

"First they ignore you,
then they laugh at you,
then they fight you,
then you win."
Mahatma Gandhi



OCCUPY LOS ANGELES NEWS

OCCUPY LA MEDIA NEWS

420



Occupy Los Angeles News

[LOS ANGELES] Occupy Los Angeles endured a quiet and cold Monday after a highly productive and visible weekend.

This past weekend was heavily programmed, which presented challenges for some occupiers and visitors. The messages of some were in fierce competition with other protesters who were already gathered in

abundance around LA City Hall. This impaired the normally smooth weekend setting at Occupy LA.

The marijuana advocates, known by most as the "420" folks, were joined by the godfather of California's historic Prop 215, Dennis Peron (pictured page 2). This weekend marked the anniversary of Proposition 215's passage in California. It gave Californians the right to a prescription for medical marijuana.

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(..cont) This action led to much national controversy, as marijuana remains prohibited under federal law. California's passage of Prop 215 was the first in the nation and became a model for many other states.

When Peron ran for Governor under the Republican ticket back in 1998, he was already known for his support of marijuana as a medicine. Back then, he could be seen on West Hollywood streets spreading the message with a handwritten sign made from cardboard. Peron converted many to his cause, resulting in what would soon become state law. This Sunday at City Hall, Peron was again protesting – this time in support of full legalization. But to some, his age made him less the spirited Dennis of old. Still, he spoke as a man revered by many for his strong advocacy in marijuana legalization.

Los Angeles is known as one of the most marijuana-tolerant counties in California, but this weekend, the marijuana message was met with some turbulence from organizers of other actions scheduled for that time. Because the Occupy movement is focused on open discussion of many societal issues, simultaneous rallies often lead to uncomfortable confrontation. But this weekend, the marijuana advocacy rally, which took place during a planned teach-in nearby, led to an especially tense conflict over use of the public square.

The 420 activists held their amplified protest just a few hundred feet from the already planned "Teach-In: Day 1," which sparked claims of insensitivity from those hoping to attend the teach-in. One occupier attempted to persuade the 420 activists to respect the Teach-In and lower their message, but there was little shift in the 420 focus, which continued to amplify itself over the PA system.

The biggest attraction Sunday, however, was the 420 tent set up for "medical marijuana consultation." The line for the tent snaked south and then westward toward Parker Center. This popular free offering also attracted the attention of the LAPD. A trove of officers watched nearby on street corners and near City Hall entrances, but continued to show restraint. The LAPD a welcomed contrast by protesters to the police forces of other cities, several of which have raided occupation camps on minor grounds such as illegal camping. Raids have varied in resistance. Oakland PD's Occupation raids are best known for what many consider a violent overreaction. One OPD officer inflicted severe head trauma to at least one veteran protester. Riverside and Atlanta were both raided for illegal camping, along with Denver and several other cities. While many officers act distant due to regulation, many other off-duty police officers have been quoted showing support for the underlying message of the OWS movement. Last week, one off-duty Los Angeles officer was spotted donating food and clothes to protesters.

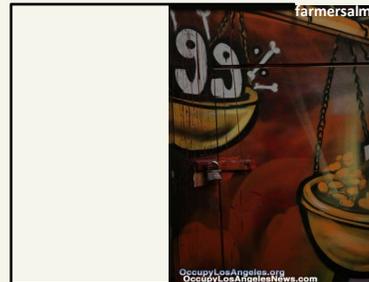
As Dennis Peron held a pink sign celebrating Proposition 215's anniversary on the west steps of Los Angeles City Hall, his accompanying entourage cheered and read a declaration of sovereignty.

Meanwhile, a member of the LA Media committee attempted to elicit consideration from the 420 group for the nearby tent of invited guests and speakers. The advocacy group refused to comply. They continued to read lines from the "Sovereign Nation of Freedom And Peace."

The medical marijuana consultation line was growing much longer by then. But among the chaos, waiting occupiers remained peaceful in the line as it moved slowly forward.



Dennis Peron
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS LOS ANGELES CITY HALL NIGHTLY 730PM

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