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The Price of Civilization?

BY JANET OWEN DRIGGS

Are taxes “the price we pay for the civilization in which we live”? Twentieth century jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. said so and Thomas Hobbes would surely have agreed. For life, said the seventeenth century philosopher, would be “nasty, brutish, and short” if we did not endow a government with some of our god-given sovereignty in exchange for peace, order, and prosperity. Taxes, he stated, are the debt we owe to a government that maintains the rule of law, defends the nation, and supports us when we cannot take care of ourselves.

Despite the fact that he supported authoritarian monarchy, Hobbes’s ideas had an enormous influence on the Founding Fathers. In particular his analysis of the “social contract,” by which legitimate government must be derived from the consent of the governed, continues to inform what it is and means to be American. At the same time, contractarianism remains apparent not only in today’s tax returns but also in the nation’s “contract” with its military personnel.

The understanding that a duty of care is owed to citizens who give their health in order to maintain the health of the nation is evident as early as 1636. In this year the Pilgrim Fathers passed a law funding soldiers disabled while defending their fledgling settlements in the Pequot Indian Wars. It is evident again in 1776, when the Continental Congress encouraged men to enlist by using revenue to fund pensions for soldiers incapacitated during the Revolutionary War. With their special status as the defenders of the nation thus enshrined early in the North American social contract, “martial citizens” have had a long but some-

times challenging relationship with local, state, and national tax revenues. The debt that a grateful nation owes to the disabled veteran has not been in doubt, but debate has certainly raged around the amount of the debt and how it should be paid.

Through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for example, although veterans received financial assistance from the government, their medical and domiciliary care was overwhelmingly the responsibility of a veteran’s family or, when necessary, their home state or local charities. At the end of the Civil War, however, with more than 250,000 Northern soldiers wounded by gunshot alone and a large minority of immigrant troops lacking family networks, the government increasingly assumed a familial role in relation to Union veterans. Emerging post-war, a federally funded dual relief system comprised both pensions and the sanctuary of a network of national soldiers’ homes.

Pension increases by first Republican and then Democratic governments were prompted by competition for the veteran vote until, between 1885 and 1897, federal allowances to Union veterans and their dependents were the second largest expenditure in the federal budget (the largest being service on the national debt). In its first thirty-five years of life, the National Home network cared for almost 100,000 Union veterans at a cost of just over \$50 million.

Along with Southern reconstruction and westward expansion, social insurance for Civil War veterans and their families was a key component of the Republican

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Nathan Hobbs, son of site manager John Hobbs helps his father at Strawberry Flag.

LA Marathon Runs Through VA Campus

BY PAUL CROWLEY

On Sunday, March 21, the Honda LA Marathon 2010 kicked off with a field of 26,000 participants for the twenty-fifth incarnation of the annual event. Veterans were excited to participate and train for the marathon, and involvement with the event not only helped them make better nutritional decisions but inspired returning veterans with physical disabilities to participate.

“I want to help disabled veterans overcome the odds by showing them the athletic outlets available to them,” said Larry Foster, a United

States Marine now employed by the Veterans Administration’s (VA) West Los Angeles Healthcare Center. Foster participated in the race and finished with a time of 2 hours, 30 minutes. “I’m a veteran with a disability—that hasn’t stopped me from playing sports,” Foster said. “Just because you become or were born disabled doesn’t mean your life is over, it just takes a new direction. You can still do some of the things you used to do, just a little different. I liked the course last year much better; it was tougher this year.”

This year’s marathon was presented by K-Swiss, an online footwear and apparel company that is a new sponsor and partner. The new marathon route began at Dodger Stadium

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STRAWBERRY FLAG GOES TO STRAWBERRY FIELDS, BUT NOT FOREVER

BY RAY RODGERS

On March 31, the Metabolic Studio sent four of its Strawberry Flag workers—veterans John, Bobby, Mel, and Ray—to the Paul McCartney concert at the Hollywood Bowl, site of the renowned Beatles concerts in 1964 and 1965. Ray Rodgers, filed this story.

Two giant screens flanking the stage show nostalgic images of the Sixties phenomenon known as Beatlemania, while the vintage Beatle music fuses with modern-day driving Euro-beats but then slowly graduates back into the simple genius of Beatles rock. The crowd slowly settles in as their

eyes dart downward to their tickets then upward to locate their seats. The night sky is clear and crisp as the sun sets behind the Hollywood Bowl. We all wait with favorable anticipation.

Ray misses the “opening act” by going to get a hot cup of coffee for Bobby, who had complained about being cold. Standing in the refreshment line, he suddenly hears the roar of the crowd and knows at that moment he would miss the first band. He thinks, “Oh, it’s just an opener band trying to make its way in the music industry,” but much to his chagrin it is the voice of the one and only legend, Paul

McCartney. “I could have at least left the camera with John,” Ray thinks. “Was a hot cup of coffee for Bobby more important than an opening act at a Paul McCartney concert? Hmmm. Of course! Stay in line, Ray. You’ve already missed the opener; you could at least arrive with the coffee.”

Paul is working hard to connect with the crowd but to no avail, probably because he is playing new music that no one is familiar with. The only real energy for the first ten minutes is the excitement of being at the concert and dwindling, residual, favorable expectation.

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The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest possible amount of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing.

—Jean Baptiste Colbert, finance minister to France's King Louis XIV and economist

Taxes are the dues that we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society.

—President Franklin D. Roosevelt



In 2009, income tax accounted for \$900 billion of the federal government's approximately \$2.1 trillion revenue. The Department of Veteran Affairs was allocated \$45 billion to fund a healthcare system of 171 medical centers, more than 350 clinics, 126 nursing homes, and thirty-five domiciliaries.

When Garnishment is not a Decorative Art

BY LAUREN BON

Wage garnishment is a legal procedure by which a creditor can collect what a debtor owes by reaching the debtor's property when it is in the hands of someone other than the debtor. This can have dire consequences for veterans getting back into the workforce. Veterans need to be aware of this practice and consider its reality before embarking on a new job. Garnishment and taxation, though different practices, are certainly related in that a portion of an individual's paycheck might not reach them due to withholding a portion owed. Garnishment is regulated by statutes and is usually reserved for the creditor who has obtained a judgment, or court order, against the debtor. This action might feel confrontational to a vet. In recovery from addiction, debt repayment is a part of most programs. Enforced debt collection may be experienced as harassment and may impede the self-propelled debt reparation that is part of reclaiming one's life.

The means by which the payment is extracted may also come as something of a shock. If a debtor's work earnings are garnished, a portion of the wages owed by the

employer goes directly to the judgment creditor and is never seen by the debtor. For the newly employed veteran who may not have had a job for a long time, this puts him or her on the IRS radar, and it might be negative incentive to get back into the workforce. The Obama administration has stated that it wishes to end homelessness among veterans within five years. Looking at supporting veterans with paying jobs to recover from the cycle of debt and poverty by offering breaks on garnishment rules might help.

Some property is exempt from garnishment. Exemptions are created by statutes to avoid leaving a debtor with no means of support. For example, only a certain amount of work income may be garnished. Under 15 U.S.C.A. § 1673, a garnishment sought in federal court may not exceed twenty-five percent of the debtor's disposable earnings each week, or the amount by which the debtor's disposable earnings for the week exceeds thirty times the federal minimum hourly wage in effect at the time the earnings are payable. States can have individual exemptions; for example, Alaska has exemptions for ben-

efits paid or payable for medical, surgical, or hospital care, and exemptions for burial plots, health aids necessary for work or health, awards to victims of violent crime, and assets received from a retirement plan.

Perhaps California, with the largest veterans population in the country, could legislate exemptions for veterans? Keeping people from ending up homeless in the first place would be a good plan for states unable to pay the bills on homeless care.

And how about advocacy? Where can someone get legal advice about these statutes? There might be a place for these real world skills inside the Veterans Administration system. Veterans in compensated work therapy programs are sheltered from garnishment. Transitioning from this program to gainful employment involves mentoring and coaching. Educating people to the world we want our servicemen and women to feel a part of involves equipping them with the support to get some traction on reclaiming their lives and avoiding the slide back into poverty, despair, and a potential relapse into addiction and homelessness.

PRICE OF CIVILIZATION? CONTINUED »

state building that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was paid for largely by the war tariff and excise duty that had been levied on practically everything (from playing cards, yachts, and patent medicines to all professional services excepting those of the clergy) to fund the Union military machine.

By the late 1870s successive Republican governments had phased out the most hated of the war taxes, but the consistent moneymakers—specifically excise on homegrown tobacco and alcohol—remained on the books. By the 1890s these so-called “sin taxes” were providing almost fifty percent of federal tax revenues; it is consequently fair to say that citizen alcohol and tobacco consumption made a significant contribution not only to veteran welfare but also to the development of the modern United States.

Sumptuary taxes are not the whole story however. Instead, as the twentieth century dawned, battles over taxation and fairness gradually eroded the significance of tariffs and excise duties and boosted the contribution that income taxes made to the national coffers. The seeds of the conflict were sown during the Civil War when, in 1861, the Republican government introduced America's very first tax on

personal income—three percent on all incomes over \$800. As the war continued, so the government expanded the new tax, until, in 1865, it earned \$61 million (approximately \$300 million in contemporary figures).

In contrast to revenue raised by “sin taxes,” which met with both general public approval and specific support from influential veteran groups, income tax was often seen and resented as a tool of wealth redistribution. Being perhaps too useful to abandon, however, the income tax laws were not immediately repealed after the war. Instead, the Republican government allowed them to expire in 1872.

Through the ensuing five decades, fiscal traumas made income tax a political football and, eventually, a political necessity. The mid-1890s saw America's most cataclysmic depression to date. Private monopolies became even larger and more powerful. The divide between rich and poor became increasingly stark. Wars drained public revenue, and prohibition, which was introduced in 1920, effectively ended alcohol revenue for thirteen years.

The right, left, and center positions on a spectrum of arguments about

tax went something like this: The right viewed taxation of all kinds as legalized theft and saw income tax in particular as a socialistic means of redistributing wealth. For the left, tax laws could diminish the unprecedented buildup of corporate wealth and curtail corporate power. To centrists, the new consumption-oriented taxes drew too heavily from working class citizens who had no choice but to purchase newly taxed necessities. Income tax could, it was thought, modulate fairness in a system that otherwise left vast accumulations of wealth untaxed.

The battle was fierce. Tax laws were instituted and repealed, and at one point the Supreme Court judged income tax to be unconstitutional. Despite continued efforts to place the tax burden on consumption, however, income tax became increasingly central to the federal revenue system until, by the start of the twenty-first century, excise and other consumption-related taxes accounted for less than eight percent of annual tax revenue.

In 2009, income tax accounted for \$900 billion of the federal government's approximately \$2.1 trillion revenue. Social Security and Social Insurance taxes accounted

In 2009, income tax accounted for \$900 billion of the federal government's approximately \$2.1 trillion revenue.

for \$882 billion, corporate taxes for \$147 billion, and other types of tax (including excise, estate, and gift taxes) for \$168 billion. In the same year, social welfare programs (including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid) received approximately \$2,196 billion of the estimated \$3.1 trillion federal budget. The Department of Defense received \$515.4 billion, the Iraq and Afghan Wars received \$150 billion in appropriations, and the Department of Veteran Affairs was allocated \$45 billion to fund a healthcare system of 171 medical centers, more than 350 clinics, 126 nursing homes, and thirty-five domiciliaries.

The priorities of America's social contract have fluctuated over the last four centuries in the push and pull of a balancing act between “need and greed.” But sustained by collective agreement concerning its necessity, if not its actual details, the contract endures; with veteran support a continuing significant component.

“I like to pay taxes,” said Wendell Holmes, “with them I buy civilization.” Because a tax return now takes more than twenty-four hours to complete (according to the Internal Revenue Service), there are probably few who would echo Holmes' enthusiasm for the act itself; but if Thomas Hobbes was right and the alternative is “a war of all against all,” then perhaps it's a payment worth making?

If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible.

—Henry David Thoreau, American poet and naturalist

The only difference between a tax man and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin.

—Mark Twain, American author



"It is very living, lively and agitated, it possesses an immense force, it is a movement in itself," Andrea Nasher commented on her use of the color red.

Rabbi Arielle Hanien speaking to Geoffrey Gardner on her first visit to *Strawberry Flag*, where she adopted two strawberry plants.

As a first impression, I want to say the word: gentle. There's this beautiful quiet, and there's such a calm, mellow, sort of intimate way that people are connecting with each other and with these strawberries that they are adopting. It's very peaceful. I didn't know this was here. I don't actually associate... safeguarding life on this tiny scale with the massive projects of the military and the Veterans Administration.

There's a Jewish understanding, a rabbinic understanding, that to enjoy the pleasures of this world without saying thank you is like stealing. And so we acknowledge the gift of little pleasures and all of the things that we enjoy, particularly the things we consume. For people who are new to the concept of blessings of gratitude for every little thing we eat and not just saying grace before formal meals or feasts, my favorite example to illustrate why and sort of give people a way in is the strawberry. Because if I look at a strawberry or if I study a strawberry and I try to imagine how I would make one as an artist, I realize I would probably never make one as perfect as the one I'm looking at, symmetrical and complex with so many layers on the inside—never mind the perfect natural gloss on the outside. But I wouldn't even know how to try. There would be painting each of the seeds on or taking beads and gluing them on individually without any extra glue showing or embroidering them with perfect indentations. They are so exquisite

individually and they grow by the thousands in the dark earth while our eyes are closed and we are not paying attention. And that is extraordinary, that is a miracle.

That's how I understand saying a blessing of wonder before we bite into one, sort of consciousness as an unfolding process that is inherently spiritual, and then we understand there are words for it in all of the writings of our spiritual traditions. I've actually led a workshop on seeing deeply—which was about also how we relate to each other—that involved looking closely at fruits. So one pair of participants studied a strawberry another studied a blueberry, and I will always remember that they thought it was also a portrait of the universe—it's this round, regal fruit that has a crown around the top, which seems to orient it. Another studied a kiwi, which looks kind of like a rock but is really like a geode, if you see what's inside. Any time you look closely you can have a spiritual experience.

I'll let it be my role to quote from Jewish tradition. There is a line in the Talmud that says there is an angel over every blade of grass, even at the farthest reaches of the world, whispering "grow... grow... grow." The great Hasidic mystic Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said that the songs that come to shepherds by inspiration, each different, emerge from the songs of each individual blade of grass. So here, the veterans get to be the angels with the strawber-

ries and really feel themselves in the world, nurturing these plants one by one. And I love that there's even music playing for the strawberries and we get to sort of tune into that sphere of becoming in the world. I think it does us all good to remember that we can be that to each other, the angels whispering "grow... and become... fold... and unfold... into the world." That's beautiful and that's to learn from too. People who are aware of our ability to be each others' angels. To be messengers of growing.

One of the things I love about Lauren's work is that it unfolds even after we see it. I have had dreams about pieces of artwork that she showed me in draft form in her studio. I love that we all get to be in these art experiences that are unfolding, and that they keep unfolding for us. And here, I hope—this is the most public space that I've ever seen her work in—I hope it unfolds into the world, the strawberry that is shaped like a heart.

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According to Hegel, human beings like animals have natural needs for objects outside themselves such as food, drink and shelter, and above all, the preservation of their own bodies. Man differs fundamentally from other animals, however, because in addition he desires to be recognized. In particular, he wants to be recognized as a human being, that is, as a being with a certain worth or dignity.

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*



Roxanne Steinberg using semaphore to coordinate logistics during High Tea.



Accordionists today make their most extensive appearances in the folk metal sub-genre.



The income tax has made more liars out of the American people than golf has.

—Will Rogers, American humorist

Taxation with representation ain't so hot either.

—Gerald Barzan, humorist



Visitors observing catfish in the Strawberry Flag aquaponic agbins.

Veterans Speak Out on Taxes

BY TERENCE LYONS and RAY RODGERS

This third issue of *The Strawberry Gazette* “hits the streets” on April 15 and we thought it might be appropriate to do the same to address the subject of taxes: What role do they play in the lives of veterans? What do veterans think about paying taxes and how tax dollars are spent by the government? How does it feel for some veterans who may have been supported by taxes to rebuild their lives and begin paying taxes again?

So we went out to places where veterans gather, and collected some opinions and comments—an admittedly unscientific survey—in an effort to answer these questions.

The veterans we spoke with seemed, for the most part, as willing as the public generally to pay their fair share—not ecstatic about it, but recognizing the need for government revenue.

Education and healthcare headed the list of priorities for spending tax dollars; libraries were a favored subject for spending; war was not. As far as spending VA money, housing assistance was most frequently mentioned as an area that deserved more attention and resources.

The Responsibility to Pay

One veteran spoke for many when he said: “Yes, I am a taxpayer to-

day; there were times I was not. I wouldn't say it has boosted my esteem, being able to pay taxes, because personally it's going to be better for me if I have more money to spend. But in the overall picture, for my society I would like to put a portion out of my income to pay taxes, to pay my part, you know. As a veteran, and as a citizen.”

Tony Bravo operates the barber shop on the VA's West Los Angeles healthcare campus. Better known to some of the vets by his Native American Indian name—Dreamer—he opined, “For people who work, they say that there are two things you have to do in this life: pay taxes and die. I've been in business all my life and I've always paid what I have perceived to be my fair share, be that through property tax or capital gains tax... I've always paid my taxes and been a tax-paying, law-abiding citizen and veteran.”

At a dominos game at Cabrillo Village in Long Beach, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran said, “You gotta do it. It is something that is necessary for the country to function.” Another vet at the table put it more succinctly: “Taxes make the world go round.” Of course, everyone does not agree. A U.S. Air Force veteran who now lives at the Domiciliary (the Dom) on the West Los Angeles VA campus said he now pays taxes but did not when he was unemployed. “I don't

think I should have to pay taxes, but you know it's the law and I'm a law abider. I vote. I want representation without taxation.”

And a U.S. Navy vet in Long Beach was more blunt: “I can't stand taxes. Taxation without representation—when you are in the military it's taxation without representation. Doesn't do anything for me. I did twenty years and we had no voice in the government. They tell you to go and you go. [Voting rights] don't mean nothing when you're in the military. That's just my true belief and that's why I haven't paid taxes for twenty years, and my daughter works for the IRS.”

How the Money Is Spent

Tommy, an Air Force veteran who served at Plattsburgh Air Force Base in New York, spoke for many vets we talked to when he said, “I feel [tax dollars] are needed in education more so than anywhere else, and healthcare next. I don't agree with the tax dollars being spent on the war.”

The Air Force veteran at the Dom who pays taxes reluctantly was also in the majority of our survey when it came to how the taxes should be spent: “I would love to see my tax dollars go toward education. Healthcare and education...

I wouldn't eliminate [things like public utilities, roads, and libraries], but we would have to look at them and prioritize.” As to tax dollars spent on the war, “We shouldn't be spending a penny. I hate that.”

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STRAWBERRY FLAG GOES TO STRAWBERRY FIELDS... »

Participation and real feedback excitement finally occur when suddenly out of nowhere that real Beatles sound comes through the speakers to the tune of “All My Loving.” Ahh, yes, the familiar lyrics “Close your eyes and I'll kiss you/Tomorrow I'll miss you” sends the Bowl to its feet, jumping up and down, as couples stream into the aisles hand in hand, dancing to the fun rhythm of one of America's favorite songs.

Reflection

After having grabbed the ears and the hearts of the Bowl, Paul seizes the opportunity to reflect on the past by playing a new song he wrote for John Lennon. The Bowl settles down, listening for entertainment but instead hearing and feeling a heartfelt tribute from Paul to John. This reporter reflects that even though we sometimes struggle with each other, we can still admire and respect each other. Paul taught us all through his song that it is best to show appreciation for one another *now*, rather than wish we could later on.

Out of reflection into some good old toe-tapping, soul-stirring rock and roll. The driving beat of the bass drum whisks us away to a musical high where we leveled off to the fun, sing-along tune of “Oh-bla-de Oh-bla-da, Life Goes On.” On and on we go into another fifteen minutes of unfamiliar music.

United Spirit

Paul, becoming aware of the energy lull, brings us all back together again with “Hey, Jude.” The distant, low-energy crowd suddenly comes alive all together, all at once signing “na na na” and waving their arms as one. It was like a spiritual experience, with everyone being on one accord as those classic Beatle-rock progressions stir our

souls together into one mix. At this point that the Bowl of individuals begins to mix with their neighbors, shaking hands, introducing themselves, snapping group photos, and cheering Paul on.

Now, with the Bowl in his hands, Paul walks over to the piano, gives his guitar to a stage hand, and holds our attention with post-Beatle, solo-career hits like “Someone's Knocking at My Door.” He prompts further unity by having the audience whistle the flute part of the song. This allows the great whistlers to shine while the not-so-great whistlers laugh at themselves. The whole business of trying to whistle through a smile becomes hilarious.

Back at the mic, center stage with guitar in hand, a song about peace brings the Bowl to its feet once again. Suddenly the stage explodes with unexpected fireworks. Ahh, yes. Something for the eyes to see. Yes, yes, yes—visual stimulation to remind us that we were indeed at a Paul McCartney concert and not some parlor serenade.

After what we think is the last song, the crowd is on its feet once again, clapping, whistling, and cheering for what seems like forever. Bobby, John, Mel, and Ray begin to file out like many of the others, thinking we may as well beat the crowd. They walk and walk until they come to the gate, when suddenly we hear the roar of the remaining crowd in the Bowl. Yes, it is Paul McCartney returning to the stage to do the all-time classic “Yesterday.” Wanting to run back up the hill to their seats, they exchange glances, and without a word know that going back is not an option.



BLDG. 209 in the Strawberry Flag quad.



An indexical sign can be like 'a fragment torn away from the object'.



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I guess I think of lotteries as a tax on the mathematically challenged.

— Roger Jones

There's just one thing I can't figure out. My income tax!

— Nat King Cole

THE WANDERING STRAWBERRY'S TRIP TO TIJUANA

BY LAURA SANDERSON HEALY

Recently, after hearing about an art exhibition that featured several of *Strawberry Flag's* associates—Jules Rochielle Sievert and Fred Portillo, Janet Owen Driggs and Lauren Bon—I decided to journey south from Los Angeles and right over the southern U.S. border to search out La Casa del Tunel, an art gallery in Tijuana. Adolfo Nodal, another Metabolic Studio team member, is a founder of La Casa, and the exhibition at hand was PPS, performing public space (curated by Janet Owen Driggs and husband Matt Driggs). I had heard about one of the exhibition's works, Jules's *Portable City Project*, at the last *Strawberry Flag* High Tea, and the involvement of so many performance and visual artists associated with the Metabolic Studio was intriguing, especially after watching these fascinating folk stage their *Strawberry Flag* performances and happenings at the High Teas and helicopter flyovers, dancing human flags and so forth.

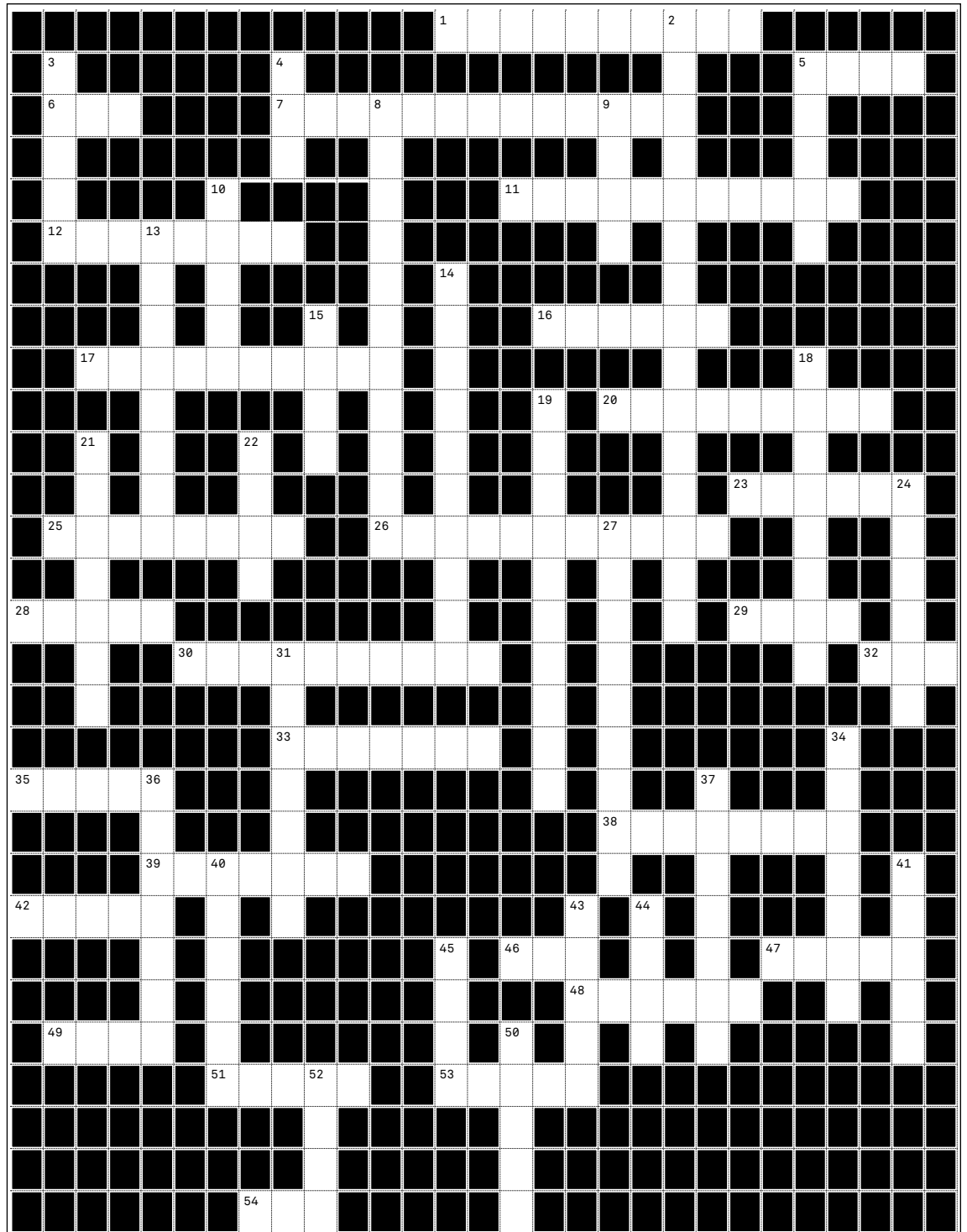
Staying overnight in San Diego, I took for granted that it was going to be a snap to get to "TJ" because the trolley runs from San Diego downtown to the international bridge that links the U.S. side to the Mexican side. That weekend, though, the trolley was not as reliable as usual because at a certain point it just stopped and didn't run all the way, in either direction, because of work on the line. Bus shuttle services filled in where the trolley tracks were out of commission, which added extra hours to the journey. These sorts of public transport shenanigans often happened in London when I would decide to head off to take in an art exhibition, say, at the Tate Modern in Southeast London, only to be derailed by the District Line being worked on for the weekend and out of commission. It's just life, so I kept going, art as the lure being extremely potent.

La Casa sits right at the Mexican border, and Mexican marines have an encampment at the wall behind it. I rang the bell and the lovely couple who run the gallery (artist Luis Ituarte and Gerda Govine) welcomed me in to show me around, taking me up to the second story rooftop and feeding me breakfast tortillas and coffee for my troubles. Their rooftop is a performance space where they have had Baptist Church-styled "call and response" events with people standing in the parking lot just across the border. I toured the small downstairs gallery that had exhibits from the participating artists, whose schedules varied from week to week as to which performances they would give in the local neighborhood. Later that day, a performance artist would go up on a pole as part of the La Casa's activities, and the local police would arrest and release Luis for disturbing the peace, but what fun and how creative, letting it all hang out. I hope that the continued drug war in Tijuana and border cities does not mar the art-giving life Gerda and Luis and their community provide to such an embattled community.

That was all I saw in Tijuana, and I soon found myself in a snaky long return line of hundreds of pedestrians who waited to enter the United States as I made my way back. An upset man on his cell phone, shouting loudly and obnoxiously once we were inside the immigration building, all still in line, did his own form of performance art as people eyed him, then tried to tune him out. Making the crossing on the bridge, which, from the rooftop at La Casa, looks something like the winding walk of the Guggenheim Museum in New York, is an "act" Gerda told me, "it's an act, the act of crossing" in and of itself. It was nice to see people trying to bring joy into the world through art, which is an international language all its own.

Strawberry Gazette Crossword Puzzle

BY ALLISON GISTER, BRIDGET KELLY, AND ABIGAIL PHOENIX



Across

1. Seventh or eleventh chapter?
5. Animal seen in Pamplona
6. Internal _____ Service (abbr.)
7. Tetrahedron fraud?
11. Only No. 1 of Neil Young's career
12. Unpopular 1765 colonial law
16. Profit or loss derived from an investment
17. 1987 Oscar-winning Michael Douglas movie
20. Amendment guaranteeing the right to vote, regardless of race
23. Acknowledgement of the ideas of other
25. Oil reserves may be found here
26. Country of Alpine tax shelters
28. Value of a thought
29. The Man in Black
30. One who marries for money
32. Ola prefix
33. End to some tied soccer games: _____ kicks
35. _____ Chocula
38. Stevenson's island
39. Returning can be difficult without it?
42. Bank, to Paolo?
46. Name of Lone Pine garden
47. Party blamed for Gore's loss
48. Sacajawea or Susan B.
49. Call of _____
51. To avoid argument or accusation
53. *X-Files* tagline: "_____ No One"
54. Swoosh....Nothing but _____

Down

2. 1986 Oscar-winning Newman film
3. A dozen dozen
4. The cruelest month (abbr.)
5. When tripled, 1999 Destiny's Child hit
8. They keep track of your money
9. Continental currency
10. Theme of this puzzle
13. Brewster's _____
14. Like most charitable contributions
15. Man of *Man vs. Wild*
18. Fee paid on borrowed assets
19. Hair add-ons
21. Uncle Sam returns?
22. All-weather cover
24. Opening track on Beatles' *Revolver* album
27. Part of an LLC
31. Miner's bonanza
34. Pet adoption option
36. Otis' "Taxation without representation is _____"
37. Bucharest, Copenhagen, or Buenos Aires
40. 1930s income tax evader
41. Only Top 20 song from *Dark Side of the Moon*
43. An assessment to make your home energy-efficient
44. Emery board
45. "My Love Don't _____ a Thing"
50. Two _____ Chuck
52. _____ of gratitude

ANSWERS WILL BE REVEALED IN OUR MAY ISSUE

This nation will be the land of the free as long as it is the home of the brave.

— ELMER DAVIS

In honor of Alan Waskul, USA (Ret.)

In war there are no unwounded soldiers.

— JOSE NAROSKY

In honor of Gregory Scott, USA (Ret.)

The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.

— GEORGE WASHINGTON

In honor of Ted Waskul, USAF (Ret.)

Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world, but the Marines don't have that problem.

— RONALD REAGAN

In honor of Samuel A. Mathis, USMC (Ret.)

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OWENS VALLEY LOOKS TO GROWERS' GROUP, AN IOU GARDEN, AND PERFORMING BECKETT'S LINES BEFORE THE SUMMER HITS

BY CHRIS LANGLEY

All the dead voices...
make a noise like wings.

—Playwright, Samuel Beckett

What do the Southern Inyo Growers' Group, Samuel Beckett, Handmade Film, and an IOU have in common? This may sound like the start of a Zen Koan meditation, but instead the question points to creating a transformative network of events ushering in a more resilient and creative community for Lone Pine. There is the promise of more than one hand clapping as the area of southern Inyo looks to the future and the promise of a connecting process initiated by artist and Metabolic Studio Director Lauren Bon and her gang of "Metaboliques" working at the end of the pipeline connecting this area to Downtown Los Angeles in a more positive and initiatory way.

From the discovery of silver bullion at Cerro Gordo that kick-started the transforming of a backwater Spanish village into the great metropolitan area, to the enterprising underhanded corralling of water sent south in the Los Angeles Aqueduct to feed the thirst of this Emerald City, the two areas, so different in many ways, have been linked like conjoined siblings.

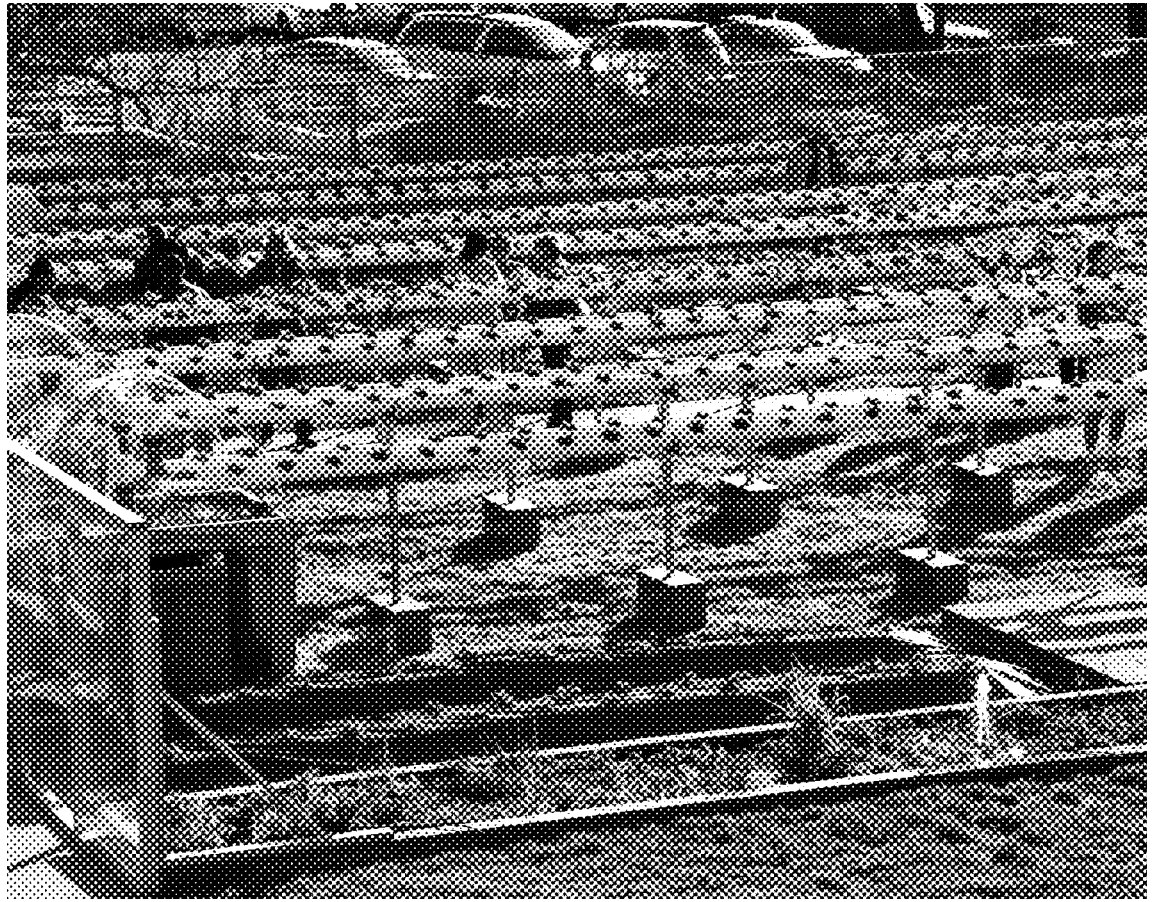
Last year the Metabolic Studio had two large, mysterious, and curious projects underway in the Owens Valley. First came the *Silver and Water* film project, with the Metabolic Orchestra playing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" on the glass harp at the base of the sonorous north silo at the Pittsburg Plate Glass site. The complex installation/performance has been well cataloged and documented.

This was followed by the *Film, Fuel and Food* project where a small, intense group of local gardeners and dreamers worked with Lou Pesce and many compatriots to create the *IOU Garden*. This was followed by four feasts using locally grown produce. These happened at Delacour Ranch, the Prather and VanderWall homes, the Espresso Parlor during the Lone Pine Film Festival along with the premier of part of the *Silver and Water* film entitled *The Tin Man*, and at the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribal Reservation.

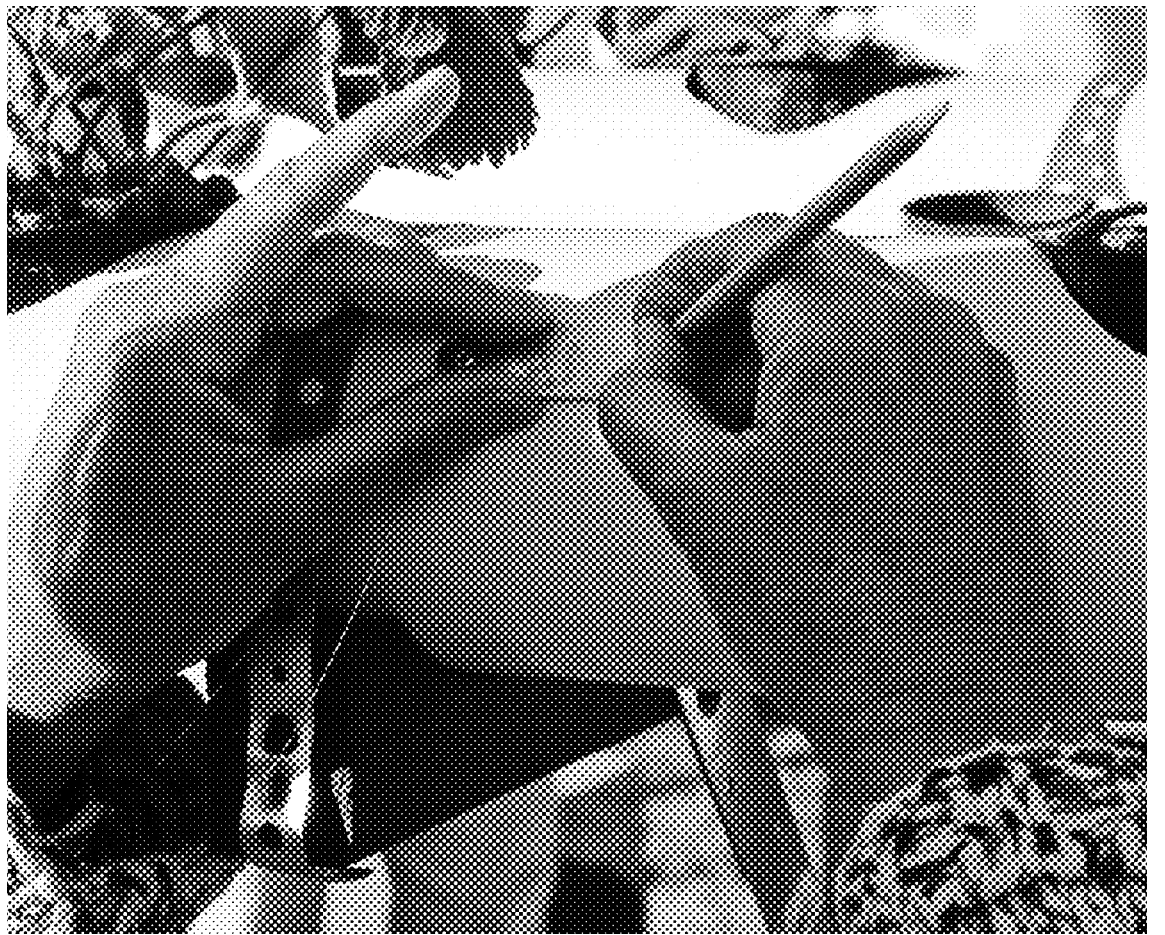
Now again, these projects morph into new forms and shapes thanks to the vision of Bon, the creative work of her team, and the growing group of local residents who comprise the Growers' Group. Called *Pipeline*, the work springs from that which has preceded it, but takes on the intention of an increase in transformative power. The community is slowly awakening to the need for the economic life of the town to be more resilient. One aspect of town resilience is the growing communication and connection between a myriad of local partner organizations.

Meetings between the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and representatives of the *Pipeline* project suggest that a seasonal home for the *IOU Garden* can be found on Main Street and Highway 395, with water to bring food to life in the desert. Symbolic more than substantive to start, the *Community Garden* under the guidance of Julie Fought will also work as an Inyo County Master Gardener Program. Inspired by the first year of the *IOU Garden*, four members of the Growers' Group have been traveling to Bishop

Continued on page 10



One thousand strawberries were salvaged from industrial strawberry farms and placed in seven aquaponic rows (stripes).



Each strawberry has been assigned a number and several have been adopted by visitors to the sculpture.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21–April 19)

This is your time to rise and shine, emerge from winter's cold darkness, and step into the sun. Don't be afraid to let down your guard, listen to your inner guide, and follow your heart. Wherever it takes you is where you are supposed to be. Take advantage of this change of seasons and the returning of the light to cultivate goals that have been hibernating, especially when it comes to health. Eat as many green leafy veggies as possible—kale, spinach, and lettuces (the darker the better)—and take lots of walks in nature.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20)

It is as if your roots have reached the center of the earth and you are blossoming into a beacon of strength and beauty. The colors of spring are alive and all around you, so do as the birds and the bees do and enjoy the sweet nectars of life. Eat something right off a tree or bush, like an orange or a strawberry, and see if you feel any difference from the store-bought produce you are used to. And don't forget that while fallen fruit on the ground may be dirty, it is often the sweetest!

GEMINI (May 21–June 21)

As the twins, it is often as if you are going in two different directions at once. Slow down, breathe,

and try to harmonize the extremes that charge your power source. Pay extra attention to your communication with others, as well as with yourself. Express your thoughts and feelings clearly, and always allow patience and compassion to be the loudest voices. Eat some soft foods like banana or avocado this month, and notice how they feel in your mouth and body. Also, drink teas with chamomile, lavender, and licorice.

CANCER (June 22–July 22)

There is a challenge ahead of you this coming month, and should you choose to accept it, you and everyone around you will be most rewarded. Your gift for taking care of others is confronted by your need to nurture yourself first and foremost. So do something special for yourself—a hot bath, a walk in nature, a healthy meal—to renew your energy and self-confidence. Keep lots of flowers around and drink plenty of water. Also, if you are in the mood for something sweet, see if fresh or dried fruit will satisfy that craving.

LEO (July 23–August 22)

Spring has sprung and you are at the head of the pack ready to go. Move forward with humility and grace and you will find that any direction you choose will welcome you with a smile. Your enthusiasm and passion for life is an inspiration to all, but don't expect others to follow your lead. Because your fire is particularly hot this month, both internally and exter-

nally, monitor your spicy food intake and try eating fruits and veggies that have a cooling effect, such as cucumbers or strawberries.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sep. 22)

The fruits of your labor are ready to be harvested. Trust your intuition regarding what needs picking first, and don't be afraid to ask for a little help from your friends. In fact, you've been so busy and hard at work (whether physical, mental, or emotional) that you may have forgotten what it's like to let others do some of the heavy lifting. Enjoy some downtime, and try preparing a new grain, like quinoa or amaranth, that will help nourish your mind, body, and spirit from the ground up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 23)

The birds are singing, the bees are buzzing, and you are humming right along. It's as if beautiful flowers are popping up under every footstep you take. So feel free to run, skip, and dance everywhere you go—besides, the exercise will only enhance those tingly sensations of love and bring more balance and harmony to your life. Seek out foods that are red, like beets and berries, which will support your hard-working heart and purify your blood.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24–Nov. 21)

That icy exterior you've been wearing all winter is melting fast, whether you like it or not. You are shedding layers and exposing new surfaces to yourself

and the world around you. Social relationships are especially important and rewarding this month, so make time in that busy schedule for your friends. Also consider some home improvement or that personal makeover you've been pondering, whether it's a haircut, new clothes, or a new coat (and color) of paint. In terms of diet, protein is essential, but don't just look to meat for your needs. Try some veggie options like tofu, tempeh, spirulina, or seitan.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21)

You are feeling extra playful, adventurous, and expressive this month. At the same time, life is getting more serious, especially at work, and your daily responsibilities are growing by the minute. Rather than trying to tame the wild child within, channel that energy into business. Whatever it is that you have to do, approach it with your creative power and you will be successful. And because you are juggling many things at once, keep a balanced diet with lots of fruits and veggies in a rainbow of colors.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19)

Variety is the spice of life! Now is the time to shake things up, take some chances, and experiment with something new. Whether it is something you add to your life (like a vegetable you have never tried) or something you give up or substitute for something else (like processed sugar for honey in your coffee or tea), explore the world outside your comfort zone. You may find that this "risk" is not as risky as you

thought. Also, consider throwing some ginger and/or mint into your diet (tea, salad dressings, smoothies), which will help stimulate digestion and keep your internal fire burning.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18)

It is time to wake up and make those dreams come to life. Whether at work, at home, or somewhere in between, your visionary and artistic side is craving some attention and expression. Fortunately, it's all at your fingertips. The world is your canvass, so paint away. Explore a new creative medium, maybe printmaking, sewing, or cooking—it will do you good and bring a new perspective to your picture. To spark your inspiration, try some ginseng, which will give you extra energy and mental clarity.

PISCES (February 19–March 20)

As this change of seasons stirs up new emotions, you are presented with an opportunity for tremendous growth. This requires you to stand up, sink your feet down into the earth, feel how it supports your every movement, and trust that everything happens for a reason. Even though it might look like rainclouds as far as the eye can see, clear skies and a glorious rainbow will break the gloom as soon as you look up. Be patient and forgiving with yourself and with others. And to calm your sensitive nerves, make a tea with valerian root, passion flower, or lemon balm. Even better, add herbs such as lavender, chamomile, or rose to a hot bath.



Today, it takes more brains and effort to make out the income-tax form than it does to make the income.

— Alfred E. Neuman

Man is not like other animals in the ways that are really significant: animals have instincts, we have taxes.

— Erving Goffman

Dear Raw Mama

With
**Gabriella
Salomon**

Q: I am having trouble sleeping, is there anything natural you can suggest to help me get some rest?

A: I think that one of the best remedies for insomnia and anxiety is an herbal tea and a hot bath, and if you don't have a bathtub (like me) a hot compress over your eyes, back of the neck, and/or on your chest will do the trick. Relaxing teas, which can also be used to soak your towel for the compress, can be made of chamomile,

your own brew. Also, if making an herbal beverage is not your cup of tea, try a tincture, which is a concentrated extraction of herbs that is ready for use whenever and wherever. Many of these herbal medicines are available in capsule form as well. Beware that both kava and valerian are very powerful herbs and should be ingested according to the recommended dosage. If you take too much, you can end up feeling very groggy the next day, which defeats

and illness, the living microorganisms in this tea have been used for hundreds of years to prevent as well as cure many diseases. By helping to regulate the production and growth of harmful bacteria or pathogens, probiotics play an essential role in treating different types of cancer, irritable bowel syndrome and other digestive ailments, as a general health tonic that promotes mental clarity, stimulates metabolic functions, strengthens and supports the immune system, lowers

OWENS VALLEY CONTINUED... »

on a weekly basis to take the rigorous Master Gardener training, and upon graduation in May will create a new and improved *IOU Garden* with various demonstrations of good gardening practices for locals and visitors alike. Three additional local Master Gardeners have joined the Growers' Group to help in this project.

This partnership connects the work of the Metabolic Studio in Lone Pine with a much larger group of gardeners in Big Pine and Bishop where additional projects are underway. Transformation happens when disparate parts of a community are connected in new ways, bringing about a general upward sweep of human consciousness accompanied by activity. It happens quietly often, not quite unnoticed but ineluctably. It is happening in many areas nationally, in small and big ways. Change can frighten some people, who passionately resist it. Most know that a change in our life and outlook is very necessary for all of us.

The Transition Town Movement (TransitionUS) has become aware of the possibility of a transformative group of events in Lone Pine being led by an artist. They think this is the first such event because, generally, the transition town initiatives are led by social planners, political activists, and/or environmentalists. Eventually it is expected that small pocket projects will start to spread across the local landscape. A demonstration of "edible landscaping" is already underway in the boxes in front of the Lone Pine Chamber Offices where the local food bank is located.

Pipeline also includes interesting events created by Bon involving Handmade Film Institute artist Robert Schaller and theater director Walter Asmus. Bon invites the residents and visitors to the valley to join her in this latest work on Friday, May 21, and at workshops during the weekend: "Please join us at the PPG Factory for a two-day handmade film workshop focusing on local, eco-friendly practices." In workshops led by Robert Schaller of the Handmade Film Institute (<http://www.handmadefilm.org/>), participants will transform a PPG silo into a temporary darkroom, and learn how to process 16mm film using a non-toxic mixture of coffee, vitamin C, and washing soda. Watch cinematic magic happen before your very eyes! Films created at the workshop will be shared with the community at a free screening soon after. The event is free and everyone welcome. No previous filmmaking experience is necessary.

On the same weekend and in the same place, there will also be creative workshops with director Asmus on a small piece of text from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

This will become the soundtrack for the next scene of the Metabolic Studio and Bon's film *Silver and Water* that has been in production locally.

This is a very rare and fun opportunity for both creating handmade film and being involved in the production of a scene with a renowned theater director.

Asmus, who directed the world-famous version of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, and who worked directly with the playwright himself, is collaborating with Bon and directing the local group reciting lines from the play in the resonant chamber of the PPG silo. The famous lines reminded Asmus of the area.

The event begins with an open call and meet-and-greet at the Lone Pine Film Museum for Inyo citizens interested in being part of *Pipeline's* homemade filmmaking workshop and theatrical chorus inside a wondrous space. Certainly anyone familiar with the site (located south of Lone Pine on Highway 395) is familiar with its gray, dull metallic structures—bleached and blasted by the winds—that take on the pinks and ochre of the sands and salt on the west side of the Owens (not so) Dry Lake, home of the LADWP Dust Mitigation Project. It may well be the first site of a giant solar power park now on the LADWP drawing boards as well.

To learn more, please join us at our upcoming reception on May 21 at the Museum of Lone Pine Film History. Meet our guest from Berlin, director Walter Asmus, watch films of Beckett's works, and enjoy a discussion about the Metabolic Studio's ongoing work in the Owens Valley, now in its fourth year.

Please RSVP to Chris Langley at 760.937-1189.

The events associated with this project are tightly scheduled. On Friday, May 21, an evening of homemade films and Beckett short films will take place at the Lone Pine Film History Museum at 701 South Main in Lone Pine at 7:00 p.m. followed by refreshments. This will be followed by a Q&A with Bon and Asmus.

Things begin with a creative intensity on Saturday with Workshop No. 1 at PPG. The Beckett Chorus workshop in Silo No. 1 (the white silo) goes from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., after which dinner runs from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., followed by the filmmaking workshop until 10:00 p.m. in Silo No. 2 (the black silo).

Note: The colors refer to the inside of the silos, not the outside. On Sunday, May 23, Workshop No. 2 continues with the Beckett Chorus and filmmaking workshop at the same times as Saturday. Because this is a creative, transformative process, expect details to grow and morph during the performance installation. That brings part of the excitement of discovery and insight that makes Lauren Bon's artist projects so very satisfying and fun to experience first hand.

One of the best remedies for insomnia and anxiety is an herbal tea and a hot bath...

lavender, kava, hops, lemon balm, passionflower, skullcap, st. john's wort (also used to treat depression) and valerian root. Many of these herbs can be foraged, dried or kept fresh, and made in to teas. There are many brands of pre-packaged teas that have specially formulated blends that promote sleep and calm the nerves, such as Yogi Teas, Traditional Medicinals, and Celestial Seasonings. If you can find a place that sells herbs in bulk, or have access to online shopping, you can purchase them separately and create

the point of a good nights sleep. And when in doubt, pick up a boring book—that always puts me to sleep!

Q: What is all the hype around kombucha and why is it good for me?

A: Kombucha is just one of many fermented foods that is gaining recognition as a delicious way to incorporate probiotics and build healthy bacteria or microflora in your body. While we tend to think of bacteria as bad and associate it with infection

blood pressure and cholesterol, and much more. The benefits of probiotics can be consumed in many forms other than kombucha, such as capsule, yogurt, sauerkraut and kimchi, kefir, miso, and even wine. In order to provide these friendly microbes with a hospitable breeding ground, it is best to avoid or use moderation when drinking alcohol, eating foods that are highly processed, taking antibiotics, and stress in general. Honestly, I attribute my 2½ years of radiant health, without even a common cold, to a good diet and lots of probiotics!

VETERANS SPEAK OUT CONTINUED... »

Another vet also stressed education: "I would like to see my taxpayer, dollars go to more specific things than they have been going. Education is the big important thing for me. Education is paramount. It's high on my list, having a sixteen-year-old son who I don't have in the public school system right now. I would like to see grant programs that help charter schools that take up the slack for some of our schools that have too many students in them."

Healthcare was echoed by the veteran who said, "Life, liberty,

the high cost of emergency and urgent care. We'd have a much better country for it."

The VA Budget

Tommy from Plattsburgh Air Force Base thinks that VA healthcare is "excellent," but added, "I think we need a little more tax dollars for substance abuse treatments, and we should be appropriating funds toward housing." On the whole, "I think my tax dollars are being spent agreeably."

Veteran Pierre on the VA budget: "We don't know where the healthcare dollars are going, but at the VA it seems the President has kind of put our veterans in a more impor-

How can you have life and liberty in this country if you don't have your health?

and the pursuit of happiness are guaranteed, that's in the Declaration of Independence, and in the Preamble to the Constitution it becomes life, liberty, and property. How can you have life and liberty in this country if you don't have your health? A sick person has less opportunity for life, less opportunity for liberty, and less opportunity for the pursuit of happiness and property. So getting into a system where people go to the doctor when they are beginning to be ill as opposed to going to the emergency room or urgent care when they are very ill would change the dynamics of the system and allow people to go for a lower cost preventative care, lower cost early care, and avoid

tant light right now. Naturally with it being the federal government, it's a little slow sometimes to get things done, but overall I would say I'm definitely pleased at least to have our country give us back some form of healthcare. It's been a tremendous help in my life."

There were the expected complaints from vets that their medical claims were taking too long to process and that Vietnam veterans were not being treated as well as they should. But housing was a subject that several vets brought up. As one said, "Yes, I would like to see more, more money. Definitely for the housing for the veterans. Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan."

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STRAWBERRYFLAG.ORG

— Mick Jagger

— Tom Lehrer



LA MARATHON... CONTINUED »

and ended at the Santa Monica Pier, promising “a landmark every mile.”

The stadium-to-the-sea course passed through or by such celebrated Los Angeles areas as Chinatown, City Hall, Echo Park, Hollywood, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, the VA's West Los Angeles Healthcare Center, and Brentwood before terminating in Palisades Park with a celebratory awards ceremony beside the pier.

Riding in an open vehicle with KTLA camera and microphone were Los Angeles Dodgers owner and now LA Marathon owner Frank McCourt, as well as Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Upon entering the VA from Ohio Street, McCourt said that including the VA property in the route was “a tribute to the military,” and Mayor Villaraigosa called the property “hallowed ground. The Deed of 1888 specifically states that this land is to be permanently maintained as a national home for disabled soldiers.”

Strawberry Flag Stories

BY LAURA SANDERSON HEALY

There is a great peace at *Strawberry Flag* these sunny days, now more than ever with the abundance of the ripe strawberries waving in their stripes. Over many months, the flag made of reclaimed strawberry plants has been growing incrementally into its now robust state. What began quietly with the hope of new life in the future is now producing beautiful red berries; veterans who have served in our military services may relate to this concept when returning home after harsh time periods in their lives, healing and realizing new scenarios. The scent of this living green and red sculpture is certainly an original in the realm of outdoor art, and walking about it, listening to the gushing new fountain in the blue section of the flag is, as has been written, “deliciously therapeutic.”

As well as the strawberry plants and the fish in the tanks that facilitate the hydroponic system, the mockingbirds who hold court in the trees and the bluebirds who inhabit the myriad of mud nests in the eaves of the buildings are thriving too, adding their daily symphonies and call-outs to the

Strawberry Flag soundscape. The security log at the site notes nocturnal visits from other wildlife, including curious coyotes and hooting owls, when evening falls.

The strawberries grown at *Strawberry Flag* are now being used for the first time to make Veterans Preserves in the kitchen upstairs at Building 208. Meanwhile, the people associated with *Strawberry Flag*—including the veterans working there, patients passing through to appointments, the staff of Metabolic Studio, and friends of the project sharing in this unique experience at the VA campus—are having transformative milestones in their own lives too. The berries are thriving and so are the people.

Great joy attended a recent happening involving team member Emily Meredith and Jeremiah Lewis when they got married at the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area near Culver City on March 27 in a small ceremony with close friends. Congratulations Emily and Jeremiah—happiness to you and may your life be an endless bowl of sweet strawberries.

A visitor from Texas enlivened *Strawberry Flag* recently when Andrea Nasher of the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas visited and stayed on to make her own original print for a jam jar label for the preserves. Nasher took part in the Tuesday boot camp on the bicycles that power the water system at *Strawberry Flag*, danced to the music in the Print Studio, joined the team for teas and lunches, and generally sparkled and made friends throughout the time she spent working with veteran and printmaking teacher Ray Rodgers on her label, a vision of sunshine and strawberries. We hope she will return soon.

Another recovery: the tinkling ivories of a rescued and now-tuned piano has been a hit in the kitchen of Building 208, where Ray (who was recently the veterans' talent show winner, playing for nearly all the day at Building 500) has been play-

ing for the *Strawberry Flag* troops during the jam-making sessions.

There is magic in the air and joy on the horizon for *Strawberry Flag's* site manager Rochelle Fabb, who has recently gotten engaged to her Leo. Says Rochelle, “Leonardo Bondani proposed on one knee in front of the fireplace in the Tamarack Lodge in Mammoth (built in 1925) with a diamond ring (the diamond was restored to replace one I lost at *Strawberry Flag* in September). Our honeymoon will be in Cairo followed by ceremonies in New York and Mexico City.”

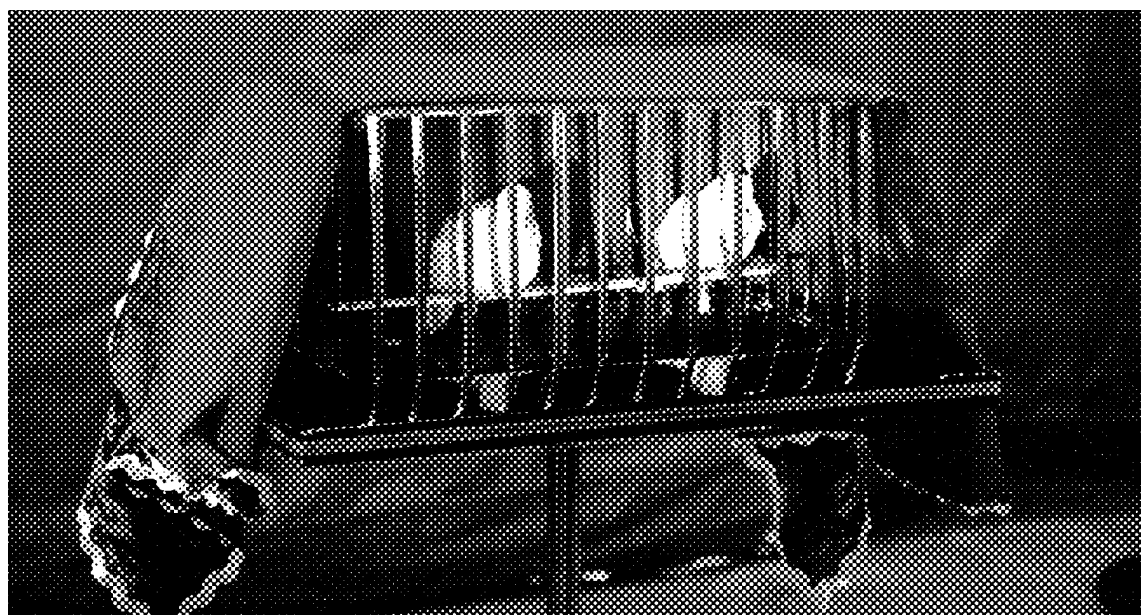
Strawberry Flag team member Chelsea Gokcay has returned to her home country of Turkey to visit her father.

Thirty-one veterans, veterans with disabilities, and VA employees registered for the run/walk in the marathon.

Other veteran entries included Vietnam veteran Jim Witted, currently a participant in the weight management program who also trained for and finished the 1992 LA Marathon. For VA West Los Angeles Healthcare Center staff member Robert McLarty, a U.S. Army Reservist who served during the Vietnam conflict from 1966 to 1972, the marathon was his fourth and final, whereas it was the first for Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Daniel Isaza—a goal he had for several years. “It is an incredible honor to represent the VA and the troops,” Isawa said.

(It should be noted the fact that there are thousands of homeless veterans sleeping on the streets of Los Angeles, even though this is their rightful “home.”)

The winner of the marathon, Wesley Korir, said he got a kick out of running through the historic West Los Angeles VA grounds. His time was 2 hours, 9 minutes, 19 seconds. Edna Kiplagat of Kenya won the women's division with a time of 2 hours, 25 minutes, 38 seconds.



Bill Mays a veteran — who goes by the name Amazing Mayseo—performed magic at the quad at 205, 208 and 209 at the VA of WLA .

Film Noir Festival kicked off at The Egyptian Theatre

BY EMILY MEREDITH LEWIS

On April 2, 2010, the 12th annual Los Angeles Film Noir Festival kicked off at The Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood with a Bill Bowers Tribute Double Feature: *Cry Danger* and *Tight Spot*. I was lucky to catch the sold out event and my archivist heart was beaming to see such a wonderful restoration of the 35mm print of *Cry Danger* (courtesy of the Film Noir Foundation and the UCLA Film and Television Archive).

The film presents a classic noir whodunit plot: ‘Rocky’ Mulloy (Dick Powell), fresh out of prison for a crime he didn't do, sets out to

uncover the \$100,000 that he was sent away for, to clear his partner's name, and if possible, to make a little dough on the side. But he's up against some crooked characters and a cop who isn't soft on crime. With everyone gunning for Mulloy, he must figure out who set him up, before he gets shot up. The film co-stars Richard Erdman as Mulloy's sauced business partner, and Rhonda Fleming as the wife of Mulloy's partner and his former flame.

Written by William Bowers, *Cry Danger* is one of the finest examples of a noir screenplay that is not only

rippingly cynical and fast-moving, with no wasted space, but it's also clever and humorous, with comedic moments and sharp dialogue that plays even with today's jaded and expectant audiences. The performances are equally honed to perfection, and Robert Parrish's impeccable direction never strays from telling the story in an economical, but never miserly fashion.

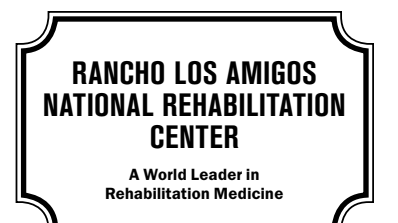
Among the cast is a silent star that pulls the film together completely—that star is Los Angeles. Due to a small budget the film was shot in real locations at Union Station and around the Bunker Hill area next to downtown. Did you know there was once a trailer park downtown? The post-war Los Angeles backdrop will definitely

compete with the stars for your attention — but only because both are truly amazing in this noir film.

After the screening actors Rhonda Fleming and Richard Erdman were interviewed by Eddie Muller, founder and president of the Film Noir Foundation. Both were charming, sharing stories of the making of the film and fond remembrances of Dick Powell. They both agreed with Muller in saying that the film's mostly unsung, often overlooked heroes was that of the film's writer William Bowers.

The second screening, *Tight Spot*, was also written by Bowers, and features Ginger Rogers in the latter part of her career, as she plays Sherry Conley, a feisty prisoner who has inside information on a

murderous thug who is about to be prosecuted by District Attorney Hallet (the incomparable Edward G. Robinson). However, Sherry's also butting heads with Vince Striker, the earnest but compromised cop assigned to protect her and try to convince her to testify, played by Brian Keith. Most of the film is cloistered in a hotel room, though some air is let in from time to time. While perhaps not as strong as the opener, *Tight Spot* is still meat and potatoes for any die-hard noir and crime cinema fan.



NATIONAL CALL CENTER FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

HOMELESS VETERAN IN NEED OF HELP?
CALL 1.877.4AID VET (1.877.424.3838)

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) has founded a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans hotline to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. To be connected with a trained VA staff member call 1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838).

- Call for yourself or someone else
- Free and confidential
- Trained VA counselors to assist
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- We have information about VA homeless programs and mental health services in your area that can help you.

What will happen when I call?

- You will be connected to a trained VA staff member.
- Hotline staff will conduct a brief screen to assess your needs.
- Homeless Veterans will be connected with the Homeless Point of Contact at the nearest VA facility.
- Family members and non-VA providers calling on behalf of a homeless Veteran will be provided with information regarding the homeless programs and services available.
- Contact information will be requested so staff may follow-up.



The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax.

— Albert Einstein

In general, the art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one party of the citizens to give to the other.

— Voltaire, French author



Cherokee Nation's first female chief, Wilma Mankiller, transformed the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the Cherokee Nation and the Federal Government.

Former Cherokee Nation chief Wilma Mankiller dies

BY ROCHELLE HINES and MURRAY EVANS, Associated Press Writers

Former Cherokee Nation Chief Wilma Mankiller, one of the nation's most visible American Indian leaders and one of the few women to lead a major tribe, died Tuesday after suffering from cancer and other health problems. She was 64.

Mankiller, whose first taste of federal policy toward Indians came when her family ended up in a housing project after a government relocation project, took Indian issues to the White House and met with three presidents. She earned a reputation for facing conflict head-on.

As the first female chief of the Cherokees, from 1985 to 1995, Mankiller led the tribe in tripling its enrollment, doubling employment and building new health centers and children's programs.

"We feel overwhelmed and lost when we realize she has left us, but we should reflect on what legacy she leaves us," current Cherokee Chief Chad Smith said. "We are better people and a stronger tribal nation because her example of Cherokee leadership, statesmanship, humility, grace, determination and decisiveness."

Mankiller met snide remarks about her surname—a Cherokee military title—with humor, often delivering a straight-faced, "Mankiller is actually a well-earned nickname."

Continual struggles with her health appeared not to deter her. A 1979 car accident nearly claimed her life and resulted in 17 operations. She developed the muscular

disorder myasthenia gravis and had a kidney transplant in 1990.

Mankiller used some hospital stays to work on her autobiography with Michael Wallis, which came out in 1993. In "Mankiller: A Chief and Her People," she said she wanted to be remembered not just for being the tribe's first female chief but for emphasizing that Cherokee values can help solve contemporary problems.

"Friends describe me as someone who likes to dance along the edge of the roof," she wrote. "I try to encourage young women to be willing to take risks, to stand up for the things they believe in, and to step up and accept the challenge of serving in leadership roles."

Mankiller had also battled lymphoma, breast cancer and several other health problems. Last month, her husband, Charlie Soap, said that she had stage 4 metastatic pancreatic cancer.

After that, Mankiller said she was "mentally and spiritually prepared for this journey."

"I learned a long time ago that I can't control the challenges the creator sends my way, but I can control the way I think about them and deal with them," she said in a statement released by the tribe last month. "On balance, I have been blessed with an extraordinarily rich and wonderful life, filled with incredible experiences."

"We have lost an inspirational leader and a great American, someone who was truly a legend in her own time," Gov. Brad Henry said. "As a leader and a person, Chief Wilma Mankiller continually defied the

odds and overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to better her tribe, her state and her nation." Born at W.W. Hastings Indian Hospital in Tahlequah, Mankiller moved with her family to San Francisco in the 1950s when their farm failed. The pledge of opportunity turned out to be poverty in a housing project. She married and had two daughters, Felicia and Gina.

In 1969, she got what she called "an enormous wake-up call" and took her first step into Indian activism by participating in the 19-month occupation of Alcatraz Island.

Seventy-nine Native Americans took over the site of the former federal prison to protest a policy that terminated the federal government's recognition of tribal sovereignty and the exclusion of Indians from state laws. The policy was based on the belief that Native Americans would be better off if they assimilated as individuals into mainstream American society.

Mankiller moved back to her family's land in Oklahoma after getting divorced in 1975. A decade later, she succeeded former Chief Ross Swimmer, who had tapped her as his running mate because of her business savvy. During her re-election campaign, she pledged to improve the tribe's economic interests.

As chief of the Tahlequah-based tribe, Mankiller was less of an activist and more of a pragmatist. She was criticized for focusing almost exclusively on social programs, instead of pushing for smoke shops and high-stakes gaming. Mankiller decided not to seek re-election in 1995, and accepted a teaching position at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., where she held an honorary degree.

Among her other honors was a Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation's highest civilian award—presented in 1998.

TAKING UP THE PRESIDENT'S CALL TO END VETERANS' HOMELESSNESS IN FIVE YEARS—YES WE CAN

"For them to come in with smiles and open arms and befriend us, it means the world to me."

— Charles Warren, Vietnam War veteran with *Strawberry Flag*

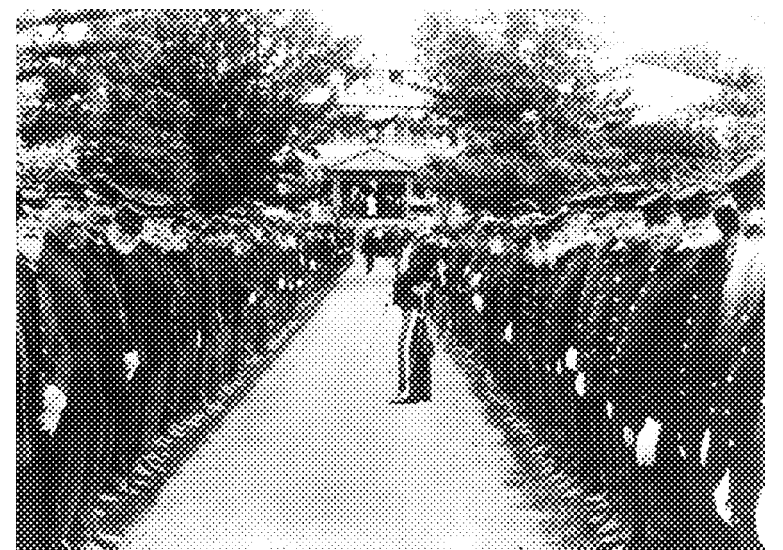
For American veterans, a once-in-a-lifetime political moment has come. President Barack Obama's challenge to "end veterans' homelessness in five years" is a "we will go to the moon" challenge to 2010 citizenship. Almost everyone says homelessness and the associated mental illnesses are "intractable" problems that can only be "ameliorated." Few believe veterans' homelessness can "end."

President Obama does, and so do we. The Annenberg Foundation has shown its capacity to capture this moment with artist Lauren Bon and the Metabolic Studio's *Strawberry Flag* at the Veteran's Administration (VA) West Los Angeles Healthcare Center. Working

at the intersection of art and philanthropy, the Metabolic Studio has piloted an artwork in the form of a veterans' program. *Strawberry Flag* embraces the historic concept of the "martial citizen" whose sacrifice has earned the ongoing assistance of a grateful state and fellow citizens—the same concept that motivated the original philanthropists who donated the land in West L.A. as a home for Civil War veterans. This "attitude of gratitude" is palpable today at the site of *Strawberry Flag*.

Strawberry Flag is motivating veterans and professionals at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Administration Healthcare System with a progressive message of collaboration and teamwork. With more time, increased advocacy, and a sharp financial strategy, we can leverage the \$3.2 billion in federal money committed in the year 2010 alone. Washington is finally addressing this national disgrace. Let us not miss this opportunity to get the 6,600 veterans living on the streets of Los Angeles County into housing and back into the work force. Let's do this right here in the demographic hotspot of veterans' issues.

STRAWBERRYFLAG.ORG



Veteran residents parade at the Soldiers Home dining hall on what is now Bonsall Avenue, Memorial Day circa 1900. (The building no longer exists.)

LOVE STORY

Ray Rodgers proposed to his love Sheila Lowe at *Strawberry Flag* on Friday April 9 at 11:00AM under the blue star tower.

When Ms. Lowe exclaimed yes, a bright star shadow appeared across Mr. Rodgers' chest.

When they posed for their engagement photo, both had stars where their hearts are—and true love in their eyes!

HOURS OF OPERATION

Strawberry Flag Teas
Mon–Fri, 3PM

Jam Sessions
Wed, 3PM

Wadsworth Theatre
Spring 2010 Season begins March 15:
Reel talk with Stephen Farber

Brentwood Theatre
No performances for March 2010

Farmer's Market
Thurs, 12-6PM

Barber of Dreamers
Open daily,
9AM–7PM

Parrot Sanctuary
Thurs, 7AM-dusk

Vet's Garden
Thursdays,
7AM-dusk

Golf Course
Closed

Japanese Garden
Closed

Canteen/
Restaurant
Mon–Fri, 7AM-2PM

THE STRAWBERRY GAZETTE

Produced in conjunction with the *Strawberry Flag* and the Metabolic Studio, Los Angeles. The Metabolic Studio is a direct charitable activity of the Annenberg Foundation.

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