

# 2012 Los Angeles Annual Regional Report

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We had a busy year in Los Angeles in 2012. We also welcomed two great milestones . . . The LA League of Arts received its 501c3 designation as well as the CA State Tax Exempt status. Two great things that go great together. And it opened the door to so many great opportunities for 2013.

**RED CROSS TRAINING:** We started January off with a bang, hosting a Red Cross First Aid/Search and Rescue Workshop taught by Capt Stacey Gerlich of the LA Fire Department. This was a continuation of the CERT training of 2011 and the Disaster Preparedness Workshop of 2010. We will continue to educate our community on Radical Self Reliance.

**TOWNHALL MEETING:** Our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual TownHall Meeting and Ice Cream Social was a huge hit. We talked about all the wonderful plans for community outreach for 2012. Put together many teams to implement them. And also talked more about the 2012 CORE project. Of course, much of the time was spent talking about the Burning Man ticketing. A lot of information from the represented theme camps was gathered and then relayed back to the Burning man office. It was extremely helpful for everyone involved.

**CALIFORNIA STATE PARK:** Our partnership continued with California State Parks with their invitation to attend a planning meeting for the LA State Historic Park (where we hold Decom). This was the 5<sup>th</sup> year they sponsored the event and they were looking for our input on the future development of the park. It was a huge honor to be invited to their February planning meeting. We were also asked by State Parks to partner with them for their Earth Day Celebrations by leading a drum circle and teaching drumming. We had hoopers and poi spinners come out to demonstrate as well. In attendance were mainly local East LA neighbors.

**LA LEAGUE OF ARTS:** April started the monthly Board meetings for LALA. The interim Board was officially formed and we began laying the ground work for the future of LALA. We continue these monthly Board meetings to this day, further evolving the projects. 2013 will be the first Board elections.

**NEWBIE ORIENTATIONS:** This year we decided to host 3 Newbie Orientations because of the large amount of Newbie's going to Burning Man. The first one was in May, then June, and July. Each one had about 30 people attending. Some more, some less. We covered an amazing amount of information then opened it up to the veterans to add their best practices tips and tricks for making your playa stay more enjoyable. Even the old dogs learned new tricks.

**CORE PROJECT:** Our CORE project this year was Seraphim: The Spirit of Unification. A great team came together to create the CORE project. Many returned from last year and we added several others. It was a huge success on playa. It was not the work of one artist or one builder, but the compilation of several artists each working on an aspect of the piece. And then everyone on playa participated by decorating a board to be added to the upper vortex. The visceral beauty of the on playa Seraphim struck deep.

And our CORE project not only went to the playa but also had a second chance at our LA Decom. We had permission to burn Seraphim in downtown LA, but 10 days before our burn the LAFD repealed

our permit siting public safety as the cause. Since it had not rained for 100 days we agreed with them and did not put up a fight. Of course, as it does every year, it rained right before Decom. They still would not allow the burn. Even so, we built her again and then invited all of Los Angeles to participate by decorating boards for the upper vortex. 4 different artists worked on the angels, different artists worked on the panels. It was completely collaborative. Plus we had great partnerships with local organizations like the Boys and Girls Club, the LA Mission, American Cancer Society, So Cal Cross Train, and many others. All who came out to create art with us in the park and place their sentiments on the vortex. Never has there been so much written on a single piece of art before. Seraphim was completely covered. Not a single board or piece of wood was left unmarked with some blessing, dream, hope, fear, or good bye. After Decom, we dismantled her gently and packed her in a truck. There she will remain until we find a place to burn her. LAFD is still not certain we can burn her in LA city limits. With all the rain we have had the last two months, we will ask again.

**LA ARTS FUNDRAISER:** LA followed the lead of Alchemy with their arts fundraiser. It was great fun and a huge success. We invited anyone trying to fund art to participate. We had 10 art installations. Everyone who attended the fund raiser paid \$10 and received a ballot. The ballot allowed them to choose where they wanted their \$10 (all or part) to go. After the event we counted the votes and cut checks with a matching percentage amount being added to their totals. The only requirement was that the art piece being funded must be presented at LA Decom. All complied and participated.

**LA DECOM:** This was the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the LA Decompression Celebration. It was bigger and better than ever. Nothing has ever felt more like home. We had 12 stages of scheduled music going from 1pm till 7am. Yep, this year we went till dawn. Although amplified sound had to end at 2am, we could become a headphone party. And State Parks allowed us to keep the DJ monitors going, so anyone who did not bring headphones could still participate. Beyond the 12 stages, we had over 100 art installations and theme camps. Over 1800 people volunteered to make Decom happen for the 6400 people who attended the 18 hour event. Of all the people who attended over half had never been to the playa. The event was twice as big as last year and virtually flawless. There were lots of costumes, immense amount of gifting of everything from clothing swaps, dinners, hot chocolate, ice cream, and custom made Decom swag from various theme camps. Our door process was flawless with a new bank drop system that kept the majority of the cash off site.

15% of the profits from LA Decom was used towards the BWB project at Santee High School.

**LA DECOM CALENDAR CONTEST:** For the first time, LALA held an online calendar contest. Anyone who took a picture at this year's Decom could enter the contest. The new RCs and the Board of Directors chose the 12 winners and what month they would occupy. LALA covered the cost of the calendar. They are gifts to donors who donate \$25 or more to the Santee Garden Project. The 12 winners were invited to present their winning prints plus 5 additional works of their choice at the White Blissmas Charity Ball. The calendars were revealed at the Ball.

**AQUAPONICS AT SANTEE HIGH SCHOOL:** We finished Carver Garden in 2011 and started a very ambitious project of building an aquaponic ecosystem at Santee High School. This is a very large garden which will be incorporated into every class at the school. The system will cost around \$30,000. So far we have raised \$12,000. With our new 501c3 we plan to apply for grants and larger donations to complete the project in 2013. Also part of the project will be a summer symposium of teachers and permaculture experts combining their knowledge and creating an open sourced

curriculum approved by LA Unified School District and available to any school district anywhere in the world. This symposium will be an annual event held every summer at Santee High School. The curriculum will be ever growing like the garden and technology. <http://laleagueofarts.org/what-we-do/school-gardens/>

In November, LALA was nominated with 4 other local orgs to compete for the Ford Community Green Grant at the Green Expo. Out of the 50+ applicants, it was a huge honor to be one of 5 recognized by Ford Motor Company. Although we did not win, the connections made at the Green Expo will change the course of LALA. From partnerships with UCLA and USC grad departments, we are expanding our horizons while continuing to expand partnerships.

**WHITE BLISSMAS CHARITY BALL:** We ended 2012 with the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual White Blissmas Charity Ball raising funds for both the Aquaponics garden at Santee and Hurricane Sandy Relief. The event was a huge success and marked the first time LALA partnered with other promoters to create an event. Everyone dressed in their white holiday finest and celebrated the endless possibilities we create as a community. The 12 winning photographers presented their work in the gallery at Blissmas and the LA Decom Calendar was made available for the very first time. They are now available online with 100% of the donations going to the Santee Aquaponic Educational Garden Project. [http://laleagueofarts.org/2013\\_calendar/](http://laleagueofarts.org/2013_calendar/)

Now to look towards 2013 and all that we can accomplish together as one.

Respectfully Submitted,

LALA Board of Directors: Athena Demos, Deb Stiers, David Wedeen, Esquire Jauchem, Debi Cable

LA RCs: Athena Demos, David Wedeen, Jenn Ramsey, Gloria Lamb, John Simmons