Efforts to Pass the Discriminatory Community Care Facilities Ordinance Fail!

WRITTEN BY JESSE BUENROSTRO AND BECKY DENNISON

On January 30, 2013, the Los Angeles City Council’s agenda included a recommendation to enact the Community Care Facilities Ordinance (CCFO). This proposed ordinance would have unfairly restricted and eliminated shared housing options in LA, increasing homelessness and segregation in our communities. Councilmember Mitch Englander, the lead proponent of the CCFO, was not able to secure the votes to pass this discriminatory ordinance. However, instead of outright voting the ordinance down, the Council did not vote and instead created a “working group” to return with revised recommendations within 90 days.

The January Council meeting followed years of public hearings and community organizing against the CCFO. More than 160 diverse organizations – non-profits, business organizations, neighborhood councils, faith-based organizations, landlord associations and others – were opposed to the ordinance and worked together to defeat it. Continued on page 7

Meeting Mr. O’Dell, Unsung Civil Rights Hero

WRITTEN BY PETE WHITE

In November 2012 I had the opportunity to share a lectern with Mr. Jack O’Dell. Jack O’Dell was serving as a respondent (book critic) to LA CAN’s book entitled, Freedom Now: Struggles for the Human Right to Housing in LA and Beyond, at the Social Science History Association meeting in Canada. Without doubt, it was one of those moments that will forever transform my understanding of why this work is crucial; how this work must be accomplished; and, the need to create a system of inter-generational transfer of ethos and information.

In order to fully appreciate this article the Community Connection reader must understand who Mr. Jack O’Dell is and all that he has accomplished. We would need an entire library to fully describe his efforts and impacts. Continued on page 4

Suggested Minimum Donation $1
Long-time tenants have worked for more than 10 years to ensure the Rosslyn Hotel was protected from loft conversion, brought up to health and safety codes, and now will be improved and preserved as affordable housing for at least 55 years. The process for building rehabilitation is now moving forward.

In December 2012, tenants of the Rosslyn Hotel received documents from the owner, SRO Housing Corporation, which included the Tenant Habitability Plan (THP). A Housing Department requirement, the THP is a document that is created by the owner and given to tenants documenting any major rehabilitation that is planned for a building. The THP informs tenants of the type of construction work to be performed and the expected impacts it will have on tenants. After receiving this notice, tenants had 15 days to inform the owner if they wish to apply for permanent relocation funds. They also had 15 days to file for an appeal to Housing Department regarding the content of the THP. As far as LA CAN members know, no appeals were filed and the construction as guided by the THP will begin in February.

Tenants are NOT required to vacate the building. Tenants need to be aware of their relocation options and should have already communicated their decision about permanent or temporary relocation to building management or the Shober Consulting group. Shober Consulting has opened an office on the second floor if tenants wish to come to speak with them about any concerns they may have about their relocation plans and/or payment. Tenants can also contact LA CAN if they have any questions or concerns with the relocation process as well.

This is a friendly reminder for tenants of the Cecil Hotel that you only need to pay 85% of your rent until the building is released from the City’s Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP). The building was placed into the REAP program for not fixing habitability issues, such as adequate heat, in a timely manner. The benefit for residents under REAP is that tenants receive rent reductions – in the case of the Cecil tenants received a 15 percent rent reduction. Furthermore, if the tenant pays their rent directly to the Housing Department it goes into a trust account which the landlord cannot access until the city removes the building from REAP. Tenants can also pay 85% of their rent directly to the owners/managers, but LA CAN recommends you pay your rent to the Housing Department. For more information about this program you can contact LA CAN.

Tenants in residential hotels have some of the strongest tenant protections in the City of Los Angeles. Yes! That is right. For more than 10 years, LA CAN members have organized in the community to ensure residential hotel policies were improved and/or enacted and continue to work to ensure these rights are upheld for everyone.

Among many tenant rights under numerous City and State laws, below are only a couple of basic rights residential hotel tenants should know about. But these are only a few of your rights – we encourage you to attend LA CAN’s housing committee to learn more and/or keep reading the Community Connection!

1. Residential hotels throughout the City are protected under the City’s Residential Hotel Unit Conversion and Demolition Ordinance. This means they cannot be converted or demolished unless the units are 100% replaced, at rent levels affordable to the existing tenants. For example, this means that if an owner sells your building, the new owner cannot evict or ask people to move because he wants to convert the building to upscale lofts or to serve other tenants. If you aren’t sure whether your building is covered by this ordinance, visit LA CAN.

2. Tenants have the right to live in housing that is up to code with no health and safety violations. Residential hotels were placed under the Housing Department’s Systematic Code Enforcement Program several years ago, joining other rental housing that is covered under this program. If there is a health and safety issue in a rental unit or building, tenants can file a complaint with the Los Angeles Housing Department at 1-866-557-RENT, or come to LA CAN for assistance.

El Hotel Rosslyn

Los inquilinos de largo plazo han trabajado durante más de 10 años para garantizar que el Hotel Rosslyn se proteja contra la conversión a vivienda de lujo (los “lofts”), que cumpla con los códigos de salud y seguridad, y hoy será mejorado y preservado como vivienda económica por nada menos que 55 años. El proceso para rehabilitar el edificio se está moviendo hacia adelante.

En diciembre del 2012, los inquilinos del Hotel Rosslyn recibieron documentos de parte del propietario, SRO Housing Corporation, que incluían el Plan de Habitabilidad Para el Inquilino (THP por sus siglas en Inglés). Como un requisito del Departamento de Vivienda de la Ciudad, el THP es un documento que es elaborado por el propietario y que se le da a los inquilinos para documentar cualquier rehabilitación mayor que está prevista para un edificio. El THP les informa a los inquilinos del tipo de construcción/trabajo que se va a realizar y los impactos previstos para los inquilinos. Después de haber recibido esta notificación, los inquilinos tendrán 15 días para informarle al propietario si deseaban aceptar fondos para reubicarse permanentemente. También tendrán 15 días para presentar una apelación al Departamento de Vivienda con respecto al contenido del THP.

En cuanto saben los miembros de LA CAN, no se han archivado apelaciones y la construcción según descrita en el THP se iniciará en Febrero.

Los inquilinos no tienen que desocupar del edificio. Los inquilinos tienen que ser conscientes de sus opciones de reubicación y ya deberían de haber comunicado su decisión acerca de la reubicación permanente o temporal a la administración del edificio o al grupo de Consultoría Shober. Shober Consulting ha abierto una oficina en el segundo piso si los inquilinos desean ir a hablar con ellos acerca de cualquier preocupación que puedan tener sobre sus planes de reubicación y/o sobre el pago. Los inquilinos también pueden contactar LA CAN si tienen alguna pregunta o preocupación con el proceso de reubicación.

El Hotel Cecil

Este es un recordatorio para los inquilinos del Hotel Cecil que ustedes sólo tendrán que pagar el 85% de su renta hasta que el edificio se remueva del programa municipal Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP). El edificio fue colocado en el programa REAP porque el dueño no solucionó los problemas de habitabilidad de una manera puntual, tales como la falta de calefacción adecuada. El beneficio que tienen los residentes bajo el programa REAP es que ellos reciben una reducción en la renta - en el caso de los inquilinos del Hotel Cecil, la reducción a la renta fue del 15 por ciento. Además, si el inquilino le paga su renta directamente al Departamento de Vivienda, ese dinero entra a una cuenta de fideicomiso la cual el propietario no puede acceder hasta que la Ciudad remueva el edificio del programa REAP. Los inquilinos también pueden pagar el 85% de su renta directamente al propietario/gerente, pero LA CAN recomienda pagar su renta al Departamento de Vivienda. Para obtener más información sobre este programa puede comunicarse con LA CAN.

Conozca Sus Derechos -Los Inquilinos de los Hoteles Residenciales Tienen las Mejores Protecciones en Los Angeles

Los inquilinos viviendo en los hoteles residenciales tienen algunas de las protecciones de los inquilinos más fuentes en la Ciudad de Los Ángeles. Sí. Eso es correcto. Durante más de 10 años, los miembros de LA CAN se han organizado en la comunidad para asegurar que la política de los hoteles residenciales fuera mejorada y/o aprobada y continúan trabajando para asegurar que estos derechos sean respetados para todos.

Entre los derechos de los inquilinos bajo numerosas leyes municipales y estatales, a continuación encontrará sólo algunos de los derechos fundamentales que los inquilinos de los hoteles residenciales deben de conocer. Pero estos son solamente algunos de sus derechos - lo invitamos a asistir al comité de vivienda de LA CAN para obtener más información y/o que siga leyendo el Community Connection!

1. Los hoteles residenciales a lo largo de la ciudad están protegidos bajo la Ordenanza de la Conversión y Demolicion de las Unidades en los Hoteles Residenciales de Los Ángeles. Esto significa que pueden ser convertidos o demolidos a menos que las unidades sean reemplazadas por un 100% y a los mismos niveles de renta para los inquilinos actuales. Por ejemplo, esto significa que si un propietario vende su edificio, el nuevo propietario no puede desalojar o pedirle a la gente a moverse porque quiere convertir el edificio a vivienda de lujo (los “lofts”) o para servirle a otros inquilinos. Si no está seguro si su edificio está cubierto por esta ordenanza, visite a LA CAN.

2. Los inquilinos tienen el derecho a vivir en viviendas que cumplan con todos los códigos y sin ninguna violación a los códigos de seguridad y salud. Los hoteles residenciales fueron colocados en el programa del Departamento de Vivienda de inspecciones sistemáticas para hacer cumplir el código (CEP por sus siglas en Inglés) hace varios años, uniéndose a las otras viviendas de alquiler que están cubiertas bajo este programa. Si hay una cuestión de salud y seguridad en una unidad de alquiler, o en un edificio, los inquilinos pueden presentar una queja ante el Departamento de Vivienda de Los Ángeles por llamar a 1-866-557-RENT, o venir a LA CAN para obtener ayuda.
Housing is a Human Right Updates

WRITTEN THELMY PEREZ | PHOTO BY WARREN HILL

Public Housing Committee - Trash Fee Campaign Going Strong

In January, the LA Human Right to Housing Collective won “class” status for all of LA’s public housing residents in a lawsuit against the Housing Authority of LA (HACLA). The newly certified class action lawsuit against HACLA is an important step towards victory by the Collective’s Public Housing Committee who launched their campaign to end the expensive trash fee collection and validation in early 2012. Even though their contracts state that HACLA is financially responsible for the trash service, public housing residents have had to pay the expensive fees for years. “This is great news which happens to validate what we already knew- HACLA’s bad policy decisions harm all public housing tenants,” said class representative Marco Galindo. In December, the Collective submitted over 1,000 postcards signed by residents from several public housing communities asking HACLA to settle the trash issue. All public housing residents should expect to receive notice of the class action lawsuit at the end of February.

Rent Control Reform & The Mayoral Debates

Over the last few months, the Collective’s Rent Control Committee members have followed the Mayoral candidate’s debates to monitor their positions on housing and homelessness and, in particular, on the lack of affordable housing and the steady loss of rent controlled units. As it stands, over half of affordable housing and the steady loss of rent controlled units. As it stands, over half of affordable housing and the steady loss of rent controlled and affordable housing revealed that nearly one in every three renter households in Los Angeles are “severely rent burdened,” meaning that they are putting more than half of the household income towards rent alone. In addition, LA is well known as being the nation’s “homeless capital,” with over 51,000 human beings living on the street. We want to know what concrete steps our Mayoral candidates propose to address this crisis but unfortunately, we have not heard any such plan short of both Mr. Garcetti and Ms. Greuel’s claim that they will end homelessness if elected- something no LA Mayor has succeeded in doing. In short, LA is in the midst of a fully fledged housing crisis, and we deserve a Mayor who will LEAD on the issues that matter most to the citizens of LA- the vast majority of whom either rent their homes, or don’t have one at all.

Despite the shocking indifference by our Mayoral candidates towards the housing crisis, on February 13, when pressed by a group of tenants who are leading on housing by resisting the demolition of their rent-controlled housing, candidate Jan Perry agreed to address the housing crisis by publicly supporting the tenants call for the preservation and expansion of rent controlled and affordable housing and the reform and expansion of the City’s Rent Stabilization Ordinance as concrete steps towards ending LA’s housing and homelessness crisis.

Since 2005, the tenants, whose building is located at 2913 S. Flower Street, just one block north of Perry’s campaign office, have been organizing to resist and defeat the efforts by their landlord to evict all the long term tenants and convert their 33 unit, rent controlled building to student-only housing. In a lawsuit they brought forth in 2007, the tenants charged that this effort was discriminatory and violated the Fair Housing Act. Eventually, that lawsuit was settled and the evictions stopped.

Yet given the building’s close proximity to USC, the newly constructed Expo Line across the street and the boom of luxury and student housing development, they are now facing a new threat. Student housing developer, Symphony Development, is in the process of buying the property and has already approached the tenants about leaving their homes in exchange for relocation funds.

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Actualizaciones de Vivienda es un Derecho Humano

ESCRITO POR THELMY PEREZ
FOTO POR WARREN HILL

COMITÉ DE VIVIENDA PÚBLICA-LA CAMPAÑA DE LA BASURA SIGUE FUERTE:

En enero, la Colectiva Pro el Derecho Humano a la Vivienda ganó el estatuto de “clase” para todos los residentes de viviendas públicas de Los Ángeles en una demanda contra la Autoridad de Vivienda de Los Ángeles (HACLA). La nueva certificada demanda de acción de clase contra HACLA se ve como un paso importante hacia la victoria por el Comité de Vivienda PÚBLICA de la Colectiva que lanzó su campaña para poner fin a las tarifas por la recolección de basura a principios de 2012.

A pesar de que sus contratos de alquiler establecen que HACLA es financieramente responsable por ese servicio de basura, los residentes de viviendas públicas han tenido que pagar las costosas tarifas durante años. “Esta es una gran noticia, que pasa a validar lo que ya sabíamos: las malas decisiones en las políticas de HACLA nos hace daño a todos los inquilinos de vivienda pública,” dijo el representante de la clase Marco Galindo. En Diciembre, la Colectiva le presentó a HACLA más de 1,000 tarjetas postales firmadas por los residentes de varias comunidades de vivienda pública pidiéndole que resuelva el problema de la basura. Todos los residentes de vivienda pública deben de esperar a recibir la notificación de la demanda de acción de clase a finales de Febrero.

A pesar de que los candidatos a alcalde estaban dispuestos a abordar la crisis de vivienda, el 13 de febrero, presionada por un grupo de inquilinos que se resisten a la demolición de su vivienda de renta controlada, candidato Jan Perry acordó abordar la crisis de vivienda por públicamente apoyarlos en su llamada por la preservación y ampliación de vivienda económica y bajo control de rentas y la reforma y ampliación de la Ordenanza de Estabilización de Rentas de la Ciudad como medidas concretas para poner fin a la crisis de vivienda y de falta de vivienda.

Desde 2005, los inquilinos, cuyo edificio está ubicado en 2913 S. Flower Street, a una cuadra al norte de la oficina de campaña de Perry, se han organizado para resistir y desafiar a los esfuerzos de su propietario para desalojar a todos los inquilinos de largo plazo y convertir su edificio de 33 unidades bajo control de rentas a vivienda únicamente para estudiantes. En una demanda que archivaron en el año 2007, los inquilinos denunciaron que ese esfuerzo era discriminatorio y violaba la Ley de Vivienda Justa. Con el tiempo, esa demanda se resolvió y se detuvieron los desalojos. Sin embargo, debido a la proximidad del edificio a la USC, la nueva Línea Expo frente al edificio, y la construcción de viviendas de lujo y para estudiantes, ahora ellos se enfrenta a una nueva amenaza. Construidores de vivienda exclusivamente para estudiantes, la empresa Symphony Development está en el proceso de comprar la propiedad y se ha acercado a los inquilinos pidiéndoles que desalojen de sus apartamentos a cambio de fondos de reubicación.
Meeting Mr. O’Dell

However, I will attempt to pen a summary that gives you a bit of the flavor.

Mr. O’Dell is one of the unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Movement but whose influence still reigns today. His experiences date back to World War II as a U.S. Merchant Marine, followed by his anti-racist organizing in the National Maritime Union and in the Jim Crow South of the 1940’s and 1950’s. As if that was not enough, Jack also served as a trusted advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., working closely with him on voter registration campaigns, the poor people’s campaign, and anti-war and international solidarity efforts.

Jack O’Dell was also the editor of Freedomways, the leading African-American theoretical, political and cultural journal of the 1960s–1980s, featuring the works of literary titans such as James Baldwin, W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, African liberation leaders Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah, and the work of three Nobel Prize laureates.

At first glance Mr. O’Dell, at 89-years young, comes across as a small framed and unassuming elder. He is not in search of the limelight or status. His voice need not bellow across the room to assert his presence. Instead, his presence suggested that he was there to listen, to learn, and, if asked, to share a story. His entire response to Freedom Now was told utilizing stories of global struggles dating back to the 1920’s. He seamlessly connected his ideological framework to concrete examples of organizing and activism that changed the material conditions of workers (broadly defined) and communities.

Mr. O’Dell pointed to the relevance of those historical battles and instructed attendees where we needed to look to fully understand today’s context. At almost 90-years of age it appeared that very little has been forgotten and that the fire and hunger for justice and today’s context. At almost 90-years of age it appeared that very little has been forgotten and that the fire and hunger for justice and international solidarity efforts.

he made the room laugh when doing so—the true mark of a great storyteller is well-placed humor.

Personally, my introduction and fellowship with Jack O’Dell was a truly transformative experience. The impact of the stories he shared jolted me on numerous levels. They helped me understand why I fight this fight. They highlighted the intense study that is needed to understand the global context; our fight is a global fight. They affirmed that our current strategies and tactics, while criticized by many, are in fact correct and similar to the struggles used to historically secure civil and economic rights in the US and abroad. Lastly, they made me acutely aware of what is lost when we are not intentional about passing the baton of knowledge throughout successive generations.

This last point moved me on a number of levels and I’m clear that an investment must be made to secure our stories. It is my hope that I will visit with Jack O’Dell in the near future and absorb all that he has to offer. In our culture we’ve been taught to follow and admire spokespersons of our movements, most oftentimes leading to the demise of those individuals and our movements. During this month of Black stories I encourage us all to dig just a bit deeper and find more of the Jack O’Dells amongst us.

Gladys Park and San Julian Park were recently scheduled to be closed. Funding was found at the last minute to keep them open for another 6 months. But this isn’t a long term solution.

How do you feel about the status of Skid Row parks? What you do to improve the situation? Any thoughts on how to improve the parks?

G.R.E.

“I think these parks should stay open for people who want to utilize it in a lawful manner. I enjoy playing cards and conversating with my friends. These are the only parks in the area.”

Mark

“They’re opening up parks in other parts of the city, and in other parts of Downtown too. So I know they have money somewhere for these parks. Also, the parks need to stay open longer so people can enjoy them.”

Carmen

“I feel it’s a shame if they should close the parks. While there are areas where drugs may be transacted, there are also great events held there, such as the Skid Row Arts Festival at Gladys Park and Father’s Day in the Park at San Julian Park.”

Leroy

“Where would they have people go? People use those parks to get out, get fresh air, meet people, play cards with family and friends. They don’t let us stay on the sidewalks, so if we don’t have the parks, where do they want us to go? And they got the money. They just want it for middle class people - they don’t want to use their money for homeless people.”
COMMUNITY CONNECTION | FEBRUARY - MARCH 2013

COMMUNITY HEALTH

**LA CAN’s Team Food Works Toward EBT Access in Farmer’s Markets, Community Garden Council in 2013**

**WRITTEN BY ERIC ARES**

After years of successful gardening and anti-hunger policy advocacy, LA CAN’s Team Food Committee is aiming to take the next steps in improving community health and access to fresh food for Downtown’s low-income and homeless residents in 2013.

As in years past, members on the committee will continue work with our statewide partners to push state lawmakers to lift the ban on CalFresh (Food Stamps) for those convicted of past drug sales offenses. Team Food will also be focusing a lot more on organizing strategies to address local issues that market.

Community health through improving our access to good food. All are welcome to join us in the collective effort of improving community health through improving our access to good food. All are welcome to join us in trying to make Skid Row a healthier, more nutritious community. Team Food meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 am at LA CAN (530 S. Main St.).

**SAVETIME THE DATE!!!**

Downtown Women’s Action Coalition Presents...

**The Vagina Monologues**

Written by Eve Ensler

The Monologues featured in this play relate to love, sex, and other mysteries, struggles and triumphs of women

All proceeds go to the Downtown Women’s Action Coalition (DWAC). DWAC’s vision is to establish a collective voice that communicates the strength and power of women in the Downtown LA community.

**Thursday, February 21, 2013**

**Friday, February 22, 2013**

Doors Open at 6:30 -- Show Starts at 7:00 PM

Vortex Theatre, 2341 E. Olympic Blvd (at Santa Fe)

General Admission $25
Low Income Residents $10
Group Rate 5 for $50
To R.S.V.P. please contact: BeckyD@council.org

A dance at DTLA Rising Against Street Harassment, an event at Pershing Square on February 14 as part of One Billion Rising. One Billion Rising is a global day of action to end violence against women and girls during which one billion women and men joined in solidarity to rise and dance. The purpose: to shake the world into a new consciousness and stop the violence. For more info, visit onebillionrising.org.

women of all backgrounds) that relate to love, sex, and other mysteries, struggles and triumphs of all women. In addition to being a fundraiser, for many women in the Downtown LA area, this is an important way to bring awareness to their experiences of violence, struggle, survival, and perseverance.

“I’m involved with the Vagina Monologues celebration because I am my sister’s keeper,” said Janine Betts, one of the performers. “I must assist women that have been abused, misused, disfigured or battered. So I am going to lend myself to help my sisters by any means necessary with all that I have to give. GIRL ROCK!”

**DWAC presents The Vagina Monologues**

**WRITTEN BY DEBORAH BURTON**

The vision of the Downtown Women’s Action Coalition (DWAC) is to establish a collective voice that communicates the strength and power of women in our community and to build a community that goes beyond service, one that values women, promotes women’s rights, acknowledges and support women’s experiences, includes diverse women leaders, and has adequate housing.

To help achieve this vision, DWAC needs resources. This is why every year DWAC hosts a fundraiser to raise funds that go to continue the much needed work with and for the women and girls of the Skid Row community.

This year the women of DWAC will be bringing back their always powerful and impressive performance of Eve Ensler’s Vagina Monologues. The Vagina Monologues is a worldwide sensation that feature monologues (based on real interviews with real stories, includes diverse women leaders, and has adequate housing.

**Community Garden**

The first convening was held on Thursday, February 7, and it was a huge success - with farmers and gardeners from the Cobb Apartments, Las Americas, 7th/San Julian and LA CAN attending. We will be meeting again next month to see how we can work together to garden in and around Skid Row.

After conducting some visits, community residents learned that the Spring Street. Farmer’s Market is the one Downtown market with EBT access. Team Food members are also now working with the market organizers in Pershing Square and Council Member Huizar’s Office to get EBT machines at that market. The next steps will be getting Food Stamp access in City Hall Farmer’s Market and the new market which will be opening up soon in Grand Park.

Team Food will also be expanding its gardening work by establishing a “Skid Row Community Garden Council.” The idea is simple: There are a number of community gardens and gardeners in Skid Row. Why not collaborate together - sharing skills, resources, and experiences - to help green the community as well as provide fresh locally grown fruits, vegetables, and flowers? The first convening was held on Thursday, February 7, and it was a huge success - with gardeners from the Cobb Apartments, Las Americas, 7th/San Julian and LA CAN attending. We will be meeting again next month to see how we can work together to garden in and around Skid Row.

These are just a few of the plans Team Food has in the works for 2013. Growing fresh vegetables, organizing for EBT access in Farmer’s Markets, continuing our anti-hunger policy advocacy - all are part of the collective effort of improving community health through improving our access to good food. All are welcome to join us in trying to make Skid Row a healthier, more nutritious community. Team Food meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 am at LA CAN (530 S. Main St.).

**THE VOICE, THE PULSE, OF OUR VILLAGE**

A dance at DTLA Rising Against Street Harassment, an event at Pershing Square on February 14 as part of One Billion Rising. One Billion Rising is a global day of action to end violence against women and girls during which one billion women and men joined in solidarity to rise and dance. The purpose: to shake the world into a new consciousness and stop the violence. For more info, visit onebillionrising.org.
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Instead of Pointing Fingers at Homeless Residents, Let’s Solve These Problems:

Improvement Districts (BIDs). Why not in Skid Row? Why doesn’t the City of Los Angeles have adequate trash cans and regularly scheduled city weekly trash pickup? We’re not sure – yet – but LA CAN members are committed to solving this problem.

For years, community residents have taken on the task of cleaning up the streets themselves. This is LAPD and mainstream media would have dismissed him as a “mad man” or “bad apple” – an isolated case. How ironic is it that it had to happen from within, by an exceptional cop being trained by the oppressors of whom he was part – until he was punished for being a whistleblower, and cast out from the elite. “To be targeted because of what you are... that is absolutely terrifying,” said Chief Beck to the club, Charlie. Welcome to the club, Charlie.

We cannot and do not condone the taking of innocent life. However, we cannot simply dismiss him as a “mad man” or “bad apple” as LAPD and mainstream media would have done.

Don’t Believe the Hype! Dorner the Latest to Highlight LAPD Corruption

WRITTEN BY LA CAN

In early February ex-LAPD Officer Christopher Dorner captured the attention of the entire country by becoming the latest in a long string of whistleblowers who expose LAPD corruption and injustice.

We cannot and do not condone the taking of innocent life. However, we cannot simply dismiss him as a “mad man” or “bad apple” as LAPD and mainstream media would have done.

Activist and Write Ruth Fowler put it well when she said, “I’m not a violent person, and I do not support gratuitous violence in any form. This includes, but is not limited to, street violence and police violence. I do, however, support the idea of justice and of self defense, particularly given the lack of both of these rights under the current system. It’s not hard to see that when a group of oppressors suddenly become the prey in much the same way as they have preyed upon the most vulnerable and under-privileged members of society, that the oppressed feel vindicated. The oppressed feel that justice is finally being dealt. The oppressed feel that there is some form of defense happening. The irony is, of course, that it had to happen from within, by an exceptional cop gone rogue, by a brilliant and deadly human being trained by the oppressors of whom he was part – until he was punished for being a whistleblower, and cast out from the elite.” “To be targeted because of what you are... that is absolutely terrifying,” said Chief Beck as the Dorner saga unfolded. How ironic is this coming from a man in charge of an department that has profiled and targeted poor black and brown communities for decades.

Now that Dorner is (reportedly) dead, much work to be done. For example, besides the basic solutions of providing trash cans and collection and ensuring adequate bathroom access, LA CAN members have also suggested that residents be involved in these solutions and jobs (or at least stipends) could be provided to low-income and homeless residents as a dual benefit.

LA CAN’s Civil Rights committee will continue to work on these issues and update the broader community through the Community Connection. However, it’s everyone’s responsibility to stand up and get involved. If we don’t say anything - who’s gonna say it? If we don’t stand up - who’s gonna stand up for us? And if we don’t fight, who’s gonna fight for us? Together we stand, divided we die!

Come join other community residents every Monday at 1:00 PM at LA CAN where we’ll be discussing numerous health and public safety issues, including the policing and occupation of Skid Row… ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

As seen in this photo, many residents and other Skid Row stakeholders keep the streets clean. However, without any trash cans, people are left to leave even bagged trash on the curb.
En vez de ponerles dedo a los residentes sin techo, resolvamos estos simples problemas!

¿Qué podría algo, sobre las necesidades básicas tales como el acceso a los BANOS Y LA recolección de BASURA?

ESCRITO POR GENERAL DOGON Y KARL SCOTT

Los residentes, tanto alojados y sin hogar, así como los compradores y otros visitantes al Centro, se han quejado de la falta de baños públicos y basureros en la comunidad de Skid Row, y los temas relacionados con la salud que esto representa. Estas quejas fueron validadas por el Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de Los Ángeles en su informe de mayo 2010 que recomendó la ciudad, entre otras cosas, “Proporcione baños públicos adicionales particularmente sobre las calles San Julián, San Pedro y Crock- er” y proporcionar un número adicional de basureros en colec- riones con una coleción frecuente, según sea necesario para evitar la acumulación de basura y escombrros en la acera.” Hasta la fecha, el Ayuntamiento no ha hecho ninguna de estas cosas.

Mientras que una gran parte de la comunidad de Skid Row está muy satisfecha por los residentes, orga- nizaciones sin fines de lucro y otras personas inte- resadas, en muchas de las calles la personas se ven obligadas a depositar su basura en el suelo, porque simplemente no hay botas de basura a la vista. Mien- tras que muchos de afuera de nuestra comunidad han criticado el problema de la basura, simplemente no se ha hecho nada al respecto.

Además de que la falta de la recolección de basura provoca problemas de salud y seguridad, sola- mente hay cinco baños públicos en todo Skid Row a pesar del gran número de residentes sin hogar que necesitan acceso a los baños 24-7 y otros residentes y visitantes al Centro que también necesitan acceso a los baños públicos. Los miembros de LA CAN han estado monitoreando los cinco baños desde que el Departamento de Salud Pública le suplicó a la Ciudad a aumentar el número de baños y garantizar que los baños actuales se mantengan limpios, en buen func- tionamiento, y con jabón. Los residentes de LA CAN han reportado que estos baños son cerrados por la noche (de 6pm - 6am, cuando los baños en los parques y otros lugares también están cerrados) - algunos están fuera de servicio por largos periodos de tiempo y en general, la disponibilidad de materiales en las mejores circunstan- cias es irregular. La falta de baños deja muchos resi- dentes y compradores, y especialmente los residentes sin techo, sin otro lugar para limpiar, sin otro sitio que vencer estos problemas de salud y seguridad, sola- menes otros residentes y visitantes en lugares públicos. Además de los problemas de salud, esto puede resultar en multas o arrestos por las personas de LAPD e incluso, a veces nunca han sido reparados, o han sido robados por otros residentes sin techo.

Durante años, los residentes de la comunidad se han dado a la tarea de limpiar las calles ellos mismos. Por ejemplo, OG’s N Service ha organizado un grupo de residentes de Skid Row que ofrecen voluntariamente su tiempo, basureros, sus recursos personales y los materiales de limpieza de las calles de la ciudad. A menudo, a la par de ellos trabajan personas que viven en esas mismas cuadras que se enorgullecen de mantener limpia su comunidad - solo necesitan sus propias escobas y materiales para hacerlo. Los BID’s también ayudan un poco, pero sobre todo en la per- iferia de Skid Row, tal como en las Calles Main o 7th. Por último, existe el "equipo de limpieza de los sin techo" de la ciudad que, hasta hace poco, se dedicaba más a robear los bienes personales de las personas sin hogar que para la limpieza de las calles y ahora sólo ofrecen limpieza de forma de forma esporádica. A pesar de estos esfuerzos, no hay ninguna recolección de basura consistente y eficaz en nuestra comunida- dad y aún no hemos recibido nuestra parte justa de basureros. En gran medida, la Ciudad le ha respondido a las quejas de la asociación empresarial y otras perso- nas que atribuyen los problemas de salud y seguridad a los residentes sin hogar con aumentar las fuerzas de policía. El problema no será resuelto a los residentes sin techo!

Los miembros de LA CAN se han estado uniendo con el personal del Concejil Huizar y representantes del Departamento de Salud Pública para buscar una solución sencilla para el acceso a baños y basureros en Skid Row. Ambos han expresado su compromiso para mejorar las condiciones, a la comunidad de los servicios básicos de la Ciudad y en resolver estos problemas. De hecho, el oficina del Concejil Huizar fue capaz de añadir seis basureros a la ciudad a la ciudad de las calles San Pedro y Crock- er. Por desgracia, ya no están en su lugar, pero hay un compromiso para que sean un problema, el acuerdo del Concejil Huizar ha sido un gran paso hacia el éxito del cierre de los baños públicos por la noche, y ahora todos los cinco baños deben ser accesibles 24-7.

Estamos progresando, pero aún queda mucho tra- bajo por hacer. Por ejemplo, además de las soluciones básicas de proveer basureros, recolección de basura y asegurar el acceso adecuado a los baños, los miembros de LA CAN también han sugerido que se involucren los residentes en estas soluciones de que se puedan pro- porcionar trabajos (o al menos estímulos) a personas de bajos ingresos y residentes sin hogar como un doble beneficio. El Comité de Derechos Civiles de LA CAN continuará trabajando en estos temas y en actualizar a la comunidad a través del Community Connection. Sin embargo, es responsabilidad de todos para ponerse de pie y participar. Si no decimos nada - ¿quién lo va a decir? Si no resistimos - ¿quién nos va a defender? Y si no luchamos, ¿quién va a luchar por nosotros? Juntos lo venceremos, divididos moriremos!

Venga, únase a otros residentes de la comunidad cada Lunes a las 1PM en LA CAN donde discutire- mos varios temas de la salud y la seguridad pública desde el uso de los servicios de limpieza de la ciudad de Skid Row... ¡EL PODER ES DEL PUEBLO!

Continued from page 1

Community Care Facilities Ordinance

WRITTEN BY JESUS BUENROSTRO AND BECKY DENNISON

under the umbrella of the Stop CCFO Coalition. The Coalition believes in healthy, safe and diverse communities and that shared housing is a crucial component in ensuring this goal throughout all of the City.

In addition to the broad community opposition, there were legal challenges to the CCFO as well. The proposed CCFO was likely to be found in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act and other laws. At the hearing, Autumn Elliot of Disability Rights California and Mercedes Marquez, the head of the United Way and Maria Elena Durazo of the LA County Federation of Labor. They presented the coalition’s positions about the need for maintaining a healthy, safe and diverse communities and that shared housing is a crucial component in ensuring this goal throughout all of the City.

The strength of the STOP CCFO Coalition is its diversity - boasting over 150 groups and organizations for across sectors and areas of L.A.
It’s Only My Opinion
WRITTEN BY AL SABO

- Lakers - Is it even possible that D’Antoni is worse than Brown? You betcha! Any coach that takes a team’s biggest asset - size - and parleys it into a liability needs to go back to the Italian League and stay out of the NBA where the big boys play.

- Jim Bus - His arrogance, lack of experience, and insecuirty have turned the Lakers into the laughing stock of the league. Admit it, Jim, you hired the wrong guy. Swallow your pride, look D’Antoni in the eye, and make appropriate contract and name Bickerstaff Head Coach for the remainder of the season. Then, try to mend fences with Phil Jackson and hope he has more class than you and will accept your late offer to return to the Lakers next year.

- Phil Mickelson - Isn’t it a pity? A kid whose backyard was part of the fairway of a country club and who grew up with all the advantages of Richie Rich is upset because he pays around 62% of his income to taxes. If that were true he needs a new accountant, a new tax attorney, or a better math instructor. I always suspected he was a spoiled rich kid, but I didn’t know he was full of crap too.

Even though he’s self-employed and must pay the full 16% to Social Security, it’s only on the first $103,000 of his $47 million a year in earnings. This means that while you and I contribute between 8% and 16% of our total income to Social Security, he pays only .0017%. And, with his travel, dress, and lodging expenses to write off one must wonder if he pays any taxes at all.

- Cardenas Goes to Washington - Jose Cardenas always had the good looks of a Congressman, but little else. However, since he was elected to U.S. Congress I’ve come to the conclusion that good looks are more important than brains. But I still wonder what Tony do now that he no longer has Jan Perry instructing him on how to vote.

- Senator Rand Paul - How did he get elected anyway? The fine people of Kentucky must have been on moonshine the day of his election. Paul, a darling of the Tea Party, proved to be a big loser like his father when he claimed that if he were president, he would have fired Hillary Clinton after the attack on the American Embassy in Benghuzi.

His disdain of Clinton is prompted by his desire to run for President in 2016. On the other hand, John McCain’s berating of Clinton stems from the fact that he’s a poor loser who holds grudges. With this incident, both of these senators proved just how small they are.

- Governor Jerry Brown - With a super majority in the state assembly and with a surplus in the budget it’s time to end the rhetoric and act to restore dental and eye coverage to MediCal while also insuring all low-income individuals, not only those with minor children.

- The Upper 1% - They own 93% of this country’s wealth. It only stands to reason that they should then pay off 95% of the country’s debt. Yet with tax loopholes many of them don’t pay a cent in taxes.

- Lieutenant Paulson - Thank God she’s gone. She fell victim to her own battles with discrimination. She let her struggles overwhelm her good judgement. Rather than protecting and serving all, she often placed her own ambitions ahead of common sense. She could have made a difference, if only she could have overcome her own gremlins.

- Downtown News - In an article highly critical of LA City Council President Herb Wesson, Executive Editor Jon Regarde of the DT News lambasted Wesson in a way that reeked of Jan Perry’s influence. The article was so defamatory and biased that one is led to believe that it was contrived by ghost writer Jan. Unlike Perry, Wesson has generally supported the causes of the people and not the interests of big business. Regarde, your article slandering Wesson should be flushed down the toilet.

- Skid Row Missions - Don’t confuse them with the good work of the Salvation Army. How can anyone escape Skid Row and poverty with no money? Yet several of the missions take their patrons entire General Relief check, claiming that if they didn’t the money would only go for illegal drugs and alcohol. That might be a good premise if all who receive them are beggars and not just that it isn’t the case. By taking all of the money of the residents for the services they provide, the missions leave many penniless and on a path of theft and crime. Everyone doesn’t do drugs as the missions would lead you to believe. However, everyone needs money to exist and without it poverty becomes a way of life that can often lead to a life of crime. Wake up, Andy Bales!

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

Some Reflections on Race and Class in the Downtown Neighborhood Council
WRITTEN BY BECKY DENNISON

I attended the January monthly meeting of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC). I have a long history of interacting with DLANC, as LA CAN was very involved in the early years and I personally served on DLANC committees in the past. I haven’t participated in DLANC meetings of any kind in several years but, in January, still observed the race and class issues to be incredibly problematic

The craziest moment of the evening for me was when a representa- tive was making an announcement about the Martin Luther King Day event to be held at Grand Park. Michael Key and General Jeff, Skid Row residents and longtime DLANC representatives, raised some questions about African American representation on the planning committee and at the event itself. They suggested, among other things, that African American artists should be included on the bill and that more outreach for the planning committee would be helpful. Among the few African American DLANC representa- tives, both were raising important issues to the person who made the announcement. Yet Patty Berman, DLANC President, abruptly shut down this conversation, even stating that their comments were “not really germane to the event.” Really? The issues of race and equal representation in a public event are not “germane” to Martin Luther King Day? Ridiculous.

Patty Berman also made inappropriate and demeaning comments to Max, the DLANC Homeless Representative, on several occasions. She did not do this to other representatives in the same way. After Max weighed in on an issue more than once, she stated, “If you continuously interrupt, you will be removed.” On what grounds? Yes, DLANC operates under Robert’s rules, but Representatives have the option, if not the obligation, to make their point heard. Later, when Max requested to pull agenda items off the consent calendar, within regulations, Patty responded, “You can if you want to, but we will be here later.” Max didn’t say that to anyone else who wanted to discuss certain items further. And is the point to make informed decisions on neighborhood issues, or get out of the monthly meeting within a certain time?

Lastly, there were about 20 or so low-income and homeless resi- dents present at the January meeting – some from LA CAN, some from Occupy, and some others I personally know or recognized. We weren’t there as an organized group and no one, that I know of, put in public comment cards. Yet at the very beginning of the meet- ing, Patty Berman announced that she noted a large number of people in attendance and that the “group” should pick a representative to speak on their behalf. She said there would only be ten minutes total for public comment. Why would a group of any kind, let alone people who were there separately, have to choose a spokesperson at a neighborhood council meeting? Why is public comment limited to ten minutes? Isn’t this supposed to be a forum for people to have their voices heard, included and actually represented by this council? And why is the meeting opened with the statement that most people will not be heard - why is that pre-determined?

Race and class – both divisions and points of unity – are crucial is- sues in Downtown Los Angeles, which is home to some of the high- est income and lowest income Angelinos, home to a historic Black community, and now also home to mostly white “new downtowners.” DLANC leadership should be required to explore these issues more deeply and get some training on white privilege and how it is perpetuated, both intentionally and unintentionally.
OPINION

DIDN’T WORK THEN, WON’T WORK NOW

WRITTEN BY WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT | ART BY WRAP

Not until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did Jim Crow laws finally become part of history. Not until 1974 did Chicago take off the books the last Ugly Law that penalized and fined “any person on the streets….who is diseased, maimed, mutilated, or in any way deformed, so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object.” And Anti-Okie laws were constitutional until the California Supreme Court decision of 1941.

None of these discriminatory laws would have been overturned without deep community organizing to get the power structure of the time to pay attention. On December 3, 2012, a Homeless Person’s Bill of Rights and Fairness Act was introduced in California to strike down our current version of discriminatory laws that ostracize people from local communities or criminalize their presence by forbidding them to sit or lie on public sidewalks or distribute free food in public parks. Rhode Island has already passed a Homeless Bill of Rights, Oregon is planning to do the same and other communities are interested in following. These bills are written to protect the rights of extremely poor or homeless people, rights that most of us take for granted – the right to equal treatment from state and local government agencies, or the right to use public spaces as everyone else, or the right to engage in basic life sustaining activities.

Better laws and passage of good bills don’t just happen. They need public awareness and widespread support. The California Homeless Bill of Rights is cosponsored by East Bay Community Law Center, Western Center on Law and Poverty, Jericho: a voice for Justice, an interfaith community, and by WRAP, whose members include long time community organizations spanning from Los Angeles to Portland, Oregon.

Steady and strong community organizing is leading more and more groups and people to join hands across the boundaries of their particular race, class, work or interests – religious workers, mental health and housing advocates, political activists, neighbors and friends. We can finally break into the “appalling silence of the good people,” which is how Martin Luther King put it in 1963 when he wrote his letter from Birmingham Jail.

But our challenge is now. Any time government tells a person, “your presence is unacceptable in our community,” it is a civil rights issue. Anytime local governments demonize one segment of society in order to control their movements and justify their removal from public spaces, it is a civil rights issue. Local anti-homeless police enforcement campaigns, separate court systems, property confiscations and the closing of public spaces – these are in the forefront of today’s civil rights battles. Homelessness has become a civil rights issue.

The Theft of Everyone’s Home: A Personal Account of the Fall of #FuerzaHernandez

WRITTEN BY ADAM RICE

At 4:30 AM on December 27, 2012, over 200 members of “Law Enforcement,” including some 50 LA County Sheriff’s deputies and more than 150 LAPD officers, descended on 14620 Leadwell Street in Van Nuys. They brought with them the implied violence of firearms, armored vehicles, tear gas, and full riot gear, all to throw one family out into the street – ending likely the longest post-eviction foreclosure defense in California’s history. Tragically, that same morning on Sherman Way and Van Nuys Boulevard, one block away from the Hernandez home, a homeless woman was set on fire at the bus bench that had been her spot for years. Even though about 200 sworn officers were just down the block, a civilian had to chase down the attacker, and hold him for 30 minutes until the police arrived since they were apparently too busy with their plan to make the Hernandez family and many of their supporters homeless.

Even though we had known this moment was coming for 124 days, as the 30 of us were led into the chill of the early morning air at gunpoint, past the seemingly endless lines of nervous cops equipped with shotguns and bulletproof vests, I could not help but be surprised at the extreme response to what had been an entirely peaceful protest. I shouldn’t have been. Having been involved in many face to face confrontations with police on the streets of Downtown LA, I should have been well aware that the first response of the reactionary monied class to any attempt by the people to enforce their basic human rights is to criminalize us, using the very agencies we pay for to deny us our rights. Even still the response was, in a word, overkill.

Despite the direct and obvious evidence of fraud on the part of Countrywide and Bank of America presented by the Hernandez family, both directly to the police and in court, nearly half a million dollars in public money was spent to harass and criminalize an innocent family simply to evict them from a house with a market value of barely $200,000. I remember thinking, “How, in a country where vacant homes outnumber homeless people 5 to 1, in a city where tens of thousands of people sleep on the streets every night, is this ridiculous waste of public funds even slightly justifiable?”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
The pigs finally shuffled us out from behind the police lines and into the parking lot of Lucky’s supermarket, which had recently closed down because of all the displacement in the area. Guadalupe Hernandez, who we had come to call Mama Lupe, stood on the sidewalk across Wynedote Street wrapped in a purple blanket, looking distraught, and shivering in the cold. Brother Ulisses stood next to his mother, eyes fixed on the ground, the heat of his anger palpable in the early morning air. But it was the look on Javier Hernandez’s face, that mixture of sorrow, guilt, and shock, as he took in the scene of his mother, brothers, and the rest of his newly adopted family huddled with whatever meager possessions they had managed to save that still haunts me to this day.

A gray Mustang followed by two U-Haul trucks pulled onto Wynedote and were stopped at the police line until the driver announced that he was from the bank. The jeering from our people began, at which point the police surrounded the car as if President Obama himself was inside. This served to reinvigorate our makeshift clan of family members, houseless activists, and organizers and shake us out of our dejection. The rest of the morning was a blur of activity as our team sprang into action, challenging the unnecessary police presence, herding the media, and destroying the police’s credibility in front of the neighbors. Our people were in rare form, and I was never more proud of us than in those immediate post-eviction hours.

A little past 10:00 AM, after the U-Haul trucks pulled away illegally carrying out the Hernandez family’s memories and possessions from their home of 7 years, the Sheriffs returned in their armored vehicles to the station. I imagine they patted themselves on the back for following orders, and I hope they hated themselves a little. After the LAPD slinked wearily back to their patrol cars, a rough morning of oppressing the people and the Hernandez family, so special. Not to mention that the police lines and into the parking lot of Lucky’s supermarket, which had recently closed down because of all the displacement in the area. Guadalupe Hernandez, who we came to call Mama Lupe, stood on the sidewalk across Wynedote Street wrapped in a purple blanket, looking distraught, and shivering in the cold. Brother Ulisses stood next to his mother, eyes fixed on the ground, the heat of his anger palpable in the early morning air. But it was the look on Javier Hernandez’s face, that mixture of sorrow, guilt, and shock, as he took in the scene of his mother, brothers, and the rest of his newly adopted family huddled with whatever meager possessions they had managed to save that still haunts me to this day.

The wooden barricade painted with the human right to housing, it had become the official heart of the local community. A place where things like children’s parties and knowing your rights classes were held, where tenants could go to learn how to fight their evictions, or neighbors could stop by to have a friendly conversation. For 4 months, Van Nuys had a real community center. The #FuerzaHernandez resistance served to inspire housing victims across the country, and presented a strong example of people coming together to fight an unjust system.

For example, the Lucero family of East LA built a barricade to protect against their eviction, and as of this writing they are still standing strong 91 days after their November 4, 2012 eviction date. La fuerza sigue indeed.

But, not a day goes by that I don’t think of the look on Javi’s face on that cold December morning, looking at all of us with such sadness and guilt, as if he had failed us, when the way I see it, was the other way around. If the #FuerzaHernandez action was any kind of victory, it was a Pyrrhic one. When Lupe left that morning, she and her family were forced to cram 12 people into a small apartment down the street from their stolen home. When they tried to pick up their belongings, a representative from Soifer’s office tried to get Javi to sign off on the contents of the storage space without being able to examine them, and left, with everything the family owned still being held to ransom, when he refused.

A month and a half later, Lupe still can’t find work and may be forced to move back to Mexico with her youngest son. The breakup of the family we fought so hard to prevent may well still happen anyway. While Ben Soifer, B of A, and all the other money grubbing scumbags involved in their fraudulent eviction are safe in their homes with their families, homes purchased by perpetrating the suffering of others. While 150 million of us struggle to breathe under the crushing weight of poverty, and big banks and their seemingly hired hands, the police, spread terror in the name of those who exploit and oppress us.

The Hernandez family will survive and thrive - have no doubt. Their family and community solidarity has never been stronger. Their courage and self determination in the face of a corrupt vampiristic system serves as an inspiration to us all. B of A had to send its minions to destroy #FuerzaHernandez, its very existence exposed the illegitimacy of the US financial system – simply by telling millions of other people in the same situation that they were not alone and they could fight back.

Now imagine if everyone facing forced eviction did the same. What would happen? Would we win? What is holding us back? Fear? Everything that has happened to the Hernandez family post-eviction would have happened whether they had resisted or not.

A lack of leadership? It is time to stop waiting on someone to lead us out of the darkness, and turn on the lights ourselves. You are the next great leader in your community. You are the next Malcolm X, the next Angela Davis. If you or your neighbor are facing eviction, do not panic and do not move without the police tried to get Javi to sign off on the contents of the storage space without being able to examine them, and left, with everything the family owned still being held to ransom, when he refused.

Take back your land! Take back your homes! Amandala Ngawethu! Power to the Poor People! And peace to you all, if you are willing to fight for it.
Local Skid Row Poet Releases Powerful New Collection

Anthemic and driven with purpose, filled with the lives of the poet’s heroes and heroines, the new collection, Conveyor of the Sayer, is steeped in the powerful humanist slogans of the 20th century. Author Billy Shaw knows of whom and what he is talking of precisely - in each poem, he conveys an experience akin to flag-raising, to the flying of brave banners through a martial breeze.

In his opening poem, “My Heroes,” he says: “These are my heroes, who dedicated their lives/ To uplifting the spirit of justice, which had been so/ undeniably deprived. / Here’s to their memory that lives on in us all./ Cheers to their vision of the future; may we equally/ heed the call.” Yet Shaw, a longtime resident of Skid Row, is realistic in all these, leavening his poetry with uncannily familiar portraits and renditions of the people’s champions which idolizes the times in which they lived. Many of the poems are of actual events that happened to Shaw or those that he witnessed and are filled with hardcore love, death, violence, the loss of loved ones, and the rebelliousness of the oppressed.

To request a complimentary paperback review copy, contact the publisher at (888) 795-4274 x7879.
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A Pencil’s View

by Billy Shaw

I am a pencil that writes with your hand
I can do nothing alone, but then again
I am the instrument of communication
With my use civilizations are brought to desolation
I am the silent friend or enemy of man
My unspoken word can rebuild or destroy the land
I’d like to take the time to show you how things used to be
I’d like to take you back in a time before prehistory
On an adventure through unknown days
Back before a time when the sun shed no rays
Let’s go back to when mind was a matter of space
And Imagine if you can now where or place
I imagine mind with no conception
Unforetold nor spoken perception
Just try to concentrate on uncalculated time
And listen to the silence that envelopes your mind
Realize now that reality of unconfirmed expression
Feel yourself expanding from regression to progression
Grow and glow into imperial night
Let your thought go yes give them flight
Be the wind the breeze that’s everywhere
Be free and wild as the invisible air
Now if you care this is the way it use to be
And time again will know this reality
When all have evolved into the imperial night
And time again will twinkle into blissful twilight

Housing is A Human Right Updates

Ted Snyder, Symphony’s CEO, recently met with the tenants to make them the offer in person and show them the design of the five story, student only luxury building he plans to build on the land once the tenants move out and their rent controlled building, where some of the tenants have lived for more than 30 years. The tenant’s response of, “why, should we- this is our community, our home, we know our rights, and we will not be moved- we will fight to the end,” was not the response that Mr. Snyder was hoping for.

Although it is clear that Symphony Development has also sought the support of Councilmember Perry in an effort to fast track his student housing building, we will see if, as a mayoral candidate, Ms. Perry will honor her commitment to the tenants to LEAD on solving the housing crisis beginning with the preservation of affordable and rent controlled housing such as 2913, and take steps to address the much needed changes and expansion to LA’s Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Regardless, the residents of 2913, and the Collective will fight for the human right to housing every step of the way - because HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT.

Housing is A Human Right Updates

Ted Snyder, director general of Symphony, se reunió recientemente con los inquilinos para hacerles la oferta en persona y mostrárselos el diseño de un edificio de cinco pisos de vivienda únicamente para estudiantes y de la que planea construir en la tierra una vez que los inquilinos se muden del edificio donde algunos de ellos han vivido durante más de 30 años y su edificio es demolido. La respuesta de los inquilinos de “¿por qué?, si nosotros reconocemos nuestros derechos, esta es nuestra comunidad, estos son nuestros hogares y vamos a luchar hasta el final”, no era la respuesta que el Sr. Snyder estaba esperando.

Aunque está claro que Symphony Development también ha buscado el apoyo de la Concejal Perry en su esfuerzo para acelerar su construcción de viviendas para estudiantes, vamos a ver si, como candidato a la alcaldía, la Concejal Perry honrará su compromiso con los inquilinos para liderar resolver la crisis de la vivienda comenzando con la preservación de la vivienda económica y bajo control de rentas tal como 2913, y si ella tomará medidas para hacer frente a los cambios tan necesarios y la expansión de la Ordenanza de Estabilización de Rentas de Los Ángeles. En cualquier caso, los residentes de 2913, y la Colectiva lucharán por el derecho humano a la vivienda en cada paso del camino - porque LA VIVIENDA ES UN DERECHO HUMANO.
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.

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The 1783 was the year that a pioneering African-American began to practice ________ in the U.S.

The name of the first African-American owned and operated newspaper. 3. 7. During this month in 1831, Nat Turner led dozens in a slave revolt in Virginia.

Sarah Breedlove ________, one of the first African-American scientists, business women, and philanthropists who invented the process for straightening hair.

Chisholm, the first Black U.S. Congresswoman who represented New York State for seven terms.

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