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Pagodas at Westminster and OFW, around 1980
 Photo by Gary Gallerie

Pagodas' Last Stand?

By Greta Cobar

Big “cleanup” is planned for Ocean Front Walk (OFW) ahead of the summer 2026 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup and summer 2028 Olympics. Money is being poured in, similar to the OFW Refurbishment Plan ahead of Los Angeles hosting the Democratic National Convention of 2000. That’s when the Venice Pavilion was torn down and the five sets of pagodas lining OFW were rebuilt. The set of pagodas at Westminster was dismantled by the city and should be restored.

At the December Committee of the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) meeting Sean Silva, Venice Deputy for Councilmember Traci Park, reported that new funding for the restoration of the pagodas has been secured and the goal is to have them fully restored by summer 2026.

“Another area of universal support is for the restoration of the historic pagodas consistent with the 1940s architectural plans and specifications. Thirty-two total umbrellas exist and would be replaced per the original plans,” according to the Refurbishment Plan that outlined the proposed changes for OFW in 2000.

Contrary to the plan as written, the end result proved to be quite different from the original pagodas, which were much larger and had wooden benches that could accommodate more people. A current reduction in the number of available places to sit underneath the pagodas is the ongoing trend of removing benches and fencing in the pagodas on OFW.

Because the city did not comply with its own plans of restoration in 2000, illegally and without public consent changing a historical part of OFW, it should now be made mandatory that the current proposed remodel of the pagodas restore them to the exact design of the 1930s.

Six sets of pagodas were originally built and were called pergolas. Sometime in the 1990s the set of pagodas at Westminster, literally a stone throw away from the bench on OFW and Horizon that was just removed on November 21, was demolished, once again due to “vandalism.” (See Benches article, back page)

“Since Westminster has been known to be a troublesome street, the design team is not recommending replacement of that original pagoda” according to the Venice OFW Refurbishment Plan of 2000. At the time of the removal of the Westminster pagoda there was considerable speculation that it was taken down to deny Black residents of Oakwood, who often use Westminster to access OFW and the beach, to have a place to sit.

“Old is not historic” said Silva about the pagodas at the November 3 2025 OFW Committee of the VNC meeting. He went on to allege that because they lack historical status, the city has more flexibility to renovate. This is exactly what we are afraid of and are preparing to fight against.

“There are a lot of things in L.A. that are historic that are not yet designated,” said Amanda Seward regarding the pagodas. Seward is an attorney who participated in the successful efforts against the giant housing corporation Apartment Investment and Management Company (Aimco) to preserve Lincoln Place apartments in Venice. She authored the California State Historic Resource nomination, which was approved by the State Historic Commission in 2005 and prevented the complex from being demolished.

A motion that included preserving the historically sensitive design standards of the pagodas, giving them historic-cultural monument status, and keeping them open to the public was on the agenda of the



December 16 VNC meeting. Brian Averill, VNC President, single-handedly made the decision to skip over that specific agenda item, and it was not heard, discussed or voted on.

A motion requesting that City Council District 11 move to have the pagodas designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monuments was passed by the VNC Preserving Public Places Committee on November 7, 2024. Unfortunately they still do not have historic landmark status.

In April 2022 the VNC Board unanimously passed a motion to have the pagodas restored “in keeping with their historic design, features and color, including to recreate the distinctive missing spires.”

“Right now we are waiting for quotes to restore the pagodas. New wood, paint, etc. They would be restored as is,” according to an email sent to the Venice Arts Council by Sonya Young-Jimenez, Recreation and Parks Superintendent, on December 3, 2025. If this sounds similar to what was promised during the restoration that took place in 2000, it’s because it is.

The 2000 remodel wound up with pagodas and seating areas that are radically different from what was built in the 1930s. As the saying goes, “fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.”

At the November 6 2025 Town Hall meeting held at the BAR Jewish Center on OFW, Councilmember Traci Park stated that the pagodas at Dudley were fenced off because of neighbor complaints. Meanwhile it is well-known around town who that one neighbor living on Dudley is, and that her lobbying Traci Park is also the reason why there isn’t any more music played at that location.

The city is aiming for peaceful and family-friendly events at FIFA and the summer Olympics. However protests, boycotts and picket lines are already being planned along OFW during the events if the city does not take into consideration public input regarding the proposed remodel of the five sets of pagodas on OFW. Although officials have mentioned the project at several public meetings, public input has not been requested or accepted so far and no information concerning the project has been made public.

A Freedom of Information Act Request (#25-17675) regarding the proposed remodel project of the pagodas was submitted to Recreation and Parks on November 28 2025. No response had been received as of December 16, 18 calendar days later. According to California state law, government agencies must respond to public records requests (under the California Public Records Act) within 10 calendar days.

Emails requesting information about the specifics of the plan to remodel the pagodas were sent to Councilmember Traci Park and her Communications Deputy Jonathan Davila and Communications Director Peter Brown on November 14, November 21 and December 5. Neither one of them provided any response as of December 16.

Since our elected officials, whose salaries we are paying, walk all over us while going to the bank, an attorney might be needed in order for us to restore our pagodas to the grandeur that we and our millions of visitors deserve. If you can help, let us know.

While none of the FIFA events will take place in Venice, a significant surge in the number of visitors is expected during the summer of 2026. In 2028 Venice is scheduled to host the Olympic Triathlon and the Paratriathlon with OFW as a backdrop, in addition to being the starting point for the Marathon and the Road Cycling events of the summer Olympics. Let’s welcome everyone and provide the historical setting that Venice of America is famous for worldwide.



Above: Original Venice pagodas built in 1930s on OFW
 Left: The Doors chilling under an original Venice pagoda

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LETTERS

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Venice Heritage Museum,

As the year draws to a close, we want to take a moment to thank all of you. We've been so grateful for your support, this past year more than ever. You've made it possible for the Venice Heritage Museum to help preserve the heart of our community, keeping the unique history and spirit of Venice alive for future generations.

It's been an impactful year. In partnership with Venice Arts, we presented the exhibition, Buried Years, while continuing to welcome thousands of visitors to our main show, This is some place. We hosted numerous salons, conversations, and events and continued to expand our archives. None of this would have happened without the dedicated community behind us—like you!

We also have some important news to share. You may have already heard murmurings.

We have been lucky to call 228 Main Street our home since opening the space in March 2024. It has served our museum effort above and beyond what we could have ever hoped for and shown our visitors from all around the world that the history and culture of Venice deserves the kind of attention that only a museum can ensure.

The doors at 228 Main Street officially closed to the public at the end of the day on Sunday, November 30th. Although this was not an easy decision to make, we have done so in the name of keeping the VHM project sustainable and financially secure. This is the beginning of an exciting new phase!

The good news is that we will be re-opening again this spring in a new location in the community center at Westminster Park! Stay tuned for more information about our move and be on the lookout for announcements about programming in the works at pop-up locations around Venice.

The work of a museum is ongoing, and we need your help to keep our momentum. Looking ahead, we have exciting plans to make an even bigger impact!

If you're searching for something sweet and unique in Venice, look no further. Venice Local Tima Bell's newly opened Washington Square Pizzeria has you covered. The Lala Lemongrass Panna Cotta has sent our taste buds and sweet tooth into a frenzy!

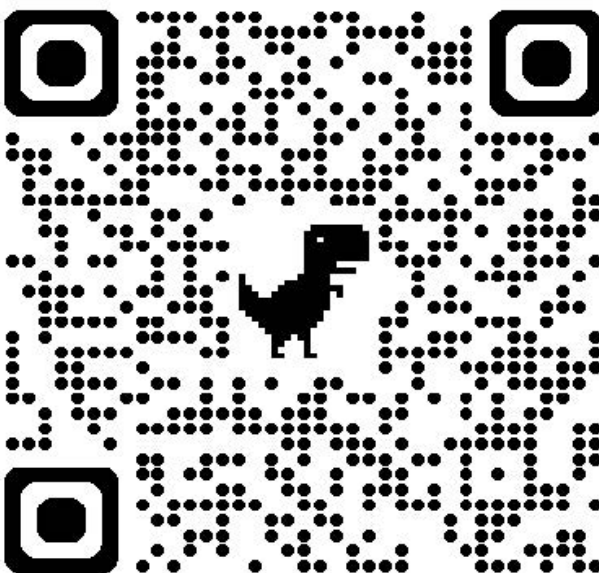
This amazingly light yet velvety treat takes your taste buds on a journey with the first bite.

The lemongrass with its mild floral citrus notes fuses poetically with the sugar-toasted basil on top.

This delightful dessert has swiftly become our new favorite.

Sarah Mahir

Please support us, make a donation.



William McNally

3:26 PM (2 hours ago)

to Carol, Carol, mary, gerry, Michael, me

12 08 25

Carol, Re: Tom Sewell should be exposed as a real estate schnor. tried to convince a VHM Board Member and the Venice Beachhead but nobody but me dared expose greedy Tommy Sewell, a late Sixties real estate speculator, using family money to buy depressed Venice properties, cheaper than Monopoly money...

Sometimes you have to play hardball. He's just toooooo greedy, living in the lap of Maui extorting non-profits.

He was the only person in Venice who in the '70s openly supported the Vietnam War.

He's a slug, a capitalistic pig fucking a non-profit he should be financing.

I was appalled to learn how much monthly rent he was charging VHM, \$5000 a month.

My best,

Thomas Pleasure

Carol Levy <carol@veniceheritagemuseum.org>

to Anthony, Bill, Carol, mary, Gerry, Michael, me

While I sincerely appreciate the fact that you are looking out for VHM's best interest and care about our existence, I feel I need to respond to your email.

As president of the board of VHM, I would like to go on record to say that Tom Sewell has been a very good friend to VHM. We would never have been able to afford the beautiful museum space at 228 Main St. for the 2+ years that we called it home had Tom and his partners not agreed to significantly reduce our rent from the normal market price. Our space would have normally gone for almost double what we paid.

I would NEVER say that he extorted the museum and I can tell you that I am happy to call him a friend.

Yes, we would have loved to have been able to stay in the Main St. location, but it is not possible. None of us know Tom's personal business or that of his partners, so it is unfair to make personal attacks on him based on an assumption.

We have been so humbled by the response from the Venice community, to whom the work we have done clearly matters. The great news is that we were able to secure a new space for at least the next year, rent free. It will be different, but we feel confident that it will be just as great.

Warmly,

Carol

Carol Levy

Board President

Venice Heritage Foundation

310-614-1873

<https://www.veniceheritagemuseum.org/>

Ten Overused Terms and Phrases to Avoid in the New Year:

1. awesome
2. "billion" with a "B"
3. Enough is enough.
4. existential threat
5. gotcha question
6. mike drop
7. out of the loop
8. period full stop
9. That's not who we are.
10. weaponize



The Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument (VJAMM)

Committee and the Manzanar Committee are pleased to announce the deadline extension for the 6th annual Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant to Friday, January 16, 2026.

Currently enrolled college and university students are eligible for a \$1,000 grant that will pay for transportation, room, and board; and for their participation in the planning for the weekend of the 56th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, scheduled for April 24 – 26, 2026. Applicants may submit an essay, poem, or short story that incorporates the legacy of the late Arnold Maeda, a charter member of the VJAMM Committee.

At the age of fifteen, Maeda reported with his family to the northwest corner of Venice and Lincoln Boulevards in April, 1942, for transportation to Manzanar, which would become one of the ten War Relocation Authority incarceration “camps”.

The Maeda family, as did so many others, lost their home, their business, and their liberty in the wake of Executive Order 9066.

The VJAMM Committee successfully raised

community support and the funding to install and dedicate the VJAMM obelisk on April 27, 2017 on that northwest corner of Venice and Lincoln Boulevards in Venice, California, as a reminder of what happened and what should never happen again to any minority group based solely on “ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, race, or religion”.

Suspension of Constitutional rights, including the writ of habeas corpus and due process, enabled the US government in 1942 to forcibly remove persons of Japanese ancestry from coastal areas in Washington, Oregon, and California. Executive Order 9066, signed on February 19, 1942, cited “military necessity” as the reason for this violation of civil rights. Some 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry lost their homes, their businesses, and their liberty, and were incarcerated in Department of Justice detention centers, temporary Assembly Centers, and War Relocation Authority camps across the United States. Many remained incarcerated through the duration of World War II.

Today, suspension of civil rights, including the writ of habeas corpus and due process, is enabling the US government to seize persons right off the streets in the name of “national security” and in

violation of 4th Amendment rights against unreasonable and unwarranted search and seizure. In its inaugural year of 2025, the new federal government administration has already committed a tremendous number of unconscionable violations of Constitutional rights in its struggle against Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion.

The newly empowered Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) itself (and posted by CBS News) has reported “holding 65,135 people in detention facilities throughout the U.S., the highest level ever publicly reported by the agency.” Almost half, “48%, of the ICE detainees in custody as of Nov. 16 lacked any criminal charges or convictions in the U.S. and were being held solely because of civil violations of U.S. immigration law,” again, without benefit of the writ of habeas corpus or any due process before imprisonment or deportation.

To help connect the dots, please visit the transcript of Rachel Maddow’s podcast at MSN NOW:

<https://www.ms.now/msnbc-podcast/msnbc-podcast/maddow-burn-order-podcast/episode-3-one-drop>

The conversation, “One Drop: Maybe security wasn’t the whole motivation for what was going on here,” includes dialogue with Norman Mineta, David Mineta, Edward Ennis, James Rowe, Dillon, Meyer, Earl Warren, Satsuki Ina, Aiko Herzog-Yoshinaga, Frank Abe, and Adam Scragger. For more information on the Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant, please visit venicejamm.org or manzanarcommittee.org.

City Attorney, after pressure from supporters of supportive housing, withdraws Traci Park’s funding request to finance legal opposition to the Venice Dell Project

On Friday December 5th, Los Angeles City Council approved a nearly \$11 million budget request for outside counsel from the City Attorney. The original request was nearly \$12 million and included \$850,000 to continue fighting the Venice Dell Community project. Hundreds of letters were sent by residents from Council District 11 and across Los Angeles, prompting the City Attorney to pull the controversial \$850,000 from the funding request, which was reviewed and approved by the Budget Committee on December 2nd.

This means that Venice Dell litigation funding will likely be requested at the Budget Committee and full Council again in early 2026, and Venice Community Housing will continue to need our community’s voice and support.

The Venice Dell Community is a proposed affordable housing project by co-developers Venice Community Housing and Hollywood Community Housing Corporation that would bring 120 homes to Venice.

Venice Community Housing thanks the community for stepping up and supporting affordable housing throughout the years. Visit www.vchcorp.org to learn more about Venice Community Housing, and visit linktr.ee/vchcorp for links to a 1-click email to send to LA City Councilmembers and information about the Venice Dell Community project.

Erika Lee, she/her/hers

Co-Executive Director, Venice Community Housing building affordable housing and communities since 1988



“KEEP MOVING”: WEST LA VEHICLE RESIDENTS SURVEY JUNE 25, 2025 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In Los Angeles and across California, government officials have adopted a “carrot and stick” approach to resolving visible instances of vehicular homelessness. As we’ve shown in this report, the “stick” of this approach includes ticketing, towing, displacement, dispossession, and tolerated forms of harassment by housed neighbors, businesses and private security. And the “carrot” includes offers of shelter or housing that often never manifest. We have shown how this approach harms vehicle residents by heightening daily stress and exposing them to street homelessness in cases of towing. Further, the forced mobility, debt and dispossession of these practices both prevent vehicle residents from improving their own situations and hinder the ability to deliver existing social services.

We propose an alternative policy vision that is built upon mutual respect and trust rather than us vs. them politicking. In particular, we argue for a divestment from criminalization and investment in parking stability paired with supportive services that enable access to affordable housing.

Divestment from Criminalization

While criminalization often refers to arrests and incarceration, it also entails police move-along orders, ticketing, towing and forms of tolerated harassment from non-government actors. The number one reason that vehicle residents we surveyed moved was because they were told to by city or county officials, resulting in forced mobility that upsets any semblance of stability for them and creates issues with services follow-through. Vehicle dwellings are targeted by parking enforcement for citation, with most vehicle residents we surveyed having some form of citation debt, and nearly half have lost a vehicle they were living in to towing at some point in their lives. Beyond the “stick” employed by city, county and state authorities, vehicle residents must contend with harassment from non-government actors, including vigilantism. Vehicle residents we surveyed have had their vehicle dwellings damaged by angry housed neighbors, their parking spots illegally removed by neighboring businesses, and their sense of security threatened by security services that employ illegal intimidation tactics (e.g., Ghost Town Security).

Unfortunately, elected officials are currently doubling down on criminalization in response to the growth of vehicle dwellings over the Covid-19 pandemic and backlash from conventionally housed constituents and business owners. In West LA, Council District 11 representative Traci Park has made vehicle dwellings a publicized target of her homeless policy, calling them “nuisance vehicles” in her weekly e-newsletters and social media posts to constituents and encouraging the public to report them to her office (see figure 31). She’s proudly declared that her office has removed “hundreds” of RVs from the streets and that “impacted communities are now safer and more accessible¹,” but she barely mentions efforts to shelter or house those she disposes. That’s because the RVs she’s removing often aren’t receiving sufficient outreach (or any outreach at all) ahead of these punitive operations, as we witnessed time and again speaking to people who were either about to have their dwelling towed or had just experienced it. The city’s own statistics on vehicle dwelling operations support our findings: from June through August of 2024, there were 85 vehicle dwelling operations across the city for 873 vehicle dwellings, and of those 370 were ticketed, 240 were impounded, and only 56 people were housed².

In other words, Councilmember Park’s punitive approach to vehicle dwellings isn’t unique, as we witnessed during a hastily planned multi-week sweep of Cotner Avenue just over the border in Council District 5 (run by Katy Yaroslavsky) that saw vehicle dwellings destroyed literally in front of the eyes of their residents and scant housing resources offered. We have heard reports of similarly punitive operations occurring in the San Fernando Valley and other parts of the city. Further, wealthy neighboring cities

like Santa Monica have adopted policies of wholesale exclusion of “oversized” vehicle dwellings like RVs from street parking and overnight beach parking, pushing them into surrounding cities where they often cluster along certain blocks where they have not yet been banned³.

Given the sharing of strategies and resources across city and county governments, these punitive practices are not confined to Los Angeles but are present across California and beyond. While LA County’s “Pathway Home” program⁴ appears to do a better job of pairing shelter/housing offers with vehicle impoundment than the City of Los Angeles, we stand firmly against using vehicle impoundments as a “stick” to push vehicle residents into accepting whatever shelter/housing resources the government has at the time. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass’ advocacy with California Assembly Member Mark González to introduce Assembly Bill 630, which will enable impounded RVs to be more easily destroyed⁵, is a clear continuation of punitive practices driven in part by misinformed ideas of “service resistance.” If some people prefer living in rundown RVs to the sorts of shelter and housing programs offered (if any are offered to begin with), then government officials ought to critically question the efficacy of their programs rather than seeking to make vehicle residents more desperate by destroying their vehicles and leaving them on the streets.

Investment in Parking Stability, Supportive Services, and Affordable Housing

The success of any program needs to be about housing and services, not a street void of human beings. And that success begins with trust and developing a mutual understanding of each vehicle resident’s needs, which vary widely. As demonstrated in our survey, some vehicle residents don’t see themselves as “homeless” or “unhoused” and have material circumstances that satisfy most (if not all) of their daily needs. That is not to say that these vehicle residents wouldn’t benefit from supportive services or conventional housing; rather, it’s a reminder to meet them where they’re at, including recognizing the value that their vehicle dwelling has for them. Other vehicle residents are desperate to get out of their vehicles and into services and housing, but may distrust a system of inconsistent outreach. The spectrum of vehicle residency experiences is a reminder that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting vehicle residents, and that politically driven decisions about who gets what services will inevitably leave many of the most vulnerable out of the picture as resources are instead spent on appeasing neighbors’ complaints⁶. As such, our call for investment in parking stability, supportive services and affordable housing is premised upon honoring the diversity of vehicle residents and re-calibrating the impetus for government action away from neighbors’ complaints and towards vehicle resident needs.

Given vehicle residents’ experiences with forced mobility and the difficulties in connecting a mobile population to services, we advocate for establishing parking stability through safe and stable parking models. We understand parking stability as a principle that may be operationalized through any number of models, with safe parking the most well-known. Safe parking establishes a secure parking site with basic amenities (e.g., bathroom) and access to supportive services to help move people into conventional housing. Within Los Angeles, most of these sites are overnight-only and exclude “oversized” vehicles like RVs, which can work as a model for certain populations but notably excludes a majority of the 13,549 vehicle dwellings counted for the 2024 Homeless Count on vehicle size alone. Further, there are nowhere near enough sites or spots within them to absorb even a small fraction of vehicle residents: as of January 2024, there were only 14 such sites across the City of LA with capacity for 349 vehicles⁷. We call for safe parking sites that are 24/7, inclusive of oversized vehicles like RVs, and low barrier to entry. As such, we call for working with vehicle residents to make their vehicles “street legal” (i.e., operable, insured, and registered, with certified ownership) both within and outside of safe parking programs.

Parking stability can also be achieved through stable parking models, which according to Dr. Graham Pruss includes similar amenities to safe parking but

usually without the social services. Stable parking can provide space for people living in vehicles who aren’t seeking to transition into conventional housing, often because they have a vehicle that is suitable for them as housing and only require long-term parking and access to basic amenities in the vein of a typical RV park. We might even think of these sorts of stable parking sites as state-funded RV parks which can act as both homeless diversion and/or low-cost rental parking programs for those who can pay⁸. But given the tens of thousands of vehicle residents living in Los Angeles and the logistics of acquiring suitable sites for safe and stable parking programs, we also advocate for more street-based parking for vehicle residents. As put forth by UCLA

Professor Adam Millard-Ball, “cities could permit camper van parking on the right-of-way, analogous to liveaboard canal boats that provide housing options in some UK cities⁹.” Ironically, some of the places most suitable for this sort of parking, such as streets adjacent to parks and away from residential streets, have been explicitly targeted to remove and prevent vehicle residents from staying there. At such sites, community good neighbor agreements could be created with input from vehicle residents, conventionally housed neighbors and other local stakeholders to ensure that mutual respect flourishes.

Parking stability with supportive services must be connected with a robust affordable housing pipeline and voucher system. Local attempts to thwart affordable and supportive housing projects like Venice Dell, which would provide 120 units for people experiencing homelessness and low-income tenants, are clearly counterproductive to solving homelessness¹⁰. This is especially true given that 79% of vehicle residents we surveyed indicated they’d choose to accept an offer for a low-income reserved apartment or permanent supportive housing, which is exactly what Venice Dell would provide. Given that Council District 11 only has 4% of the city’s permanent supportive housing beds (see figure 32), it’s imperative that local officials make good faith efforts to ensure every affordable housing project proposed gets priority, not political interference on behalf of their base. The Trump administration’s proposals to end federal funding for permanent supportive housing, making 315,000 current participants vulnerable to homelessness¹¹, makes local support of permanent supportive housing projects all the more important.

Beyond affordable housing development, we also call for expanding voucher programs that enable vehicle residents and low-income people in general to access market-rate housing subsidies. That includes vouchers like Section 8, for which the waitlist in Los Angeles has been closed due to potentially disastrous cuts by the Trump administration

A Call for Advocacy

While not a specific policy recommendation, we’d like to end with a call to advocacy for vehicle residents, from national to state to local levels. Depending on one’s position, this can look any number of different ways. For example, social service providers should stand up for their clients who are vehicle residents, advocating from within the system against criminalization and for parking stability, supportive services and affordable housing. Well-funded systems of support would make their jobs all the more rewarding. And for those who are too often boxed out of the homeless services system by defensive politicians and bureaucrats, such as our fellow mutual aid groups and activists, we call for not only advocacy but also mitigation of criminalization through “know your rights” outreach and clinics for vehicle repairs and ticketing. We’re also more than happy to teach other groups what we know about conducting surveys for advocacy. Our sincere hope is that these survey findings and policy recommendations help lay the foundation for an alternative to the current systems in place for vehicle residents, which are inadequate and harmful in Los Angeles and beyond. In other words, we hope that the phrase “Keep Moving” won’t be so painfully obvious as a title for future reports on vehicle residency

Full Report: <https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/2023/09/25/vehicle-residency-survey-and-interview-project/>

Veterans and Peace Action

by Jerry Vann

Here in the Venice beachhead, I think about the breakout. From the bunker, we stand behind the wire and do what we do. The breakout is where we are going. Going to make a difference pitching? One planet, one people, one peace. Veterans for Peace. On the Venice Ocean Front Walk, we spent one year at Paloma fitting out our Peace Bird.

We are also pitching Trees for Peace—trees that do not burn up. Consider the Incense Cedar (*Jigonhsasee*), which is a cypress tree. As with all others we call cedar in the Americas, true cedars are from the Earth Island (Lebanon, Atlantic blue, deodar). None have thick bark like the ones we call cedars and other cypress trees, except the American Sequoias (Giant and Coastal). My pitch since 2007: giving out the seeds. Cedar bullets will not pick up your sidewalk, fall on your house, or burn it down.

Fire is not peace to mammals; plants are part of their cycle. The oldest trees are Sycamore, but they have been burned over so many times. This may be more than you wanted to know, but planting trees and shrubs that burn so hot is crazy. You could have a forest with the same water, of safer, saner trees that could be grown for their three F's: food, fuel, fiber.

Our other tree is the Mesquite, another tree of Sequoia's (a name with no meaning). Their fruit tree, but the beings of a problem. I collected bags of beans at Cypress Point Park, Victorville, California. Cut them down. Food, fuel, fiber.

Agricultural Policy and History

I sent UC Davis a registered letter in 2015 about old varieties of pears, offering to send cuttings to women in Afghanistan for them to dry and put in our school lunches. On the other hand, I wrote about the Mesquite tree. I hand-carried the letter to the University of Arizona twice. I found an old pear along the highway in Julian and sent the dry pears to UC Davis. I figured there would be no biotech interest, but that is not the law that I made them and gave them money.

In 1887, the **Hatch Act** provided money from Lincoln's land grant colleges. Lincoln stayed in a dorm as a congressman with Jefferson's books and papers. You might think he read this paragraph, written by Jefferson to William in 1803 "The class of principality defective is that of Agriculture. It is the first in utility and ought to be the first in respect. The same artificial means which may have been used to produce a competition in learning may be equally successful in restoring agriculture to its primary dignity in the eyes of man. It is a science of the very first order; it counts among its handmaids the most respectable sciences, such as chemistry, natural philosophy, mechanics, mathematics, Natural History, and botany. In every college and every university, a professorship of Agriculture and the class of its students might be honored as the first. Young men, closing their academical education with this as the crown of all other sciences, instead of crowding the other classes, would return to the farms of their fathers, their own, or those of others, and replenish and reinvigorate a calling now languishing under contempt and oppression. The charitable schools, instead of storing their pupils with lore which the present state of society does not call for, converted into the schools of Agriculture, might restore them to that branch, qualified to enrich and honor themselves, and to increase the production of the nation instead of consuming it. A gradual abolition of the useless offices so much accumulated in all government might close the drain also from the labors of the field and lessen the burden imposed on them. By these means, the sum of industry will be increased and that of misery diminished."

The top and bottom lines said it all.

Labor, Politics, and Judicial Fear

One hundred years after the Hatch Act, I read in the *LA Times* that a judge ruled for small

farmers in labor. I believe they knew what they wanted when they wrote: "For the farmer. Good of the consumer. Toward total employment." I don't believe they meant big farmers, big chemical companies, or big machinery manufacturers.

UC Davis said it will appeal on academic freedom. They must have found the right judge. ***Science Friday*** on NPR, I believe, on December 1, 2022, discussed U.S. agriculture schools for corporations.

Law and Order: A Judge and Original Intent

Another Jefferson quote: "The great object of my fear is the federal Judiciary. That body, like gravity, with noiseless foot and alarming advance, is insidiously engulfing the special government into the jaws which feeds them."

After two judges threw out leases of LA VA (1888 Deed), a home for veterans got to stay to do what? Our garden is gone for construction equipment containers!

I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man. The rest is not on the wall of Jefferson's Memorial. That is all they have to fear from me, and that is enough.

Contemporary Politics

Jefferson's great fear just ended: the Johnson Rule of no political campaigning for churches and non-profits (those with C3 tax-exempt status). This was around the same time they put "In God We Trust" on our money and what I call the pledge to the wall. The first treaty of the U.S. states we are not a Christian Nation, and the Constitution requires no religious test to hold office.

Now, as this president, there is no more Superman motto: "Truth, justice, and the American way." That wouldn't sell well in China and wasn't in any movie.

So I can say, as the official wheelman for Veterans for Peace, the words to an old song: "You have to speak out against the madness, or you can't."

From President T.R. Roosevelt: Republicans have been "the party of no." General Eisenhower went with them to get his highway system. He led an army convoy across what would become U.S. 50 in 1919 and led the biggest wheeled invasion into Europe on June 6, 1944.

My father brought the certified Bailey bridge three days later for General Patton. It was a secret weapon, only seen three days before D-Day.

So, the party of no must take the U.S. back from the brink. Put a Speaker of the House of Representatives—somebody Democrats can make president after impeaching Trump and Peter Thiel's attack dog, Vance. Their show in the White House, going after President Zelensky, following him, him folding his arms, having enough for his country. Trump will make good TV.

Remember, the party of no sent U.S. Senators—and I believe Jill Stein was there—to Russia on the Fourth of July. Like Ralph Nader, she changed the world for the worse. Impeachment has no timeline; nothing says they cannot do both at the same time, and the Speaker becomes president. Fools floated making Trump Speaker somehow for a third term. The Speaker could be Adam Kinzinger, a real Republican. And the world is watching. Full stop.

Arlington West and Historical Context

No stupid question or battle plan. I've been speaking to the world for 10 of the 15 years that Arlington West was at Santa Monica. From 2008, I had Chinese people thank the U.S. for what we did in World War II.

I had a helmet (except on a watermelon box) that I handed to a Chinese man, and as many people wanted their picture with it on, he pointed to my head to have the picture with me and him.

I spoke to Uyghurs before this dictator put them in BBC prisons. The well-fed and bred would laugh at us; after this dictator, not so much.

This last Sunday, a man and a woman with their

ALL IN TO SAVE THE VENICE CHURCH

By Jon Wolff

Original Save Venice (OSV) is currently working to secure funding to restore the First Baptist Church of Venice. The group recently met with Rohan Abraham, the African American Community Coordinator for Congressman Ted Lieu.

OSV took Mr. Abraham on a walking tour of prominent African American historic sites in the Oakwood neighborhood of Venice. They viewed the Monday Women's Club on 6th Avenue, and the Vera Davis McClendon Center on California Avenue. They shared the rich cultural heritage of the Venice Black Community that is often overlooked in many historic surveys of Venice. And they discussed the importance of preserving these sites that have contributed to the history of Venice.

Special emphasis was placed on the importance of the First Baptist Church of Venice. OSV expressed their desire to see affordable housing built on the lots adjacent to the church. Mr. Abraham took notes and photos of the church, and the group gave him a book of facts and historic dates about the church and about Oakwood. He was enthusiastic about OSV's vision, and he agreed to bring this matter before Congressman Lieu.

Original Save Venice is pursuing many other means to fund the restoration of the First Baptist Church of Venice. And the Beachhead is your primary source for updates.

15-year-old son asked, "All he gets in school is about World War II in Holland. Where can he get information for a better picture?" I said, ****"Good Night, and Good Luck"** is the picture of the Republicans and the McCarthy era, using actual CBS footage. McCarthy called those communist generals. They were tasked to put labor on the board of directors in Germany.

The book is ****Padover's *Experiment in Germany*****. He went over to Europe as an OSS officer. I sent President Obama his first speech after he became president, saying, "We need labor on the board of directors." I explained that President Roosevelt knew he faced Hitler and had much support because of what was called the Republican Great Depression. The party of no could not stop him from building schools, libraries, and parks that are used today, and they want these properties to the last tree.

T.R. Roosevelt, John Muir, and friends saved them, but more important was not only their discipline in training. So many soldiers were unhealthy during World War I, making it hard to form a military force.

Padover, born in Austria in 1905, came here because of a professor. He went to Europe in the 1930s to write a book on Louis the XVII. He went to France, Austria, and Russia, and came back in 1939.

His book, ***Thomas Jefferson on Democracy***, I had the 1984 edition. I wanted the 1939 hardcover for the Chaffee Schools Library. On the dust cover was Louis the XVII. The first paperback edition in 1946 showed him in uniform. That is how I learned of ***Experiment in Germany***.

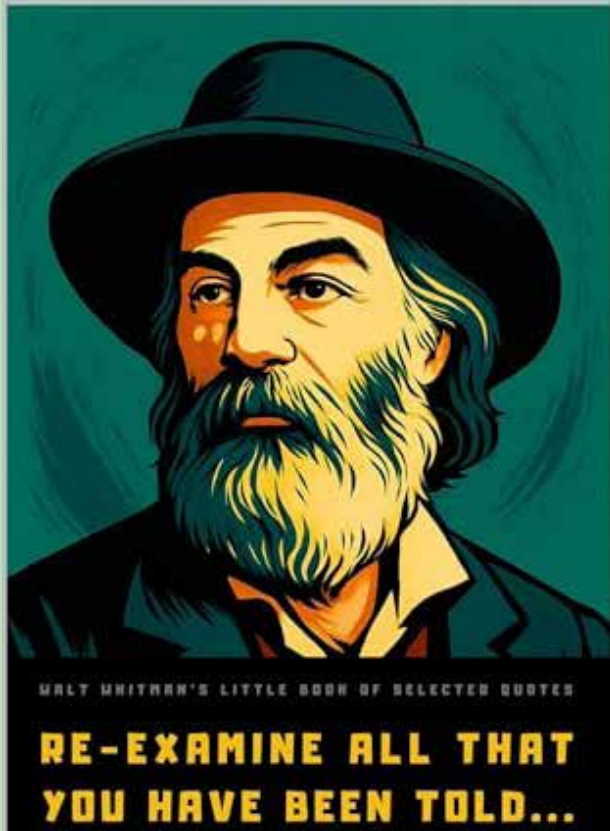
Also in 1946, he was editor of ***PM News***. In 1947, the second edition was gone. You see ***PM News*** in ***Good Night, and Good Luck***. Also in ***Experiment in Germany***, the last paragraph in the Jefferson book preface mentioned what we faced: "Hope they're sorry. They turned U.S. veterans loose on them."



Poetry As Protest by Gerry Fialka

W. H. Auden declared: “Poetry makes nothing happen.” Let’s get stimulated for fiery discussion. Auden was articulating that the job of the poet is not to be a “crusader,” but to make poems happen. He continued, “Poetry, that is, survives / in the valley of its making.” Kenneth Rexroth, who read at Venice West (later called Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave), felt the job of the poet is to subvert the bourgeoisie and woo your lover. Personally, the poems of the Berrigan Brothers motivated me to pursue peace activism. Their compelling words encouraged me to take action.

Can poetry really be an effective protest to plutocracy and war? Is rebellion seeing that something is wrong? Then what? Is revolution saying there is something wrong and here’s a new plan? A re-evolution? I believe the revolving into more peaceful and loving ways is the Venice strategy, as well as the universal goal. Duh? In preparation for our Venice Library event on Jan 3, and the 23rd Venice Film Fest on Jan 11 (with the screening of “FRANCISCO LETELIER - I WRITE YOUR NAME” the new documentary on the Venice poet & art activist) please consider the following:

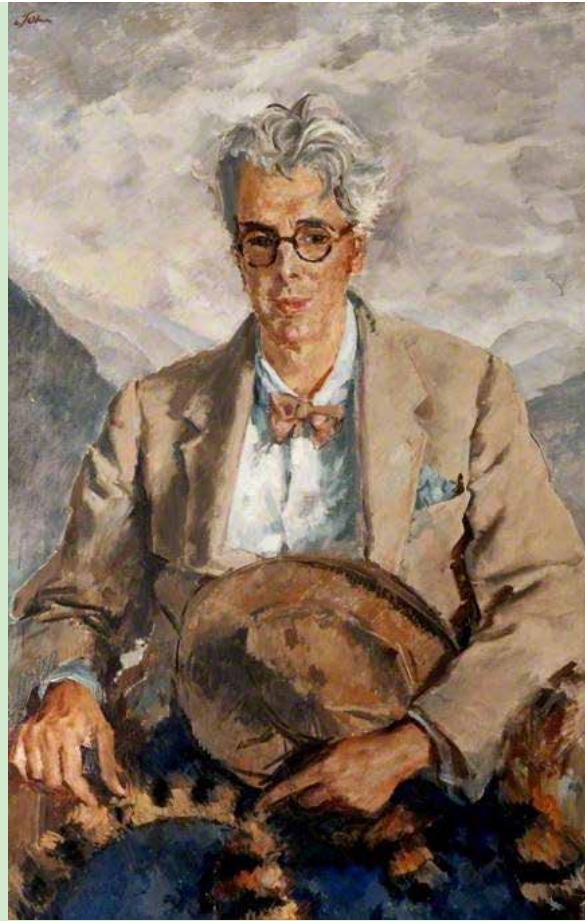


Walt Whitman’s Preface to the 1855 “Leaves of Grass,” assures us that the English language is “the most powerful language of resistance.” He concludes with, “The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it.”

W.B. Yeats, wrote in 1937, “I thought when I was young - Walt Whitman had something to do with it - that poet, painter, and musician should do nothing but express themselves.” Then he decided otherwise, “A poet is justified not by the expression of himself, but by the public he finds or creates, a public made but others ready to his hand if he is a mere popular poet, but a new public, a new form of life, if he is a man of genius.”

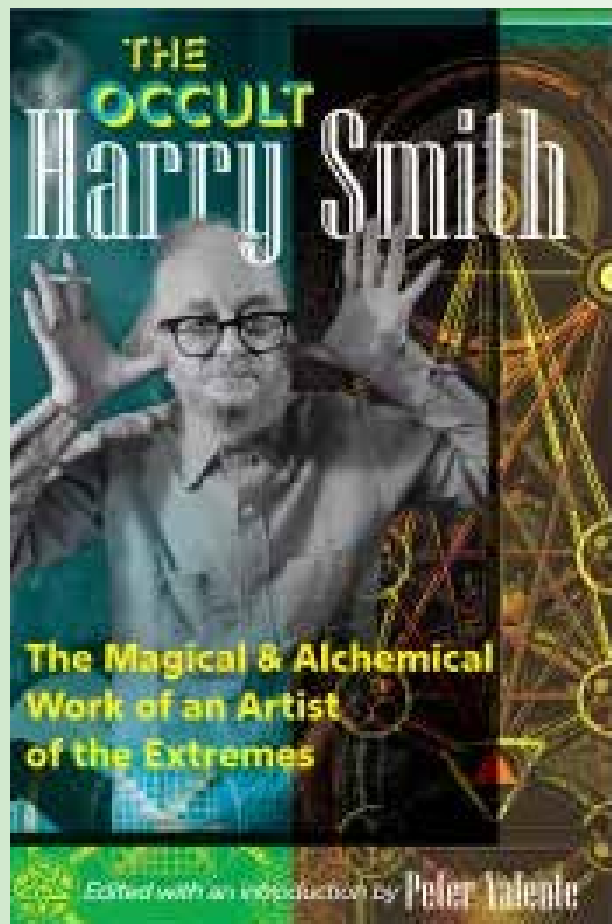
Grounds for further research? If the poet can generate new ways of feeling, perceiving, thinking and acting, then we can move the project forward in positiveness. Can we make the world a better place? Can we change our own mode of mindedness, our own life, and then the world’s too?

One major artist who has changed me and my friends and the world is Chris Marker (1921-2012),

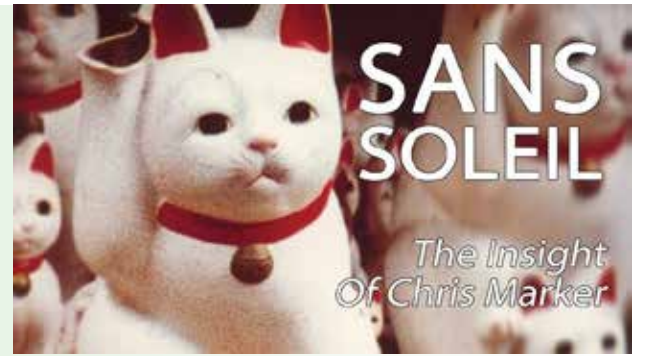


with words like “I remember the images I filmed. They have substituted themselves for my memory,” and “I betrayed Gutenberg for McLuhan long ago.” The new 2025 IMMEMORY: GUTENBERG VERSION book is highly recommended. His 1962 LA JETEE, arguably one of the best science-fiction films ever made, is about love and longing and memory. Catherine Opie called it “an incredible political poem to that time.” Another must see is SANS SOLEIL, an example of the “essay film,” a genre he practically invented. It is not an aristocratic discourse but really an attempt at “conversation,” being both “personal” and explicit” in intentions. It is worth your time to probe his 60 year career creating political art supporting black civil rights, anti-Vietnam war campaigning, and always true to the power of protest. IMMEMORY: GUTENBERG VERSION brings his seminal CDROM work into the present and future via a time-tested, durable format of the past — the book. The Brooklyn Rail wrote it “may serve as a life jacket, a way to pull back out into the world of the real.”

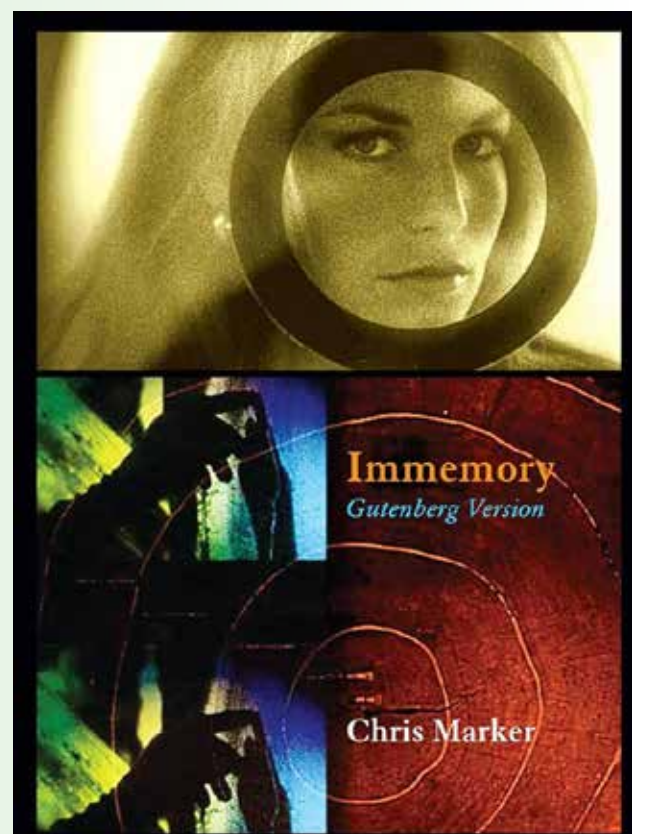
This ability of the book, film, song or poem to be revisited fascinates me. Not only revisitation, but also transforming it in the process. This “resonating interval” (-McLuhan) is a space for remediation. We can play the event against itself, as Marker loved to quote Jean Cocteau “Seeing as these things are beyond us, let’s pretend to be the organizer of them.”



Another major influencer is Harry Smith (1923-1991), who was a painter, filmmaker, folklorist, musicologist, and collector as well as a radical nonconformist whose work defies categorization.



Like Chris Marker, Smith propagated a poetic quality with political resonance. The new book THE OCCULT HARRY SMITH - THE MAGICAL & ALCHEMICAL WORK OF AN ARTIST OF EXTREMES (edited by Peter Valente) is highly recommended. Frank Zappa-Ornette Coleman wannabe John Zorn writes: “This outstanding collection of lovingly written testimonies pays tribute to Harry with wit, respect, love, and laser-like precision. It is absolutely impossible to forget any interaction you had with Harry—and the beautiful tales in this remarkably readable and heartfelt book will have you awestruck, laughing out loud, and hungry for more. Perhaps the best collection of writings about one of the most enigmatic and fascinating figures the world has ever known.”



Smith proclaimed, “I’m glad to see my dreams came true. I saw America changed through music” when he accepted 1991 Grammy Life Achievement Award, reflecting the profound impact of his Anthology of American Folk Music on bridging divides and creating a shared cultural memory. This reflects his belief that music and poetry can foster social change and influence future generations, which it did, especially for folk and rock musicians in the ‘60s and beyond, even though the Anthology was first released in 1952

Kate Millar writes in LA Review of Books 9-17-25 that “Anne Waldman seems anxious to preserve and memorialize her friends: artists, poets, and multidisciplinary creatives belonging to the ‘Outrider’ tradition, a lineage conceptualized by Waldman herself, whose works pulse with a spirit of resistance and experimentation, communally integrated and politically engaged.” Waldman, like Smith and Marker, is a compelling comprehensivist providing pattern recognition to get the “big picture.”

Millar continues, “Waldman’s poetics is inseparable from her ethics and politics. Poems clutter with scenes of aftermaths of violence, ... Waldman writes of a civilization on the brink (or condition) of collapse and apocalypse. Climate disaster, political corruption, human rights violations and denials, war and genocide—all of which prompt Waldman to search for ‘new and deeper memorials’ ... Here, poetry is archive in the sense that it is witness to the atrocities of history and now. In this witnessing, language becomes resurrective in power...”

Millar summarizes, “Though we can become numbed by the incessant documentation and dissemination of atrocity in the news and on our feeds, we

can chant and recite our way back toward feeling. In the face of loneliness, weariness, climate death, and genocide, we must cling to word's ceremonial and ritualistic power, curative and reconstructive, turning charnel ground into a place of rebirth. Ultimately, your life is your art is your ritual is your language is your life. Less important than the interpretation of language is the doing of it."



Anne Waldman declared in her interview with Jim Cohn in May, 2024: "Harry Smith is a major template for many of us. He put together, he anthologized, the Invisible Republic's range of stories. The revival around Harry's archiving, film work, cinema work, artistic practices, his hipster and trickster energy, his alchemical and quixotic presence, has influenced my thinking of myself also as a field poet. I am interested in everything."

Anne articulates the panoramics of poets, "You are also historian and seer. You exude your art through consciousness, relationality to the events of your time, startling, disturbing, extraordinary, from space travel to genocide. As an activist you can be a witness, scrying, prophesying, you can observe and pay attention to events around you and in your own life. There's a long tradition of this in troubadour culture, the role of the poet as witness, seer, chronicler, the griot, telling and living the epic of the time. Capturing the heart break and injustices and sorrows of the time as well. It's almost archival in a way. You collect, you save things, you amplify things, and you keep things alive. These traditions, in contemporary times, we're seeing poetry within protest encampments, in refugee camps, places where people don't have access to other forms of art. With poetry you only need the voice."



Jack Kerouac aspired to transform America into a kinder and gentler nation (way before Bush used it as a catch-phrase) - a nation that would welcome and try to understand other cultures and religions, not bomb them. Poets and songwriters have long propagated Martin Luther's call "If you want to change the world, pick up the pen and write."

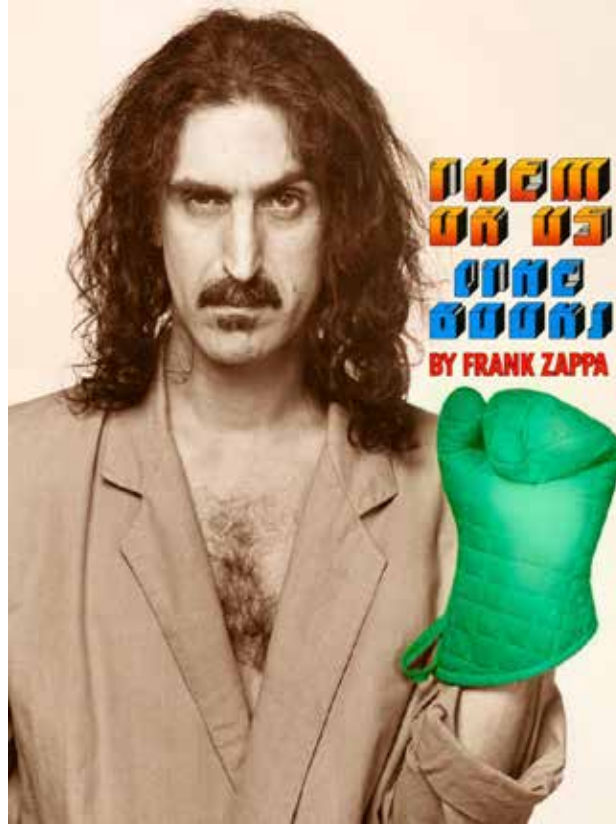


Kurt Vonnegut quipped, "For Berrigan, poetry was mode and method of survival." Daniel Berrigan's words continue to inspire me:

the cause
is the heart's beat
and the children born
and the risen bread.

to see and not be seduced
to hear and not be deafened
to taste not be eaten
to touch and not be bought

I salute and encourage all y'all to write and be proactive. Engage all your senses. Let us praise and study Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Utah Phillips, Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Gil-Scott Heron, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Marge Piercy, Diane Di Prima, Sonia Sanchez, Gwendolyn Brooks, and many more. Tell me your additions. Support Beyond Baroque and all the poets in solidarity in the collective effort and movement building that is necessary to create meaningful social change.



Frank Zappa explained in 1967 on the radio in Michigan, "All my songs are poetry." Check out the words to his iconic song "Trouble Comin' Everyday," with its explicit social commentary, addressing racial violence, economic inequality, police brutality and media sensationalism. The in 1983, his "Stick Together" song emphasizes unity against authority, "You know we gotta stick together."

Reinvent Stephane Mallarme's axiom: "Everything in the world exists in order to end up as a book." into "Everything in the world exists in order to end up in the Venice BeachHead." or "Everything in the world exists in order to end up as a protest poem."

I welcome your reactions, Gerry Fialka pfsuzy@aol.com

Laughtears.com Upcoming Events:



***Tues Dec 23 Two Christmas Hams - The Ginger & Suzy Show UNURBAN CAFE Benefit Concert with Suzy Williams & Ginger Smith & Friends 3301 Pico Blvd

*** Wed Dec31 Venice BeachHead Party at Beyond Baroque, Gerry opens with New Year Rant at 6:30pm

7 • Q1 2026 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

*** SAT, Jan 3 VENICE POETRY as POLITICAL ACTIVISM at 3pm (till 4:30pm) free - Venice Public Library, (This was scheduled at the library, but will be on zoom, due to the remodeling there from Dec 29 till the end of April) Email John Frank jfrank@lapl.org for the link. VENICE - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE #2- Fun interactive salon hosted by Gerry Fialka - Cultural revolutionaries Gerry Fialka & Richard Modiano interconnect politics and poetry with fiery, interactive discussion. Delve deep into current Venice issues via questions: What can we do about it? What's the difference between rights & responsibilities? Revolution & rebellion? "Poetry is about the grief. Politics is about the grievance." - Robert Frost. "You don't have to be a communist to be anti-capitalist. It is enough to be a poet." - Jonas Mekas. "When Philosophy raised a dialectic, a debate toward what it calls Truth; Poetry raised a theater, a drama of truth." - Robert Duncan. "I should prefer to de-fuse this gigantic human bomb by starting a dialogue somewhere on the side-lines to distract the trigger-men, or to needle the somnambulists." - Marshall McLuhan, who encouraged inventing new questions and new metaphors. How do we nurture Bucky Fuller's "we are all crew, no passengers"?

*** SUN, Jan11 - 23rd Venice Film Fest at Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd, free. Celebrate live music and films 5:30-BSP funk poetry, 6pm-Suzy Williams & Friends perform Venice-related songs, 7pm- Short Venice films by Jeremy Kagan & Sam Ray Wilson, 7:30- "FRANCISCO LETELIER - I WRITE YOUR NAME" (2025, 78 minutes) Compelling portrait of Venice resident, Chilean-American muralist, poet & art activist Letelier, who has created murals around the world for over four decades. Francisco's Dad was murdered by Pinochet in 1976. Documentarians Julie Thompson & Brogan de Paor delve deep into how art & culture play powerful roles in movements for human rights and justice. Co-sponsored by Venice Heritage Museum.

***TBA - Gerry Fialka hosts Venice Culture Salons (VCS#19) at Venice Heritage Museum (new location TBA, opening in the spring) - Fun, fiery, interactive discussions about our Beachtown. Free admission. Bring your stories. Delve deep into Venice music, film, art, literature & current events. Live oral history. Featuring: 16th annual POETRY OF VENICE PHOTOGRAPHY discussion & show&tell.

***Watch the 35th annual PXL THIS Toy Camera Film Festival for free Electronic Folk Art "The most audacious film festival ever" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOp3SiVQVuk&t=6s>

<https://pfsuzy.medium.com/pxl-this-35-the-most-audacious-film-festival-ever-by-gerry-fialka-7a0ad90f48d6>

We made the cover of The Argonaut:

<https://digitaledition.argonautnews.com/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=84e7afd9-b10c-40e8-a3ea-ebe90695f708>

***EVERY FIRST TUESDAY of EVERY MONTH is Marshall McLuhan-FINNEGANS WAKE Reading Club online "where the hand of man never set foot"

***Check Gerry Fialka's "I'm probably wrong about everything" Podcast on Youtube- interviews with MUSIC, ART, LIT, FILM, POETRY, MEDIA, ACTIVISTS, SCIENCE, NEW KNOWLEDGE, INFLUENCERS & amazing people world-wide <https://www.youtube.com/@improbablywrongaboutev-eryt6781/streams>

Be sure to listen to GF's new interview with John Fugelsang (who performed at Sponto Gallery years ago) who is the author of the new NY Times best seller book "Separation of Church and Hate: A Sane Person's Guide to Taking Back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleeing Frauds."

***Every SUN from noon - 4:30pm Brad Kay jazz merriment at Unurban 3301 Pico Blvd with Suzy Williams, Mews Small, Ginger Smith, Flo Laurence and more. FREE (except 2nd sundays) JAZZ CABARET FOLK POPULAR MUSIC Live!!! <https://sundaysongbirds.com/>

Yolanda Moreno Miranda

– May 2, 1943 - Sept. 15, 2025

By Jim Smith

When the media tells a story about a union organizer, it's usually about a man. Yolanda Miranda showed everyone that, in fact, women make the best organizers. They are less threatening to the maleworkers, and they are sympathetic with women workers. Even so, the organizer in question must have a great talent for conveying their friendliness and solidarity, even if the worker is shy or unsure. This is where Yolanda shined.

In the California town of Delano, a baby girl was screaming her head off. Her parents, Guillermo Miranda and the former Consuelo Moreno, knew their lives would never be the same. As for the baby Yolanda, it was as if she knew she had been born into a life of struggle and hardship. In the early days of her life, she was surrounded by love and caring from her mother, father, grandmother and 12 siblings. The family never saw a doctor. If anyone was ill they would call their Abuela (grandmother) Christina, who was a curandera (healer). It was through her Abuela that Yolanda learned of her Yaqui Indian ancestry. She considered herself to be both Chicana and Yaqui. Once, when she had her DNA analyzed, the results showed that she had no European ancestry. She was ecstatic that she didn't have to bear the burden of a lineage that included colonization, slave masters and genocide Born into a Migrant Farm Worker Family

Outside her home in the neighboring town of Earlimart were fields of crops stretched to the horizon. Indeed, they filled most of the San Joaquin Valley. Yolanda had been born into a migrant farm worker family. This affected her development throughout childhood and into adulthood. On the one hand, she grew up with love and kindness among her family, neighbors and co-workers.

On the other hand, being a young Chicana and farmworker severely limited her ability to succeed in a society ruled by white men with money. Not only that, but because her skin color was darker than that of the whites, she was constantly confronted with racism in her schools and by local white merchants, and for the rest of her life. The "professionals" and shopkeepers in town expected nothing from Yolanda other than an early marriage, children and a life working in the fields.

Yolanda was still living at home when the family moved to San Jose, which was also located near the fields. Her brother Billy became best friends with one of his high school classmates named César. It was THE César Chávez, who would later become the driving force of the farmworkers movement for justice and founder of the United Farmworkers Union (UFW).

Yolanda recalled the weekends when César would come to their home, where he and Billy would get dressed up in their Zoot Suits (this was in the late 1940s). After shinning their shoes and putting on their flashy clothes and hats, the two sharp-looking Pachucos would hop into their low-rider and head out for a night on the town. Poor Yolanda was left at home wishing she was old enough to share their evening's excitement.

Yolanda had gone to work in the fields as a child and young adult. As she grew up, she was mentored by César and soon became an organizer for the United Farmworkers Union in the Salinas area. After college, she went to



Yolanda (center) in black, with Aztec Dancers



A commendation from the L.A. City Council for Yolanda's work on International Woman's Day. (l to r) Mimi (from L to R) Mimi Bogali, Lisa Green, L.A. Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, Yolanda Miranda (holding City Council Commendation), Maria Elena Montañó, Alice Stek MD, Suzy Williams, Hillary Kaye.

work for a nonprofit organization that helped farmworkers in need. Then it was back to organizing, with the Office and Professional Employees Union. From there, she went to work with the garment workers union, the ILGWU..

The Writer Meets the Organizer

This is when I met Yolanda. She was on the picket line day after day during a strike at the Glydon's garment shop in downtown LA. It was one of the biggest strikes in Los Angeles and it was up to Yolanda to keep morale high. I was covering labor issues for a local paper, so I went to interview some of the striking workers who were all women. Yolanda was one of the few people who was bilingual and had something to say about the uncaring employer.

I told Yolanda that I was teaching a class on labor economics nearby in the downtown area, and that she should come by when she wasn't so busy. That evening a new student came in late. It was Yolanda. She said she had just gotten off the picket line. I welcomed her, and she took a seat while I went on with my lecture. The next time I looked toward the back of the room, there she was, sound asleep. I couldn't blame her. She had begun her day on the picket line around 5am.

Yolanda never missed a day on the picket line, where she energized her co-picketers all day long. The Glydon's strike had become the biggest labor struggle in L.A. at that time in the 1970s. I followed the course of the struggle and talked to Yolanda on the picket line several times a week. I soon realized that she was not your ordinary union organizer. She knew a lot about labor history, Chicano history, and tactics that could be used to win a strike. They finally got a contract renewal at Glydon's a few weeks later. In some strikes when things got slow, Yolanda would pull out a deck of Tarot cards and read the picketers' fortune. Their fortune was always good for those on the picket line, and bad for the bosses.

The union leaders, Phil and Wally, who never walked the picket line, gave Yolanda her next assignment. It was at a non-union garment shop, Spring City Knitting, in Phoenix. But this time her job was not to walk a picket line, but to become a "submarine," someone who gets a job at the plant for the sole purpose of organizing the other workers. Yolanda later told me that she already knew how to sew and keep the machines running. She was just what the company wanted, they thought.

The campaign at Spring City Knitting was going well when without warning, Phil and Wally pulled her out to help save a garment plant in Yuma, Arizona, where the company was trying to bust the union. The campaign to save the union, as Yolanda knew, was a lost cause. The union had not fought for the workers when they had

grievances and the leadership back in L.A. could care less, as long as the dues money kept arriving.

By now, Yolanda was fed up with Phil and Wally, and the whole ILGWU structure. She walked. Yolanda Takes on the Big Hospitals Meanwhile, I had gotten a job running a campaign for the Communication Workers (CWA) to organize the nine California State Hospitals. There were a total of more than 8,000 Psychiatric Technicians (Psych Techs) who needed a union, so we would need lots of organizers. I needed to find at least 20 good union organizers to staff every hospital. Luck was on my side when Yolanda called to ask if I knew of any organizing jobs. I said, "Yes, you're hired immediately." Initially, I sent her to the San Jose State Hospital, where we already had one organizer who needed help.

The next day I got a call from Yolanda. She said, "I will not work with these people (meaning the organizers and some volunteers)." She went on, "They're doing cocaine in the office with the workers that we're trying to organize." It could have been disaster if word had gotten out. Coke use might have been very common back in the early 1980s, but if anyone found out it was being used in the union office, it would have destroyed the union's credibility. I had to fire the organizer, who I later found out had been selling coke to the workers and to some of the top union people in D.C., who would visit our campaign just to get their baggies.

Yolanda went ballistic when she saw what was going on in the office. I apologized for our raggedy campaign and suggested Yolanda might be happier at the Napa Hospital. I had already hired a second great organizer who I wanted to work in Napa, which was the biggest state hospital.

Below: Democratic Presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich hugs Venice Peace and Freedom Party leader, Yolanda Miranda

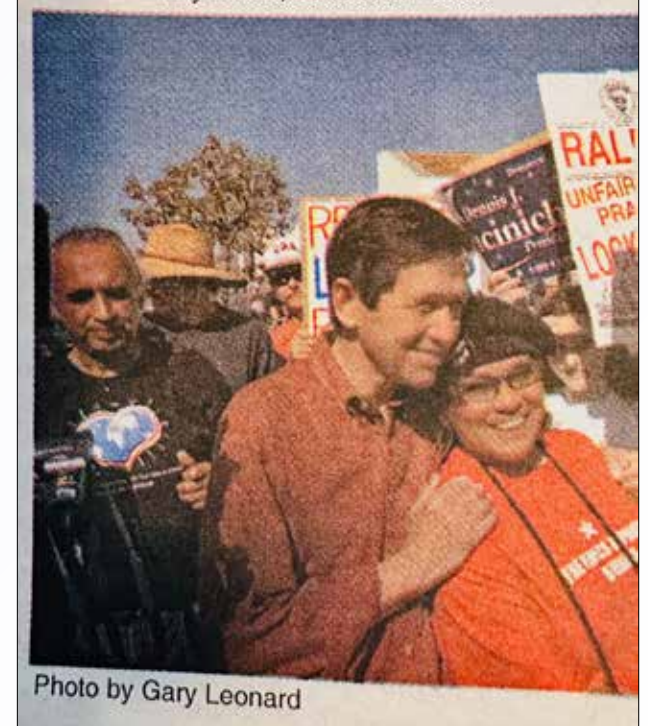


Photo by Gary Leonard

Yolanda encourages future union activists



Geraldine Johnson was already known in San Francisco for her impressive work with women and labor unions. She was the Northern California President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). I told her about Yolanda, and she said she would be happy to work with her.

Yolanda and Geraldine made quite a dynamic pair. They quickly turned Napa State Hospital around. At the beginning of our campaign, Napa, with more than 1,000 workers, was a bastion for the company union (CSEA) but by election day, Yolanda and Geraldine had made it into the hospital that delivered the most votes for our union. The experience also made the two organizers lifelong amigas, until Geraldine's death in 1996.

After our victorious campaign, the union honchos found ways to fire our dedicated crew of organizers, including Yolanda and me, to make way for their cronies in the telephone industry. Suffice it to say that Yolanda was well aware of the poor treatment of organizers by unions. She was also aware of the greater cause, La Causa, to which she was dedicated.

La Causa

Yolanda experienced a personal blow when she discovered that her son Paul had AIDS. She supported him as never before. Paul, who was a famous boxer, became the first prizefighter to publicly announce his disease. With his mother's care and new medical cocktails, Paul survived. It was touch and go for several years. Yolanda was later given an award by the Golden State Boxing Commission that recognized her steadfast support for her son through difficult times.

Yolanda settled in Venice, California, in 1982 with her four children, Steve, Paul, Rebecca and Tim. After the Psych Tech hospital campaign, we formed a collective – Yolanda, Mary Jane Galbiso, Philip Melnick and me. Our mission was to teach unions how to organize. Many of the union leaders at that time hadn't done much organizing in their lives. They were amazed at our success and were inspired to learn how to make their unions grow. We held seminars at our office and held on-site meetings with individual unions like SEIU (Service Employees), Retail Clerks, Machinists, Teamsters and others.

Our nonprofit, Western Labor Organizing Project (wallop), was successful except for one problem. Everyone wanted to hire Yolanda. Eventually, our ranks were depleted. Yolanda went to work for the Office and Professional Employees Union (OPEIU), Philip went to Europe, Mary Jane moved to Northern California and I went to work for the Newspaper Guild. Wallop was a good idea, but we couldn't do it without Yolanda. She was the only one of us who actually liked phone banking, by which we made contact with unions in L.A. and across the country.

Why was Yolanda a great union organizer? First, she treated the workers as equals. She was always happy to meet workers and find out about their lives. She made suggestions about dealing with their problems, both on the job and at home. She always had a smile on her face and a twinkle in her eye, but the key to her success was that she really listened to what people had to say.

Yolanda dedicated her life to fighting injustice for those without a voice. She was a fearless leader, lifting people up and giving them the courage to demand dignity and equality, often at great personal sacrifice.

In a written statement to a union's Board, we learn how humble Yolanda could be. She wrote, "I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to work for the union. It is a vocation that has been the major part of my adult life and adds passion to my life."

Turning to the Venice Community

Flash forward a few years, and you would find us worn out from our involvement with thousands of workers in every conceivable line of work. Yolanda had had enough. She had found few union leaders who were worthy of her respect, and besides, she had to deal with racism and sexism nearly every

day. In her 50s, she needed a break. Her idea of a break was to become a community organizer. She applied her skills, focusing on one community, Venice. At the time, which was the new Century, our small beach town of Venice was being gentrified, as were many other parts of Los Angeles. Yolanda brought up the issue of a community newspaper. There had been one, the Free Venice Beachhead, which had published regularly from 1968 to the mid-nineties. We decided to try to revive it. So off Yolanda and I went to visit some of the veterans of the old paper, and some new activists.

Everyone we talked to was very enthusiastic about the paper, and many of them became reporters and distributors, including Yolanda, who also wrote poetry.

Yolanda also helped organize a Venice organization called Progressive Venice, which contended in elections to the newly elected Grass Roots Venice Neighborhood Council. In the first election we won about half the seats, including Yolanda's, against the conservatives. In the second election we won 21 out of 22 seats (we didn't contest for the 22nd seat).



Yolanda, and her beloved Che, explains her vision

Another campaign Yolanda and I started was to create a Memorial to the Japanese who during WWII were rounded up in Venice and put in a concentration camp. We circulated petitions and ran stories in the Beachhead about this atrocity. When they heard about our efforts, many of the Japanese people who still lived in Venice thought it was a good idea and worked hard to make it happen. Our campaign was successful. Today there is a Memorial at the corner of Venice Blvd. and Lincoln Blvd. in Venice.

Los Tres Amigos

Now that she had some time of her own, Yolanda was anxious to see some of the rest of the world. Yolanda, me, and our mutual friend, Karl Abrams, became traveling companions. We traveled over several years to Oaxaca, Yucatan, Havana, and several parts of Italy and Spain. Yolanda had so much charisma that when we would meet people for the first time, they would assume that Karl and I were her bodyguards.

I'd like to tell just a few adventures of Los Tres Amigos. Our first trip was to Mexico City and Oaxaca. We were walking down one of the main streets when Yolanda spotted the Teachers Union headquarters. They were on strike, so of course Yolanda had to go in and meet them. The President happened to be a woman. She and Yolanda talked about strike strategy and tactics for a couple of hours.

The strike wasn't going well, so Yolanda explained how we had won strikes and other struggles by involving the whole community. This strategy was unknown to the teachers. After we went home, we learned that the teachers had been victorious, in large part by employing that community strategy.

Later, in Oaxaca, we met Tanya, the daughter of Subcomandante Marcos, who was the leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in the neighboring state of Chiapas. The EZLN had become the de facto government of Chiapas after their peaceful uprising on Jan. 1, 1994. The following year, a peace accord was reached between Mexico and the EZLN, called Harmony, Peace with Justice and Dignity Agreement.

The behavior of the Mexican government was completely different than the rampage of the Trump Administration in U.S. cities. The Mexican government treated the insurgents and people of Chiapas with respect, and did not want the situation to turn violent. Tanya and Yolanda became good friends.

The five of us - Tanya, Yolanda, Karl, me, and Tanya's real bodyguard - explored the city of Oaxaca. In later years, Yolanda was always invited to women's conferences in Chiapas.

One of Yolanda's happiest times was when she went to Cuba with a delegation from the Peace and Freedom

9 • Q1 2026 • FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

Party. She loved being with the Cuban people who were building socialism in spite of the U.S. blockade.

We were privileged to have a meeting with members of the Cuban Central Committee (CCC). Yolanda carried the meeting on our side. She told her compañer@s about conditions in the U.S., including homelessness, racism, the plight of women, and the need for socialism. They all expressed their delight at meeting Yolanda and the rest of us.

The following day was the giant May Day march in Havana with more than a million people attending. Because of our warm meeting with the CCC, we were placed in the front row to hear Fidel deliver one of his great speeches. Yolanda was thrilled.

Fighting for Women's Rights

In her later years, Yolanda took up International Woman's Day as her cause. She believed that women were oppressed in their jobs and in their daily encounters. Of course, with Yolanda's urging many women gathered around and began celebrating the day every year. Yolanda received a commendation from the Los Angeles City Council for her initiative. An award was presented by

Councilmember Bill Rosendahl (see photo at top of article).

As she got older, Yolanda's mobility became more restricted. Her old illnesses, mostly nerve problems plagued her. She obviously needed strong pain relief medication but she didn't always get it. Doctors told her that if they prescribed them to her they might lose their license. That's just how frightened the medical profession was. Unfortunately, too many doctors allowed her to suffer intense pain without any medical relief.

Yolanda died on Sept. 15, 2025 at her son's family home in Utah. She was, at last, free of the pain that had dogged her for too many years. It's my belief that she suffered lifelong pain and contracted fibromyalgia and rheumatoid arthritis from living and working in the fields where toxic chemicals were routinely used on crops by the growers.

Yolanda is survived by her four children: Stephen Banke, former World Boxing Council Super Bantamweight champion, Paul Banke, Tim Munz, and Rebecca Gillespie, plus 13 grandchildren, and 20 great grandchildren. In addition, Yolanda also loved all of her 48 nieces and nephews. In addition, she loved her constant companion, a Shih Tzu Poodle, named Joey. Yolanda and Joey grew old together and were never separated.

Yolanda's walker was often taken over by Joey so that he could enjoy a ride to the market. Joey died just five weeks before Yolanda. It was a devastating blow to Yolanda. She said she wouldn't be able to live without Joey, and she didn't.

**Memorial
Yolanda Moreno Miranda
2pm Sunday, March 8
International Woman's Day
Beyond Baroque
681 Venice Blvd.
— Pot Luck —**



Yolanda and Joey



Mark Rago is a hard man to find time with. He spends his hours at his day job for Universal, matching blockbuster movies to theatres for distribution. On weekends, he's enjoying the local music scene and the rest of his time, he's selling his new Venice-Opoly board game. It's out just in time for the holiday season! We met up at an event outside the Whaler, over by the Venice Pier, while he engaged with shoppers intrigued by his new creation. (Beachhead staffer Jon Wolf, who asked me to do the interview, had a rare gleeful smile I could feel over the phone, when he added "make sure you ask about his background story. I was intrigued!")

Well, Jon was so right on! As it turns out, Mark Rago was born to do this! He originates from South Jersey, and regularly visited Atlantic City throughout his early years. His dad and mom grew up on the boardwalk there but most significantly, the famous Hasbro Monopoly game originated there. Like most of us of that era, Monopoly was a central part of family gatherings, spanning all ages, making memorable pastimes, channeling what would have been long strings of debates and arguments into fun board game time.

It was during the COVID economic dry spell, that this idea of a game, which had been spinning in his head for years, began to take form. The game was created after 3 arduous years, and came out in September 2025. The concept of the game is not new. But as an Atlantic City native, Mark noticed that Long Beach, Manhattan Beach and even Compton have a version; so of course a talented man from the birthplace of Monopoly would get that "ahah!" moment of "Why not a Venice-Opoly!?" Yet he distinguished his game from the others in the quality and content of his version. He created an historical, iconic art piece as opposed to a "gag" piece.. Once the idea struck him, he took it upon himself to do something of lasting value before a cheap, money grabbing spin-off was created by someone else, without honoring the deep culture of Venice. Thus a lot of his time and money was put into creating it. Of course the old time locals are extremely excited to see their iconic Venice preserved in this form. It was important to Mark to contribute to the memory of the original Venice.

Various artists and photographers contributed to the game, as he had to avoid any copyright infringements with Hasbro. Mark explained his concept. "The board is laid out with "GO" is the skatepark and "JAIL" is the Valley. The four railroads are historical landmarks. These were originally only seen on the box but added on the board just weeks before production. The UTILITIES are the two old Jewish Temples on the boardwalk that have each been there nearly a century. The properties, except for Oceanfront Walk which is the Boardwalk and the Canals, which is Park Place, are all the oldest businesses which kept the same name the longest; the oldest ones being the most lucrative and expensive properties on the board. Their origins range from 1911 to 1980; "that's how

I determined which businesses should be included and where their position should be on the board" Mark explained. He went on. "This is NOT a Hasbro version of the game but my own custom one". So he couldn't use anything that they had copyrighted as part of his game. Therefore beach pads and bungalows replaced houses and hotels. He used an original color scheme. Abbot Kinney replaced Monopoly Man; CHANCE and COMMUNITY CHEST became DogTown and Hecho en Venice. The tokens are a gondola, a bicycle, a skateboard, a surfboard and (alas!) a laptop. Any Venice local will have fun and a nostalgic trip rolling these dice! And newcomers will learn something about its enduring history. He even put instructions for an hour long version of the game, to avoid the Monopoly fatigue, because the original game could take hours sometimes.

I asked Mark what he learned in his creative process. He said he learned photoshop, to be a better



photographer, and that "what starts as something simple can be a long and trying experience, but it's all good!" And he's happy he persevered.

This custom art piece game, replete with historical information on each business recognized, is only \$59.00, and ten percent of each purchase goes directly to the Venice Heritage Museum. It is manufactured solely in the United States. That's the cost

of one foreign made mass produced video game these days! Details on purchasing Veniceopoly along with all the local artists contributions and historical places mentioned can be found on his website,

Veniceopoly.com

VENICEOPOLY IS HERE!! copyright 2025 by Enyaj Pitford

Books Available at Beyond Baroque

Established in 2008 by Peter Carlaftes and Kat Georges, MAINTENANT is a globally recognized annual journal of contemporary Dada writing and art. Published by Three Rooms Press, it serves as a provocative "gallery-in-print," archiving work that challenges social and political norms through the lens of Dadaism.

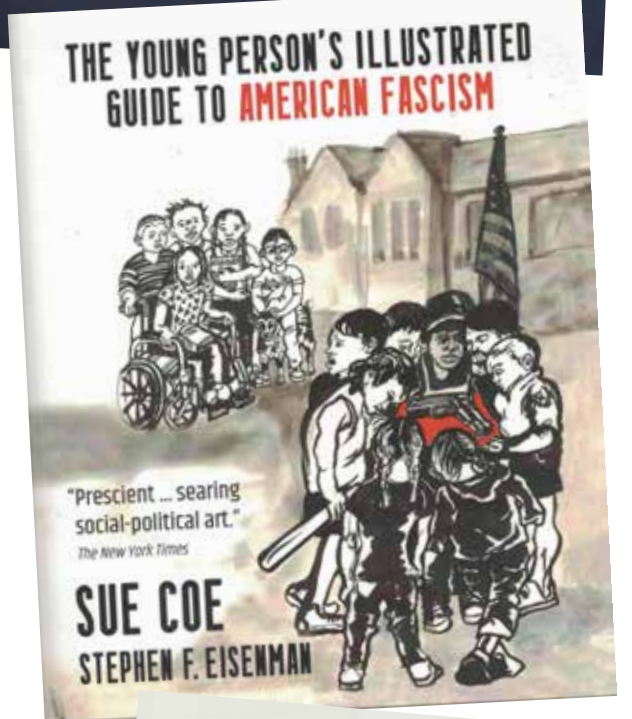
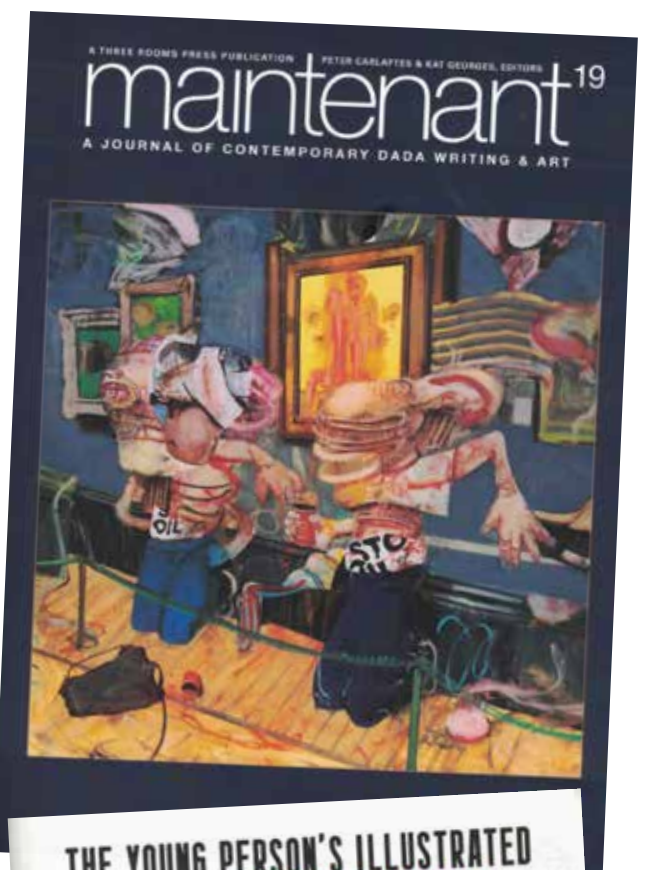
Overview of the Series

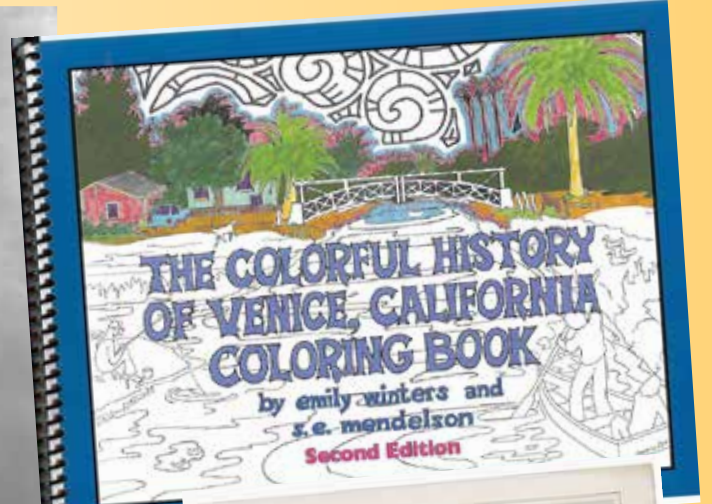
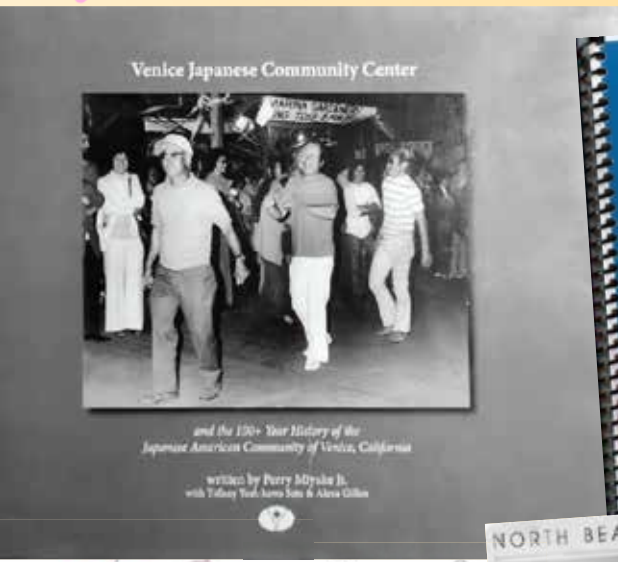
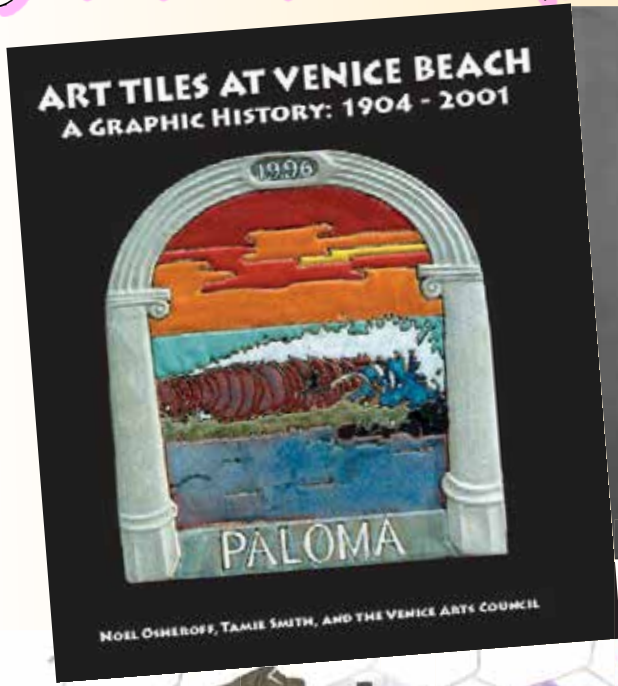
Each issue of MAINTENANT is centered around a timely, disruptive theme. The journal is archived in prestigious institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.

Maintenant 19 (2025): The latest issue explores "Ethics Cleansing," acting as a testament against self-righteousness and the loss of rational thought in a profit-driven world.

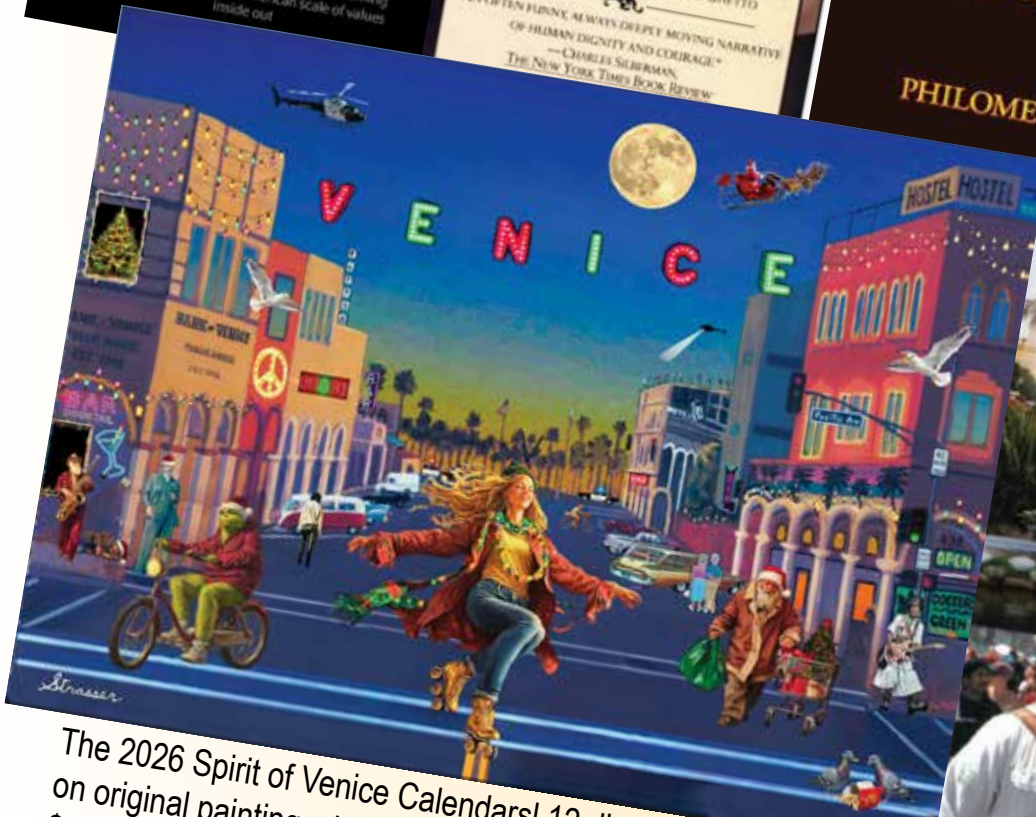
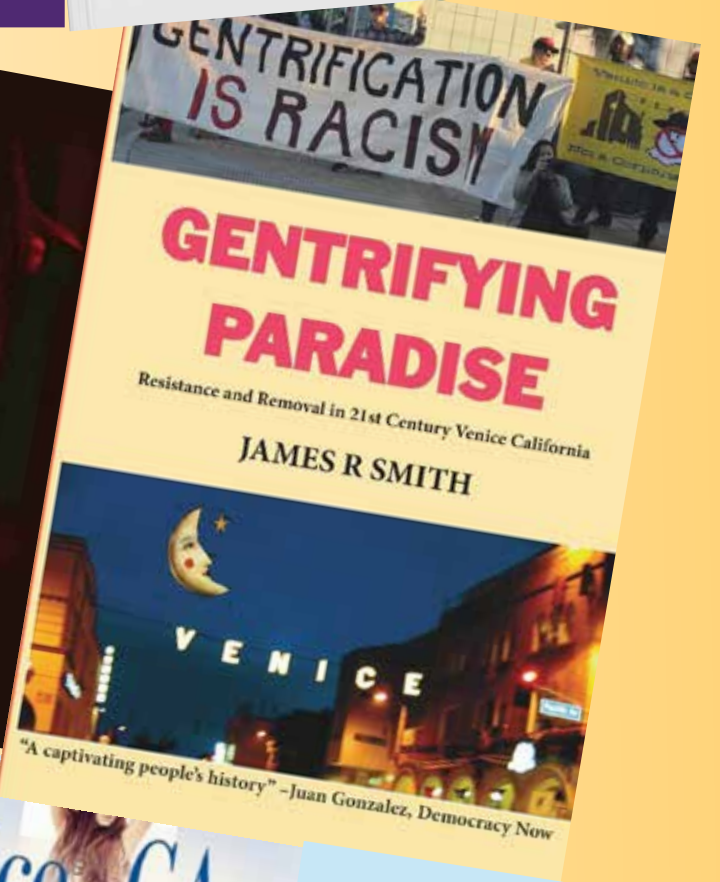
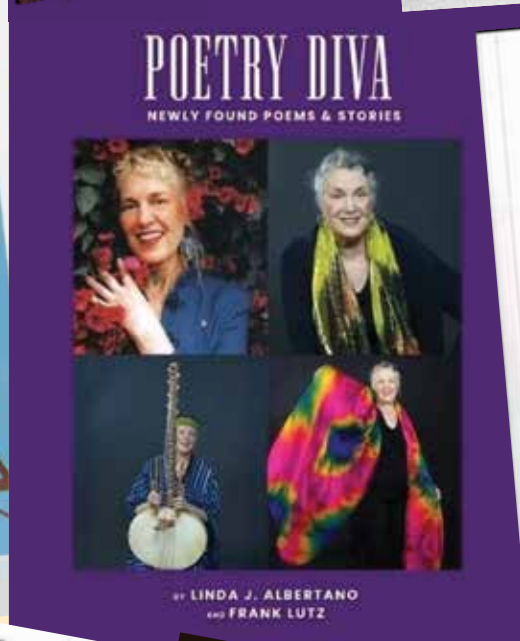
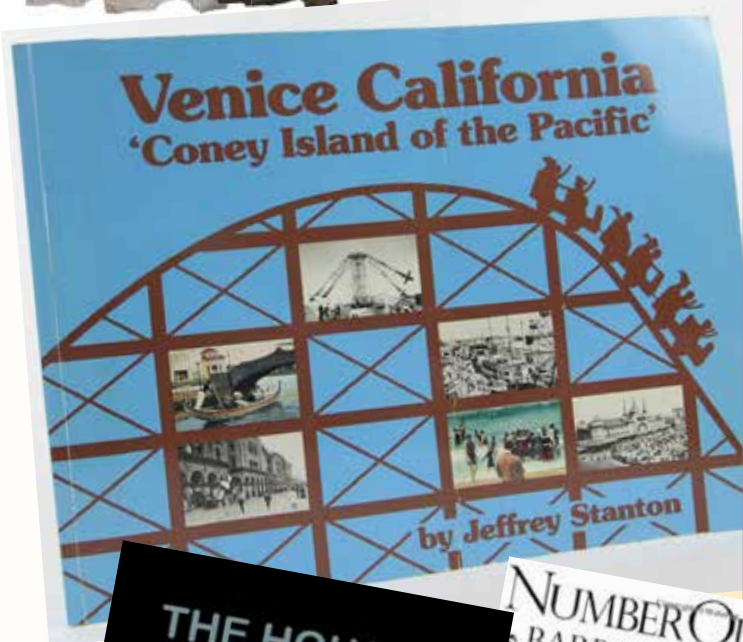
Maintenant 20 (Upcoming): The theme for the next collection is "IMPROPERGANDA," focusing on disinformation, media manipulation, and the global crisis of truth.

Contributors: The series features a diverse range of international talent, including punk legends like Thurston Moore and Mike Watt, and renowned artists like Raymond Pettibon and Mark Kostabi.





for sale at the New Year's Eve Party.



The 2026 Spirit of Venice Calendars! 12 digitally remastered images based on original paintings. Like a yearlong vacation in Venice, CA. \$30 each. 4 for \$100.00. 50 available on a first come, first served basis. Visit frankstrasserfineart.com to place your order. Or contact: artist Frank Strasser with any questions. frankstrasser@gmail.com 310-428-7590.

The Return of the Nightmare on Main Street

The Return of the Nightmare on Main Street

The 200 block of Horizon Avenue in Venice is a special place. It is a narrow, one-way residential street in the historic “Lost Canals” neighborhood, lined with trees, families, dogs, skateboarders, and bicycles. It hosts a monthly open-mic night. It is a place that still has more multi-family homes than million-dollar boxes, and where neighbors know one another. I’ve been fortunate to call it home for over 30 years; longer than most, not as long as some.

Today, that sense of place is under serious threat by a greedy developer. At the western end of Horizon, where it meets Main Street, a developer is proposing a massive mixed-use project at 1410–1422 Main Street. The project would combine three parcels into a single five-story structure containing 19 residential units, four restaurants, office space, and underground parking accessed not from Main Street, but from a 14-foot-wide residential alley called Toledo Court. At its proposed height of over 57’ it would tower over the rest of the area and block the sunlight and ocean breeze from everyone situated in the residential blocks behind it.

This is not the first time this site has been targeted. In 2013, the same developer proposed a four-story, 26-unit project with underground beach parking. That plan was met with overwhelming community opposition and was unanimously denied by the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) and its Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC). (See “The Nightmare on 1414 Main Street”, by Krista Schwimmer, Published in the Beachhead on 1/1/14: <https://bit.ly/1414Main>).

In response, they cut down a major shade tree on the corner and erected an illegal construction fence that has run the length of Main Street from Horizon to Market ever since, effectively taking away the public space that used to exist there. They then used the space for long-term and short-term rentals and used storage containers to create unpermitted office space in what they now claim was a vacant lot behind the fence.

In 2021, the developer returned with a much smaller proposal: three stories, nine residential units, and limited ground-floor commercial space. That version was approved by the VNC on the condition that all vehicle access and loading occur on Main Street — a condition intended to protect the surrounding residential streets and alleys. But that project was never built.

Instead, in 2025, the developer added a new application to their 2021 file — and this one larger than ever. The current proposal more than doubles the size of the previous project, adds four restaurants, exceeds established height, mass and scale limits, and abandons the prior condition requiring Main Street access. All vehicle ingress, egress, trash collection, and deliveries would now occur through Toledo Court, a narrow alley shared daily by residents, children, pets, and emergency vehicles.

It was a dramatic expansion of the project, and they submitted it as an addendum to their old filing so that they could sneak it in under the radar of the neighbors. Since it was not technically a new application it did not appear in the City Planning Department “s Bi-Weekly Case Report. The purpose of this report is to provide the public with the earliest possible information on project applications filed with City Planning.

As someone who lives within 300 feet of the site I was mandated to receive a notice in the mail about their new hearing. I didn’t get one and I “m not the only one. Many of the surrounding neighbors and business owners I spoke to did not receive one either, and most had no idea the City Planning hearing was happening between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Rather than presenting this expanded proposal to

the community, the developer attempted to bypass the local advisory boards completely. Thanks to the diligence of the Venice Neighborhood Council’s Land Use and Planning Committee and its staff, the project was heard — and unanimously denied. More than a dozen neighbors spoke in opposition. Not a single member of the public spoke in support.

The LUPC staff report cited numerous deficiencies, including excessive height and mass, incompatibility with the Venice Specific Plan, lack of required setbacks, consolidation of multiple lots, elimination of usable open space, and the severe impacts of funneling traffic, trash, and deliveries through a residential alley. The report also raised concerns about coastal access and parking scarcity in an area already under intense pressure.

The following day, at the preliminary City Planning hearing, the pattern repeated. Residents again spoke passionately about the project’s impact: insufficient parking, unsafe alley conditions, over-concentration of restaurants and bars, and a complete mismatch with the surrounding neighborhood. Once again, there were no public comments in support.

At the conclusion of that hearing, the City’s hearing officer asked the developer a direct question: would they reconsider the size and scale of the project in light of the unanimous neighborhood opposition? The answer was no. The developer stated they intended to move forward unchanged.

Much of the developer’s justification relies on a selective reading of state parking law AB 2097, claiming entitlement to major density and height increases while simultaneously minimizing parking obligations. Under this interpretation, 28 parking spaces are presented as generous — despite serving nineteen apartments, four restaurants, and additional commercial uses, just two blocks from the beach. The result would be predictable: neighborhood streets turned into overflow parking and residential alleys converted into commercial driveways.

The safety implications are real. Two vehicles passing in a 14-foot alley leave virtually no margin for error. Add delivery trucks, garbage collection, rideshare drop-offs, and restaurant patrons circling for parking, and the alley becomes a bottleneck — one that could delay emergency access when seconds matter.

Venice’s height limits, zoning standards, and coastal protections exist for a reason.

They were adopted to preserve light, air, neighborhood scale, and livability — not to be negotiated away through aggressive interpretations and incomplete applications. Projects that disregard these principles don’t just affect adjacent neighbors; they set precedents that ripple throughout the community.

Venice has always balanced growth with character. This project fails that test.

If you care about protecting neighborhood safety, and the unique fabric of Venice, now is the time to pay attention. Their next hearing is scheduled for Thursday February 26, 2026.

Please join our email list at smallstreetsbighearts@gmail.com to get involved and SAY NO

TO 1410-1422 MAIN. Tell them to go back to the drawing board and come back with a proposal that complies with local law and fits with the character of this historic neighborhood.

Rick Garvey is a Venice resident who lives near the proposed development site.



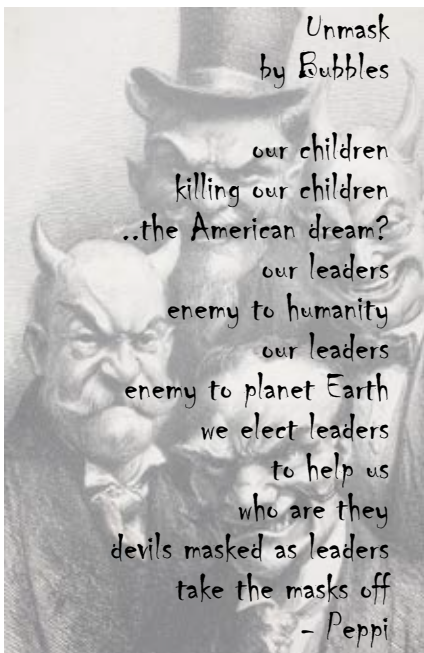
SUNDAYS WELL PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

FRANCISCO LETELIER
I WRITE
ESCRIBO TU NOMBRE
YOUR NAME
A FILM BY BROGAN DE PAOR & JULIE THOMPSON

SUN, Jan 11 - 23rd Venice Film Fest
at Beyond Baroque, 681 Venice Blvd, free.
5:30-BSP funk poetry,
6pm-Suzy Williams & Friends perform Venice-related songs,
7pm- Short Venice films by Jeremy Kagan & Sam Ray Wilson,
7:30- "**FRANCISCO LETELIER - I WRITE YOUR NAME**" (2025, 78
minutes) Compelling portrait of Venice resident, Chilean-American
muralist, poet & art activist Letelier, who has created murals around the
world for over four decades. Francisco's Dad was murdered by Pinochet
in 1976. Documentarians Julie Thompson & Brogan de Paor delve deep
into how art & culture play powerful roles in movements for human rights

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11th ANNUAL CHICAGO AWARDS
August winner Hollywood International Golden Age Festival September 2022
WFAE London International filmmakers festival



Unmask
by Bubbles

our children
killing our children
..the American dream?
our leaders
enemy to humanity
our leaders
enemy to planet Earth
we elect leaders
to help us
who are they
devils masked as leaders
take the masks off
- Peppi



Faizah Malik's campaign focuses on addressing the root causes of the district's rising costs, which are pushing out the artists, small businesses, and working families that make the culture so vibrant. With LA's housing crisis disproportionately affecting working-class families, she is committed to creating a more affordable, more livable Westside, where long-time residents, artisans, and small businesses can continue to thrive.

As a civil rights lawyer, Malik helped lead the effort to secure the most significant expansion of tenant protections in over 40 years, has successfully defended renters against corporate landlord interests, and pushed the City to adopt landmark housing policies. Until she entered the race, she was a lead attorney in a major civil rights lawsuit against the City over the obstruction of the City Council-approved Venice Dell affordable housing project.

LET'S IMPEACH HIM!

A rap song
Donald Trump
is a fat, old grump
on the USA he takes a dump
as he kisses Putin's rump
Let's impeach him!
The Constitution he ignores
as inflation soars
immigrants kicked out our doors
while he screws whores
Let's impeach him!
He's a felon and a crook
breaking every law in the book
we polute every river and brook
he's an insane snook
Let's impeach him!
To immigrants he says go
to abortion he says no
to gays he says go blow
while that smoe steals our dough
Let's impeach him!
No Medicaid, Social Security,
Medicare
for the poor he doesn't care
we better beware
and he has stupid hair
Let's impeach him!
He sucks Putin's dick
and Elon that prick
billionaire's asses he'll lick
everything he does is sick
Let's impeach him!
He plays dirty games
Obama and Biden he blames
he makes crazy claims
while he chases bimbo dames
Let's impeach him!
Greenland a state
Gaza a golf resort he'll make
he's a phony fake
he's a moron for Heaven's sake
Let's impeach him!
Propaganda and lies
freedom of press dies
the world cries
while he eats pizza pies and fries.
Let's impeach him!
Goodbye democracy and freedom
he puts in crooks and scum
everything he says is dumb
that stupid, fat bum
Let's impeach him!
Lies, lies, bullshit
a screaming, screeching dimwit
we got a dictator, damn it
America falls down a pit
Let's impeach him!
If King Trump has his way
the end of our USA
it is taken away every day
let's pray and say nay, no way
Let's impeach him!
-George Moishe Washington

VENICE IS -marty liboff
(sung to, My Kind of Town)
My kind of town
Venice is
My kind of town
Venice is
My kind of people too
People who smile at you
and each time I roam
Venice is
calling me home
Venice is
Why I just grin like a clown
it's my kind of town...
My kind of town
Venice is
My kind of town

Venice is
Billionaires & homeless
cops, drugs & sometimes a mess
Venice is
and the Gingerbread House
& Windward Avenue
Venice is
Where I'm never blue
Venice is
Sexy babes, surfers & skate-
boards
and vendors & tourists by the
hordes
Venice is
One town that won't let you down
It's my kind of town...

MY WINGS

a blues song - (c)marty liboff-

Time goes by
soon I'm gonna die
flappin my wings high
up in the sky.
Sittin on a moon beam
on a cloud dream
playin my harp
in c sharp.
I'm gonna toot a horn
from evening to morn
as angels play
and even all day.
Moan ya sinners the blues
ya gotta pay your dues
dance & sing
let freedom ring.
Sing it in a loud blast
play it fast
sing it low
play it slow.
Gonna join Heaven's band above
a joyful group of love
Jerry Garcia, Bob Marley, Janis Joplin
Jimi Hendrix, Elvis, Jim Morrison.
God is rockin & rollin
with Mozart & Beethoven
singin and getting down
creating the newest sound.
So get up and sing & dance
it's time for love & romance
flappin my wings in the sky
someday when I die.

Her key campaign priorities include:

- Nurturing and preserving the Westside's natural spaces and investing in climate resilience.
- Ensuring that working families and long-time residents can afford to stay in their homes by advocating for tenant protections and affordable housing.
- Pushing for public safety solutions that focus on prevention and care-first responses to crises, not just punishment.
- Protecting civil rights and ensuring that Los Angeles stands firm against any federal government attacks on immigrant communities, workers, and tenants.
- Advocating for community-led rebuilding initiatives affected by the Palisades fire, ensuring that all families—homeowners and renters alike—have access to resources to rebuild.

A PEACE CHANT *marty liboff

March, organize, fight
Speak out, vote, write
Protest and resist with might
Demonstrate, coordinate, unite
Don't back down for what's right
Question, create with clear sight
Stand our ground and be bright
Peace, love and seek the Light...

In the Beginning

by Lydia Ponce

At the RAC offices, comrades from more than a decade ago, Rio, José Lopez, Paula Guadron, Veronica Arellano,

Kwazi Nkrumah, and Caro and moi were there. In count 9-12 people who gathered, shared food, and spent 9 hours at a retreat focusing on solutions to the tenant evictions. We brainstormed in the last couple of hours of our retreat.

Our day-long retreat ended with a brain-storming session, amongst great ideas: a moratorium - a stay, a freeze on rent increases for many reasons. Numero uno as illegal evictions and the pattern and practice was obvious. Class Action Lawsuits were brought up. Everything was all written on a white board... I offered, "tenants' union" inspired by the Venice High School students, VHS, who were rallying for a Student Union. VHS, 2007- 2008: they wanted to have a Student Union and the VHS Admin wouldn't allow it. Btw, the school bathrooms are still closed for the record. Back to the 9 hour mtg, we came up with the name: Resisting Displacement Los Angeles, RDLA.

After considering, upon review of everything written, we had kept the list to the short few ideas... the College and University Students ran with the idea changing the name to the Los Angeles Tenant Union, LATU. The details were birthed by many who had more time. I was busy with my VHS student and I didn't contribute much to the infrastructure.

We did start with meetings at the UTLA Building at Wilshire Blvd & Berendo. Months into organizing meetings - it was obvious the war on

renters via illegal evictions was leading to a displacement crisis. So many tenants did not know their renters' rights. Where do they go for support? Legal Aid LA, Eviction Defense Network and Ya Basta were helping as many as they could. Compounded with capitalists' dreams of short term rentals popping up everywhere! So many lies for business profit.... So many displaced. The criminal landlords had time on their side for quite a few years and they had zero problems displacing seniors, families, students and disabled tenants.

Los Angeles Community needed neighborhood support - neighbors supporting neighbors. We divided into the four directions to create better access for community who needed information including referrals to lawyers.

Mark Lippmann, Jon Wolff and myself were the open hearts Westside and many steady volunteers to support Westside Tenants' Union, now currently named the Westside Local Tenants Union. We organized the meetings at Venice Community Housing Corporation, VCHC. We are forever thankful for VCHC and the support they offered.

Jon Wolff has been the community volunteer WLTU du jour and we are forever grateful for Jon and Mark. Mark has embarked on his successful poet life.

Me? I'm happy to share truth... you'd never know would you? I'm not surprised that you're surprised. Well there it is.... Truth.

Resisting Displacement LA = LATU =

17 to 18 tenant unions across the City of Angels currently. Find your local T.U. and join in....

Westside Local Tenants Union meets every first Wednesday and third Wednesday of every month at Oakwood Park at 6:30PM. Our information can be found at Instagram & Facebook. Or <https://latenantsunion.org/en/>

West Los Rapid Response (WLRR)

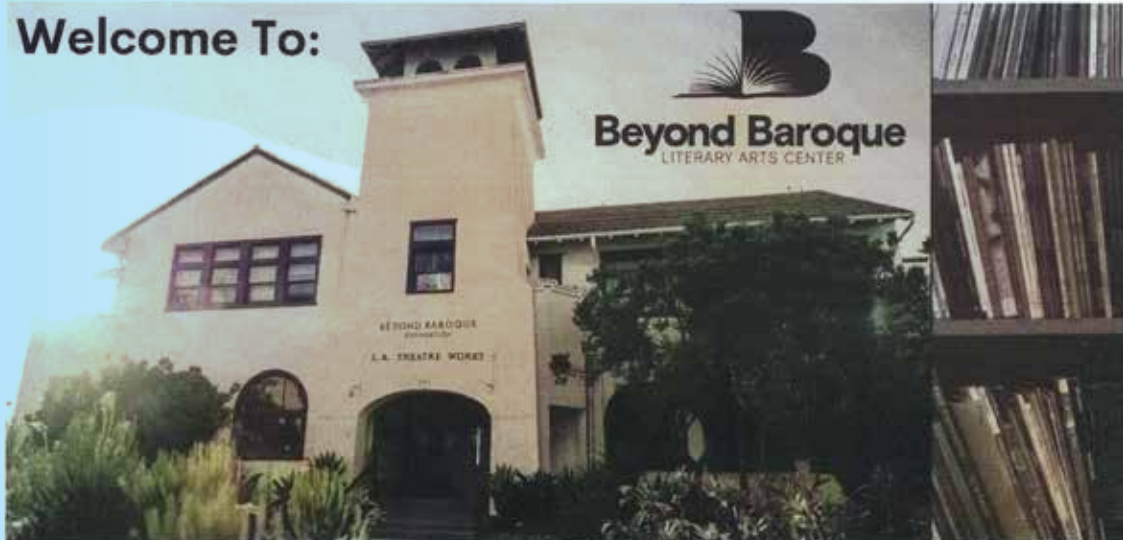
is a grassroots network serving the four corners of the Westside of Los Angeles — Santa Monica, Sotel (Sawtelle), Culver City, and Venice. We are a multi-generational community-based organization with majority youth Oaxacan, Zapoteco, and Indigenous leadership. All our work is volunteer and donation based. West Los Respuesta Rápida operates under the guidance of our community and responds directly to its needs. Since the start of June, we've organized responses to ICE kidnappings in our neighborhoods, conducted outreach and education, supported families who have lost income due to fear of being kidnapped, and provided financial and legal assistance to families whose loved ones have been detained. West Los Respuesta Rápida means a lot to us because we are woven into these communities, many of those being kidnapped are folks we grew up with - our tios, tias, and neighbors.

On June 20, we launched our first despensa and have since consistently raised funds to deliver weekly groceries (in Spanish "despensas") to over 250 families in West LA neighborhoods. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, we are able to bag fresh produce and basic necessities once a week and deliver them straight to their doors.

See ICE?
¿Ves a la migra?



Call Us
LIÁMANOS
Síguenos en Instagram @WestLA.RRN



About Us:

Beyond Baroque is one of the United States' leading independent Literary | Arts Centers and public spaces dedicated to expanding the public's knowledge of poetry, literature and art through cultural events and community interaction.

Quick Facts:

- Our space features:
 - The Scott Wannberg Bookstore
 - The Mike Kelley Gallery
 - The Wanda Coleman Theater
 - The Poets' Garden
- Hosts over 10,000 attendees between our workshops and reading series each year
- Hosts of the Southern California Poetry Festival, the International Poetry Film Festival, and more
- Notable Workshop alum include: Dennis Cooper, Wanda Coleman, Amanda Gorman, Tom Waits, Exene Cervenka, and Amy Gerstler



Terrance Hayes reading in the Wanda Coleman Theater, 2023



Poets meet for the Wednesday Night Poetry Workshop, 1970's

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Prepared & Sent By

Tony Mason

Want to support, rent out our space, or learn more?

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find us on social media @bblitarts

681 Venice Blvd. Venice. CA



Beyond Baroque

Gallery and Bookstore now open
 Tuesday - Thursday, 2:00-6:00 by appointment
 Friday - Saturday, 12:00 - 6:00 open

beyondbaroque.org
East of Western Closing: L.A. Poets Read Charles Bukowski
 Saturday, December 20, 2:00 PM PT
 In Person at Beyond Baroque
 Join us for the closing reception of East of Western curated by Joan Ganny. In tandem with the exhibition's closure, this intergenerational reading of Charles Bukowski's poetry features several poets from across Los Angeles at The Wanda Coleman Theater. The lineup includes: Ingrid M. Calderon, Rhiannon Cielos Chavez, Michael C. Ford, S.A. Griffin, Bill Mohr, Iván Salinas, Laura Sermeño, Paul Vangelisti, jimmy vega, Pam Ward, Charles Harper Webb, and more TBA. de

Wed Dec31 Venice Beachhead New Years Eve Party @Beyond Baroque

6:30PM Gerry Fialka opens with New Year Rant
 7:00 Suzy, Brad, Khalil, and Ginger and guests!?
 8:00 Matt Sedillo curates Poetry
 9:00 The usual outstanding cast of characters cuts up for the new year.



City Phone Numbers

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Police: TDD Service	800-660-4026
City Park Emergencies	323-913-7390
Water & Power / Report a Problem (no immediate danger)*	800-342-5397
Natural Gas Service	800-427-2200
Traffic Signal Outage	213-485-4184
Street Light Repair	3-1-1 (or 213-473-3231)
American Red Cross	310-445-9900
Animal Services	888-452-7381
Building Inspection Request	888-524-2845
Refuse collection	800-773-2489
Sewer & Storm Drain Issues - 3-1-1 (or 213-473-3231)	
Winteren Street Trees / Debris - 3-1-1 (or 213-473-3231)	

For assistance with most other City services, dial 3-1-1 within City limits; or call 213-473-3231 -- from anywhere.

Weekday hours: 7:00 am to 7:00 pm;
 Weekends and holidays: 8:00 am to 4:45 pm.
 Or, visit MyLA 311.

For information about emergency preparedness programs in the City of Los Angeles, contact: LA City Emergency Management Department (EMD)
 Phone: 213-484-4800
 E-mail: emd.emdweb@lacity.org

This Paper is a Poem

Are You Hungry?

Free Food At Venice Beach

(Times and places occasionally change)

- *You Matter- Michael's picnic with friends.** Tue. & Thur. around 11 am. North border of Venice on the Ocean Front Walk near Ozone Ave.
- *Oasis Network Inc.** Dan and pals. Various groceries, bread, fruit, vegetables, etc. Sat. & Sun. around 8 am. Ocean Front Walk by Ozone Ave.
- *St. Joseph Center-** their clients, to-gomeals. Mon. 10-11:50, Tues. & Thurs. 12-2:50. 204 Hampton Dr.. Also weekly food if you register at (310)396-6468 ext.313
- *St. Mark Church Free Food Pantry** Every Saturday from 11am to 1pm 940 Coeur d'Alene Ave, Venice 90291 (entrance Garfield Av) Vegetables, fruits and other food items. No registration needed. Drive-thru and walk-in options. Call St. Mark Parish at 310-821-5058 or email us at loavesandfishes@stmarkvenice.com
- *Venice Family Clinic** - Free bag of fruits and vegetables. Every 3rd Wed. of the month. 10 AM to 12 PM. 589 Rose Ct.
- * Community Corp Veggie Giveaway Weekly** 3pm to 5pm on Wednesday 2033 Virginia Ave, Santa Monica, CA 90404, USA

* BAR Center at the Beach *

201 Ocean Front Walk
 Senior Schedule

- *LUNCH for seniors (60+years old)
- *Monday thru Friday-12 PM
- FREE SENIOR CLASSES – Over 55 years old
- Mondays**
- 10 AM Dance class with Zhanna
- 11 AM Rummikub game
- 1:45 PM Arthritis Exercise with Kathrin
- Wednesdays**
- 10 AM Shakti Naam Yoga with Allyn
- 11 AM Rummikub game
- 12:40 PM BINGO!
- 1:30 PM Arthritis Exercise with Shifra
- Thursdays**
- 10 AM Fall Prevention Exercise with Kathrin
- 11 AM Fall Risk Assesment with Kathrin
- Fridays**
- 10 AM Fit & Fun in Motion with Shifra
- 11:15 Shabbat Celebration with Shifra
- * Every 1st
- Friday of the month at 12:00 PM- Klezmer music with Gustavo, Freddy, Andrew, Marty.
- Marty's Movie Matinee once a month.
- Arts and Culture Club with Sheryl- alternate Mondays.
- + Plus Special Events and Parties Every Month!
- Additional classes available on ZOOM...

Live Music

The Trip Bar

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<https://www.tripsantamonica.com/calendar>

Unurban Cafe

3301 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica
 Open Mic Fridays 7:00
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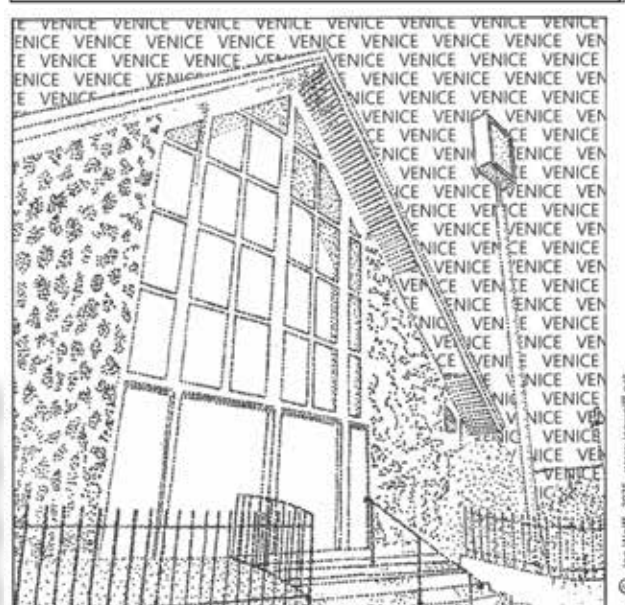
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The Smashing of the Benches

By Greta Cobar

Two individuals with face masks, hoods and Security vests damaged the bench by the Sidewalk Cafe on Ocean Front Walk (OFW) and Horizon during the night of November 20 to 21. “Coincidentally,” the usual Friday OFW cleanup by Recreation and Parks (RAP) took place the next morning, on November 21, and the workers swiftly removed the bench at 9am.

“The Horizon bench was vandalized by the individuals in the picture. They are not city employees and no order was given to remove the bench in the manner they attempted,” according to an email sent to the Venice Arts Council on November 26 by Adan Pulido, Senior Director of RAP. The picture was captured from the live feed camera of the Venice V Hotel.

Two dollies can be seen in the foreground of the photograph, as well as a sledge hammer that is propped under the bench in what looks like an effort to remove the bench. Overall, the picture gives the impression of a pre-meditated act being executed according to a plan. The scene does not resemble typical acts of vandalism, which tend to be random and performed with anger, disarray and far less equipment.

The bench was one of 11 installed on OFW in 2000 as part of the Venice OFW Refurbishment Plan ahead of Los Angeles hosting the Democratic National Convention, and it is the third bench to have been removed by RAP since 2016. The other two benches that were removed were located at Breeze and Dudley. The bench that was originally placed on OFW and Wavcrest was moved to the end of Windward, by the “Declaration” V artwork by Mark di Suvero “due to concern from LAPD about nefarious activities,” according to Sonya Young-Jimenez, RAP Superintendent.

Each of the 11 benches housed two hand-made tiles depicting scenes from the history of Venice, chronicled in the book “Art Tiles at Venice Beach - A Graphic History: 1904-2001” by Noel Osherhoff, Tamie Smith and the Venice Arts Council. The two tiles on the bench that was recently removed, at Horizon, survived the “vandalism” as well as the removal of the bench by RAP city workers. Numerous inquiries about the whereabouts of the four tiles that were on the two benches previously removed have not been answered by RAP representatives.



Bench at OFW and Horizon being “vandalized”

In 2016 RAP did replace five broken benches. Tiles were removed from the broken benches and placed on the new benches in collaboration with the Venice Arts Council. Because one of the tiles was broken, another one was created. The same thing needs to happen again with the current three missing benches and in the future with any benches that are broken or damaged.

“At one time there were sixty of them. Sixty sturdy benches like duennas at a cotillion offering aid and comfort, or just to enjoy the day. Every spring, the benches would be painted, and broken slats would be replaced,” wrote Carol Fondiller in an article titled “The Case of the Disappearing Benches,” published in the Beachhead, October 1983.



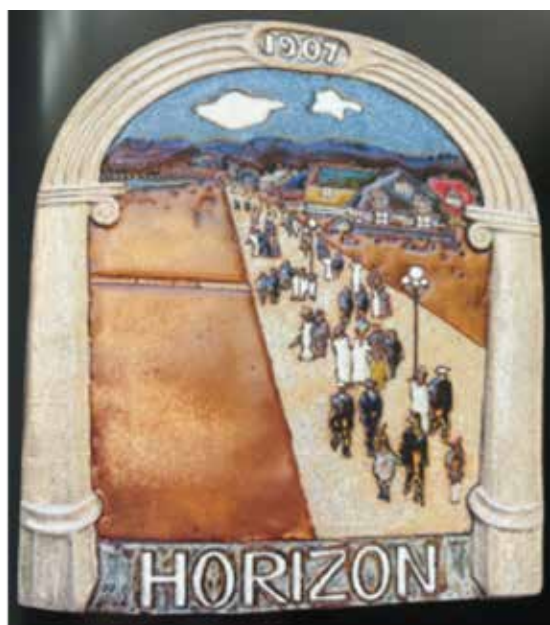
Above: Benches lining OFW in front of the old Synagogue at OFW and Park



Above: Latest victim of getting fenced in, pagodas at OFW and Park
Below: Pagodas remodeled in 2000 with reduced, cemented seating



Right: Section of The Endangered Species Mural by Emily Winters



Above: Tile from the bench removed from OFW and Horizon depicting OFW in 1907 Design: Tamie Smith

“There are no plans at this time to replace any of the missing benches,” according to a January 17, 2025 email sent by Darryl Ford, Management Analyst for the Planning and Development division of RAP, when asked about replacing the two benches that had already been removed at that time. “We need to find money to replace the benches,” wrote Sonya Young-Jimenez in December in a follow-up to Ford’s email.

It’s not the benches that have proven to be undesirable, but the people sitting on them instead. This is part of a trend that started with the fencing of the pagodas at Dudley several years ago, continued with the fencing of the pagodas at Park a few months ago, and the removal of the bench at Horizon a few weeks ago. Although seating areas can be annihilated, people cannot be eliminated.

Don’t for a minute believe that the city doesn’t have enough money for benches or other public art projects. It just spent \$3.5 million to install the new bollards on OFW without accounting for the fact that there is sand at the beach. The sand got into the mechanism that makes the bollards go up and down, in order for only emergency vehicles to be able to get through, and they have officially been deemed useless.



Bollards out of order, OFW and Rose

At the June 2025 meeting of the OFW Committee of the VNC city officials announced that the bollards don’t work, that they are a money pit, and that they would be replaced with meridian barricades and “theme gates.” Silva announced at the September 2025 OFW Committee of the VNC meeting that the new gates and meridian structures are now permanent.

Besides being a huge eye-sore, the gate that was installed at OFW and Rose creates a major safety hazard by reducing the passageway to three feet. It has produced a bottle neck congestion with pedestrians, bicycles, skateboards, electric bicycles and scooters, strollers and wheel chairs colliding head-on, as there is space for only one of any of the above to pass through at any one time.



Cumbersome gate, OFW and Rose

During the bollard installation project, the L.A. Construction and Engineering Department set up the construction site on OFW and Park, right in front of Emily Winter’s (Co-Founder, Chair Emeritus of the Venice Arts Council) Endangered Species (1990) mural, which caused extensive damage to the artwork. “The department never lived up to their offer to pay for repairs. Emily was told to apply to the City’s Department of Cultural Affairs for a grant to restore the mural. She did and the grant was denied,” according to Suzanne Thompson, Chair of the Venice Arts Council.

Ironically, the endangered species that Winters’ currently graffiti-covered mural illustrates includes the folks sitting on OFW benches.

