The TB “Outbreak” in Skid Row – the Reality and the Hype
WRITTEN BY KARL SCOTT AND GENERAL DOGON

In early March, the media reported that the Los Angeles County Department of Health was looking for 4,500 people who had been exposed to a special tuberculosis strain that was unique to Skid Row - stating that approximately 78 cases have been identified and treated, with 11 deaths (none since 2011).

This media hype had many up in arms – with myths and misinformation driving the media coverage and residents left with no information about the severity of the risks to their health. Beyond the misinformation about the impacts of the actual TB strain in Skid Row, the media also linked TB to the efforts by the City of Los Angeles to appeal a federal decision that protects homeless residents’ personal property.

So, if you’ve just arrived downtown, read any newspaper stories, or watch local and national television, you’d be led to believe there was a major epidemic of TB in Skid Row. You might also think that by just walking past homeless people and their property you are at grave risk of catching this new strain of TB. Neither are true.

The media reports sent waves of panic throughout Downtown and Skid Row - sparking great concern, especially amongst homeless residents. Because officials didn’t release any information to impacted residents before or just after the media reports, folks were left to get information from less than accurate sources. Members of LA CAN took it upon themselves to contact the Los Angeles County Public Health Department and demanded that someone from their office meet with Skid Row residents to inform the community about the facts and provide answers to resident concerns.

Cristin Mondy and others from the LA County Department of Public Health agreed to meet with Skid Row residents at the James Woods Community Center where they gave a presentation on TB - debunking a lot of current myths about how TB is contracted and spread and sharing other valuable facts. They reported that the TB situation in Skid Row is nothing new, that “outbreak” is a public health term and shouldn’t cause panic, what the symptoms of TB are and how it is spread, and how to prevent TB.

Pre-Trial Hearings Continue in the Unjust Case Against Deborah Burton
LAPD and City Attorney Continue to Attack Anyone Who Questions Their Unjust Actions and Policies
WRITTEN BY ERIC ARES

Long-time Skid Row resident and community leader Deborah Burton has been unjustly charged with three counts of assault by any means of force likely to produce bodily injury. Deborah is alleged to have committed “as an act of resistance” on the LA City Attorney’s offices and the LA City Attorney’s office meet with Skid Row residents to inform them of facts and provide answers to resident concerns.

61-year old Skid Row resident, community leader and grandmother Deborah Burton, who is being targeted by LAPD and the LA City Attorney, continue to be charged for her actions during a legal protest in April 2011. Unfortunately, the charges have less to do with her actions and more to do with Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) policing and the targeting of anyone who speaks out against the campaign of LAPD to criminalize poor and homeless, largely black and brown residents of Skid Row - with the downtown business community and the LA City Attorney’s office doing their part to support this effort.

In 2011, LA CAN and partners began protesting the Central City East Association’s (CCEA) “Skid Row Walk” because it was a tool to promote SCI and a public relations opportunity for the business community to demonstrate all the ways in which they were “cleaning up” Skid Row. Not to men-

Tenants in South LA Achieve Victory for the Human Right to Housing!
WRITTEN BY THELMA PÉREZ

On March 7, LA Human Right to Housing Collective’s Flower Area & Rent Control Committees succeeded in thwarting the plans of local student housing developer to demolish 2913 S. Flower, a 33 unit, affordable and rent controlled building located next to the Expo Line.

Longtime members of the Collective, the tenants of 2913 have a long history of resisting the intensifying pressure to abandon their homes brought on by the rapid gentrification of the area, including the USC Master Plan, the coming of the Expo Line and other redevelopment projects surrounding their building.

The building had been a coveted site for student housing developer, Symphony Development, who had hoped to get the tenants out quickly and quietly so they could demolish and erect a new, five story, student only luxury housing project similar to the one they constructed several years ago at 27th Place & Figueroa.

Continued on page 4
Housing Watch

WRITTEN BY STEVE DIAZ AND THELMY PEREZ

Travellers Hotel

Last month a community postcard campaign was started to show support for a receiver being appointed to oversee the day to day operations of the Travellers Hotel. A receiver is independent management that can be appointed to oversee the operation of a property when the owner is not in compliance with legal obligations.

According to LA’s nuisance ordinance, the City should have looked into this possibility before June 2012, when it moved to revoke the land use permissions of the hotel. The postcard campaign is geared at showing community support for a receiver taking over the building. A receiver would ensure the tenants of the building benefit by having a more accountable group in charge of the building that could make the needed corrections and repairs, and tenants would no longer be facing the possibility of forced displacement.

If you haven’t signed a postcard or haven’t signed the flyers posted in the Lincoln and Rossmore Hotels, please do so! To get more involved in tenant organizing in and around the Travellers Hotel, contact Steve at LA CAN.

Pueblo Del Rio

The tenants at Pueblo Del Rio recently achieved a victory in their fight for better public lighting throughout the whole community. Residents began experiencing problems when the Housing Authority began changing its lighting system. The map used to identify what locations would receive new flood lights left out some key areas, which were then left in totally in the dark.

LA CAN’s Pueblo Del Rio tenant committee members acted quickly and began advocating and organizing to bring attention to this issue. At the beginning of March, the committee hosted a Housing Authority representative Sanford Riggs to discuss the problem with him and demand decent lighting for all parts of the community. They also filed complaints directly with management staff and at community meetings. And the work paid off. The areas of concern now have appropriate lighting - which increases public safety and brings peace of mind to the residents.

This small victory is part of the tenant committee’s longer term goals to preserve and improve community health in Pueblo del Rio, and work with other public housing communities in the LA Human Right to Housing Collective to prioritize and improve public housing throughout the City.

LA Human Right to Housing Collective

Over the last several months, we have reported on the Housing Collective’s work on a class action lawsuit over the high trash collection fees in public housing communities. If successful, the lawsuit would have a significant impact in the financial stability of roughly 6,500 households, saving those households an average of $30 per month. Additionally, if successful, the lawsuit would grant tenants a lump sum payment for a portion of unjust fees paid in past years.

The lawsuit has been chugging along slowly but steadily, reaching a milestone in January when “class” status was granted to ALL public housing tenants. At the end of March, all public housing tenants should have received a notice of the Class Action in the mail. The Collective encourages all members of the Class (current and some former PH tenants) to stay in the class. This does NOT require any action on the part of tenants at this time - no response to the notice is needed.

If you currently live in public housing, recently moved out of public housing, or know current or former public housing tenants, it is important that you obtain the correct information about the lawsuit. For more information, please contact Thelmy from the Collective at 818-835-1091 or lahumanrighttohousing@gmail.com.
Police Harassment on Main Street Continues to Increase, Residents Demand Meeting with Chief Beck

WRITTEN BY ERIC ARES

On Tuesday, April 2, two LA CAN members were arrested on Main Street while legally observing a group of LAPD officers. The two, along with a group of other neighborhood residents, were standing on the sidewalk talking when they noticed a squad car approach at a high rate of speed and stop a few buildings from where they stood.

Multiple Witnesses reported that two male officers exited their vehicle and threw two Black females against the wall. One officer took one of the females between two buildings - out of the sight of the general public. Shortly thereafter he aggressively slammed her to the ground in full view of residents and LA CAN members who were rightly outraged.

LA CAN members were on hand to video and document the altercation. And when the officers decided they did not like that, they arrested two of our members.

Of course, this type of biased and violent policing has only increased since the Safer Cities Initiative was implemented in 2006. Long-term, low-income residents who have stood up against represssion have been met with retaliation and constant harassment.

But it is also important to note that over the last few weeks there has been a particularly high increase in LAPD presence and hostile policing on Main Street in Downtown - as evidenced by the incident that prompted the arrest of police monitors.

This is why a large delegation of Skid Row residents attended the LA Police Commission on the morning of April 9 - to demand that Chief Beck look into the cases pending against LA CAN organizer Deborah Burton (from a separate incident, see page 8) and LA CAN member Colonel Dwayne, take action to reverse this trend of arresting, and that he hold a town hall meeting with the Skid Row community to address these and other issues.

“This commission along with the LAPD has continued to turn a blind eye to the concerns and appeals by the residents of Skid Row,” said Bilal Ali, one of the members arrested the night of April 2. “We the residents see the Safer Cities Initiative as a sham, we see the so-called Safer Cities Initiative as a racist, reactionary and irrational policy that only furthers the criminalization of the homeless and poor in the Skid Row community.”

LA CAN will not sit back and allow LAPD to intimidate and attack our community. LAPD will be held accountable for their actions and policies, but only if the people demand it.

The Dirty Divide in Downtown Los Angeles

WRITTEN BY BECKY DENNISON

On April 11, LA CAN released The Dirty Divide, a participatory research project that highlights the continued lack of public health infrastructure for poor residents residing in Downtown Los Angeles, with a particular focus on trash services and restrooms. It also documents a growing divide between the “new Downtown” and Skid Row communities, with new Downtowners continuing to see an influx in resources and services of all kinds and Skid Row seeing resources and services continually cut or threatened. The gentrification of Downtown Los Angeles impacts far more than trash and restroom access and associated public health disparities, but The Dirty Divide provides a snapshot of the inequities that exist in the City’s center.

In order to respond to the human rights violations outlined in this report and begin to ensure public health equity, The Dirty Divide’s recommendations include: 1) Shift current political and governmental priorities and resources from criminalization to housing; 2) Place adequate numbers of trash receptacles in Skid Row and establish frequent trash collection; 3) Increase access to restrooms; and 4) Develop a community health council to address issues for the long-term.

To download and read The Dirty Divide, visit cangress.org. To get involved, come to LA CAN Civil Rights Meetings Mondays at 1pm.

Stop LAPD Spying Coalition Releases People’s Audit on LAPD Spying Program

WRITTEN BY HAMID KHAN

The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition released its People’s Audit of LAPD’s Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) program on Tuesday, March 19. Starting with the release of the audit at a press conference, the coalition went on to present the People’s Audit at the Police Commission meeting.

The People’s Audit is intended to present the limited information about the SAR program that is available to date, highlight the lack of information available to the public, and reflect LA residents’ viewpoints on these unjust policies that are broadly enforced under the pretext of national security. Substantiated by independent research and analysis by Political Research Associates and the National Academy of Sciences, a US Senate report on Fusion Centers, community focus groups, forums and townhalls, and surveys by Angelenos, the People’s Audit reveals that LAPD Special Order (SO) 1 and IWATCH program are flawed in their basic premise – criminalization of innocent behavior, dissemination of fear and suspicion, the facilitation of racial and religious profiling, and waste of precious public resources.

Key concerns that are highlighted in the People’s Audit are:

False Positives: There is a very high potential of SARs leading to falsely identifying individuals as potential criminals who are merely engaging in innocent activity.

Eroding Constitutional Protections: By watering down standard of proof to initiate contact and investigate through the use of completely vague and overbroad language of “reasonable indication,” there is deep concern of re-configuring policing as we know it.

continued on page 8
El brote de TB en Skid Row

ESCRITO POR KARL SCOTT Y GENERAL DOGON

A principios de marzo, los medios reportaron que el Departamento de salud de Los Ángeles buscaba a 4,500 personas que habían estado expuestas a un tipo especial de tuberculosis que era único a Skid Row - declarando que aproximadamente 78 casos habían sido identificados y tratados, con 11 muertes (ninguna desde el 2011).

Este tipo de exageración de los medios tuvo a muchos en pie de guerra - con mitos y desinformación llevando a la cumbre de los medios y los residentes dejan mal informados respecto a la severidad de los riesgos a su salud. Mas allá de la mala información sobre los impactos a la salud del tipo de TB actual en Skid Row, los medios también se volcaron a la TB en los esfuerzos de la ciudad de Los Ángeles a apelar una decisión federal que protege la propiedad personal de los desamparados.

Así que si usted acaba de llegar al Centro, lee algunas historias de los periódicos o mira la televisión local o nacional, estaría llevado a creer que hubo una gran epi-

demia de TB en Skid Row. También podría pensar que tan solo pasar por el lado de personas desamparadas y sus propiedades, estar expuesto a grave riesgo de contraer este nuevo tipo de TB. Nada era cierto.

Los reportajes de los medios enviaron oleadas de pánico a través del Centro y Skid Row: desatando gran preocupación, especialmente entre los residentes desamparados. Y a pesar de los oficiales no dieron información alguna a los residentes impactados antes o luego de los reportajes de los medios, la gente quedó teniendo que buscar información de fuentes menos acreditables. Los miembros de LA CAN tomaron la iniciativa de ponerse en contacto con el Departamento de Salud del Condado de Los Ángeles, y exigieron que alguien de su oficina se reunion con los residentes de Skid Row para informar a la comunidad acerca de los hechos y prover respuestas a las preocupaciones de los residentes.

El mito más grande que el Departamento de Salud aclaró fue el que uno no puede contraer la TB por estar en contacto con la propiedad de una persona desamparada, o pasar a alguien en la calle. Hay un mayor riesgo de contraer la TB en una de las misiones que en la calle. Sin embargo, esto no ha sido explícito alguna a los residentes de Skid Row para informar a la comunidad acerca de los hechos y proveer respuestas a las preocupaciones de los residentes.

Cristin Mondy y otros del Departamento de Salud del Condado de Los Ángeles acudieron a reunirse con residentes de Skid Row en el centro comunitario James Woods donde hicieron una presentación para aclarar los mitos al corriente acerca de como se transmite y se desplaza la TB y compartieron los otros factores importantes. Repitieron que la situación de TB en Skid Row no es nada nuevo, que el "brote" es un término de salud pública y no debería causar pánico, que el tuberculoso no transmita, y como hacerse la prueba. Desde que hubo la junta con los oficiales de salud, han habido otras juntas con la comunidad acerca de cualquier posible riesgo y medios para proteger su salud.

"Pienso que la junta fue una decisión excelente porque la comunidad necesitaba estar debidamente informada acerca de un asunto de salud tan importante ya que hay tanto gente, residentes y no residentes que estaban mal informados en cuanto a esto," dijo Jazz, un residente de Skid Row.

Continúa en la página 11

INFORMATION ABOUT TB

For People Working or Living in Downtown Los Angeles and the Skid Row Area

From the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. If untreated, TB disease can be fatal. There are two forms of TB: latent TB infection and active TB disease. People with latent TB infection don’t feel sick, don’t have symptoms, and can’t spread TB bacteria to others. People with latent TB infection can go on to develop TB disease if they don’t take preventive therapy. People with active TB disease feel sick, have signs and symptoms, and may spread TB bacteria to others. People who think they were exposed to someone with active TB disease should contact their healthcare provider or the local health department to see if testing is needed.

How is TB spread?

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. You can only get infected by breathing in TB germs that a person coughs into the air. TB bacteria are put into the air when a person with active TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. You cannot get TB from contact with clothing, drinking glasses, eating utensils, handshakes, or contact with surfaces. Transmission of TB is usually associated with prolonged or frequent close contact with a person with active TB disease.

Should the public be concerned?

No, the general public should not be overly concerned. The public needs to know that there is no immediate danger to their health related to the current situation. TB is spread from person to person through the air, and usually requires prolonged, close contact. You cannot get TB from contact with clothing, drinking glasses, eating utensils, handshakes, contact with surfaces, or passing someone on the street.

Tuba story on March 11 that included a picture of a homeless person’s property - implying that this is the source of TB and putting more fear into the minds of people.

Public Health officials also confirmed that LAPD officers should NOT wear masks in the community, as the LA Times reported that they were directed to do. LAPD Captain Horace Frank of Central Division was asked by the LA Times who within Department was alerting officers to wear protective masks. He refused to comment.

Public Health representatives reported that they did not release the information about their intensified TB activities to the media. So the million dollar question remains, who did and why they falsify and distribute information that would cause fear inside and outside the community?

LA CAN does not believe that it was coincident that the very same week of the media coverage on the “outbreak,” the City of Los Angeles appealed the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision that protects homeless residents’ property rights to the Supreme Court. LAPD and the City Attorney have been strategizing for more than a year to establish that homeless people are somehow second-class citizens and simply don’t have constitutional rights to property. Linking property to public health issues has been a strategy used continually through the multiple appeals to overturn the initial decision. City Attorney Carmen Trutanich even when so far as to say that “the current out-break of tuberculosis among the most vulnerable population should serve as a stern reminder to all who and what is at risk.” (LA Times 2/28/13).

Basically, they were trying to tie the tuberculosis panic to the homeless property to support their multiple court challenges. Again, TB CANNOT be contracted through property - clean or dirty. Public health isues facing Skid Row are real and urgent - but they should not be distorted or unfairly linked to efforts to eliminate basic civil rights of residents.
Homeless Bill of Rights Continues To Build Momentum

WRITTEN BY PAUL BODEN

On April 23, 2013, Assembly Bill 5 (AB 5), also known as the Homeless Person’s Bill of Rights and Fairness Act, will be heard by the California State Assembly Judiciary Committee. This comes on the heels of months of organizing by a growing statewide coalition led by the Western Regional Advocacy Project.

AB 5, introduced by Assemblymember Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco), would guarantee homeless people freedom from discrimination by protecting homeless people from unlawful laws infringe on poor people’s ability to exist in public space, to acquire housing, employment, and basic services, and to equal protection under the law. The California Homeless Bill of Rights is a response that can help alleviate poverty and homelessness by protecting homeless people from discrimination and ensuring their right to privacy and to their personal property. This is not about special rights - this is about equal rights.

Last year, Rhode Island became the first state to pass a statewide homeless person’s Bill of Rights. Building off of the community organizing that led to this success, poor people’s organizations around the country have been working on similar bills. California and Oregon, for example, are fully engaged in campaigns to see homeless bills of rights passed in their respective states.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, some Downtown LA business groups are opposed to AB 5. The Downtown LA Historic Core BID, for example, is opposed to the bill on grounds that it would negatively affect "the ability of BID security to engage and encourage people to move off the streets, and to initiate private person’s arrests in cases when necessary to promote a safer and healthier community for everyone.” The group is also opposed on grounds that “the public right-of-way is meant to be enjoyed by all, without being subject to intimidation, confrontation or a lack of sanitary conditions.”

These statements are ironic at best and totally misinformed at worst since the entire point of AB 5 is to “promote a safer and healthier community for everyone.” Moreover, AB 5 would create 24-hour Hygiene Centers - which would address any concerns around “sanitary conditions.” And, let us not forget, the Green Shirts (and Red Shirts, Yellow Shirts, and Purple Shirts) have NO right to move any one off any street.

The Central City East Association’s (CCEA) opposition letter to the bill goes so far as to say that “AB 5 is not a measure of protection for the homeless” and that it would “seriously infringe on the life-sustaining activities of others in our district.” What about the life-sustaining activities of those without homes who are harassed daily by LAPD and have their personal property illegally confiscated by the CCEA? Should not their rights be protected from being infringed upon?

Obviously the CCEA and Historic Core BID are not interested in protecting or respecting the rights of homeless individuals. If so, they would be in support of AB 5, a bill that does not call for special rights, just equal rights - for those who are most vulnerable and who see their livelihoods criminalized on a daily basis.

To learn more or get involved, visit the Western Regional Advocacy Project website: wraphome.org.
Tenants in South LA Achieve Victory for the Human Right to Housing!

Late last summer, Symphony began sending their representatives to the building to gauge the tenants’ willingness to accept relocation money in exchange for signing a letter of support for their project - support which the Collective (through a Public Records Act request) learned was suggested by Councilmember Jan Perry’s office.

The tenants, however, organized their resistance effort quickly - immediately calling on elected officials and the public in an open letter demanding the right to housing and the right to participate in the development plans threatening their community. In the subsequent months, they would meet face to face with Symphony’s CEO, Ted Snyder, and their Councilmember, Jan Perry, with the same message: “We will fight until the end for our homes.”

In that face to face meeting with Perry in February, the tenants were surprised and pleased by Perry’s willingness publicly to support their effort to preserve their building along with all of Los Angeles’ affordable and rent controlled housing.

A press conference was planned and carried out on March 7 - with Perry on hand, stating, “I’m glad to stand here with the residents of 2-9-1-3 South Flower, and to call for the preservation of rent controlled housing.”

Even though the Collective was unable to lock down a date for the press conference with Perry before the primary election, the tenants felt that her participation in this effort is an example of the important role that our elected officials play in defending the rights and the livelihood of tenants across the City.

Without a doubt, Symphony counted on the support of the 9th District office to carry forth their plan. Instead, by insisting on the support of their councilmember, the tenants demonstrated that the will of the people can and should be enforced by those who we elect to represent us. Hours after the press conference, Symphony representatives informed the media that they were “no longer interested in the property.”

“Today’s victory was a symbolic one,” said Nohemi Armendariz, tenant leader of 2913 S. Flower Street. “But our struggle is far from over. Today we call on our next mayor, and on all of our elected officials to: 1) preserve and expand ALL of LA’s affordable and rent controlled housing; and 2) to reform and expand the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) in order to serve and protect LA’s most vulnerable residents.”

Indeed, the struggle is far from over. The 2913 S. Flower Street tenants are just a few of the thousands of low-income residents across the city who are at risk of losing their homes. However, this small but powerful group of tenants are an example of what can be accomplished when tenants come together and fight for their homes.

“We are going to demand more from our mayor and from all of our elected officials,” concluded Armendariz. “As residents of Los Angeles, as the tenant majority, we must demand the human right to housing”

Pre-Trial Hearings Continue in the Unjust Case Against Deborah Burton

Public records show that leading up to the June protest, and in the interim months until the charges were filed, the CCEA and the LAPD actively lobbied the City Attorney to criminally charge LA CAN members involved in the monthly “Skid Row Walk” protest.

Records show that immediately after the LA CAN protests began, the CCEA, LAPD, and the City Attorney’s office started coordinating and strategizing on ways to stop opposition to the walk. In fact, emails obtained through a Public Records Act request show how CCEA was trying to use LAPD and the City Attorney to criminalize first amendment rights.

In one email, sent after the second protest of the Walk, CCEA Estela Lopez assures other business leaders that the City Attorney informed her that “they would explore all legal options to protect us and allow us to conduct our walk without interference from LA CAN.”

But in an email by Lopez to the same group of colleagues on June 1, 2011 - the same date as the alleged assault - she states that the group “completed our walk as planned” and never mentions being assaulted or injured by Burton or anyone else.

In another email, sent in July 2011 from LAPD Lieutenant Paulson – at that time the officer in charge of the Safer Cities Initiative – asks the City Attorney about how to improve her reports for City Attorney filings related to arrests at the public safety walk because “this is going to be an ongoing problem until it gets too costly for them.” And after a series of many emails between Paulson and the City Attorney regarding this same protest and after months of advocacy to ensure arrests and charges were made against LA CAN members, she tells prosecutors, “As I have stated many times before, I place the full resources of my 50-officer task force at the disposal of your office should any leg work or additional effort be necessary to find some legal, prosecutorial remedy to this [Skid Row Walk protests].”

As the aforementioned emails demonstrate, this case is not about the use of an air horn at a legal protest. This is about the coordinated effort between the LAPD, the City Attorney, and the downtown business community to attack and squash political dissent in order to silence anyone who resists the gentrification of downtown and the biased policing and criminalization used to help facilitate the banishment of poor and homeless residents.

LA CAN is now demanding that the City Attorney drop the charges against Deborah Burton. And the community and supporters from across the country are standing by her side - submitting letters and videos of support. The battle is far from over - but it appears that the community will not rest until Deborah is freed of all charges.
Los inquilinos del Sur de Los Ángeles ganan victoria para el derecho humano a la vivienda

ESCRITO POR THELMY PEREZ

El 7 de marzo, los comités de control de renta del área de Flower, tuvieron éxito en coartar los planes del desarrollador de demoler el edificio en el 2913 S. Flower, un edificio de 33 unidades, de renta costeable y control de renta localizado cerca de la línea Expo.

Miembros de largo tiempo del Colectivo, los inquilinos del 2913 tienen una larga historia de resistir la presión intensificada de abandonar sus hogares llevado a cabo por la rápida gentrificación del área, incluyendo el plan maestro de USC, la llegada de la línea Expo y otros proyectos de redesarrollo circundando su edificio.

El edificio ha sido codiciado por el desarrollador de vivienda para estudiantes Symphony, quien tenía la esperanza de desalojar rápida y silenciosamente a los inquilinos para poder demoler el edificio y eregir un nuevo edificio de cinco plantas, solo para estudiantes, un proyecto de vivienda de lujo similar al que construyeron varios años atrás en el 27th Place y Figueroa.

Ellos se planeó y se llevó a cabo una conferencia de prensa el 7 de marzo - con Perry a mano, declarando “Estoy contenta de encontrarme aquí con los residentes del 2-9-1-3 Sur Flower, y de llamar a la preservación de la vivienda bajo control de renta.

Se planeó y se llevó a cabo una conferencia de prensa el 7 de marzo - con Perry a mano, declarando “Estoy contenta de encontrarme aquí con los residentes del 2-9-1-3 Sur Flower, y de llamar a la preservación de la vivienda bajo control de renta.

Aún cuando el Colectivo no pudo conseguir una fecha para la conferencia de prensa con Perry antes de las elecciones primarias, los inquilinos sintieron que su participación en este esfuerzo es un ejemplo de lo que se puede alcanzar de los inquilinos que se juntan para luchar por sus hogares.

“Vamos a exigir más de nuestro alcalde y nuestros oficiales electos,” concluyó Armendariz. “Como residentes de Los Ángeles, como la mayoría de los inquilinos, debemos exigir el derecho humano a la vivienda!”

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It's Only My Opinion

WRITTEN BY AL SABO

Republican Representative Paul Ryan - He claims to be a pro-lifer against abortion (and even contraception) because of his Catholic beliefs. However, Pope Francis proclaims all Catholics should protect the environment, the weakest, and the poorest. Yet Ryan’s budget proposal calls for budget cuts to programs that protect the environment and cuts deeply into programs that help the weak and the poor. Apparently Ryan believes in Catholic Doctrine only when it fits his belief. What a hypocrite.

Republican Party - Jefferson Davis would be their Presidential candidate if he were only available. The party of Lincoln is now the party of the right wing, bigoted, evangelical revolutionaries.

Starbucks - CEO Harold Schultz blames this Nation’s woes on the failed leadership of President Obama rather than the Republican “Say No” Congress. I can’t speak for you, but due to his bias against our President, won’t be visiting Starbucks again. Take my advice, try Coffee Bean. It’s better anyway.

Sequester - President Obama got taken when he agreed to this. The Republicans got everything they wanted and more. Middle and Lower class people get screwed once again.

Marijuana - It should be taxed and regulated the same as cigarettes and sold openly in smoke shops to everyone 21 and above.

Korea - It’s just what Dick Cheney and his cronies at Haliburton were hoping for.

Lakers - The only thing wrong with the Lakers is Jim Buss. If Jim turned the reigns over to Jeanie the ship would be righted.

Downtown News - Now they are blaming Herb Wesson for Jan Perry’s demise and the potential ruination of Bernard Parks. Get over it. Perry lost the election because she ran as a progressive even though she consistently voted as a conservative ally of big business and developers. The same holds true for Parks. On the other hand, Wesson has always been a true progressive representing his constituents and supporting the poor. He’s a true Democrat - unlike Parks and Perry who are Democrats in name only.

Mayor’s Race - Why did we have a primary? It was evident from the start that it would be Greuel facing off against Garcetti - that is, evident to all but Perry, who proclaimed she’d smoke the field.

Pershing Square: The current policies of Park Manager Louise were supposed to force the homeless from the park while bringing in local residents. The plan, which includes taking away the tables and umbrellas and closing at least 50% of the park (and 80% of the seating) at 3pm, has been and continues to be a complete failure. It has actually had the opposite effect. It has chased away the locals, who have frequented the park for years, while not attracting any tourists or local business men and women. The park is now a virtual ghost town occupied mainly by only a handful of homeless transients and a few local hard liners who refuse to be forced out. Changing the park won’t be easy, but a change in management would be a good start.

Cecil Hotel - It seems like the building consensus is that the woman found in the water tank on the roof of the Cecil Hotel committed suicide. How did she get in that tank? What about hotel security and maintenance? I smell foul play - we need a progress report not a cover up.

New York’s Strict Gun Laws - Adopting the same stiff New York rules as the LAPD for carrying guns here in Los Angeles would not only result in less crime and shootings, but will also result in the police not acting too quickly to use their guns. Wouldn’t it be great if our trigger happy police didn’t have to shoot anyone? Adopting New York City’s gun laws would hopefully have this effect.

LAPD - They will never win the hearts and minds of Skid Row residents as long as they continue employing the racist Safer Cities Initiative policies of former Chief William Bratton.

These are only my personal opinions. If you want to agree with or counter these positions, send your comments to The Community Connection, Attn: Al 530 S. Main St. 90013

When the Law Doesn’t Protect and Serve All,
We the People Have the Right and Duty to Change the Law!

SUBMITTED BY THE OCCUPY THE HOOD LA ACTION ASSEMBLY

On February 26, Occupy The Hood LA Action Assembly, along with the Los Angeles Community Action Network and other supporters, held a rally and press conference at Los Angeles Police Department Headquarters to demand an open and thorough independent investigation of allegations made by former LAPD officer Christopher Dorner and exposure of the depth of the pervasive racist practices of the Los Angeles Police Department.

The LAPD is a notoriously racist institution. The Rampart Division scandal of the late 1990s is the most well-known reminder of this in recent history, but by no means the only one. What Chris Dorner’s manifested called into question is the degree to which racism is blatantly ignored, reasoned away, and legitimized in this society in general and within law enforcement in particular. Dorner’s manifesto mirrors the dangerous, even deadly, impacts of oppression used against people of color on a daily basis in our City and nation.

For as long as we can remember poor people, especially in Black and Brown communities, have been the victims of abusive and criminal acts committed by LAPD officers. The history of the LAPD has clearly shown that both the institution and the Commission appointed to oversee it have been consistently unwilling to impose serious punishment for racist and abusive acts of officers, either through internal mechanisms or by referral for prosecution.

The LAPD refuses to track problem officers or implement any structural change proposed to ameliorate the problem. This malfeasance of the public trust by the LAPD sends a clear message to officers who sent out “street justice” — that they will be protected or even rewarded for their conduct and culture of racism, sexism and violence.

The oppression and power wielded without checks and balances within LAPD and toward communities are what produced the anger in Christopher Dorner. It’s the chickens coming home to roost…it’s no fun when the rabbit got the gun. However, community members told the police commissioners that the concerns and demands made weren’t about Christopher Dorner as an individual, but instead reflect experiences and history with the brutal and oppressive institution known as the LAPD.

What Dorner’s manifesto did was shine a spotlight on the internal culture of LAPD for the first time in a long while, but this is not a first because organizations fighting police abuse have done this time and time again and now is the time to reinvigorate this fight.

Those attending the Police Commissioner’s meeting made demands including: 1) We demand the LAPD express the same zeal and determination we did hunting down Christopher Dorner and apply it to those officers who continue to murder, beat, harass people in our community; 2) An independent investigation into Dorner’s claims AND all of the related responses by LAPD be done (outside of the LAPD), because we won’t be duped into believing that Bonnie can investigate Clyde; 3) Accountability of the officers who shot innocent people in their “hunt” for Dorner; and 4) New mechanisms for community control of the police.

It is time for communities to stand up and demand an end to all law enforcement policies that violate people’s civil and human rights.

For more info, stop by the LA CAN offices.
Incarceration and Race in California Under the New Jim Crow

WRITTEN BY AZIM MUHAMMAD

In the book The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander uses empirical data to demonstrate how the War on Drugs has incarcerated African American communities on a scale entirely out of proportion with the actual criminal activity taking place within our neighborhoods.

In less than three decades the US prison population exploded from 300,000 to more than two million incarcerated. It is eight times the incarceration rate in Germany, a comparatively developed, large democracy. The US is unparalleled in the world in concentrating its penal activities on its racial/ethnic minorities. In California, Blacks comprise just 6.2 percent of the population. Yet Black people represent 29 percent of all incarcerated people in state prison. Latinos do not fare much better. Nearly 39 percent of all felony drug arrests made in California in 2010 were of Latinos. And over 35 percent of all those incarcerated in the state are Latino.

The proportion of African American men with a criminal record of some sort (as many as 80% in major cities) are marginalized and a part of the growing permanent underclass. According to Alexander, forms of “racial control” evolve as required by changing political circumstances and contemporary standards, with the current “criminal justice” activities replacing the Jim Crow laws, which in turn had replaced slavery.

In 1973 the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals of the Justice Department stated that there is overwhelming evidence that prisons and jails create crime rather than preventing it, and recommended no further construction of adult facilities and the elimination of the existing juvenile centers. However, actual developments went in the exact opposite direction, as the US embarked on an unprecedented expansion of its prison system. California’s corrections system has gone from being a national model to one that spends twice as much as other states. Yet it maintains 70% recidivism rate compared to a national average of about 40%.

In 1977 I was convicted on a felony robbery charge under the Juvenile Corrections Act. I successfully completed my 24 month sentence in 1979. I received a split sentence of 18 months in a federal corrections institute (FCI) and 6 months in a halfway house. Boy have times changed.

My 18 months of incarceration was served in a minimum security facility. It was so minimum that it was called a compound (not a jail) and we were housed in cottages. The guards did not carry clubs or weapons of any kind. Each resident had his own single room complete with a key, which he controlled. No orange jump suits or pink panties, we were allowed to wear our own street clothes. In fact, my rehabilitation program consisted of taking college classes at the local college (West Virginia University). I also worked away from the facility at the local country club (Lakeview Country Club and Inn). Individuals were sentenced to John F. Kennedy Center from all over the country for what would be considered today AB 109ers: “non-violent,” “non-serious,” and “non-sexual crimes.” The compound included an Olympic swimming pool, outdoor track, a miniature golf course and a pond complete with fish.

I so vividly recall the contact visits held on the picnic grounds. After six months of good behavior we were allowed weekend furloughs and after twelve we were allowed week long reunification visits back home with our families. Each resident was required to continue education whether GED, college or vocational. This was a time when there were still prisons that administered fair and humane treatment.

So regardless of who you support, we need to make sure the candidates not only heard the voices of the 1%, but that they heard the voices of poor folks as well. In fact, we extended invites to many of the candidates, including Garcetti, Greuel and Perry. However, it was only Garcetti that accepted.

At our November 14 breakfast with Garcetti, he promised to work with LA CAN and other Skid Row residents. He committed to also working for affordable housing and to finding real solutions to ending homelessness. Low-income residents presented him with our Share the Wealth Plan, which includes, amongst others things, a call for no more displacement, an end to the destruction of green space, a halt to the criminalization of poverty, and effective public transportation. And he generally supported the plan.

When Will the Mayoral Candidates Talk Poverty and Housing?

WRITTEN BY WESLEY WALKER

The top two finishers in the Los Angeles Mayoral primary on March 5 were Eric Garcetti and Wendy Greuel. Garcetti took 32.9% of the vote with Greuel trailing behind with 29.2%. They beat out Republican Candidate Kevin James (16.4%), Councilmember Jan Perry (15.9%), and four other candidates. To win the election outright, one of the candidates would have had to receive more than 55% of the vote. Therefore, Garcetti and Greuel will now face off against each other in a run off vote on May 21.

At quick glance it appears that Garcetti and Greuel generally agree on a some issues - namely the need to stimulate the economy, get more jobs, and uplift business. Garcetti regularly touts his record of job growth on the campaign trail. He often points to Hollywood, which is in his district, and the cranes looming above the skyline as evidence of his revitalization efforts in his district. In television ads, he cites a report that says that his district is #1 in adding jobs.

But Greuel has attacked Garcetti on this point - blaming him for a spike in the citywide unemployment rate, which is said to have risen from 5.9% to 13.3% during his tenure as City Council president.

Greuel, on the other hand, talks a lot about her experience. She points out that she was a liaison to Mayor Tom Bradley for ten years on policy issues ranging from child care to homelessness. She also worked for the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Clinton Administration. She was the Councilmember in LA’s second district from 2002-2009. And currently she is the LA City Controller.

However, neither candidate is talking about the issues that are facing many Downtown and South LA residents (and LA residents in general) - poverty, the lack of affordable housing, and homelessness. This is why LA CAN protested outside the Mayoral Candidate breakfasts that were hosted by the Central City Association back in the fall of 2012. We wanted to make sure the candidates not only heard the voices of the 1%, but that they heard the voices of poor folks as well. In fact, we extended invites to many of the candidates, including Garcetti, Greuel and Perry. However, it was only Garcetti that accepted.

Don’t forget to vote on May 21.
In Loving Memory of Yvonne Pamela Patterson  
“Rosey” 
July 28, 1960 - March 21, 2013

Paul Robeson: Scholar, Artist, Activist 
WRITTEN BY ESTHER ALEJANDRO

As a person, performer, and activist, Paul Robeson was the kind of example of a leader who is inspiring! He was a native of New York, where his father was a minister of the Zion Methodist Episcopal Church. He appreciated learning from a young age, and this is how he became a true scholar. As any other person of color, he had to survive in a country that had no sympathy for such a thing. He often recounted the experience of looking for the cafeteria at the university only to find out that he could not eat there. When his questions went unanswered and his needs ignored, he would resort to saying he was a dishwasher or some other laborer to get where he needed to go.

He proved at an early age that he had an extraordinary singing voice and when the time came he wanted to join the university choir. At first, he was told that he did not sing in tune, one of the many excuses to keep him from being in the same place with white folk. However, he not only possessed a rich bass voice, but he could even reach the higher notes in the baritone register. This was one of the defining moments of his life; not just discovering the power of his singing voice, but the range and capability of it - this was to become a prized possession.

As a concert artist, he began to perform in different countries and experiencing different cultures. He was always aware of discrimination against African American people, but in his concerts abroad his perspective grew to understand man’s inhumanity to man - irrespective of color.

He observed, while in Europe, how the workers would be mistreated by their bosses. He was in Spain during the Francisco Franco dictatorship. He became aware of the brutality of Mussolini in Italy. He saw a different picture in the Soviet Union, where he observed how there seemed to be no animosity between Uzbeks and Slavs in spite of being different cultures and of different skin color. This was a powerful, eye-opening experience for him. So he praised not the political system, but the manner in which laborers interacted. He became an outspoken political activist. And, eventually, his life became an inspiration to workers in Italy, Spain, France and the then Soviet Union.

Because of his beliefs and actions, he became an ‘enemy of the country’ and his passport was revoked. He was accused over and over again of being a communist - to which he replied that his passion for human equality had nothing to do with socio-political interests. Still, he was “blackballed” by the entertainment industry - his concerts often cancelled - and he was vilified by the press. But he did not waver, or become accommodating. He kept his dignity until the day of his death in 1976.

We have in our community, people who are not significantly different from Robeson. We must look inside of ourselves and start discovering that which makes us leaders, activists, artists and use these talents for a greater good. This is one thing we owe not only to ourselves, but to our community, our city, our state, our country. Paul Robeson taught us this. We KNOW we can make a difference!

RAIN 
WRITTEN BY BILLY SHAW

I LOOKED UP TO THE HEAVENS, 
AND A TEAR FELL IN MY EYE  
I SUDDENLY REALIZED, 
THAT THE CLOUDS BEGAN TO CRY  
I HEARD THE THUNDER, 
THE GROANING OUT LOUD  
THE SOUND OF THE STORM, 
THAT BELLOW FROM THE CLOUDS 
I FELT ITS INTENSITY, 
AS THE LIGHTING STRUCK THE GROUND 
I WAS MOVED BY EMOTION  
AS THE THUNDER MADE ITS SOUND 
I THEN BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND, 
THE MEANING OF THE CLOUDS  
AND WHY THEY MAKE A SPECTACLE, 
AND MAKE THEIR CRIES SO LOUD 
FOR THEY TOO HAVE LOST SOME ONE, 
LIKE MINES THAT LEFT ME 
SHE WAS MORE THAN I COULD IMAGINE, 
A SIGHT FOR SOAR EYES TO SEE 
BUT NOW SHE’S GONE SOMEWHERE, 
FAR AWAY ACROSS THE SEA 
AND LEFT ME HALF THE MAN, 
EMBERSED IN MYSERY 
AND NOW LIKE THE CLOUDS ABOVE, 
I CRY MY TEARS OF PAIN 
AND LIKE THE LONELY CLOUDS ABOVE, 
MY TEARS FALL LIKE THE RAIN
El brote de TB en Skid Row

Los oficiales del Departamento de Salud también confirmaron que los oficiales de LAPD no deben usar máscaras en la comunidad, como reportó el LA Times que se les indicó que hicieran. El capitán Horace Frank, de la División Central de LAPD se rehusó a comentar acerca de la pregunta que le hizo el periódico acerca de quién les alertó a usar máscaras protectoras.

Representantes de Salud Pública reportaron que ellos no dieron a conocer la información acerca de sus actividades intensivas a los medios. De modo que la pregunta del millón de dólares queda, ¿quién y por qué falsificarían y distribuirían información que causara temor dentro y fuera de la comunidad?

LA CAN no cree que sea coincidencia el que la misma semana de la cubierta de los medios sobre el “brote,” la Ciudad de Los Ángeles apeló la decisión del circuito 9no de la Corte de Apelaciones que protege el derecho a la propiedad privada de los ciudadanos desamparados a la corte suprema. La LAPD y el abogado de la ciudad han estado estrategizando por más de un año para establecer el que los desamparados son en alguna manera ciudadanos de segunda clase y sencillamente no tienen derechos constitucionales a la propiedad privada.

Claramente, el sabotear la propiedad a los asuntos de salud pública ha sido una estrategia usada continuamente a través de las múltiples apelaciones para voltee la decisión inicial. El abogado de la ciudad Carmen Trutanich llegó a decir que “el brote actual de tuberculosis entre la población más vulnerable debe servir como un serio recordatorio a todos de lo que está a riesgo.” (LA Times 2/28/13)

Básicamente, estaban tratando de ligar el pánico de la tuberculosis a la propiedad de la gente para apoyar sus múltiples desafíos a la corte. Una vez más, la TB NO puede contraerse a través de la propiedad - limpia o sucia. Los asuntos de salud pública que encara Skid Row son reales y urgentes - pero no deben ser distorsionados o injustamente ligados a los esfuerzos de eliminar los derechos civiles básicos de los residentes.

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Stop LAPD Spying Coalition Releases People’s Audit on LAPD Spying Program

We already have a watered down version of probable cause in reasonable suspicion. This new language and terminology is completely unprecedented and is rife with dire consequences.

Waste of resources: At a time when the City is drastically cutting back on providing life saving services to the communities, threatening schools, community centers, health care facilities, millions of dollars are being spent by LAPD in expanding secret spying and surveillance programs.

The LAPD Office of Inspector General (OIG) also released its audit of Special Order (SO) 1 at the Police Commission meeting on Tuesday March 19th. The OIG’s audit is the first audit of LAPD’s SAR initiative since its launching in March 2008. The OIG audit raises several very serious concerns including:

- The OIG audit creates an illusion of accountability but completely lacks any substantive analysis.
- The OIG is focused mostly on procedural issues – i.e. does LAPD follow the written policy? If the policy itself is flawed to begin with, then a procedural audit won’t inform the public of what it most needs to know.
- The OIG cherry picked the data. The audit is confined to a mere four months of data concerning a policy which has been in effect for five years. For the OIG to now come back with a 4 month audit is disgraceful.
- There is no analysis on potential civil rights and privacy violations and no data on LAPD budget and expenses assigned to its SAR policy (especially at a time when the city wanted to raise taxes to add more funds to LAPD’s already huge budget).
- With over $4 million dollars of annual budget, the OIG failed to meaningfully audit an LAPD program that has dire consequences in the long run.

Special Order 1 should be rescinded. Visit www.stoplapdspying.org for more information.

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La Vivienda En Vela

Conozca Sus Derechos

En un esfuerzo continuo para asegurar que los lectores de Conexión Comunitaria (Community Connection) estén al tanto de sus derechos de inquilinos, esta sección delinea información para “Conozca sus Derechos.” Esta sección se enfoca en como prevenir desalojos por ser una así llamada “molestia,” los que desafortunadamente son algunos de los desalojos más difíciles de combatir.

1. Si se le ha señalado por la administración por ser un líder vocal de los inquilinos, asegúrese de tener un testigo con usted cuando visite o interaccione con la administración. Esto es importante para que usted tenga una persona adicional que dé validez a sus acciones de ser necesario.

2. Asegúrese de solicitar una junta con la administración para discutir cualquier alegato de actividad molestas; si esta es actividad en la cual usted ha estado envuelto. Es importante documentar que la actividad haya sido corregida y los pasos que se han tomado para dirigirse a problemas legítimos traidos por la administración.

3. Lea siempre cualquier notificación recibida de la administración completamente. Si la notificación sigue la ley, se le requiere que la cumpla. Si usted no está seguro de si la notificación cumple con la ley, o simplemente no entiende las notificaciones escritas que ha recibido, por favor trágalas a la clínica legal de LA CAN los miércoles por la noche, a las 6:00 p.m.

Si está interesado(a) en aprender más acerca de los derechos de inquilinos y asegurarse de que nuestras comunidades estén bien educadas, úzase al comité de vivienda del Centro de LA CAN los lunes a las 11:00 de la mañana (en LA CAN) o el comité de inquilinos de Pueblo del Río/LA CAN el segundo miércoles de cada mes a las 5:30 p.m. (en el centro recreativo James Slauson).

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The Community Connection is a street newspaper and a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) is a membership organization comprised of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless residents living in Downtown and South Los Angeles, and surrounding communities. LA CAN’s staff and core members write many articles that appear in the Community Connection. These generally appear without a byline, attributed to LA CAN as a collective. Articles by contributors who are not LA CAN core members and/or personal opinion/experience articles receive a byline. These articles do not necessarily represent the views, opinions and perspectives of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

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