it's a blessing - the extreme- i never knew people had to live in projects. we were taught to love, be free thinkers. at 16 i marched with dr. king, our farm was close to d.c., the underground railroad runs through our farm to detroit.

beachhead: i heard you are related to harriet tubman. where's our underground railroad gonna go in venice?

ibrahim: venice is alive, the spirit of venice is connected to the whole world. this beach is a mecca - all diversities come together here to worship. whoever tries to stop this, he pauses, will find themselves....not in the right spirit.

beachhead: the native people of many tribes seeded the energy by gathering here to drum, dance and feast.

ibrahim: all of it! the birds come here to pick their mates! here you can see the moon touch the water. you can feel the labor and love the people have left behind - in a funky way- not in a sterile way. now venice is being squeezed, you can feel it, the construction of destruction, things are disappearing, things of value, people and trees and homes. it's getting hot, even by the ocean now, it's too hot....

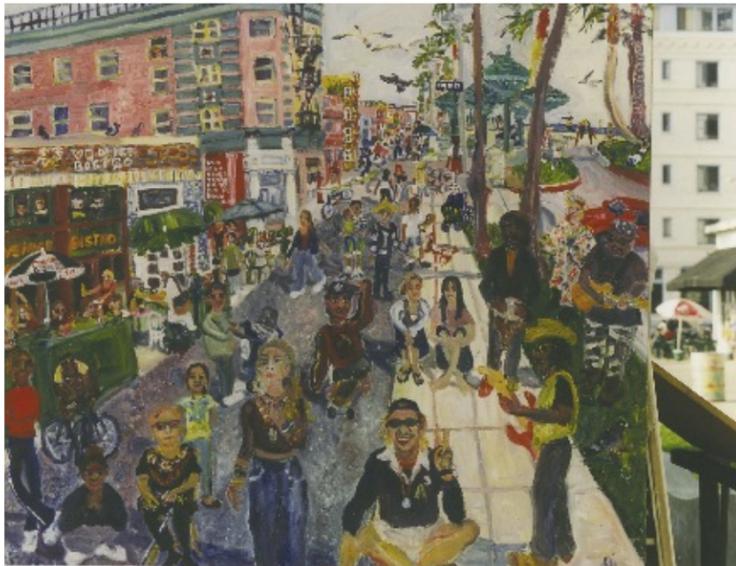
beachhead: your paintings often say affirmations of respect and honor. you paint under the name I M LOVE.

ibrahim: when somebody sees it, they have to say it, too. when people change themselves, everything else will change. the music we play is instant healing, gives them enough in their soul to last for weeks. this music is not taking them down, it's bringing them up. the music we play is the music of king solomon, king david - you get to taste a bit of paradise before you die - we create totally in the moment and we manage to come together as One...

beachhead: i am a believer! the joy i see on children's faces, the fun it is to dance on the street with incredible strangers, the way people gather around the band to hold the music in their hearts.....

ibrahim: for the city of l.a. to target me and this music - it's the same as putting our ancestors in shackles or making children criminals - persecuting what's holy - and the proof of the pudding is that people pay us, and show us their appreciation in many different ways. this boardwalk is a walkway where ambassadors of culture create and educate....yet we also got people thinking about not letting people eat. it's only insanity to take that position, to criminalize us. if you don't want the mercy, won't accept the divine, hell, i know there's more powerful forces than me, what are you calling for then but the wrath?

beachhead: ibrahim shows me a receipt for property taken into custody by the l.a.p.d., including nine paintings, three drums, a guitar, a mask, banners, signs, all seized for the dubious crime of "displaying an item", some archaic lawyerly snazzle written into



the boardwalk ordinance. as well lately cops tend to break up the band before it even begins by threatening confiscation of all instruments. still, if anyone knows how to hang in there and bide the storm, it's ibrahim and diane, but it all makes one wonder..... why?.....

murmurings in the wind.....sitting in the dreamy sand.....why? what's going on? shit, i think it's almost

gone.....diane's smoking cigs in a blue dress with rainbow tulips. sun-kissed lines cross her face, a gracefully light gypsy beauty with stories like treasures to share, for the sea, sky, and birds, a weathered patience she holds. paints her visions on giant 4' by 5' canvases, expressing the beach community in a loving way, in which everybody's smiling, looking benevolently out at us, getting along, a way to see through the random pain to a higher spirit ground, if only we would let it all live, let it be this way.....we're rambling.....on art.....

diane: when i was a kid, i got encouraged by my teachers.....paint something besides dots.....

beachhead: a natural pontillist, eh? emanations of pure light!

diane: so i went for realism from photos, me and my best friend spent our time drawing. we grew up just inside the gates in belair. 1970 i'm eighteen hanging out in venice. gave birth to my daughter lani in 1977...

beachhead: we'll be mysterious and say she's an amazing underwater artist! (laniware.com)

diane: i had a great teacher at smc in the eighties, taught me how to look, to let go of our stylized mind. taught me how to stretch a canvas, its a ritual that really makes it your own painting. i use oils, ditched the turpentine, and linseed over the years. squeeze straight from the tubes....

beachhead: great textures! hey, where did you meet ibrahim?

diane: right in that pagoda over there! pauses. laughs. oh, he might have cussed me out on the boardwalk years earlier.

beachhead: (note: ibrahim's known to break-out prophetic in-depth epic rants at times)

diane: we've pretty much been hanging at this spot (dudley and the boardwalk), for over twenty years now. i painted live, like i do now, except then it was illegal to sell stuff on this end of the boardwalk, undercover cops set me up, i got arrested for, like, getting donated a dollar for a painting.

beachhead: criminalizing artists and musicians has a long strange tradition here.... expressing too much freedom for and from the system, almost like being naked or making love in public!

diane: i painted clothing live, too. animals mostly, ras lions, monkees, tigers, tropical scenes. i crocheted hats.

beachhead: true venice tribal ware, like ibrahim's painter pants, (rain-

bow pollock coat-of-many-colors).

diane: we've always drummed here, too. me and jane and her shaggy dog, we'd drum on sundays to radio reggae shows. when i think of venice, to me, the drums are what made venice, and why people come here.

beachhead: and what gives us the inspiration to dance! when i first met you, you were spirit dancing to the Venice Beach Drum Orchestra, and swaying so much with the palm trees i felt inspired to join you. tell me about some of the characters immortalized in your paintings.

diane: well i sure know stories about them all...lots of travelling musicians who have laid bare their souls on the boardwalk. i paint bobbi in most of them, the homeless woman who helps the homeless, ibrahim drumming, of course, lani, dee, playing shaker every weekend with the band, tourists who commission paintings to include themselves in, the woman cop peggy's in that one, michael who passed away's flashing a peace sign, lots of animals, birds, the swingset that use to be on dudley....

beachhead: speaking of our furry and feathered friends, you sure are one kind crusader for them. (just then a white and brown speckled pigeon begins circling us, flashing peacock iridescence and a ruby red-eye)

diane: (tossing her a peanut from her bag) yeah, she's the one lost her foot. people bring me alot of crippled

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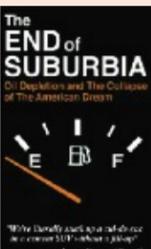
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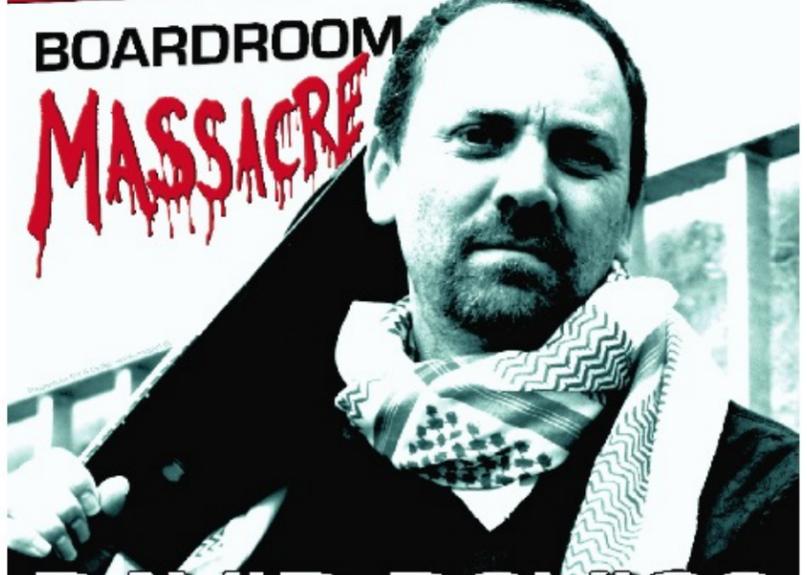


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birds, ones that can't fly well, we heal them in our motorhomes, give them extra special care. two i'm looking after right now have turned into lovebirds.
beachhead: you give them great names!
diane: my Miracle, my Blessing, Magic. i've known them in the egg, seen them peck through the egg. this year's been bad luck, two that were poisoned died, lani's spent 500 bucks at the vet, bless her. some people around here actually try to do them in, don't like them on their roofs for real estate purposes.
beachhead: horrible. i remember the one we were dancing with while you cradled her.
diane: we've taken care of so many and set them free. sometimes we'd be out walking the boardwalk and they'd fly by overhead, sight us and land on our heads or shoulders to say hi.
beachhead: there's always birds in both of your paintings. (the inside vista of one of their mobile homes is swirling sky blue, pink, and purple pastel clouds with soaring birds). one of your paintings totally sent me for a spell and gave me the shudders in this amazing lucid/eerie timeportal way. the one of the woman about to be stoned.....



Huichol Indigenous People Visit Venice
 "We thank everyone on the Venice Boardwalk for the opportunity to share our culture. We feel its a great place here, people are very kind, and we are always happy to return."
 – Diego y Geronimo of the Huichol Nation, San Andres Cohamiata, Jalisco, Mexico
 <www.huicholvallarta.com>

diane: that's one of the many mystical mary's in the bible. i feel a connection to mary magdelene, the cast-out seven demons, alot of herstory is written inside me. the mary in the painting is accused of adultery, she's dodging the rocks, when people see it they go into denial and imagine she's only dancing...
beachhead: yeah, she's dancing like the women in the stadiums in iran under the mullah's regime...
diane: it's about judgment - take the splinter, no, take the log out of your own eye before you get all righteous about the speck in the eye of your brother's or sister's. if you've been forgiving all along you are going to feel alot better. when the teachings of jesus are precious to you, you don't take lightly to using Him as a reason to have a war and to kill people.
beachhead: brandishing a military and police force has become a religion for an elite few. so what's your experience on the boardwalk this summer?
diane: well, i got arrested for protesting confiscation of ibrahim's drums a little while ago. it was my birthday and i was jumping up and down....over the fourth of july it looked like we were under occupation.... we've seen an elderly woman arrested for, basically, just sitting on a bench protesting, seen Food Not Bombs volunteers arrested and carted away, lots more people we know kicked out of low income housing by greedy

developers, perpetuation of an illegal lottery system, and an ordinance that doesn't allow us to play music anymore.
beachhead: a few beachfront residents complaining against the greater good of thousands of visitors and locals rights to enjoy, visually and orally, what only a dose of spiritual healing a band like the venice beach drum orchestra can provide in the open air temple under the sun.
diane: well, it is our church, our nature, this beach our communion, drumming, dancing, and singing, our raptures and our freedom.
beachhead: our ecstasy gone wild!we giggle...let's hope we're not doomed.....
 look for diane and ibrahim's publication Spirit of Venice Speaks, as well as guerilla revivals of the band, and an ongoing infinite outpouring of conscious Love in their paintings and presence. give them your support by calling for an end to the persecution and prosecution of artists and musicians on the boardwalk.

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Beachhead Turns 300 —continued from page 1

never do that itself.

The Beachhead got its start in 1968 with the help of the Peace and Freedom Party, but it was never a party organ. The attitude of P&F leaders, like John Haag, Rick Davidson, Jane Gordon and others, was to help get a group get going, and turn them loose. That's how "the Free Venice organization," the Venice Survival Committee," and other Venice organizations got their start. But it was the Free Venice Beachhead that lived long and prospered. That is, if you define "prospering" as being able to come up with the money to print the next edition. There have been times when the Beachhead did not have the money to print the next edition, otherwise we would have celebrated the 300th edition a long time ago.

In the beginning, the plan was to print twice a month. There was a Dec. 1 and a Dec. 15 edition of the Beachhead in 1968. After that, the collective realized that it was just too much to expect volunteers to get out two issues a month when one was hard enough. That original collective included Dora Bayrack, Virginia Bohannan, Phil Chamberlin, Rick Davidson, Carol Fondiller, Jane Gordon, Jay Jamieson, Anna Haag, John Haag, Mary Kerbret, Phil Melnick, Bill Olive, Jerry Wells. Dora was a senior citizen who contributed a poem in Yiddish. Phil Chamberlin, Rick, Carol, Jane, Anna and John were community activists and P&F members. Phil Melnick was a college student, Jay Jamieson was the "Bubble Man" who would sit on a bench on OFW and unleash huge soap bubbles, and Bill Olive was the artist who drew the masthead. You can see the original four-page Beachhead at: www.freevenice.org/Beachhead/Dec1-1968/Dec1968.html.

Through the 70s, the Beachhead carried on with several different collectives seeing it through the decade. One collective was either so equalitarian, or so paranoid, that they didn't list their names on the paper. But by April 1978, the 100th edition, an identifiable group was running the paper. They were: Arnold Springer, Wendy Reeves, Gerry Goldstein, Chuck Bloomquist, Joan Friedberg, Olga Palo, Mike Wells, and Nancy Bennett.

The 80s found the Beachhead in its prime. It had large collectives and large editions. They even experimented with an additional color at times. In August 1986, the 200th edition collective included: Kathy Sullivan, Jim Prickett, Kelly Ball, Carol Fondiller, Diane Nickerson, Patrick McCartney, Victor Wightman and memphis slim.

Their biggest coup was to get a young urban planner, Ruth Galanter, elected to the City Council. The decision that Ruth run for the position against the pro-development incumbent, Pat Russell, was reportedly made in Arnold Springer's back yard at a meeting of Venice activists. The Beachhead devoted entire issues to blasting Russell and promoting her Venice opponent.

Galanter won by a large margin in Venice and carried the district. In the heady days following Galanter's victory, memphis slim wrote in the Beachhead about how, "a relatively obscure woman with the help of her community ousted the entrenched Councilperson who had professionals and money on her side." In fact, many Venice activists felt the millennium had arrived 13 years early (or is it 1,000 years early?), and retired to their personal lives in order to let Ruth take care of all the Venice problems. Meanwhile, Young Upcoming Professionals (Yuppies) began moving into the community.

By the 1990s, a split had developed in our happy land. Many, perhaps a majority of Venice activists were still content with Galanter, and had reduced their grassroots activity. Meanwhile, another

group which included the new Beachhead collective, were growing more uncomfortable with the councilmember they had helped put in office. Concern changed to open hostility when Galanter brokered a deal that would allow Playa Vista to build on part of the Ballona wetlands, while preserving other parts. This was the final straw for many, even though many would acknowledge that Galanter had stopped the worst development schemes in Venice.

The 250th edition on July/August 1992 was produced by a collective that included: Kelly Ball, Rex Frankel, Chip Gatz, Mark Giacomelli, Judith L. Martin, Diane Nickerson-Johnston, Kathy Sullivan and Random Chance. Under this collective, the paper turned more and more to national and international issues. George H.W. Bush and, later, Bill Clinton, were bashed at least as often as Ruth Galanter. More and more time went by between issues until it finally spurted out in the mid-90s.

Rex Frankel began publishing a Beachhead look-alike called the Ballona Free Press.

Just when it looked by the Beachhead was a goner, a new collective came together in July 2002. It started with a dinner discussion between John Haag, Carol Fondiller, Yolanda Miranda and me. We all agreed that the Venice progressive community was dispersed and disorganized without the Beachhead. One of the reasons we don't live in L.A. 90291, or Marina del Rey, North, is the Beachhead. If the Beachhead is anything, it is a paper that

promotes our unique Venice identity.

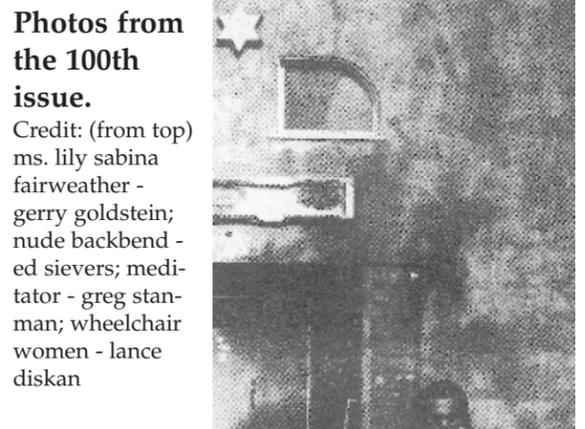
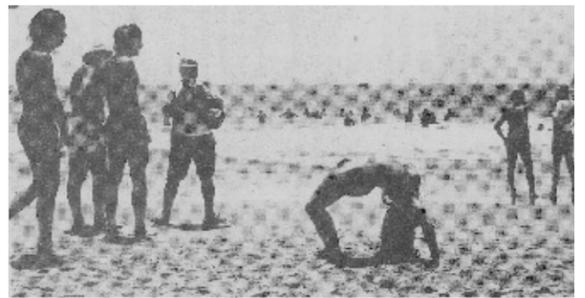
The response was immediate. We quickly had enough money for the first issue (our only expense is the printing). We also had a new, enthusiastic collective of Chuck Bloomquist, Mimi Bogale, Sherry Chovan, Carol Fondiller, Vessy Minkovski, Yolanda Miranda, Calvin Moss, Jim Smith, Alice Stek and Suzy Williams (John Haag declined to rejoin the collective because of poor health). The first new issue was dedicated to Rick Davidson, who had died while the Beachhead was on hiatus. The 262nd edition that came out four years ago looked much like any previous Beachhead. We didn't get color until the following year, but we did straighten our columns by laying out the paper on a newfangled computer.

Since 2002, many more Venetians have come and gone on the collective, but the paper has kept chugging along every month (except for two). Our current collective includes Fondiller, Miranda, Smith and Stek, plus Karl Abrams, John Davis, C.V. Beck, Don Geagan, Erica Snowlake and Judith Martin-Straw (who was known as Judith L. Martin on previous collectives).

Through the years, hundreds of people have come and gone as members of the collective. Many more have helped in other ways, including advertising, distributing door-to-door, and contributing articles, art and/or poems. If you love our little beach town as much as we do, then you should consider serving on the Beachhead collective. It's a rite of passage in our journey on Spaceship Earth, Cabin Venice.



Jane Gordon, a founder of the Beachhead



Photos from the 100th issue.

Credit: (from top) ms. lily sabina fairweather - gerry goldstein; nude backbend - ed sievers; meditator - greg stanman; wheelchair women - lance diskan



"Working to Improve the Quality of Life in Venice"

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Thursday, September 11 ... **Executive Committee** - 7:00 PM at Extra Space Storage.

Tuesday, September 19 ... **BOARD OF OFFICERS** - 7:00 PM at Westminster Elementary School Auditorium.

Wednesday, September 27 ... **Land Use & Planning Committee** - 6:30 PM. Venice High School Cafeteria.

for more information on the candidates running for office, valid stakeholder credentials, and about the VNC ... go to the VNC web site at ...

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who'll be the first
to try to sell the spot
where he dropped?

his flame tipped
sunkist dreadlocks
framed the positive vibration
grin
no saint/thank gods
just trying to beat the odds
sell some insense and stay clean
"blessed!"
he'd respond to "how's it going"
rebuilding the life
he almost lost
now lived one day at a time
suddenly soulless suits and their
pandering political puppets
declared selling insense and oils a
crime
he tried to jump
through the city's arbitrary hoops
dance to the changing tune
subject to unjustified
unwanted
unfair regulation
doors shutting too fast
the bottle reopened
mounting pressures
blew a small vein
in his brain
dead on the boardwalk
denied livelihood by the city
another gentle soul
plowed under
more greed machine grease
even the jaded bitch whore Venice
once a goddess/now merely a
celebrity
looks away in shame

he'd say,
"Hey Rex
saw your new one
in the Beachhead
Alright!"

this time, Cecil
it's about you
but you're not here
to read it

-Rex Butters

New World Ordure

By John O'Kane

From once fashionable resort to
retro-fashion-patch,
spectres of truth-seekers scrap in
the shadows of Cadillac,
drawn to throwaways in the sea-
colored containers
like tropisms on LSD,
Venice is becoming a furlough for
the free in deed,
exiting their multi-mil garrisons to
parade with
anorexic Italian Greyhounds and
pitbulimics with
Spencer's genes down Speedway,
dodging makeshift bedrolls and
welcoming
the LAPD blues.

SURF IS UP

inhale
the salty fetch...
while waiting for a wave
the quiet anticipation
turquoise

shanna moore

When my mother loved me
great portions of my body
were distributed to wild and carnivorous
animals
all small in size
eating vigorously and with passion
It was after watching my eyes being
devoured by a bug
that I starting questioning what is a
mother's love?

-Hillary Kaye

FORGIVEN FREEDOM SUNSET

What can I say about myself to the paper
jack hammer drill into iceberg
go deep deep melt snowcone
glazing rainbow
conspire
pull pull saltwater daffy tableau
peel red sweet onion layer
smack round flesh pay pay
get on gator
ride into sexual freedom sunset
strip guilty part way down far down
no glove love bouncing hayride cart
grizzly black brown polar hug
man woman monkey trial
eve?s grapefruits press
adam?s sweaty hairy chest
cajun snake in flooded swamp gone global
naked island trade for glossy beads
el mar carib
melt chocolate
spill rum
crack fleshy shellfish
all hands on off-shore booty
gentle men face faith thou saith
kneel in bayou pray for lace panty
parish brandy
riverboat sackcloth forgiveness
blackout come to
spin Henry Miller tropics thrill wheel
grip and grimace
grasp and feel real
not much more to say daily press
hums
lullaby byline five.

-Hal Bogotch

3. Meth pursuit

In that dark
room, mind lit.
Eyes dart and black
holes wide, gnashed
teeth in lockjaw
smiles. Compelled
to hunt focus is
Razor-sharp. Victim
spied, but he has
other goals.

4. Garbage bag finale

Fire, bowl and tina.
Windows open
to my pretty garden
court yard.
My methological
world on view, I'm too
easily seen. Open
to those on three sides,
I'm a TV show,
a silent movie.
my 4th wall exposed.

No curtain to hide
scene. Improvise
as I must, shut out
the world with garbage
bag blackness.
Plastic bag covered
windows don't reveal
what neighbors, police
and audience might see.
Scene ends with me.

- John David West

P
O
E
T
R
Y

EVICTION

BY Sharon Snow

The waiting lists are full she said
No vacancies -- I keep searching
for a warm place to sleep
The evil Ellis Act evicted me
It's destroyed my sanctuary
My sanity, my home - but not my soul -
Tonight I will cover myself
under a big soft blanket of prayers
Sounds of the sea surround me now
bringing peace and tranquility - for
awhile
At dawn I must rise, face reality
No place to go - waiting list still full
Corporate greed vs. poverty
Affordable housing a mere memory
Evictions cut to the core
so many tears - so many years
and so much pain --
Ellis Act brings evil gain -
I have no where to go
The woman said, now she's dead -
The waiting lists were full!



Hugo Chávez Interview – continued from page one

protection in return. They lend us petro-dollars, we lend them the 82nd Airborne.

Chávez would put an end to all that. He'll sell us oil relatively cheaply—but intends to keep the petrodollars in Latin America. Recently, Chávez withdrew \$20 billion from the U.S. Federal Reserve and, at the same time, lent or committed a like sum to Argentina, Ecuador, and other Latin American nations.

Chávez, notes *The Wall Street Journal*, has become a "tropical IMF." And indeed, as the Venezuelan president told me, he wants to abolish the Washington-based International Monetary Fund, with its brutal free-market diktats, and replace it with an "International Humanitarian Fund," an IHF, or more accurately, an International Hugo Fund. In addition, Chávez wants OPEC to officially recognize Venezuela as the cartel's reserve leader, which neither the Saudis nor Bush will take kindly to.

Politically, Venezuela is torn in two. Chávez's "Bolivarian Revolution," a close replica of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal—a progressive income tax, public works, social security, cheap electricity—makes him wildly popular with the poor. And most Venezuelans are poor. His critics, a four-centuries' old white elite, unused to sharing oil wealth, portray him as a Castro-hugging anti-Christ.

Chávez's government, which used to brush off these critics, has turned aggressive on them. I challenged Chávez several times over charges brought against Súmate, his main opposition group. The two founders of the nongovernmental organization, which led the recall campaign against Chávez, face eight years in prison for taking money from the Bush Administration and the International Republican [Party] Institute. No nation permits foreign funding of political campaigns, but the charges (no one is in jail) seem like a heavy hammer to use on the minor infractions of these pathetic gadflies.

Bush's reaction to Chávez has been a mix of hostility and provocation. Washington supported the coup attempt against Chávez in 2002, and Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld have repeatedly denounced him. The revised National Security Strategy of the United States of America, released in March, says, "In Venezuela, a demagogue awash in oil money is undermining democracy and seeking to destabilize the region."

So when the Reverend Pat Robertson, a Bush ally, told his faithful in August 2005 that Chávez has to go, it was not unreasonable to assume that he was articulating an Administration wish. "If he thinks we're trying to assassinate him," Robertson said, "I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it. It's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war . . . and I don't think any oil shipments will stop."

There are only two ways to defeat the rise of Chávez as the New Abdullah of the Americas. First, the unattractive option: Cut the price of oil below \$30 a barrel. That would make Chávez's crude worthless. Or, option two: Kill him.

Q: Your opponents are saying that you are beginning a slow-motion dictatorship. Is that what we are seeing?

Hugo Chávez: They have been saying that for a long time. When they're short of ideas, any excuse will do as a vehicle for lies. That is totally false. I would like to invite the citizens of Great Britain and the citizens of the U.S. and the citizens of the world to come here and walk freely through the streets of Venezuela, to talk to anyone they want, to watch television, to read the papers. We are building a true democracy, with human rights for everyone, social rights, education, health care, pensions, social security, and jobs.

Q: Some of your opponents are being charged with the crime of taking money from George Bush. Will you send them to jail?

Chávez: It's not up to me to decide that. We have the institutions that do that. These people have admitted they have received money from the government of the United States. It's up to the prosecutors to decide what to do, but the truth is that we can't allow the U.S. to finance the destabilization of our country. What would happen if we financed somebody in the U.S. to destabilize the government of George Bush? They would go to prison, certainly.

Q: How do you respond to Bush's charge that you are destabilizing the region and interfering in the elections of other Latin American countries?

Chávez: Mr. Bush is an illegitimate President. In Florida, his brother Jeb deleted many black voters from the electoral registers. So this President is the result of a fraud. Not only that, he is also currently applying a dictatorship in the U.S. People can be put in jail without being charged. They tap phones without court orders. They check what books people take out of public libraries. They arrested Cindy Sheehan because of a T-shirt she was wearing demanding the return of the troops from Iraq. They abuse blacks and Latinos. And if we are going to talk about meddling in other countries, then the U.S. is the champion of med-

dling in other people's affairs. They invaded Guatemala, they overthrew Salvador Allende, invaded Panama and the Dominican Republic. They were involved in the coup d'état in Argentina 30 years ago.

Q: Is the U.S. interfering in your elections here?

Chávez: They have interfered for 200 years. They have tried to prevent us from winning the elections, they supported the coup d'état, they gave millions of dollars to the coup plotters, they supported the media, newspapers, outlaw movements, military intervention, and espionage. But here the empire is finished, and I believe that before the end of this century, it will be finished in the rest of the world. We will see the burial of the empire of the eagle.

Q: You don't interfere in the elections of other nations in Latin America?

Chávez: Absolutely not. I concern myself with Venezuela. However, what's going on now is that some rightwing movements are transforming me into a pawn in the domestic politics of their countries, by making statements that are groundless. About candidates like Morales [of Bolivia], for example. They said I financed the candidacy of President Lula [Brazil], which is totally false. They said I financed the candidacy of Kirchner [Argentina], which is totally false. In Mexico, recently, the rightwing party has used my image for its own profit. What's happened is that in Latin America there is a turn to the left. They have gotten tired of the Washington consensus—a neoliberalism that has aggravated misery and poverty.

Q: You have spent millions of dollars of your nation's oil wealth throughout Latin America. Are you really helping these other nations or are you simply buying political support for your regime?

Chávez: We are brothers and sisters. That's one of the reasons for the wrath of the empire. You know that Venezuela has the biggest oil reserves in the world. And the biggest gas reserves in this hemisphere, the eighth in the world. Up until seven years ago, Venezuela was a U.S. oil colony. All of our oil was going up to the north, and the gas was being used by the U.S. and not by us. Now we are diversifying. Our oil is helping the poor. We are selling to the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, some Central American countries, Uruguay, Argentina.

Q: And the Bronx?

Chávez: In the Bronx it is a donation. In all the cases I just mentioned before, it is trade. However, it's not free trade, just fair commerce. We also have an international humanitarian fund as a result of oil revenues.

Q: Why did George Bush turn down your help for New Orleans after the hurricane?

Chávez: You should ask him, but from the very beginning of the terrible disaster of Katrina, our people in the U.S., like the president of CITGO, went to New Orleans to rescue people. We were in close contact by phone with Jesse Jackson. We hired buses. We got food and water. We tried to protect them; they are our brothers and sisters. Doesn't matter if they are African, Asian, Cuban, whatever.

Q: Are you replacing the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as "Daddy Big Bucks"?

Chávez: I do wish that the IMF and the World Bank would disappear soon.

Q: And it would be the Bank of Hugo?

Chávez: No. The International Humanitarian Bank. We are just creating an alternative way to conduct financial exchange. It is based on cooperation. For example, we send oil to Uruguay for their refinery and they are paying us with cows.

Q: Milk for oil.

Chávez: That's right. Milk for oil. The Argentineans also pay us with cows. And they give us medical equipment to combat cancer. It's a transfer of technology. We also exchange oil for software technology. Uruguay is one of the biggest producers of software. We are breaking with the neoliberal model. We do not believe in free trade. We believe in fair trade and exchange, not competition but cooperation. I'm not giving away oil for free. Just using oil, first to benefit our people, to relieve poverty. For a hundred years we have been one of the largest oil-producing countries in the world but with a 60 percent poverty rate and now we are canceling the historical debt.

Q: Speaking of the free market, you've demanded back taxes from U.S. oil companies. You have eliminated contracts for North American, British, and European oil companies. Are you trying to slice out the British and American oil companies from Venezuela?

Chávez: No, we don't want them to go, and I don't think they want to leave the country, either. We need each other. It's simply that we have recovered our oil sovereignty. They didn't pay taxes. They didn't pay

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royalties. They didn't give an account of their actions to the government. They had more land than had previously been established in the contracts. They didn't comply with the agreed technology exchange. They polluted the environment and didn't pay anything towards the cleanup. They now have to comply with the law.

Q: You've said that you imagine the price of oil rising to \$100 dollars per barrel. Are you going to use your new oil wealth to squeeze the planet?

Chávez: No, no. We have no intention of squeezing anyone. Now, we have been squeezed and very hard. Five hundred years of squeezing us and stifling us, the people of the South. I do believe that demand is increasing and supply is dropping and the large reservoirs are running out. But it's not our fault. In the future, there must be an agreement between the large consumers and the large producers.

Q: What happens when the oil money runs out, what happens when the price of oil falls as it always does? Will the Bolivarian revolution of Hugo Chávez simply collapse because there's no money to pay for the big free ride?

Chávez: I don't think it will collapse, in the unlikely case of oil running out today. The revolution will survive. It does not rely solely on oil for its survival. There is a national will, there is a national idea, a national project. However, we are today implementing a strategic program called the Oil Sowing Plan: using oil wealth so Venezuela can become an agricultural country, a tourist destination, an industrialized country with a diversified economy. We are investing billions of dollars in the infrastructure: power generators using thermal energy, a large railway, roads, highways, new towns, new universities, new schools, recuperating land, building tractors, and giving loans to farmers. One day we won't have any more oil, but that will be in the twenty-second century. Venezuela has oil for another 200 years.

Q: But the revolution can come to an end if there's another coup and it succeeds. Do you believe Bush is still trying to overthrow your government?

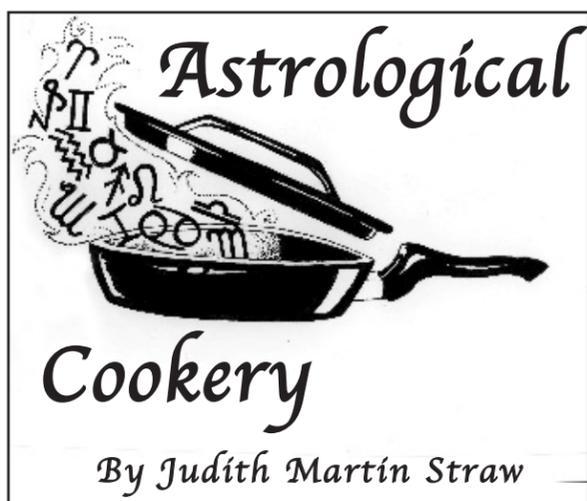
Chávez: He would like to, but what you want is one thing, and what you cannot really obtain is another.

Investigative reporter Greg Palast is the author of "Armed Madhouse: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Class War." (This interview recently appeared in the July 2006 issue of The Progressive Magazine.)

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

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Astrological Cookery

By Judith Martin Straw

Astrological Cookery for September

There is, you may have noticed, some serious world shaking stuff going on out there. One major factor is the Saturn-Neptune opposition occurring on the 31st of August. Saturn, the ruler of serious status quo and entrenched establishments comes into a dance with Neptune, the wild idealist and wonder worker.

The last time we had this scene in the sky, The Berlin Wall went down and Tiananmen Square was a campout festival for the Goddess of Democracy (remember her? Wow, she was cool!!). The Saturn and Neptune is where humanity's highest ideals have the power to overcome all the evil of banality and world weary cynicism. Now is the moment to write to your congress reps and senators, and phrase your suggestions as limericks and haiku. Now is the beginning of the next era of radical, rabid hope and enchanting enlightenment.

What does all this have to do with getting dinner on the table? Since we are talking about Virgo, it's all significant. And as an extra bonus, there are two new moons in Virgo this time around, so the chance to start fresh and clean is more than available.

Take this September and revel in it. It is a time you will recall for many years to come.

One Down, Two to Go



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September is Virgo

Virgo in the kitchen is a sight to behold. In fact, the kitchen itself is probably so clean, so well organized and so well supplied, it could be the set for a cooking show. Virgo is about having things just exactly the way you want them. The symbol for the sign, the Virgin, is often misunderstood. We're not talking about Jesus's Mom, or even Dicken's Miss Havesham.

The Virgin represented here does not define a lack of experience or a need for chastity. Think of Elizabeth the First, The Virgin Queen. This definition of virgin has to do with being self-contained and autonomous. You own your own self entirely. Helpers are great, but anyone who walks into your kitchen thinking of giving you advice or directions is very much mistaken. Because you know what you like.

The hard part about being a Virgo is that in your pursuit of perfection, you are probably too hard on your self. You really do a terrific job and you don't have to beat yourself up about it. A Virgo friend of mine showed up to a recent gathering with a fantastic plate of chocolate dipped strawberries, and while we oohed and aahed over them, she shunned our enthusiasm with the comment "yeah, so I can melt chocolate, whoopee!" She probably would have preferred to arrive with a three layer cake, decorated with Egyptian hieroglyphs, frosted with a delicate meringue buttercream, and a few roses. The strawberries were delicious, and they were quite sufficient, and they were devoured almost instantly.

So, consider that, when you are berating yourself for your alleged shortcomings. We love you just the way you are, and what comes out of your kitchen is divine.

With that, I want you to keep in mind that a recipe is always simply a set of suggestions- This is one that's easily adapted to you personal tastes-

Virgo's Pasta with Herbs

- 1 lb of dried pasta (you will want a long, slender strand for this, so think of spaghetti, angel hair, or linguini)
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, minced fine
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, minced fine
- 1/4 cup fresh tarragon, minced fine
- 2 or 3 cloves of garlic
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 cup fresh ricotta or mascarpone
- 1/2 teaspoon of cayenne pepper

Cook the pasta in boiling water with a touch of salt. Combine the herbs and garlic in a mortar or a blender and turn them into a paste. Add the cheese and olive oil gradually, until you have a kind of uber-pesto. Season with cayenne. Drain the cooked pasta, and toss it with the herb sauce. Present it to your hungry, grateful friends, who are waiting at the table with the green salad, the French bread, the pinot blanc, and the very large smiles.

General Forecast for September 2006

Aries- It all seems to be coming at you at once, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Even while you are overwhelmed, don't let yourself crawl into bad habits. Real comfort is on the other side of some big changes. Go ahead and jump.

Taurus- As much as you love to be generous, now is a good time for you to recall that charity begins at home. If you aren't taking good care of yourself, you won't have the energy to take care of anyone else, either. Be practical, take the time to plan.

Gemini- Is bad news on the way, or just on the way out? Hard to tell if you've passed the test, or just the first hurdle. Remember, courage isn't a lack of fear. It's being scared and carrying on regardless.

Cancer- Listen to the inner voice, and take care of yourself. This is a moment to pause and focus on your health and your happiness, and remember that they are very close friends. Treat one well, and the other will be pleased, too.

Leo- Now that the birthday party is over, it's time to turn to the sobering job of clearing up the remains of the day. It's OK to ask for help, and it's more than OK to enjoy the task.

Virgo- You have, at the moment, great wisdom in the direction of your own interests. Consider safety and solitude to be the order of the day. You may not rule the world, but you can rule the day.

Libra- Are you feeling the need for approval, from friends, family, or total strangers? You really are doing fine; perhaps the one whose approval truly matters is looking out of the mirror.

Scorpio- There is a possibility that your wishes are about to be granted, but they won't be falling into your lap like ripe fruit. You'll have to reach for them and grasp with just the right touch.

Sagittarius- A sense of loss, and a possible intrigue. Is someone in your daily life keeping important info from you, or are you hiding a problem from yourself? Whatever you are missing, you are the only one who can find it.

Capricorn- It may feel like defeat, but it might just be a setback. A sense of stagnation can be frustrating, and since you've done all you can to move the mountain, see what happens when you wait for the mountain to come to you. Don't discount the piece of grit in your eye.

Aquarius- There is a danger of someone being dishonest with you. It's time to Be Aware, and Beware. Your usual easy going mode won't serve you as well as a wake up call in your communication center. Don't sign anything you haven't read twice.

Pisces- Feeling intimidated by all those unknowns? Try not to get yourself too stuck in factual reality, there's a few important clues dancing in the shadows. Open yourself to the knowledge that your intuition has for you.

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