The Continued Saga of the Dirty Divide – the City’s Delayed Response Still Inadequate

WRITTEN BY KARL SCOTT AND PETE WHITE

On April 7, 2014, the City Administrative Officer (CAO) for Los Angeles released a plan to expand “operation healthy streets” and respond to “immediate health and safety issues” in Skid Row. The proposed plan, at a cost of $3.7 million, provides for modest increases in restroom access and trash cans, as well as a new voluntary storage program. The large majority of the plan has to be approved through the upcoming City budget process, so this is far from a done deal regardless of all the fanfare by public officials and the media. If approved, it could be a start in the right direction but it still falls far short of the tremendous need in our community.

While City officials are taking credit for moving this plan forward and responding to the needs in Skid Row, LA CAN’s members are constantly reminded of the attempts made by decision makers to keep community-led research, work, knowledge, and recommendations from the public. The City did not create this plan because they care about homeless residents – or at least not solely. The problems of restrooms, trash, and voluntary storage have been brought to their attention by numerous stakeholders for years. For the past three years, LA CAN and others have re-focused attention and community demands on these critical public health issues. Yet they are just now moving something forward, and it’s a very small step.

The lack of public health infrastructure and rising numbers of houseless people on the streets of Downtown LA resulted in a 2012 County Department of Public Health report that cited the City for public health violations that required immediate response, and gave numerous other recommendations for corrective actions including more restrooms and trash cans. LA CAN members and other residents supported the citations and the recommendations and worked in a variety of public settings to ensure they were implemented. Additionally, LA CAN decided to monitor, map and document the true depth of the problem for ourselves and produced a report entitled, The Dirty Divide in Downtown Los Angeles: A Call for Public Health Equity, based on the framework and tools of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Now, two years later, the City has only intermittently resolved the cited public health violations and has done almost nothing about the recommendations related to restrooms and trash. The currently proposed plan falls woefully short of the need.

“For example, the current City proposal includes only 10 additional trash cans, for a total of 27 trash cans in the entire Skid Row community, resolving only 10% of the disparity that would end the Dirty Divide in Downtown Los Angeles.”

A map demonstrating an example of the Dirty Divide in Los Angeles - where the disparity in the distribution and provision of basic resources in Downtown is quite clear.

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Housing Watch

WRITTEN BY STEVE DIAZ AND BECKY DENNISON

Cecil Hotel

As reported in the last edition of the Community Connection, the County of Los Angeles recently abandoned a plan to house hundreds of homeless formerly incarcerated residents in the mostly vacant Cecil Hotel. LA County Supervisor Gloria Molina doesn’t support the project nor do a few business and developer representatives in Downtown LA. However – unlike what the media has generally reported - the project has widespread support by diverse Downtown stakeholders, including many small businesses in the Historic Core, the Fashion District Business Improvement District, housing organizations and service providers throughout LA, and hundreds of Downtown residents.

LA CAN and other community partners are working to ensure LA County’s Department of Health Services does not walk away from this opportunity to provide much-needed housing at the Cecil Hotel. The Cecil Hotel cannot be used for anything else but extremely low-income housing, because of the City’s Residential Hotel Ordinance and a lawsuit settlement agreement – both of which were fought for and won by LA CAN. So, unless a project like the one proposed moves forward, we will see a mostly empty building continue to sit empty while thousands of people are forced to sleep on the sidewalks within blocks of the property. This is unacceptable when the funding and other resources are in place to utilize this building as supportive and affordable housing.

Some opponents of the project have argued that the County proposal included too many homeless residents and/or that the Historic Core has an “overconcentration” of affordable housing. Neither of these arguments is based in fact. The Hayward Hotel has been a project-based Section 8 building serving more than 450 formerly homeless people for decades – it hasn’t shown to be “too big” but instead has provided housing for those most in need and provides amenities, like Starbucks, that serve Downtowners of all incomes. Additionally, there are about 3,200 high-end market rate units in the Historic Core (by the way, a renamed version of the western portion of historic Skid Row) in comparison to 2,200 affordable homes – so why is there no outcry about an “overconcentration” of market rate units in this community?

Permanent supportive housing and other affordable housing have contributed to the vibrancy and diversity of Downtown LA and must continue to do so. We cannot accept NIMBY arguments when there are so many people in need, and neither should the County Department of Health Services and Board of Supervisors. Contact LA CAN to get involved in the fight for the human right to housing at the Cecil Hotel.

Public Housing Committee Member Profile

LA CAN’s work with the LA Human Right to Housing Collective includes protecting public housing as a core resource in this country. Francisco Estrada, one of our community leaders, is central to much of our work.

Francisco was born in Guadalajara, Mexico and came to the United States in 1979 and has lived in South Los Angeles since then. He joined the Pueblo Del Rio tenant committee two years ago because he saw how community members were coming together and building collective organization to improve their neighborhood. During that time, Francisco has publicly spoken out against unjust Housing Authority maintenance fees and the proposed demolition of Jordan Downs. Francisco has also been a key leader in the Pueblo Del Rio community improvement campaign to bring speed bumps and more street lights to the neighborhood. Francisco’s vision for the community is a space where people from all walks of life come together for the betterment of the neighborhood.

Get Involved

The Downtown Tenant Committe meets every Monday at 10:30am at LA CAN. The Pueblo Del Rio Tenant Committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm at the James Slauson Park Community Center. To get involved in any of the housing/tenant committees in Downtown, South LA and Watts, contact Steve Diaz at LA CAN at (213) 228-0024.

La Vivienda En Vela

ESCRITO POR STEVE DIAZ AND BECKY DENNISON | TRADUCIDO POR THELMY PEREZ

El Hotel Cecil

Como se informó en la última edición del Community Connection, el Condado de Los Ángeles abandonó recientemente un plan para albergar a cientos de personas sin hogar y residentes de extremadamente bajos ingresos en el emblemático Hotel Cecil. Supervisora del Condado, Gloria Molina, no apoya el proyecto ni tampoco lo apoyan muchos representantes de las empresas y desarrolladores en el centro de Los Ángeles. Sin embargo - a diferencia de lo que los medios han reportado en general - el proyecto cuenta con un amplio apoyo de diversos grupos de interés del Centro, incluyendo muchos pequeños negocios en el Núcleo Histórico, el BID del Fashion District, las organizaciones de vivienda y los proveedores de servicios a lo largo de Los Ángeles, y cientos de residentes del Centro.

LA CAN y otros socios de la comunidad están trabajando para garantizar que el Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Condado de Los Ángeles no abandone esta oportunidad para ofrecer viviendas tan necesitadas en el Hotel Cecil. El Hotel Cecil no se puede utilizar para cualquier otra cosa fuera de vivienda económica para personas de ingresos extremadamente bajos, a causa de la Ordenanza de Hoteles Residenciales de la Ciudad y un acuerdo extrajudicial - ambos fueron campaña de lucha y victoria de LA CAN. Entonces, a menos que un proyecto como este se mueva hacia adelante, vamos a seguir viendo un edificio prácticamente vacío mientras que miles de personas se ven obligadas a dormir en las aceras afuera de la propiedad. Esto es inaceptable cuando el financiamiento y otros recursos están disponibles para utilizar este edificio como vivienda económica y con servicios.

Algunos adversarios de este proyecto sostienen que la propuesta del Condado incluye demasiados residentes sin hogar y/o que el Núcleo Histórico tiene una “concentración excesiva” de vivienda económica. Ninguno de estos argumentos se basa en los hechos. El Hotel Hayward ha sido un edificio de Sección 8 Basado en Proyecto que sirve a más de 450 personas anteriormente sin hogar durante décadas - no ha demostrado que es “demasiado grande”, sino que ha proporcionado viviendas para los más necesitados y, a la vez, almacenes, como Starbucks, que sirven a los “Downtowners” de todos ingresos. Además, hay cerca de 3,200 apartamentos de lujo a precio de mercado en el Núcleo Histórico (por cierto, una versión renombrada de la porción occidental de la comunidad histórica, Skid Row) en comparación con las 2,200 viviendas económicas – entonces, ¿por qué no hay un clamor acerca por la “concentración excesiva” de unidades a precio de mercado en esta comunidad?

Las viviendas permanentes con apoyo de servicios y otras viviendas económicas han contribuido a la vitalidad y diversidad del Centro de Los Ángeles y deben seguir haciéndolo. No podemos aceptar los argumentos NIMBY (no en mi patio trasero) cuando hay tantas personas necesitadas, y tampoco debería hacerlo el Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Condado y la Junta de Supervisores. Contácte con LA CAN para involucrarse en la lucha por el derecho humano a la vivienda en el Hotel Cecil.

El perfil de un miembro del comité de la vivienda pública

El trabajo de LA CAN con la Colective por el derecho Human a la Vivienda incluye la protección de la vivienda pública como un recurso económico básico en este país. Francisco Estrada, uno de nuestros líderes de la comunidad, es fundamental para gran parte de nuestro trabajo.

Francisco Estrada nació en Guadalajara, México, y llegó a los Estados Unidos en 1979 y ha vivido en el sur de Los Ángeles desde entonces. Se unió al comité de inquilinos de Pueblo Del Río hace dos años porque vio cómo los miembros de la comunidad se estaban uniendo y construyendo una organización colectiva para mejorar su barrio. Durante este tiempo, Francisco ha hablado públicamente en contra de los inusuales recargos por el mantenimiento por la Autoridad de Vivienda y la propuesta demolición de Jordan Downs. Francisco también ha sido un líder clave en la lucha por el mejoramiento de la comunidad de Pueblo Del Río para la instalación de topos (reductores de velocidad) y más luces en las calles del vecindario. La visión de Francisco es que la comunidad sea un lugar donde personas de todas las clases sociales se reúnen para mejorar la comunidad.

Invólguese

El Comité de los inquilinos del centro se reúne todos los lunes a las 10:30 am en LA CAN. El Comité de inquilinos del Pueblo del Río se reúne el segundo miércoles de cada mes a las 5:30 pm en el Centro Comunitario de James Slauson Park. Para participar en cualquiera de estos comités, póngase en contacto con Steve Diaz en LA CAN al (213) 228-0024.
The Collective has helped tenants prevent or reverse over a dozen evictions at Jordan Downs in the last year! If you have received any legal notices from HACLA it is urgent that you respond right away. We can help you do that and protect your human right to housing. Contact 818-835-1091 or come to our weekly Know Your Rights meetings every Tuesday at 4PM. We meet at the Gym’s parking lot (9900 Grape Street).

Jordan Downs Update: Why was the CNI application for Jordan Downs denied?

WRITTEN BY THELMY PEREZ

Last month, the Housing Authority of the City of LA (HACLA), landlord of Jordan Downs and LA’s 13 other public housing developments, learned that the application they had submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a $30 million grant for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative program with development partners Michaels Organization and Bridge Housing had been denied for this year’s funding. There have been many rumors about why it was denied, who’s at fault for the denial, and its effects on the 1,500 tenants of Jordan Downs. We can’t answer all of those questions because, well, we haven’t seen the application. Based on what we knew about its contents, we can only speculate that: 1) the HACLA/Michaels application did not meet any of the requirements for the grant; or 2) the HACLA/Michaels plan has significant shortcomings or limitations which do not meet the requirements for CNI. Regardless, this is an ongoing program that can be applied for again next year.

Now, let’s take a deeper look at the CNI certifications that HACLA and partners agreed to when submitting their application. These certifications were attached to a resolution signed by HACLA President, Doug Guthrie, on August 22nd of last year, authorizing HACLA to submit an application with its partners for an $8.5 million CNI grant. The resolution required that “there are no environmental factors, such as sewer moratoriums, precluding development in the requested locality.” While the known toxic environmental conditions in the Factory site, at Jordan High and possibly in the residential areas of Jordan Downs may not necessarily prevent development altogether, they do have the potential to disqualify HACLA and partners from meeting certification #10, which requires “the Lead applicant and Co-applicant, will ensure that Choice Neighborhoods grants are implemented in a timely, efficient and economical manner...” Seemingly, HACLA and partners were certain that they met the certifications necessary to apply for the CNI grant this year; otherwise, they would not have signed the application. This might explain why HACLA has been so aggressive in trying to convince the community that the toxic conditions at Jordan Downs were minimal and posed “no threat to the health” of the community without actually showing any evidence to back up this position.

In fact, HACLA’s own studies reveal levels of lead in the Factory site as high as 22,000 ppm (parts per million), and 6,450 ppm right at the wall of the site which are way, way above the State of CA’s standard of 80ppm. Certainly, any indication of lead or other toxic substances in the residential areas of Jordan Downs could make it impossible for HACLA to implement its plan in a “timely” manner. Perhaps this is why HACLA and partners have been so resistant to sample inside the residential areas and deaf to community calls for an environmental investigation in the residential areas of Jordan Downs (approx. 200 residents petitioned in January requesting this of HACLA). Perhaps the folks at HUD recognize that these environmental factors at Jordan Downs might preclude development or the timely implementation of CNI grant activities. Perhaps not. After all, there is no evidence, as far as we know, that HUD is against HACLA implementing the plan, but rather they are only speculating. What is certain, however, is that the only way that HACLA can assure the community that the contamination has not spread beyond the walls of the Factory site or Jordan High is to conduct an Area-wide investigation with its partners for the grant. A choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) grant that HACLA had begged for the financial year of this. HACLA/Michaels was so significantly better in comparison with other applications from other cities; or 2) the plan of HACLA/Michaels was so innovative or significant that HUD may allow for a flexible interpretation of the requirements for CNI. Of course, this is an ongoing program by which time it will have to reapply for the grant.

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Certainly, cualquiera indicación de plomo u otras sustancias tóxicas en las zonas residenciales de Jordan Downs podría hacerle imposible a HACLA implementar su plan de manera “puntual”. Tal vez esta es la razón por qué HACLA y sus socios han sido tan resistentes a hacer muestras de las tierras en las zonas residenciales y sordos a las peticiones de la comunidad por investigaciones del medio ambiente en las zonas residenciales de Jordan Downs (aprox. 200 residentes firmaron una petición en enero solicitándole esto a HACLA ). La alternativa de HACLA/Michaels fue lo suficientemente buena en comparación con otras aplicaciones mejores de otras ciudades; o 2) el plan de HACLA/Michaels también tuvo errores significativos o no cumplió con los requisitos para CNI. De todos modos, este es un programa permanente por el cual se puede volver a aplicar el próximo año.

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Actualización sobre Jordan Downs: ¿Por qué se les negó su aplicación para la subvención CNI? ESCRITO Y TRADUCIDO POR THELMY PEREZ

El mes pasado, la Autoridad de Vivienda de la Ciudad de Los Ángeles (HACLA), patrón de Jordan Downs y otros 13 proyectos de viviendas públicas de Los Ángeles, se enteró de que la aplicación que habían presentado con sus socios de desarrollo, Michaels Organization y el Bridge Housing, ante el Departamento Federal de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano (HUD) por una subvención de $30 millones podría no ser favorable a Jordan Downs. Aunque no podemos responder a todas esas preguntas porque, bueno, no hemos visto el documento, pero solo podemos especular sobre ellas; 1) la aplicación de HACLA/Michaels fue lo suficientemente buena en comparación con otras aplicaciones mejores de otras ciudades; o 2) el plan de HACLA/Michaels tenía errores significativos o no cumplió con los requisitos para CNI. De todos modos, este es un programa permanente por el cual se puede volver a aplicar el próximo año.

Ahora, vamos a tomar una mirada más profunda a las certificaciones de la CNI que HACLA (y socios) aceptaron al presentar la aplicación. Estas certificaciones se unen a una resolución firmada por el presidente de la HACLA, Doug Guthrie, el 22 de agosto del año pasado, que autoriza a HACLA a presentar una aplicación con sus socios para la subvención CNI. La certificación #6 establece que “no haya factores ambientales, tales como moratorias de alcantarillado, que impidan el desarrollo de la localidad solicitada.” Aunque las condiciones ambientales tóxicas que se conocen en el sitio de la Fábrica (dentro de Jordan Downs) y posiblemente en las zonas residenciales de Jordan Downs no pueden necesariamente impedir el desarrollo, tienen el potencial de descalificar HACLA y socios de cumplir con la certificación n° 10, que exige que “el solicitante principal y el co-solicitante, se asegurará que las actividades de la subvención se ejecuten de manera puntual, eficiente y económica...” Parece que HACLA y socios estaban seguros de que cumplen con las certificaciones necesarias para solicitar la subvención CNI este año, si no, hubieran firmado la solicitud. Esto podría explicar por qué HACLA ha sido tan agresivo en tratar de convencer a la comunidad de que las condiciones tóxicas en Jordan Downs son mínimas y que no plantearon ninguna amenaza para la salud de la comunidad sin tener que mostrar ninguna evidencia para respaldar esta posición. De hecho, los propios estudios de HACLA revelan niveles de plomo en el sitio de la fábrica de hasta 22,000 ppm (partes por millón), y 6,450 ppm en la pared del sitio. Estos niveles son muy, muy, muy por encima de la norma del Estado de CA de 80 ppm.

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La Colectiva ha ayudado a los inquilinos a prevenir o remediar más de una docena de desalojos en Jordan Downs este año! Si usted ha recibido cualquier aviso legal de HACLA es urgente que responda de inmediato. Podemos ayudarle a hacer eso y proteger su derecho humano a la vivienda. Póngase en contacto con nosotros en 818-835-1091 o venga a conocer sus derechos en nuestra reunión semanal cada martes a las 16:00. Nos reunimos en el estacionamiento del Gimnasio (9900 Grape Street).

Contact the Collective at 818-835-1091 or lalumantright housing@gmail.com.

Comuníquese con la Colectiva en 818-835-1091 o lalumantrighthousing@gmail.com.
CIVIL RIGHTS

Homeless Bill of Rights Coalition Pressures Coastal Commission to Call Out L.A. on Illegal Venice Beach Closure

WRITTEN BY ERIC ARES

The California Homeless Bill of Rights (HBR) Campaign continues to organize to promote and protect the civil and human rights of ALL residents. Most recently, members of the coalition pushed the California Coastal Commission to uphold its duty to prevent the City of Los Angeles from enforcing an illegal Venice Beach “overnight beach curfew” from midnight to 5 a.m.

In an April 9 letter to the L.A. City Department of Recreation and Parks, Commission Enforcement Analyst Andrew Willis asks to “restart our discussions as soon as possible to ensure that the public access requirements of the Coastal Act are met.” Willis also states that “protection of beach access is among the highest priority policies of the Coastal Act” and that such a curfew and other “limitations on public access on the coast require thorough review and authorization through the coastal development permitting process.”

This letter comes as a direct result of the CA Homeless Bill of Rights supporters attending Coastal Commission meetings and demanding that they act to keep Venice Beach open to the public 24/7. On March 13, over 30 HBR supporters turned out to the Commission Meeting in Long Beach and delivered a petition with over 1,000 signatures demanding that Commissioners immediately stop the City from this illegal closure.

During public testimony, impassioned residents stressed that, despite what the City was saying, this closure was not being enforced because of public safety. Rather, the so-called “curfew” is about the larger efforts on the part of newer, more wealthy residents and businesses in Venice to gentrify the community and push homeless and low-income people away from the beach. As a result, the Commission asked staff to check-in on this issue and report back at the following meeting.

Jim Crow in Skid Row

WRITTEN BY GENERAL DOGON AND STEVE DIAZ

“Jim Crow” laws and practices in the United States from the early 1900s through the 1960s are well documented means of racial discrimination and segregation and relied upon the “separate but equal” premise, whereby separate facilities for Black Americans were never actually equal. Racial discrimination and segregation patterns have changed since that time, and in some cases improved, but less overt discriminatory policies and practices are still pervasive in this country - nowhere more, perhaps, than in Downtown Los Angeles. This periodic column, Jim Crow in Skid Row, is not intended to equate current conditions in Downtown LA with the Jim Crow South - but instead will draw comparisons and raise important questions about racial and spatial segregation that need to be acknowledged and addressed.

LA CAN has documented numerous discriminatory policies and practices over the years that disproportionally impact residents of color, and particularly African Americans, as well as low-income and homeless residents, particularly those living east of Main Street. We raise two examples in this column.

Sitting on the Sidewalk: In 2013, Councilmember Jose Huizar introduced a motion to accelerate the process for business owners in Downtown’s Historic Core neighborhood to obtain sidewalk dining permits and then pushed the City to provide amnesty for these businesses while they applied for correct permits. He took this action immediately after business owners began complaining about being cited by the City for un-permitted sidewalk dining. Creating the “pilot” dining permit ordinance for this section of Downtown took less than eight months - meaning that city departments created reports, relevant committees passed the proposal, and then the entire council voted and approved - and higher end restaurants and their customers’ desires to enjoy the public sidewalk were resolved.

Yet, for more than eight years, homeless and low-income residents have been cited and arrested daily for sitting on public sidewalks as part of LAPD’s Safer Cities Initiative. Community residents, a large group of attorneys, and many housing and service providers have vocally and actively opposed this practice since its inception. The current Councilmember and Mayor, as well as their predecessors, have ignored these concerns entirely and the criminalization of sitting on the sidewalk continues for low-income people. Tens of thousands of arrests and citations have been issued for this purported “crime”, including Annie Moody, a homeless woman arrested more than 100 times. LA CAN members were cited for sitting on the sidewalk last year while handing out seedlings to promote community gardens – just steps away from multiple sidewalk dining areas serving higher income people.

We ask, why is one group of people’s desire to sit on the sidewalk met with expedited resolution after just a handful of citations were issued when another group has been continually criminalized for years for the exact same activity?

Sidewalk Cleaning: Throughout neighborhoods in Downtown LA, you will see regular cleaning turn off the water. Yet in the industrial area of Skid Row, numerous local businesses have put in powerful, automated sprinkler systems on the roofs of their buildings. Regularly, when homeless folks stand under their buildings, these sprinklers are turned on to apparently attempt to “wash” the homeless residents away. The Jones Settlement provides for the legal right to sleep on public sidewalks between the hours of 9 pm and 6 am. Yet businesses have been turning the sprinklers on at 9 pm and running them through the night to prevent homeless residents from sleeping (in the middle of a drought, no less). When LAPD has been called, there has been no resolution. One resident, Louis, recently reported that he had all of his personal property - clothes, books, cosmetics, and important papers like birth certificates - get wet and destroyed due to these sprinklers.

So, we ask, why are businesses that clean the sidewalks respectful of residents outside of Skid Row but allowed to pour water directly on people legally occupying a public sidewalk within Skid Row?
No New Jails Coalition Travels to Antelope Valley to Protest Proposed New Jail Site

WRITTEN BY BILAL ALI

On Saturday March 15, 2014, the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) joined Critical Resistance and other allies in the No New Jails Coalition in an action in the food court of the Antelope Valley Mall. The action was staged as a peaceful and colorful protest against construction plans for a women’s jail in Lancaster. It was also intended to educate people about the proposed jail site and elicit their support in finding alternatives to jail expansion.

The controversial $200 million proposed jail would add more than 1,100 beds to the notorious LA County Jail system—which currently stands as the world’s largest jail system. It would also have a devastating impact on the County’s communities of color.

“The jail system in LA has caused horrendous damage to our loved ones and our communities,” said Gloria Galvez, of Critical Resistance. “The women’s jail plan in Lancaster is being called a ‘women’s village.’ This is offensive. The LA County Sheriff is trying to sell us a bill of goods, saying this jail will provide mental health, educational, and treatment programs. But we know jails are not effective social service settings, especially not for women.”

LA CAN’s involvement in this campaign is in response to the ongoing mass incarceration of poor and homeless populations in Downtown and South Los Angeles. It supplements our “House Keys NOT Handcuffs” approach which promotes affordable housing and other community solutions that help remedy social and economic inequities that give rise to poverty and homelessness.

Jail expansion is a waste of much needed resources in communities and only serves to fill the coffers of the Prison-Industrial Complex and its Wall Street backers. Jobs, quality education, affordable housing, and healthcare are proven solutions that guarantee safe and secure communities.

“The Federal Courts order California to reduce the overpopulation in prisons, to send the women back to their communities. Women do not need to go from one jail cell to another,” said LA CAN’s Deborah Burton. “We need jobs, we need education and resources to help everyone become contributing citizens to the community.”

Stay tuned for more information on plans to stop jail expansion in both LA County and the State of California.
Dirty Divide Saga Continues

Every day we live with the invisible (to some) line along Main Street – documented in The Dirty Divide – demonstrating who the City serves and who it does not. West of Main Street, there are three to four trash cans block on each side of the street, doggy litter bags hung up for use, and parks with bathrooms with water for hand washing. -- even drinking fountains for dogs. East of Main Street a vastly different picture emerges where some streets have no trash cans for blocks, as well as limited bathrooms and sometimes without water and other supplies.

As the saying goes, “need is the cradle of invention” and houseless residents in Skid Row have for many years tried to fill the gaps in service and infrastructure by obtaining brooms, trash cans, and cleaning materials to do the job the City of Los Angeles apparently does not want done – to provide clean streets and sidewalks in the areas they currently reside in. Now the City has finally responded, but ignored most of the community input and created a plan that will not meet the need or create equity across Downtown communities. For example, the current City proposal includes only 10 additional trash cans, for a total of 27 trash cans in the entire Skid Row community, resolving only 10% of the disparity that would end the Dirty Divide in Downtown Los Angeles.

The Skid Row community does not have to accept this as the best that can be done. In February, LA CAN members began to amend the Dirty Divide maps to check for current placement, ownership and removal of trash cans in Skid Row. We documented San Julian Street as the only example where Dirty Divide recommendations for trash cans had been implemented. LA CAN forwarded the updated maps to Adel H. Hagekhalil, P.E., with the City’s Bureau of Sanitation. Hagekhalil had stated at a recent public meeting on trash and restrooms, hosted by Council District 14, that he would place trash cans wherever community folks wanted them to go. Regardless of the City’s recently revealed plan, the community can and should hold public officials true to their original promises.

Also in early February, LA CAN members monitored the restrooms for compliance based on Los Angeles County Code (including Title 11 Health & Safety, Section 11.38.560). The effort produced a log showing restrooms were out of service roughly 85% of the time. LA CAN filed a formal complaint with the County Department of Public Health utilizing this data and they quickly inspected, confirmed our data was correct, and moved for immediate corrective action.

LA CAN urges community residents and other stakeholders to get involved in this issue and other efforts to ensure human rights are upheld in Downtown Los Angeles, and that equity in public health and other public services is achieved across all Downtown neighborhoods. The Dirty Divide can be temporary, but only if we all get involved and do not accept inadequate plans created without community participation.

The Civil Rights Committee meets every Monday at 1pm at LA CAN. Contact General Dogon with any questions (213) 228-0024.

The Los Angeles Community Action Network Presents

FREEDOM NOW

The 4th Annual LA CAN Freedom Now Awards and Fundraiser

HONOREES

Robin D.G. Kelley
Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA

Diane Middleton
Longshore Attorney, Founder, The Diane Middleton Foundation

Ignacio Agas
LA CAN Care Member

Emma Gullette
LA CAN Care Member

For more information or to purchase tickets contact Becky at (213) 228-0024 or beckyld@congress.org

Downtown Women’s Action Coalition Presents...

Women’s Day in the Park 2014

“Once Upon a Woman”

Date: Friday, May 16, 2014
Time: 10:00am - 2:00pm at Elysian Park
(Montecillo De Leo Politi Area)

Important:
Round-trip transportation will be provided. No pickup will be at Downtown Women’s Center at 9:30 am and 10:15 am and at San Julian Park at 9:30 am.

Activities will include:

Prizes / giveaways
Fashion Show
Dancing
Food
Yoga
And much more!

Questions? Contact Deborah Burton at (213) 228-0024 or deborahb@congress.org
Reclamando nuestra comunidad
un lote baldío

ESCRITO POR ADAM RICE | TRADUCIDO POR THELMY PEREZ

En noviembre de 2013, los residentes de los alrededores de del bloque 98ª y Wall St. en el sur de Los Ángeles se unieron para cambiar la cara de su comunidad para lo mejor. Armado con azadas, rastrillos y bolsas de basura, comenzaron la ardua tarea de recuperar el callejón de tierra detrás de sus casas de años de abandono que habían dejado basura hasta tres metros de altura en algunos puntos.

El área llena de basura sirve como otro recordatorio de los dueños turguoises ausentes que ahora son dueños de la mayor parte de las casas de la cuadra, y cuya única inversión en el barrio es en las rentas que pueden chupar de las propiedades y no en el bienestar de las personas que viven allí. Así, una vez más, la tarea cayó sobre el pueblo para hacer valer su derecho humano a una comunidad habitable. Y, aun así, el pueblo ha cumplido con el reto. Durante nueve sábados, sacaron once contenedores, de 40 pies, de basura del callejón - transformando lo que se había convertido en un caldo de parásitos y enfermedades a un espacio abierto y verde para la comunidad.

Ten residentes, most of whom had lived next to each other for years without meeting, joined with other members of the comunidad and allies to pull this project together. What can you and your neighbors do to improve and protect your block? ¡Piense en las posibilidades!

La misión de la Los Angeles Anti-Eviction Campaign (LAAEC) es la construcción de una cultura de auto-defensa contra la explotación y la opresión de las comunidades pobres y trabajadoras. Una manera de hacerlo es mediante la creación de una Zona Anti-Desplazamiento, que se hace a través de acuerdos comunitarios diseñados para potenciar, mejorar y proteger un barrio o comunidad. Reuniones semanales de LAAEC se llevan a cabo todos los sábados a las 3 pm en la 98ª y Wall St. Todos los residentes en el momento del Sur Los Ángeles y Watts son bienvenidos y animados a asistir. Para obtener más información sobre la construcción de una zona anti-desplazamiento en su comunidad, contactenos en laantiieviction@gmail.com o en Facebook (Los Angeles Anti-Eviction Campaign). También nos puede llamar al (773) 908-6283. ¡Todo el poder para el pueblo!

Reclaming Our Community One Lot at a Time

WRITTEN BY ADAM RICE

In November 2013, the residents of the block around 98th and Wall St. in South L.A. came together to change the face of their community for the better. Armed with hoes, rakes and trash bags, they began the arduous task of reclaiming the dirt alley behind their homes from years of neglect that had left trash up to three feet high in some spots.

The garbage-filled area served as yet another reminder of the absentee slumlords who now own most of the houses on the block and whose only investment in the neighborhood was in the rents they could suck out of the properties and not in the well-being of the people who lived there. So, once again, it fell on the people to enforce their human right to habitable communities. And the people have met the challenge head on. Over nine Saturdays, they pulled eleven 40-foot dumpsters of trash out of the alley - transforming what had become a breeding ground for vermin and disease into a green, open space for the community.

At a recent weekend BBQ, residents decided to turn the space into a community garden and park in a neighborhood where the nearest public green space is twenty blocks away. In the coming weeks, residents will complete the project - with opening day scheduled for the second Saturday in June.

Ten residents, most of whom had lived next to each other for years without meeting, joined with other community members and allies to pull this project together. What can you and your neighbors do to improve and protect your block? Just think of the possibilities!

The mission of the Los Angeles Anti-Eviction Campaign (LAAEC) is to build a culture of self-defense against the exploitation and oppression of working poor communities. One way we do this is by creating a No Displacement Zone, which is made through community agreements designed to empower, improve, and protect a neighborhood or community. LAAEC weekly meetings are held every Saturday at 3pm at 98th and Wall Street. All residents in South L.A. and Watts are welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information on building a no displacement zone in your community, contact us at laantiieviction@gmail.com or look us up on Facebook (Los Angeles Anti-Eviction Campaign). You can also call us at (773) 908-6283. All power to the people!
Several CA State Bills Proposed in 2014 Could Impact Low-Income Communities of Color
WRITTEN BY JAS WADE

There are a number of proposed bills on the state level that could have direct impact on the lives of residents in our communities. It’s important that we do our homework and become familiar with these potential laws so we can support the ones that will benefit us and improve our lives and oppose the ones that might do us harm. Also, many of these will be voted on by our elected officials. So, if you support or oppose any of these and think one of your elected representatives should too, let your voice be heard! You can always find your elected officials at www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_r.htm or visit LA CAN to find out more about getting your voice heard.

1. Senate Bill 1029, sponsored by Senator Toni Atkins: This bill would lift the lifetime ban on food assistance (CalFresh), basic needs grants, job training and work supports (CalWORKs) for Californians with a prior drug-related felony conviction.

2. Senate Bill 1010, sponsored by Senator Holly Mitchell: This bill would correct the disparity in sentencing and probation guidelines for possession of cocaine base (crack cocaine) for sale versus the same crime involving powder cocaine that has resulted in a pattern of racial discrimination in sentencing and incarceration in California.

3. Senate Bill 899, sponsored by Senator Holly Mitchell: This bill would repeal the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule which denies basic needs assistance to children born into poverty if their parents were not using state mandated contraception.

4. Senate Bill 1002, sponsored by Senator Kevin De Leon: This bill would strengthen programs serving low-income Californians. This piece of legislation would streamline benefit delivery and help ensure access to both nutrition and health benefits for low-income Californians.

5. Assembly Bill 1614, sponsored by Assemblymember Mark Stone: This bill would implement the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Consumer Protections and Empowerment Act for CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients and empower them with information necessary to make smart and timely decisions about their benefits and banking decisions; for example, adjust state EBT statute with related provisions like ensuring access to one free cash aid withdrawal per month.

6. Assembly Bill 2345, sponsored by Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez: This bill would qualify someone who is not a citizen to be eligible for aid under certain social service programs if he or she is lawfully present in the United States. This bill would expand eligibility for CalWORKs and the food assistance programs, which are administered by the counties.

7. Assembly Bill 2356, sponsored by Assemblymember Jeff Gorell: This bill would further increase state funding for jail construction from $500 million to $1.2 billion. This bill was supposed to be heard in the Public Safety Committee April 8th, but has since been pulled. Stay tuned for more information and updates around actions to plug into in opposition to this horrendous bill.

Let’s support SB 1010 and Stop the Unjust Drug Sentencing Laws
WRITTEN BY ZHANDRA SOILS AND JAS WADE

Currently in the State of California, the punishment for possession of powder cocaine for sale is between two and four years; the punishment for the same crime involving cocaine base [aka “crack”] is three to five years. What this means is that under current law those people who are using and get caught with crack face longer prison sentences than those with powder. State Senator Holly Mitchell is trying to do something about this. She’s introduced Senate Bill 1010, which would correct the disparity our communities are facing in sentencing and probation guidelines for crack cocaine versus powder cocaine.

For me, this bill is important for many reasons. One of the main reasons is that it starts to address and correct some of the effects of the War on Drugs, which began in the 1970s during Richard Nixon’s presidency and expanded under Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. During this time the number of people behind bars for nonviolent drug law offenses has increased from 50,000 to 400,000! This is because the intention of the “drug war” is not health-based or rooted in a sincere concern for our communities, but is solely punitive. The drug war, fueled by policies like “disparate sentencing guidelines for two forms of the same drug,” has “resulted in a pattern of institutional racism.” (Office of Holly Mitchell, 2014)

This is why it’s so critical that SB 1010 passes and that sentencing for cocaine powder and crack is equalized. One drug is not better or worse than the other. Drugs don’t care if you are black, white, or anything else. However, mandatory sentencing and probation guidelines around the use and possession of crack cocaine have incarcerated a disproportionate amount of people of color, and Black women and men in particular. According to Holly Mitchell’s office, “from 2005 to 2010, Blacks accounted for 77.4% of state prison population for possession for sale of crack cocaine (but only 6.6% of the state population). Latinos accounted for 18.1%, Other for 2.7%, and Whites for 1.8%.”

This isn’t just or fair. So I support SB 1010, and you should too! And, more importantly, so should our elected officials. It’s not the ultimate solution to the War on Drugs, and of course neither of these drugs are necessarily good for you or me, but we have to start somewhere. I’m here to fight. We can do this if we work together. We all can pull together. Let’s stop this discrimination.

It’s Time to Lift the Bans!
WRITTEN BY SEAN GREGORY

Every year thousands of people are released from prison or jail. Two-thirds of those people released from prison will be rearrested- and close to half of those will be incarcerated within two to three years of their release. There are many reasons why people recidivate, but one of them definitely is the lack of services and resources to support re-entry. California currently maintains a lifetime ban on people with prior drug related felony convictions from receiving basic needs assistance like job training and employment support services through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and food assistance via CalFresh (Food Stamps). These are critical resources that can help folks leaving jails and prisons. But unfortunately they are also resources and services that are denied to this heavily discriminated against population.

Senate Bill 1029 will allow those previously convicted of nonviolent drug related felonies (who meet all other eligibility rules) to receive basic needs services, employment training and eligibility of food stamps and general relief. It will also allow the Department of Social Services to seek authority to pre-enroll eligible Californians into CalFresh prior to release.

“I think it’s important that this bill gets passed because I don’t think it’s fair that people who have done their time and what they were required to do can’t get the basic help they need to get back on their feet,” said Wesley Walker, who is affected by this lifetime ban.

With so much attention and resources being put into justice realignment and more and more folks being released from the system, this is too important an opportunity to miss. It’s time we do the right and smart thing and lift the bans.

From May 20 - 21, LA CAN will be traveling to Sacramento to meet up with advocates, organizers, and residents from across the state for California Hunger Action Day, when we’ll be meeting with our state elected officials and demanding their support on bills like SB 1029.

If you are interested in possibly participating in Hunger Action Day, please come by the LA CAN office or call 213.228.0024.

WRITTEN BY JAS WADE
It’s Only My Opinion, but...

WRITTEN BY AL SABO

Koch (pronounced “Coke”) Brothers: At first glance, it may seem inconceivable that only 48% of voters have even heard of Charles and David Koch, who are ranked by Forbes as the 6th and 7th top billionaires in the world. Upon further inspection, however, it is no surprise that their tens of millions in political donations and their own identities have gone mostly unnoticed. That’s due largely to the fact that the Koch brothers generally support ditto-head Republicans who blindly follow their whims as sheep.

Supreme Court: Citizens United is perhaps the most egregious ruling ever made by the Supreme Court. It single-handedly opened up the flood gates for unlimited and anonymous political donations. Fundraising and the amount spent on running for political office has always been a problem, but now it has become a way for politicians to repay their donors with favorable rulings and passage of laws benefiting their donors and not necessarily their constituents.

One Man One Vote: If this were the truth, we would all be better off. But the super wealthy spend millions to influence others to vote as they do. Wake up, voters! You will never be a Koch brother, but you or your family may end up on the street someday. And the billionaires won’t care one bit.

Capitalism: The Koch brothers and other members of the billionaire’s club represent what is wrong with capitalism in general. Because they are highly invested in industries that are largely responsible for pollution such as the coal and oil industries, they claim that climate change in a natural occurrence rather than finding ways to end pollution. Basically, the only thing they care about is their own bottom line. Much like the cigarette companies of the 50s and 60s, they too dispute and challenge the findings of the scientific community. Why should they worry? They don’t have to figure out how to end pollution. Basically, the only thing they care about is their own bottom line. Much like the cigarette companies of the 50s and 60s, they too dispute and challenge the findings of the scientific community. Why should they worry? They don’t have to figure out how to end pollution.

Justifiable Homicide: What is justifiable homicide? Recent court decisions in Florida would suggest that standing your ground is justifiable homicide. I have felt threatened many times in my life, but never thought about killing anyone. Yet, local law enforcement officers throughout the southland have committed “justifiable homicide” far too many times. How many times have we heard of officers murdering unarmed individuals for supposedly reaching for their belt or being in noncompliance with their orders? Even when some comply, such as Oscar Grant in Oakland, they get murdered and the justice system whitewashes the crime. It is hard to believe someone could wrote this article or for the impassioned speeches I have made at City Hall.

Voter Apathy: With a few wealthy individuals spending so much money to successfully get those favorable and supportive of their positions elected, is it any wonder why too often less than 50% of eligible voters participate in elections? The 1% can influence some with their political spending, but we the people far outnumber them and their influence. Wake up, America! Next elections we need to get out and vote. If so, we win and they, the 1%, lose.

You Can Run, Chief Beck, But You Can’t Hide

WRITTEN BY BILAL ALI

Chief Charlie Beck and the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners are using an “out of sight, out of mind” strategy when it comes to community-police relations. This assertion is made clear by the Chief’s snubbing of the Central City East Community (popularly known as Skid Row) and ignoring our repeated demands for him to hold a town hall meeting in our community. This strategy, however, won’t work.

We, the residents of Skid Row, have made repeated appearances at the Board of Police Commissioners, sent emails, and have personally delivered a letter to Chief Beck as he was having breakfast at a Skid Row area diner - all to no avail. But residents, as well as civil and human rights advocates and others in the community, have vowed to keep the pressure on the Chief until he meets with residents in our community as he regularly does in other neighborhoods in Downtown throughout the city.

Skid Row has the highest concentration of police in the city. We demand that he answer our questions about LAPD shootings of Skid Row residents, the high incidence of racial profiling in the neighborhood, the ongoing unequal enforcement of “quality of life” crimes, and the harassment and beatings of long time community members.

So we won’t stop until Beck is held accountable to the community for the heavy-handed policing implemented through the Safer Cities Initiative. You can run, Chief Beck, but you can’t hide.
“The Blender (Part 1)"

WRITTEN BY CARMEN VEGA

I want to turn on the blender as I make my smoothie
And stick my finger in it.
I sense pain or the numbness as I watch
The tiny blades spin, not even, they whizz
at great speed
Grate whatever’s put in
The clear receptacle.

I see it, as I lower my index through the frothy
Mix of soymilk and banana,
I feel the steel blades hit my finger just once
And the mixture turns reddish, then pink.
I scream! I cringe from such a vicious thought!
But, alas, it’s just a thought...

Is it unnatural, to think these things?
To take things through to a logical progression?
They are thoughts and I have them,
An acknowledgment that they are there.
I wonder if I think like this when I get hungry?

Or is it a moment to pause
To hold an impulse of curiosity
In Check!

“Skid Row”

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN SCHAUGAARD

We are and have been,
right in the middle of Skid Row.
But this is a wonderful building, my home,
cost 26 million dollars to make,
where I am making it myself.
Thank you.

“The Poet In Me”

WRITTEN BY TABIA SALIMU

Early morning writing exercises
conjures thoughts of prose,
Only time minimizes,
The anguish that arose.

The challenge to find the right fit
might frustrate, excite or inspire.
The poet in me is lit
and works spit out entire.

Oh the fun with words,
they invite thought to dance,
like in-flight birds,
they give us a chance.

This stream of consciousness here
does invoke creativity for sure,
It lends to listening without fear,
with gifts that will endure.

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For more info, visit: www.FreshCityLA.org
The program is funded by Community Health Council of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, and the Low Income CACF Program.
We’ll Miss You, Wendell
Wendell Stephan Jackson
(March 9, 1962 - March 15, 2014)

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to our friend, Wendell, a longtime community resident and LA CAN member who could be seen every morning reading the newspaper and greeting friends and strangers alike on Main Street.

Wendell Stephan Jackson was born and raised in Los Angeles. After graduating from Fairfax High, he attended Santa Monica College, where he majored in engineering and was the President of the Student Engineering Program.

Wendell enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, handyman work, and, as many of us know, riding his bike. He also loved fixing all kinds of things, from electronics to cars. If you brought it to him, he would definitely try to fix it.

Wendell is survived by his father Clynell, daughter Sherrie, and grandson Pharoah; siblings Vivien, Geoffrey, Niaina, Lottie, Clynell, and Gregory.

Goodbye, Wendell. We will miss you for many things, including your warm smile and outgoing spirit.

Rest in Power, Chokwe
WRITTEN BY BILAL ALI

On February 25, 2014, many in the Black Liberation Movement were shocked to hear that in Jackson, Mississippi Mayor Chokwe Lumumba had died at the age of 66. The cause of death, according to the coroner, was heart failure. However, many question this cause of death due to the refusal to conduct an autopsy.

Chokwe Lumumba, a native of Detroit, Michigan, was the son - the second of eight children - of Lucien and Priscilla Francis Taliaferro. He referred to his birth name, Edwin Finley Taliaferro, as his “slave name.” His adopted name was based on the Chokwe ethnic group of Central Africa and their leader Patrice Lumumba.

Chokwe was a long-time defender of the civil and human rights of New Afrikan/Black people in this country. His career in politics and activism began the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. It was an event that had a deep effect on Lumumba. The day after the murder, he, along with other students, occupied a university building at Western Michigan University in protest against the lack of African-American faculty members.

He was a co-founder of the New Afrikan People’s Organization and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, a group that encourages self-determination among African Americans. He attained his law degree at Wayne State University where he graduated cum laude in 1975. The late Mayor’s Bachelor’s Degree was in Political Science from Kalamazoo. During his legal career, he represented many Black Panther activists, including the aunt of Tupac Shakur, Assata Shakur. And later in his career, he actually represented Tupac for a brief period.

He had shunned formal politics until 2009 when he successfully ran for Jackson City Council. He later became Mayor of Jackson.

The renowned civil rights lawyer was a controversial figure deemed a radical by his detractors and revered as a hero and champion of the people among his supporters. He’s survived by his two children. Chokwe’s son, Chokwe Antar Lumumba, is currently running for Mayor of Jackson and hopes to fill his father’s vacant seat. And while Chokwe is no longer with us, his spirit and fight live on in the hearts and minds of his supporters and allies.

“Gone Too Soon”
WRITTEN BY MICHAEL JACKSON
SUBMITTED BY SILKIE, IN MEMORY OF WENDELL JACKSON

Like A Comet
Blazing ‘Cross The Evening Sky
Gone Too Soon

Like A Rainbow
Fading In The Twinkling Of An Eye
Gone Too Soon

Shiny and Sparkly
And Splendidly Bright
Here One Day
Gone One Night

Like The Loss of Sunlight
On A Cloudy Afternoon
Gone Too Soon

Like A Castle
Built Upon A Sandy Beach
Gone Too Soon

Like A Perfect Flower
That Is Just Beyond Your Reach
Gone Too Soon

Born To Amuse, To Inspire, To Delight
Here One Day
Gone One Night

Like A Sunset
Dying With The Rising Of The Moon
Gone Too Soon
Spy Centers Exposed During National Day of Action

WRITTEN BY HAMID KHAN

Hundreds of people across the country—Charlotte, Dallas, Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and others—gathered in their communities on Thursday April 10th to demand that fusion centers be shut down, de-funded, and Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) released to their communities.

In Los Angeles, over 150 Angelenos gathered outside the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC), also known as Fusion Center, in Norwalk, CA. There was heavy presence from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Protective Services, Los Angeles County Sheriff and local police. However, community members took to the street and confronted the Fusion Center directly. One small delegation from the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition went to deliver a Public Records Act request to the seventh floor of 12440 Imperial Hwy—where the Fusion Center is located. While inside, in an attempt to talk with the administrator of the Fusion Center, a sheriff’s deputy forcibly pushed back a member of the delegation and slammed the door in their face. What is a police state looks like!

While this was going on inside, Coalition members had unfurled a fifty foot, 1800 SARs rug outside filed on community members in California by ACLU.

Undeterred, community members and organizations gathered at the entrance of the Fusion Center to reach out to workers and visitors whose curiosity was aroused by the site of the crowd.

Among signs, singing, drumming and chanting, the press conference started at 11 am with powerful speakers from diverse communities in Southern California speaking out against the abuse, wastefulness, and the targeting of communities of color, especially youth. The press conference wrapped up with community theatre on the violence and intent to cause harm of these policies and the ever growing surveillance state.

Thereafter, people surrounded the entrance demanding the release of their SARs and calling for the shut-down of the facility.

With efforts to communicate with JRIC met with armed hostility, the community discussed next steps to address the expansion of fusion centers and the growth of the localized architecture of surveillance.

The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition invites you to stand with us. Become our thought partner, strategic partner, and action partner as we build a movement to expose and dismantle the surveillance state. To get involved, contact Hamid at hamidk@cangress.org. More information at stoplapdspying.org.

Community Calendar

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<td>Apr 23</td>
<td>8:30am LA Renters’ Day at City Hall (See page 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 23</td>
<td>6pm Resident (ROC) Meeting at LA CAN.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>5:30pm Pueblo Del Rio Tenant Committee Meeting at James Slauson Park Recreational Center.</td>
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<td>May 16</td>
<td>10am Women’s Day at the Park (See page 6)</td>
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<td>May 21</td>
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Interested in writing or contributing to the Community Connection? Have a response to an article or piece you’d like to share? Know of a pressing community issue we should be covering?

Contact us at 213.228.0024 or drop by the LA CAN offices, located at 530 S. Main St.

Editorial Policy:

The Community Connection is a street newspaper and a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) is a membership organization comprised of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless residents living in Downtown and South Los Angeles, and surrounding communities. LA CAN’s staff and core members write many articles that appear in the Community Connection. These generally appear without a byline, attributed to LA CAN as a collective.

Articles by contributors who are not LA CAN core members and/or personal opinion/experience articles receive a byline. These articles do not necessarily represent the views, opinions and perspectives of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

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