Longtime Skid Row Resident and LA CAN Organizer Found Not Guilty on All Eight Charges of Assault and Battery against the Central City East Association’s Estela Lopez and Midnight Mission’s Mai Lee

WRITTEN WITH CONTRIBUTION FROM BECKY DENNISON, GERARDO GOMEZ, AND DAVID WAGNER

On July 11, 2013, Deborah Burton was found not guilty on eight charges of assault and battery against Estela Lopez of the Central City East Association and Mai Lee of the Midnight Mission. Estela Lopez claimed that her right ear had been injured by Ms. Burton and both claimed that Deborah assaulted them. The weapon? A toy air horn used at a legal protest, at which no one was arrested.

This case goes back to March of 2011 when LA CAN and numerous other community partners began to protest the supposed “public safety walk” organized primarily by the CCEA and heavily supported and attended by the Los Angeles Police Department, especially then Officer-In-Charge of the Safer Cities Initiative, Lieutenant Shannon Paulson.

LA CAN and others legally protested this walk because it was designed to promote the need for continued Safer Cities policing, placed blame on homeless and poor residents as “problems” for the business community, and didn’t include any Skid Row residents in planning or leadership. Mostly business representatives, police and media – with a handful of service providers at times and one or two residents occasionally – marched through the Skid Row community and made their case for more police. CCEA had every right to organize this Walk, and LA CAN and partners had every right to legally protest it.

However, that’s not how LAPD and CCEA saw it. Emails between the police and the CCEA revealed considerable planning to find leaders and organizers of LA CAN to charge with criminal offenses. Immediately after the protests began, the CCEA and LAPD began coordinating and strategizing on ways to stop LA CAN’s opposition to the walk. The quotes below, from dozens of emails between Lt. Paulson, Estela Lopez and other CCEA staff, began to shine light on just how CCEA and LAPD were working together to criminalize first amendment rights and lobbying the City Attorney for support.

In one email in April 2011, CCEA’s Estela Lopez assures her colleagues 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.” In another email sent on June 1, 2011 – the evening of the purported assault – Estela confirms they were able to complete their walk “as planned” and never mentions being assaulted or injured by Ms. Burton or anyone else from LA CAN. In a July 2011 email from LAPD’s Lieutenant Paulson, she tells the City Attorney that she needs information about the filing and documentation of cases related to the public safety walk because, “This is going to be an ongoing problem until it gets too costly for them.”

After months of LAPD and CCEA strategizing, lobbying the City Attorney, and emailing back and forth about how to criminalize the protests, the City Attorney finally complied. In August 2012, Deborah Burton received a letter in the mail stating she was being charged with assault with a deadly weapon for her actions on June 1, 2011.

Continued on page 6
Housing Watch

**Alexandria Hotel**

The Alexandria Hotel has been a place of both conflict and community organizing since 2005 - when the building was targeted by Amerland Corporation for "redevelopment" as affordable housing, but at "affordable" levels twice as high as most of the tenants living there. It was clear from the outset that the new owners were not trying to rent to long-term Skid Row residents but were rather trying to cash-in on the gentrification occurring Downtown. For the next five years tenants organized to preserve rent levels in the building and to stop illegal evictions and discrimination against low-income seniors and people of color. After winning many, but not all, initial battles tenants continued to organize to stop the increase in bed bug infestation and nuisance activities, such as loud parties allowed by the ownership. Alexandria tenants have therefore been extremely active in protecting and improving their housing units and conditions.

Since January, rumors have been floating around the Alexandria about a potential new owner taking over the building – mainly due to mismanagement of the property that has led to probable foreclosure. According to a document sent from the Los Angeles Housing Department to the Los Angeles City Council, “Alexandria Housing Partners, L.P. is currently in default of a $26.9 million construction loan held by East/West Bank.” The document goes on to say that if the loan is “not paid, East/West Bank has claimed that it will exercise its right to foreclose on the property, or sell the note to a third party who would then foreclose.”

There is a responsible owner interested in purchasing the property and the City allocated funding to help facilitate the sale and necessary health and safety upgrades in the building. Tenants of the Alexandria have already begun to have organizing meetings around the possible change in ownership, but as of the time of printing, no final sale or commitments to tenants have occurred. If you would like to participate in these discussions please attend LA CAN’s Housing Committee every Monday morning at 10:30am.

**Baltimore Hotel**

The last issue of the Community Connection reported that Baltimore Hotel tenants – who are experiencing many concerns due to the ongoing construction in the building – could file complaints with the City. In direct response to complaints received since then, the LA Housing Department came out to inspect the building. Their initial determination was that construction was only occurring in the vacant units, which meant that there was no impact on tenants and therefore no need for a Tenant Habilitation Plan (THP). A THP is a document required by City law when major systems (electricity, plumbing, walls, etc.) are being renovated that informs tenants on the type of construction occurring, when it will be occurring, how long the work will take, and any relocation processes for current tenants.

However, tenants are challenging this initial determination. It often takes tenants coming together, continuing to document the construction work, and explaining to City officials exactly what is happening. One example of this for documenting is for tenants to keep a journal of what they see or hear. Tenants should also continue to file complaints if the construction work negatively impacts you or ESPECIALLY if you are asked to relocate. You do NOT have to move unless a THP is issued to you AND approved by the City.

The work that the owners seem to have planned is legal and could help all tenants by upgrading the units and including kitchenettes and bathrooms. But it’s not legal to do this work without following specific procedures and protecting tenants’ health through the THP process.

It is important for tenants to work together and build people power. This happens by tenants coming together to identify negative issues and commit to each other to take action. The City often does not act quickly to hold landlords accountable to all laws and regulations without tenants continuing to raise concerns. Contact Steve to join the Baltimore tenant committee or with any tenant questions or concerns.

La Vivienda En Vela

**Hôtel Alexandria**

El Hotel Alexandria ha sido a la vez un lugar de conflicto y organización comunitaria desde el 2005 – cuando el edificio se fijó por la Corporación Amerlan para "re-desarrollo" como viviendas de alquiler disponible, pero a nivel "disponible" al doble más alto de lo que la mayoría de sus inquilinos disponían.

De inicio fue claro que los nuevos dueños no trataban de alquilarle a los residentes de largo tiempo de Skid Row, pero que trataban de beneficiarse del cambio ‘gentrificante’ que ocurría en Downtown. En los últimos cinco años los inquilinos se organizaron para preservar el nivel de renta en el edificio y prevenir las evicciones ilegales, la discriminación hacia personas de tercera edad de bajo ingreso y personas de color. Después de ganar muchas, pero no todas las batallas iniciales, los inquilinos continuaron organizando para parar la infestación de chinchas y garrapatas y molestias tal como fiestas alborotadas permitido por los dueños. Los inquilinos del Alexandria han sido extremadamente activos en proteger y mejorar las condiciones de sus unidades de vivienda.

Desde enero, flotan rumores en el Alexandria de pocibles nuevos dueños – mayormente por la mala administración de la propiedad que ha dado raíz a un probable ejecuto hipotecario. De acuerdo a un documento enviado por el Departamento de Viviendas de Los Ángeles al Consejo de la Ciudad de Los Angeles, los “Alexandria Housing Partners, L.P.” actualmente se han impuesto la suma de $26.9 millones en prestamos de construcción a el Banco East/West.” El documento declara que “si el préstamo no se paga, el Banco East/West ejercera su derecho al ejecuto hipotecario en la propiedad o vendera el título a un tercer partido quien luego sometera ejecuto hipotecario.

Hay un dueño responsable interesado en comprar la propiedad y la Ciudad alojó fondos para facilitar la venta y los requeridos reparos en seguridad y salud necesarias en el edificio. Los inquilinos del Alexandria ya han comenzado reuniones para organizarse en el caso que cambien los dueños. Pero en hora de prensa, todavía no se finaliza la venta y no han ocurrido compromisos con los inquilinos. Si usted desea participar en estas pláticas porfavor assista al Comité de Vivienda de LA CAN todos los lueve a las 10:30 am

**Hótel Baltimore**

En la última edición de Community Connection informó que los inquilinos del Hótel Baltimore – quienes tenían varias preocupaciones debido a la continua construcción en el edificio – pueden someter quejas con la Ciudad. En respuesta directa a las quejas recividas desde ese entonces, el Departamento de Vivienda de LA, salió a inspeccionar al edificio. Al inicio se determinó que la construcción ocurrió solo en unidades vacías, que significa que no impactó los inquilinos y por lo tanto no había necesidad de un Plan de Habilitabilidad (siglas en ingles THP) de los inquilinos. El THP es un documento requerido por ley Municipal cuando hay renovaciones en sistemas mayores (electricidad, tubería, paredes, etc.) que el informa a los inquilinos sobre el tipo de construcción que ocurre, cuando ocurria, cuanto tiempo tomará el trabajo, y cualquier proceso para realojar a los inquilinos actuales.

Sin embargo, los inquilinos retan esta determinación inicial. Muchas veces se necesita que los inquilinos se reúnan, que documenten el trabajo de construcción, y que le expliquen a oficiales Municipales exactamente lo que esta ocurriendo. Un método fácil para documentar es que los inquilinos mantengan un diario sobre lo que ven y lo que escuchan. El inquilino también debe archivar quejas si la construcción le impacta negativamente ESPECIALMENTE, se le pide realojamiento. Usted no tiene que mover a menos que un THP se emite a usted y aprobada por el Ayuntamiento.

El trabajo que los dueños planean puede que sea legal y puede ayudar a los inquilinos mejorando las unidades para que incluyan cocina, y baños. Pero no es legal hacer el trabajo sin seguir procedimientos específicos y sin proteger la salud de los inquilinos según el proceso THP.

Es importante que los inquilinos trabajen reunidos creando una fuerza pública. Esto ocurre cuando los inquilinos se reúnen para identificar asuntos negativos y si se compromete uno al otro a tomar acción. Muchas veces las nuevas unidades no se ocupan rápidamente a considerar los dueños responsables a todas las leyes y regulaciones sin que los inquilinos sigan sustituyendo lo que les incumbe. Comuníquese con Steve para reunirse al comité de inquilinos del Baltimore o si tiene cualquier pregunta o asunto de inquilinos.
Housing Authority City of Los Angeles Set to Approve 2014 Plans

WRITTEN BY DEBORAH BURTON

Every spring, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) publishes an Agency Plan for the upcoming year. The plan impacts all public housing and Section 8 tenants and developments in the City. In recent years, the Los Angeles Human Right to Housing Collective has been organizing public housing and Section 8 residents to participate in this public process.

The goals are to preserve all affordable housing for low-income families citywide, especially preserving public housing as public housing, to strengthen tenant rights, and to ensure HACLA policies reflect and promote community stabilization and health. Participating in the Annual Agency Plan process is crucial to this end.

Over the past couple of months, Housing Collective members have created a list of demands that they would like to see addressed in this year’s plan, including:

- **Appropriate Use and Prioritization of Capital Funds.** Capital funds are a crucial means of preserving public housing for the long-term and we want to be able to more clearly understand what is being funded, what is not, and why.

- **No Increases Flat Rents.** We oppose rent increases for those playing flat rents, as the economy continues to struggle and the burden on tenants far outweighs the financial gain to HACLA.

- **Preserve all Housing and Protect all Tenants in Jordan Downs.** In the most recent plans presented on the “redevelopment” of Jordan Downs, hundreds of units will be lost for extremely low and very low income families (the large majority of the 700 families living in Jordan Downs now). The Collective demands 1-for-1 replacement of all public housing units, as public housing and not Section 8 be committed to in the Agency Plan, as well as guarantees that no current tenants will be forcibly displaced (which can’t happen with hundreds of lost units).

- **Prevent Evictions of Section 8 Tenants.** This year’s Agency Plan creates a new unit of evicting tenants for ANY ACT that affects the “integrity” of the Section 8 program. This is much too big of a loophole and will increase evictions and loss of Section 8 benefits. If there is a real problem with integrity, HACLA must define it and prevent it, not create gigantic windows for evictions.

The Housing Authority will take public testimony on its Draft Agency Plan at a public meeting on Thursday, August 15, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. at St. Anne’s Church, located at 155 North Occidental Blvd. Los Angeles, CA. All Public Housing and Section 8 Tenants are strongly encouraged to attend to protect and strengthen their rights!

If you would like to attend or find out more about the Plan and the Collective’s demands, contact Steve or Deborah at 213.228.0024.

---

Housing Collective Seeks Leadership on “Rent Control” Reform

WRITTEN BY THELMY PEREZ

“Preservation of affordable rent controlled housing should be top priority for the new council!” expressed Maria, of Boyle Heights, during a monthly meeting of the Collective’s Rent Control Committee (or “RSO”) Committee for “Rent Stabilization Ordinance,” the formal name for the City’s rent control law) which is composed of residents from across the City living in rent controlled housing. The committee has been in the process of strategizing and re-building since the 2010 city hall beat down by LAPD’s Central Division after the City Council (then led by Eric Garcetti) buckled under the landlord lobby’s pressure and failed to pass a measer 4 month ban on rent increases supported by the Collective.

The RSO committee feels that it is unacceptable that the council has consistently failed to address the housing crisis when there are tools, like the RSO, that with a little tweaking can go a long way to preserve existing affordable housing. “It’s even more unacceptable that human rights defenders would be forcefully silenced and arrested, for challenging the City Council to address the housing crisis” said Steve Diaz, remembering the forcible removal of dozens of tenants from the council chambers three years ago. Since then, rents have continued to rise, forcing many low income tenants out of the City or into homelessness.

Although the previous composition of councilmembers was not willing to consider the preservation of affordable rent controlled housing as a necessary strategy in addressing the housing and homelessness crisis, the Collective is hopeful that the new council will take leadership on this issue.

"It’s a crucial time to raise this issue and our demands," expressed Jesse, a Downtown tenant. “It’s important to let them know that we expect them to lead on housing issues," chimed Becky Dennison of LA CAN, a Housing Collective anchor organization. On April 27th, the RSO Committee voted on pushing for three significant amendments to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance which they believe will go a long way towards preserving RSO housing.

On August 6th, collective members began meeting with the new councilmembers to present the following demands:

1. Adopt and enforce the following definition of high standards for quality repairs, so as to end the “Mickey Mouse” repairs that have led to detrimental health and safety impacts on tenants and the deterioration and elimination of affordable RSO housing:
   - Professional: Maintenance and repairs must be performed by licensed and/or certified professionals.
   - Timely: Landlords and/or their employees must address legitimate maintenance requests in a timely manner and emergency requests must be addressed immediately.
   - Durable: Repairs must not be purely cosmetic but must solve and prevent problems for the long term.
   - Consistent: General maintenance must be conducted on a regular basis and not only when emergencies occur. Regular maintenance will address and isolate small or potential problems before they become larger, potentially hazardous problems.
   - Investment: Landlords must regularly invest in the maintenance of their properties. These costs must not be passed on to tenants except as the allowable annual rent increase under the RSO.
   - Quality Control: Housing & Community Investment Department code enforcement division will ensure the quality of repairs and maintenance. The department will also ensure that all tenants living under the RSO have access to understanding their right to quality repairs and maintenance by:
     - Establishing language access for non-English speaking tenants through hiring multilingual inspectors and/or interpreters and/or community inspectors.
   - Consequences: Consequences such as fines and/or consideration for the REAP enforcement division and for violations of the RSO program must be established for landlords who do not adhere to the preceding definitions for quality repairs and maintenance.

2. Eliminate the current 3% minimum rent increase. Right now, landlords can increase rents 3% each year no matter the state of the economy. The rent increase should be tied directly to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) so that there are less rent increases and smaller rent increases in bad economic times, like the past 4 or 5 years.

3. Eliminate the additional 2% utility allowance. The City commissioned a study that showed that this additional 2% rent increase was a windfall for landlords. Tenants who don’t pay individual utilities should not be penalized by this additional, unfair yearly increase.

If you are interested in joining the campaign to preserve rent controlled housing, please contact the Collective at 818-835-1091 or lahumanrighttohousing@gmail.com
Autoridad de viviendas de la ciudad de Los Angeles apresta a aprobar los planes de 2014

ESCRITO POR DEBORAH BURTON TRADUCIDO POR CARMEN VEGA

En cada primavera, la Autoridad de Viviendas de LA (siglas en inglés: HACLA) publica el Plan de Agencia para el año entrante. El plan impacta todas las viviendas, desarrollos e inquilinos de Sección 8 en la ciudad. Recientemente, el Colectivo de Los Angeles para el Derecho Humano de Vivienda está trabajando en el Plan Anual de la Agencia para participar en este proceso. Las metas son: preservar toda vivienda de alquileres permitibles para familias de bajo ingreso por toda la ciudad, especialmente en comunidades de más de 40 años. El plan es para restringir la creación de nuevas rentas, por tanto, el aumento de alquileres no está permitido.

En este proceso del Plan Anual de la Agencia es imprescindible para este resultado. Dentro de los últimos par de meses, los miembros del Colectivo de Viviendas han creado una lista de pedidos, daños y reparaciones que quieren ver dirigidos en el plan de este año y incluyen:

Usar los fondos de la Ordenanza de Estabilización de Rentas, por favor póngase en contacto con La Colectiva al 818-835-1091 o lahumanrighttohousing@ gmail.com

La colectiva por la vivienda busca liderazgo para la preservación de viviendas

ESCRITO POR THELMY PEREZ

“La preservación de las viviendas económicas con rentas controladas debe ser la máxima prioridad para el nuevo consejo,” expresó María, de Boyle Heights, en una reunión mensual del Comité de Control de Rentas de la Colectiva (o Comité “RSO”) por sus siglas en inglés) que se formó por residentes de toda la ciudad que viven en viviendas de rentas controladas. El comité ha estado en el proceso de formación de estrategias y reconstrucción desde el cuan-
do un aumento de la alquileres en el ayuntamiento con la Policía de la División Central debido a que la Ciudad (entonces dirigido por Eric Garcetti) cedió ante la presión del lobby de dueños y no aprobó un moratorio sobre los aumentos de rentas de solamente 4 meses apoyado por el Colectiva.

Aunque la composición anterior de concejales no estaba dispuesta a considerar la preservación de la vivienda económica de control de rentas como una estrategia necesaria para hacer frente a la crisis de vivienda y de la falta de vivienda, La Colectiva tiene la esperanza de que el nuevo Consejo tomar la liderazgo en este tema. “Es un momento crucial para plan-

Vivienda y de Inversiones en la Comunidad garantizará la calidad de las reparaciones y el mantenimiento. El departamento también se asegurará de que todos los inquilinos que viven bajo Control de Rentas tengan acceso a la contratación de su derecho a reparaciones y mantenimiento de calidad a través de:

1. Aplicar y adoptar la siguiente definición de estándares altos para reparaciones de calidad, con el fin de acabar con las reparaciones “Mickey Mouse” que han afectado la seguridad y salud de muchos inquilinos y han resultado en el deterioro y la eliminación de viviendas económicas de control de rentas: a. PROFESIONAL: Mantenimiento y reparación debe ser por profesionales con licencia y/o certificado. b. Puntualidad: Los propietarios y/o sus empleados deben atender las solicitudes de mantenimiento legítimas de una manera puntual. Las solicitudes de emergencia debe abordarse de inmediato. c. DURABILIDAD: Las reparaciones no deben ser puramente estéticas, sino que deben resol-

Las autoridades de viviendas de la ciudad de Los Angeles apresta a aprobar los planes de 2014, la colectiva busca liderazgo para la preservación de viviendas, y el Colectivo de Los Angeles para el Derecho Humano de Vivienda apoyo por la Colectiva.

La colectiva por la vivienda busca liderazgo para la preservación de viviendas

ESCRITO POR THELMY PEREZ

“La preservación de las viviendas económicas con rentas controladas debe ser la máxima prioridad para el nuevo consejo,” expresó María, de Boyle Heights, en una reunión mensual del Comité de Control de Rentas de la Colectiva (o Comité “RSO”) por sus siglas en inglés) que se formó por residentes de toda la ciudad que viven en viviendas de rentas controladas. El comité ha estado en el proceso de formación de estrategias y reconstrucción desde el cuan-
do un aumento de la alquileres en el ayuntamiento con la Policía de la División Central debido a que la Ciudad (entonces dirigido por Eric Garcetti) cedió ante la presión del lobby de dueños y no aprobó un moratorio sobre los aumentos de rentas de solamente 4 meses apoyado por el Colectiva.

Aunque la composición anterior de concejales no estaba dispuesta a considerar la preservación de la vivienda económica de control de rentas como una estrategia necesaria para hacer frente a la crisis de vivienda y de la falta de vivienda, La Colectiva tiene la esperanza de que el nuevo Consejo tomar la liderazgo en este tema. “Es un momento crucial para plan-

Vivienda y de Inversiones en la Comunidad garantizará la calidad de las reparaciones y el mantenimiento. El departamento también se asegurará de que todos los inquilinos que viven bajo Control de Rentas tengan acceso a la contratación de su derecho a reparaciones y mantenimiento de calidad a través de:

1. Aplicar y adoptar la siguiente definición de estándares altos para reparaciones de calidad, con el fin de acabar con las reparaciones “Mickey Mouse” que han afectado la seguridad y salud de muchos inquilinos y han resultado en el deterioro y la eliminación de viviendas económicas de control de rentas: a. PROFESIONAL: Mantenimiento y reparación debe ser por profesionales con licencia y/o certificado. b. Puntualidad: Los propietarios y/o sus empleados deben atender las solicitudes de mantenimiento legítimas de una manera puntual. Las solicitudes de emergencia debe abordarse de inmediato. c. DURABILIDAD: Las reparaciones no deben ser puramente estéticas, sino que deben resol-

Las autoridades de viviendas de la ciudad de Los Angeles apresta a aprobar los planes de 2014, la colectiva busca liderazgo para la preservación de viviendas, y el Colectivo de Los Angeles para el Derecho Humano de Vivienda apoyo por la Colectiva.

La colectiva por la vivienda busca liderazgo para la preservación de viviendas

ESCRITO POR THELMY PEREZ

“La preservación de las viviendas económicas con rentas controladas debe ser la máxima prioridad para el nuevo consejo,” expresó María, de Boyle Heights, en una reunión mensual del Comité de Control de Rentas de la Colectiva (o Comité “RSO”) por sus siglas en inglés) que se formó por residentes de toda la ciudad que viven en viviendas de rentas controladas. El comité ha estado en el proceso de formación de estrategias y reconstrucción desde el cuan-
do un aumento de la alquileres en el ayuntamiento con la Policía de la División Central debido a que la Ciudad (entonces dirigido por Eric Garcetti) cedió ante la presión del lobby de dueños y no aprobó un moratorio sobre los aumentos de rentas de solamente 4 meses apoyado por el Colectiva.

Aunque la composición anterior de concejales no estaba dispuesta a considerar la preservación de la vivienda económica de control de rentas como una estrategia necesaria para hacer frente a la crisis de vivienda y de la falta de vivienda, La Colectiva tiene la esperanza de que el nuevo Consejo tomar la liderazgo en este tema. “Es un momento crucial para plan-

Vivienda y de Inversiones en la Comunidad garantizará la calidad de las reparaciones y el mantenimiento. El departamento también se asegurará de que todos los inquilinos que viven bajo Control de Rentas tengan acceso a la contratación de su derecho a reparaciones y mantenimiento de calidad a través de:

1. Aplicar y adoptar la siguiente definición de estándares altos para reparaciones de calidad, con el fin de acabar con las reparaciones “Mickey Mouse” que han afectado la seguridad y salud de muchos inquilinos y han resultado en el deterioro y la eliminación de viviendas económicas de control de rentas: a. PROFESIONAL: Mantenimiento y reparación debe ser por profesionales con licencia y/o certificado. b. Puntualidad: Los propietarios y/o sus empleados deben atender las solicitudes de mantenimiento legítimas de una manera puntual. Las solicitudes de emergencia debe abordarse de inmediato. c. DURABILIDAD: Las reparaciones no deben ser puramente estéticas, sino que deben resol-

Las autoridades de viviendas de la ciudad de Los Angeles apresta a aprobar los planes de 2014, la colectiva busca liderazgo para la preservación de viviendas, y el Colectivo de Los Angeles para el Derecho Humano de Vivienda apoyo por la Colectiva.
Supreme Court Rejects Considering Appeal of "Lavan" Injunction Protecting Property Rights and Federal Court Rejects Request to Modify

WRITTEN KARL SCOTT AND DESMONAY DOZIER

For more than two years the City of Los Angeles has been appealing a June 2011 federal court injunction that stops them from illegally confiscating and destroying the property of homeless individuals. Most recently, the City took their fight to the U.S. Supreme Court, who in June - without commenting - refused to hear or consider the lower court ban on seizing and destroying private property.

The Supreme Court’s communication followed a June 17th decision by U.S. District Judge Gutierrez to deny the City’s application to modify the preliminary injunction he issued in 2011. Among many findings in his ruling, the denial stated: “However, as the City has not shown a change in law or fact that would warrant modifying the language of the injunction, the Court is not persuaded that the alternate proposed modification is appropriate. Further, Defendant (City) has submitted no evidence of a problem with individuals failing to move their property during a noticed cleaning operation.”

The preliminary injunction is very clear in protecting people’s property rights and protecting against health and safety issues. The injunction orders only two basic things:

1. Seizing property in Skid Row absent an objectively reasonable belief that it is abandoned, presents an immediate threat to public health or safety, or is evidence of a crime, or contraband; and

2. Absent an immediate threat to public health or safety, destruction of said seized property without maintaining it in a secure location for a period of less than 90 days. Clearly, the City can and should abide by the court’s directives, as well as continue with regular street cleaning efforts to avoid the health and safety problems they claim are “caused” by the injunction.

After several attempts at different types of appeals have failed, LA CAN hoped the City would move on to focus on housing and public health solutions and stop the wasteful and mean-spirited attempts to assert that homeless people simply don’t have the same constitutional rights as those who are housed. Yet, the new City Attorney, Mike Feuer, has continued these unsuccessful efforts and has again filed a notice of intent to appeal - to challenge Judge Gutierrez’s denial of the City’s request to modify the injunction.

The latest appeal was filed around the time the LA County Department of Public Health issued a second report about pressuring public health issues in Skid Row that the City has the ability to fix, including regular street cleaning, provision of sufficient trash cans and trash collection, and provision of sufficient and clean public restrooms. These are issues that LA CAN members highlighted last spring in the participatory research project, The Dirty Divide (http://cangress.wordpress.com/2012/11/Dirt-divide-Complete-April-2013.pdf).

The City should focus its efforts on solving homelessness and public health problems, not continuing to look for ways to violate homeless people’s rights – the courts aren’t buying it, the LA Times editorial board has called for them to stop, and the community has called for them to redirect resources over and over. The time is now.

CCEA’s “Red Shirts” Pick Up Where LAPD Left Off in Confiscating People’s Property

Skid Row Residents Take their Fight against Illegal Activities to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

WRITTEN BY GENERAL DOGON

For decades the Los Angeles Police Department and the City of Los Angeles have confiscated homeless folks property on Skid Row. However, since 2011 – due to the organizing of Skid Row residents – a Federal Injunction against the City of Los Angeles and its agents has protected the personal property of homeless individuals. This means that the City is forbidden from taking unattended personal property on Skid Row. (See related article above.)

However, since the injunction was issued and LAPD changed their practices, the Central City East Association, a Business Improvement District (BID), has been under some delusion that they are exempt from following federal law. The Central City East Association’s (CCEA) security guards (often called “Red Shirts”) have been taking property from homeless folks – often times leaving a notice that says, “Unattended Property Receipt.” Private citizens removing the property of other private citizens from a public space is theft, and there are both civil and criminal penalties for theft.

To protect against the Red Shirts’ ongoing theft of personal property, LA CAN’s Civil Rights Committee created orange placards that homeless folks tie onto their carts that read: “PRIVATE PROPERTY – NOT ABANDONED.” Homeless folks place them on their carts when they have to temporarily leave their property to go eat, use the restroom or shower, etc. Despite these signs clearly visible on people’s property, Red Shirts continue to take it. Again, this is theft. Yet when residents have attempted to file police reports, they’ve been denied.

To stop this, LA CAN has taken the fight to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). CCEA receives funding from LAHSA to operate the storage facility on 7th Street. The storage program and facility are supposed to be for much needed voluntary storage space. There is no authorization to use the facility to store stolen goods. Beginning in June, LA CAN members have been attending LAHSA Commission meetings to testify and let the Commissioners know that the money they are giving CCEA – money that is supposed to be helping homeless individuals – is also supporting the illegal confiscation of homeless people’s property.

At the June 20th LAHSA Commission meeting, LA CAN gave comments on the CCEA practice of confiscation and provided two videos showing the CCEA attempting to take, taking, and digging through closed bags of people’s property. One of the videos showed the CCEA Security Team attempt to bolt-cut a lock and chain from a Hippie Kitchen shopping cart chained to a pole on a public sidewalk, and evidence from later in the day that they did in fact take this property (http://cangress.wordpress.com/2013/05/01/ccea-illegally-using-bolt-cutters-to-steal-skid-row-resident-property/). After hearing the testimony the Commissioners wanted to know more about the CCEA contract agreement so they requested that the item be heard at the next Finance, Contracts and Grants Committee.

At the July 18th Committee meeting, Estela Lopez, CCEA’s Executive Director, gave a presentation that included her admission that CCEA security guards do in fact remove private property from public spaces. Ms. Lopez stated that her group had been abiding by the “spirit” of the federal injunction, but that it did not apply to them. However, the “spirit” of the injunction, and accordingly federal law, does not allow for the seizure of unattended property without due process.

Earlier in the meeting, LA CAN’s Pete White pointed out aspects of the LAHSA/CCEA contract that explicitly require them to follow federal laws. He also reiterated LA CAN’s demand that LAHSA take action to ensure that all parties that receive their funding are following the law and respecting the rights of homeless people.

Clearly not satisfied with the presentation by Lopez and LAHSA staff, the Commissioners instructed staff to continue this item to the next meeting, which will be on Thursday, August 15th at 2:00 PM. LA CAN will most definitely be there and will pursue all avenues to ensure that people’s property rights are protected by ANYONE’s illegal seizure or confiscation once and for all.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- Come speak out at the next LASHA Commission Meeting.

- Stand up on the block! We need to be each other’s keeper and watch out for each other’s property.

- Come to LA CAN on Wednesday at 3pm for Know Your Rights Training to learn what your property rights are and what private security guards and LAPD can and cannot do.

- If the Red Shirts take your property, it’s theft! Go to Central Division and file a police report against them.

- Join LA CAN’s Civil Right Committee, which meets every Monday at 1:00 PM.
Deborah later found out that she was being charged with three counts of assault and/or battery, within the assault with a deadly weapon code section, for blowing a toy horn at the Safety Walk protest and allegedly hurting the ears of Ms. Lopez, an affluent leader of the business community. Ms. Burton, a widely respected community organizer and active Skid Row resident, for almost a year had to endure the stress and mental challenges of being accused and standing trial for something that she did not do.

The trial shed additional light on the lengths LAPD and CCEA went to in order to get these charges filed and ensure Deputy City Attorney Brad Rothenberg would prosecute. Deborah’s defense attorney, John Raphling, was able to utilize additional quotes from emails in his cross examination of Ms. Lopez and LAPD’s Shannon Paulson and in his closing argument. For example, in an email from Paulson to Jack Keyser of the CCEA, she states, “I’m bound and determined to stack the deck as far in our favor as possible as I’d like to see filings on anyone we do arrest.” Paulson later emails both Mr. Keyser and Ms. Lopez to request, “...let me know if you know a friendly ear doctor who would render a professional opinion on the record.” She testified that there was a typo in that email, and that she was actually looking for a friendly ear doctor. In the same email, she tells them (including the alleged victim Ms. Lopez), that she’s “…not sure who to make the victims as of yet.” Mai Lee’s sworn testimony matched video evidence and directly contradicted both Paulson’s testimony under oath and her police report about the incident. In the police report, Paulson states that she witnessed Deborah Burton blow the toy horn approximately 6 inches from Mai Lee’s right ear. In her testimony, Paulson gave a demonstration of her claim that Deborah Burton snuck up on Ms. Lee, out of sight of the numerous video cameras, and blew the horn in her ear. Yet Ms. Lee testified that she didn’t see Deborah blow the horn, and saw her at least 8 feet away right after the horn blew.

Ms. Lopez’s testimony also raised questions about the purported facts of the case. Interestingly, she testified both that her hearing was almost back to 100% AND that she needed a hearing aid. She showed the jury this hearing aid that she said had been prescribed a few months earlier. About 2 and a half weeks after she testified, Estela Lopez attended a LAHSA Commission meeting in which she gave testimony, answered questions from Commissioners, and conversed with several people in a crowded room. She did not, however, wear a hearing aid in her right ear.

The City Attorney refused several attempts by community organizations to drop these ridiculous chargers. Although the facts of this case simply did not add up, Deputy City Attorney Brad Rothenberg seemed overly intent to pursue this unjust prosecution of Deborah and malign LA CAN in the process. He referred to General Dogon, a longtime Skid Row resident and LA CAN organizer, as a “field commander” on multiple occasions, implying militance and violence, among many other mischaracterizations of LA CAN.

The case against Deborah Burton, an African American organizer from Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), was based on a continuing vendetta by the LAPD against the leadership of this activist organization based in Skid Row Los Angeles. For many years LA CAN has had the nerve to stand up against a veritable police occupation of their neighborhood under the so-called Safer Cities Initiative whose answers to poverty and homelessness are massive arrests of poor people for jaywalking, flicking cigarette ashes, and other minor crimes.

LA CAN has challenged the City’s policies toward inner city Los Angeles which seems to have the sole intent of benefitting the accelerating gentrification of the area.

-David Wagner, Ph.D, Professor of social work and sociology who works with LA CAN
Despite the amazing use of resources to criminalize legal protest activities, justice prevailed. More than two years after the alleged incident, on Thursday July 11, a Los Angeles County jury returned not guilty verdicts on all eight charges against 61-year-old Debo- rah Burton. The jurors who spoke after the nearly two week trial said that LAPD Lieutenant Shannon Paulson and so-called victim Estela Lopez were not plausible witnesses. They said the video did not support the claims of Estela Lopez and that she seemed to be just “thrown in there” as a victim.

The LAPD and the CCEA’s efforts to attack the rights of LA CAN to protest and demonstrate is clearly a part of a broader attack on the rights of the predominantly low-income people of color to voice their opinions on gentrification, police saturation, and a policy of mass arrests of the poor. Eventually the truth behind the trumped up claims and charges against leaders of LA CAN came to the surface. In Deborah’s case, jurors actually served justice – a rare occurrence for African American defendants.

The struggle for dignity and human rights continues and it’s victories like this one that give people the passion to keep moving forward. In targeting LA CAN and Deborah, CCEA, LAPD, and the City Attorney were trying to send a message to scare all poor people who would organize to improve their lives. Our solidarity sent them a message right back. We are all Deborah Burton!

I am incredibly proud to be able to stand with Deborah Burton. She handled this attack on her person, her beliefs and her organization in a way that we would all do well to follow. She never showed weakness, never wavered, never let them slow her down.

I was particularly proud of her short speech to the jury after the verdict, in which she thanked them for acquitting and told them (and City Attorney Brad Rothenberg) that she would never stop speaking out for human rights and the betterment of her community.

- John Raphling, Criminal Defense Attorney

DEBORAH BURTON

TOP: Hundreds of organizations and activists from throughout LA demanded that charges be dropped in the weeks leading up to the trial; BOTTOM: Deborah Burton and supporters outside the courthouse after the jury found her NOT guilty.
It’s Only My Opinion

WRITTEN BY AL SABO

This article is written as a tribute to the life of teenager Trayvon Martin.

INJUSTICE SYSTEM: Can our system of justice be called anything else? George Zimmerman is found not guilty of murder and acquitted of murder even though he killed an unarmed teenager. While Marissa Alexander, a Black woman living in Florida who has a restraining order against her abusive husband, is sentenced to 20 years in prison for only firing a warning shot to stop her husband from attacking her. Apparently in Florida white men can stand their ground and kill a Black kid, but Black women can get 20 years for not shooting anyone.

EASY REMEDY: If you don’t like someone, just buy a gun, move to Florida and invite that person to visit you. When he arrives you shoot him, make sure he’s dead and then claim self-defense. NOTE: Do not try this if you are Black. It only works for white folks.

LOST CAUSE: The state lost this case when the jury was seated. How and why was the Prosecution so inept?

MARK O’MREA: When Zimmerman’s attorney was asked whether the verdict would have been the same if Zimmerman were a Black man, he stated no charges would have been filed. What? If O’MREA honestly believes what he stated, he must have spent his entire youth in Disney World because he is clearly residing in fantasy land.

An Open Letter to the Community

WRITTEN BY HAMMER

I’m tired of praying, marching, singing and demonstrating! Seems like Black folks are always begging or protesting some other race to give us the god given respect we and our ancestors have earned through centuries of mistreatment, brutality and prejudice. It appears to me that we have become accustomed to and comfortable with these daily, monthly, and hourly instances of alienation and inappropriate treatment. I am aghast at the head shaking, praying, and shapeless dialogue from our so-called leaders and clergy. We are gonna see how much praying and marching and you do when it hits your home. I think Dr. Claude Anderson is one of the only strategists in the Black community who has nailed the Black community’s problems when he says - there are no Black communities!

Let’s conduct an experiment, Black folks. Go anywhere in any community and disregard the instructions of a 911 dispatcher, carry a gun, chase someone through a housing complex and see what happens. I’ll tell you what won’t happen – it wouldn’t take 44 days to arrest you. It would probably not take a year and a half for court proceedings. You probably wouldn’t even make it to the police station. And you’ll probably have enough bullet holes in you to sprinkle a large residence or a grape vineyard.

I know violence has no place in a civilized society. Tell them that! There has never been respect for Black life or rights in the history of this nation. I think that a new approach to this ongoing dilemma must be developed quickly. If you have a bully on your back and you can’t go around, over, or under him then you must get that bully off your back – by any means necessary. But I know I’m wasting our time. We’ll have a massive church prayer event and pray that these bullies don’t firebomb it while we’re in there.

God did not give us a spirit of fear, but rather the power of a sound mind – and no one with a sound mind would tolerate this. R.I.P. Trayvon. Sorry we let you and others like you down. God forgive us for being weak!

Respectfully,
Hammer
Black Guerilla Family

THAT AIN’T RIGHT

WRITTEN BY GENERAL DOGON

For years Skid Row has attracted blood suckers and poverty pimps from every which way. For example, Skid Row is one of the poorest communities in the nation, but it has some of the highest priced stores. The latest Skid Row blood sucker is the new “LOCKER REST” on 6th and San Pedro Streets. They rent lockers and, get this, SELL “rest time” for $5 an hour! This is the epitome of taking advantage of homeless people. These greedy blood sucking capitalist businesses that are robbing us blindly have added a new “product” to sell – the ability to rest for an hour. But illegal and immoral business practices are rarely viewed as criminal – we as residents continue to be considered the criminals.

The fact that LAPD and others continue to criminalize rest in public space at most hours of the day creates this “market” for rest. Folks are harassed on the streets every day by thugs or just sitting or lying down – but if they weren’t, businesses couldn’t be created to make money off the lack of housing and shelter!

The solution is to organize and fight for the right to housing and the right to simply exist in public space! Join LA CAN’s civil rights committee every Monday at 1:00 PM.
Trayvon Martin’s Murder: The Strange Fruit of “See Something, Say Something”

WRITTEN BY THE STOP LAPD SPYING COALITION

Our hearts and solidarity go to the family, friends, and communities affected by the murder of Trayvon Martin and other instances of legalized Lynchings and state sanctioned murder. We cannot return Trayvon Martin into the arms of his family, but the practices which led to this sadness and cruelty, such as “stand your ground” and racial profiling, have to stop before additional lives are taken!

Both the state sanctioned murder of Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman’s acquittal should not be seen without the larger context of white supremacy and racism. We need to look at government policies that spread suspicion and fear, and actively recruit community members to act upon their suspicions. The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition has been exposing, raising awareness and organizing against policies that promote violence against those considered “suspicious”. The “See Something, Say Something” messages and Los Angeles Police Department’s (LAPD) iWATCH program often lead to “Do Something”, much like “Stand Your Ground” provided cover for Zimmerman’s actions. Driven by concept of behavioral profiling, iWATCH and similar Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) programs are a grave threat to our communities, which often result in harassment, intimidation, threats and physical violence.

We see people like George Zimmerman, a self-appointed “defender of communities”, empowered to engage in overt racial profiling to stop “suspicious persons” engaging in “suspicious behavior.”

This is not just a moment in time but a continuation of history. Many of these policies have their origins in the policing of Black bodies when legal slavery was abolished in this country, in 1865. These policies have always disproportionately targeted Black people and communities of African descent. The LAPD Inspector General’s report released in March 2013 highlighted racial profiling deeply embedded in these policies. The report used a 4 month sample of race data which showed the highest numbers of SARs were filed on African Americans; overall data showed 82% of SARs were filed on non-whites.

We echo the statement by coalition member organization the Youth Justice Coalition, “We have to recognize that these are not isolated incidents, but rather tragedies part of an overall destructive and dehumanizing force of unchecked, licensed power by law enforcement and the criminal in-justice system that systematically inflicts violence and pain upon people of color and destroys public safety in our communities across the United States.”

We can fight the perverse politics of repression and surveillance by rescinding LAPD Special Order 1; iWATCH; and other policies which further criminalize our communities. Will we Sleep or Will we Fight? The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition invites you to fight…We can win!

For more information on Stop LAPD Spying Coalition visit www.stoplapdspying.org and read the Peoples’ Audit of LAPD Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR). You can also visit LA CAN to learn more.

Black August was started by Black prisoners to commemorate George Jackson and all Black Freedom Fighters (like Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, and Marcus Garvey) who fought for liberation of all oppressed people. The month celebrates various dates and events important to Black Liberation that occurred in August. During the month, people make person sacrifices or commitments to improve themselves and their community.

What are you willing to do to better yourself and/or the Skid Row Community?

Earl
I am willing to do whatever it takes to better myself - that means change. Change comes from new knowledge and new awareness, which means growth. When I grow, my community grows with me.

Tony
I am willing to help people know their property rights and to be an advocate for those living in the community.

Ray
I will share with the Black man and woman who we are and where we come from - from the ancient Kemet and beyond. So each of us can have a sense of connection with our past.

Ryan
I am dedicated to learn, to love, and to respect my people more - especially the residents of the Downtown Skid Row community. I will continue to show my brothers and sisters compassion, mercy, and genuine human kindness - and will continue to fight for the people.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION | AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2013
THE GIFT OF PEACE
WRITTEN BY TABIA SALIMU

Patience, Perseverance and Prosperity have guided me thus far along this journey of Life as a Spiritual Being.

Having a Human experience as a Mom and Child of God.

I recall yearning for an African name; a vibration I could proudly embrace and benefit as an affirmation to further my goals of obtaining Peace, Acceptance, and Salvation.

The gift of Peace resonates in my heart as a warm blanket-snuggle-hug. It smells like rain, and feels like a coat of armor. It’s sweet and slightly pungent taste excites my taste buds kicking in a flare of exhilaration as I successfully tackle my “to do” lists and triumph yet another obstacle and challenge Life faces me with.

In recent years, a diabetic diagnosis devastated me in the knowing a 2-3 mango breakfast was out of the question; that even a simple glass of juice, would be a distant past memory. Though brief in its devastation stages, rendering me to adopt an alternative dietary itinerary, I recall yearning for an African name; a vibration I could proudly embrace and benefit as an affirmation to further my goals of obtaining Peace, Acceptance, and Salvation.

The work of Team Food is expanding, so we are looking to get more community residents involved. We will be holding an infor-

mational brunch on Thursday, August 22 at 10:30 am at LA CAN (530 S. Main St.) for all those interested in gardening and/or fight-

ing for more access to affordable, healthy food.

For more information, contact Deborah or Eric at (530 S. Main St.) for all those interested in gardening and/or fighting for more access to affordable, healthy food.

The Kingdom of God
WRITTEN BY CAROLYN SCHAUERGARD

Jesus said blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God. So that’s what skid row where I live is – the kingdom of God. They don’t want much.

THE VOICE, THE PULSE, OF OUR VILLAGE

INVITE A FOE FOR TEA
- A Candid Look at Depression
WRITTEN BY CARMEN VEGA

A friend texted me recently that she was “battling” depression. That week, I heard others express similar sentiments: “I’m fighting depression,” “I’m struggling with depression,” and “depression has got me down!” I was struck. This is a natural emotion. So why does it seem like we’re going to war with ourselves when feeling depressed?

I texted my friend back: “Why don’t you invite depression in for tea, and see what it got to say?” This seemed a better option than to assign an adversarial role that invites a possibility of losing our “battles” with depression. Facing my own level of sadness, I decided to search for a way to change the paradigm - to frame depression in a way other than a struggle, fight, or battle.

According to Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and writer David Kessler, authors of “On Grief and Grieving,” depression is a stage of the grieving process. Here are the steps of grieving:

1. Denial: Denial helps us to pace our feelings of grief. It is nature’s way of letting in only as much as we can handle.
2. Anger: Underneath anger is pain, your pain. It is natural to feel desert-ed and abandoned. Anger is strength and it can be an anchor, giving temporary structure to the nothingness of loss.
3. Bargaining: “Please God, I will never be angry at my wife again if you’ll just let her live.” Bargaining may form the take of a temporary true: “What if I devote the rest of my life to helping others? Then can I wake up and realize this has all been a bad dream?”
4. Depression: After bargaining, our attention moves squarely into the present. Empty feelings and grief enter our lives on a deeper level. It is the appropriate response to a great loss. We withdraw from life, left in a fog of intense sadness. Why go on at all? To not experience depression is to not experience the appropriate response to a great loss. We withdraw from life, left in a fog of intense sadness. Why go on at all? To not experience depression after a loved one dies, for example, would be unusual.
5. Acceptance: Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being “all right” or “OK” with what has happened. But most people don’t ever feel OK about the loss of a loved one. We try to live in a world where our loved one is missing. Learn to reorganize roles, re-assign them or take them on ourselves. Instead of denying our feelings, we need to listen to our needs, to change, grow, evolve...

Depression invites us to step into the present, and while it is a painful task, when we allow it in or “invite it in for tea,” it may have the road map we need to continue living productively.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rembering our Sista Soldier,
Ms. Barbara Rowe
WRITTEN BY STEVE DIAZ

It is with extreme sadness that we announce the passing of a long-term LA CAN member and community leader, Barbara Rowe, who left us in July.

Many of us came to know Barbara in 2005 when LA CAN was organizing a tenant committee in the Alexandria Hotel to oppose a proposed redevelopment project that would have displaced the hundreds of longtime extremely low-income tenants in that building. She became an active member and worked for more than three years to ensure the redevelopment project was revised to include and protect current tenants, and later to support legal actions that held the owner and the Community Redevelopment Agency accountable to their contractual agreements.

Barbara would also be the first person to greet people in the lobby, elevator and other meetings with a smile, a hug, and words of love and encouragement. She loved LA CAN, and we loved her.

More recently, Barbara moved to an affordable senior housing complex in Culver City. But she never stopped being active in fights to protect low-income people in Downtown LA and throughout Los Angeles. She often took long bus rides from Culver City to LA CAN and other housing related meetings and, when she couldn’t, she would call the office to ask for updates about Downtown and the latest in city-wide housing issues.

Barbara will be missed by everyone in the community – those who knew her and those who benefitted from her community organizing. She will be especially missed by all of us at LA CAN.

Marguerite Casey Foundation Announces LA CAN’s Sean Gregory as a 2013 Sargent Shriver Youth Warriors Against Poverty Award Winner

Marguerite Casey Foundation is pleased to announce 25-year-old Sean Gregory of Los Angeles as one of 14 young persons to receive the second annual Sargent Shriver Youth Warriors Against Poverty Leadership Award. Mr. Gregory is being honored for his vision, passion and dedication to improving the lives of families in his community.

Mr. Gregory was nominated for the foundation’s Youth Warriors Against Poverty Award by Equal Voice for Southern California Families, a network of grassroots organizations working with low-income families. He serves on the civil rights and recruitment committees of the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) and has contributed to policy victories such as changes to Los Angeles Police Department’s Special Order 11, changes that resulted in a significant reduction in the list of activities that can be classified as suspicious and then entered into a national security database. He has also spoken at the women-led Take Back the Night event on the role of young men in ending violence against women.

Whether speaking about civil rights, helping young people gain access to good jobs, or organizing youth in their communities, each of the 14 Sargent Shriver Youth Warriors Against Poverty Award winners has a unique and inspiring story that Marguerite Casey Foundation hopes to share with other youth and communities. Each is a local hero whose work is a powerful example of Sargent Shriver’s call to “serve, serve, serve!”

LOSA NG ES COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK presents

SEPTEMBER 2ND
14TH ANNUAL LABOR DAY GALA 2013
BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH SOLIDARITY AND STRUGGLE

MAIN ST.
BETWEEN 5TH AND 6TH
11:00 - 3:00 PM

Talent Show
PRIZES
Games

Free Food

For more info call 213-298-0094
Current time limit to confinement in Security Housing Units (SHUs). There is no daily in cramped, windowless cells called Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation confinement policies of the California State Prison in 102 degree heat on July 13.

In a show of solidarity with the prisoners, more than 100 people – amongst them family members of the prisoners and other supporters - demonstrated in front of the Ronald Reagan State Office Building in Downtown Los Angeles the same day the strike commenced. In addition, more than 400 people from across the State converged on Corcoran State Prison in 102 degree heat on July 13.

Some of the prisoners are serving indeterminate terms in SHUs of more than 10 years. There are stories of men being held in solitary confinement for 15 years, 20 years, and even 30 consecutive years. This is one of the reasons why the security housing units at Pelican Bay Prison in Northern California are the subject of a lawsuit alleging that the living conditions — which include confinement to the cells for 23 hours a day and very little contact with other people — amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.

The hunger strikers are asking the CDCR to meet their five core demands that the hunger strikers and supporters say are reasonable and that have been implemented in other state and federal correctional institutions across the nation. These five core demands are: 1. Eliminate group punishments and administrative abuse; 2. Abolish the debriefing policy and modify active/inactive gang status criteria; 3. Comply with the recommendations of the US Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons remove and end long-term solitary confinement; 4. Provide adequate and nutritious food; 5. Create and expand constructive programming.

Since the strike commenced, an estimated 30,000 prisoners have refused their meals. And as the strike has endured, support for the prisoners has grown across the country – with actions being held everywhere from Seattle to Pennsylvania.

On July 31, hunger strikers’ supporters in Los Angeles held a press conference and rally in front of the Downtown federal building. Amongst them were family members of confined people, actors Danny Glover and Mike Farrell, Global Women’s Strike, LA CAN, and many more. Jay Leno has also begun to support the hunger strikers and their demands.

At the time of printing, actions are being planned for San Quentin State Prison, Colton Prison, and Men’s Central Jail in Los Angeles.

If you would like to get involved in these and other solidarity actions, contact Bilal Ali at 213.228.0024. For more information visit Prison Hunger Strike Solidarity on Facebook.