

free venice family reunion & picnic

The 2nd Intermittent FREE VENICE Family Reunion and picnic attracted more than 300 Venice residents to Westminster Park on Sunday, July 13th. The event was sponsored by the FREE VENICE Organizing Committee, "to get our heads together and talk about what FREE VENICE means."

Flags and balloons intended for the committee's postponed July 4th parade dotted the park

where small groups talked about child care centers, free schools, arts and crafts, town meetings, cooperative housing and other proposed community projects. The Song of Earth Chorale sang informally, sitting on the grass. The FREE VENICE Art Festival moved from its usual location on Ocean Front Walk and Horizon to join in the reunion at the park.

During the course of the afternoon 106 Ven-

ice residents signed up to work for a plebiscite "to determine whether or not a majority of Venice residents desire to secede from Los Angeles and establish a free and independent Venice." Copies of the FVOC's Declaration of FREE VENICE, issued originally on July 4th, also were distributed.

The Venice Peace and Freedom Party kicked off a petition to the Venice Health Council to "institute a program of hot breakfasts for Venice school children, which might be financed through tax deductible contributions to the existing non-profit corporation controlled by the Council." Deputy registrars registered 29 persons to vote, 21 of whom affiliated with the PFP.

Participants in the Sunday picnic included two women who have been mentioned as possible candidates for Lieutenant Governor in 1970. They are Jane Gordon, who is active with the FREE VENICE Organizing Committee and other community groups, and Marlene Dixon, a former Venice resident visiting here after leaving the University of Chicago, where she taught Sociology and was active in radical activities.

The Venice Survival Committee (VSC) distributed a new leaflet on the illegality of police identification checks which is reprinted below. Several lawyers were present to discuss legal problems and legal services available in the community.

Motorists passing by on Pacific Ave. slowed down to observe the colorful display of art, flags, balloons, signs and people. Police did not try to interfere with the community gathering.

(Photo by Bill Edelen)



VENICE SURVIVAL COMMITTEE SAYS

I D CHECKS

AS PRACTICED BY THE LAPD

ARE NOT LEGAL

The psychodrama that starts out with a cop asking for I.D. (identification) is a game the Man plays to harass citizens and hang them up for a half an hour or more, while trying to get incriminating information. The game will last as long as citizens are willing to play along with L.A.'s occupation forces.

THE LAW SAYS:

(California Penal Code, section 647-e)

"Every person who loiters or wanders upon the streets or from place to place without apparent reason or business and who refuses to identify himself and to account for his presence when requested by any peace (!) officer so to do, if the surrounding circumstances are such as to indicate to a reasonable man that the public safety demands such identification, shall be guilty of disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor."

Wandering upon the streets without apparent reason is not a crime, it only defines when a person may be asked to identify himself and account for his presence. The crime is to refuse to identify yourself and account for your presence under the conditions described.

This law does not require anyone to carry written identification, although the L.A. police act as though it does. There is no law that requires anyone to carry written I.D., except

drivers while driving. Persons subject to Selective Service must be able to produce their classification cards to federal officers. L.A. cops are not federal officers.

The law requires only verbal identification and explanation of your presence. Tell the officers your correct name (spell it, if necessary) and why you are there (star-gazing, getting away from the smog, seeing how the other half lives, etc.). You are not required by law to give additional information unless your lawyer is present. You are not required to give your address, where you are from or whether or not you have ever been arrested (unless you want to exchange such information with strangers).

When you have told the curious officers your name and why you are where you are, they no longer have any reason to detain you (while running a make, for instance). If you are detained, you are under arrest and have the right to know what crime you have committed.

If they can't tell you, they are committing an illegal act and can be sued for false arrest.

Police officers on duty are required to identify themselves. Ask the name and badge numbers of any officers who stop you. Ask them why they are stopping you. They are not entitled to stop you unless you are suspected of

a crime and they must know which crime.

Do not try to leave the scene, just inform the cops that you object to their illegal detention.

There is no such crime as "insufficient identification." If you are taken to the station for "insufficient identification," ask immediately to see the Watch Commander (the officer in charge of that shift). Discuss with him the meaning of the law. As long as you have not refused to tell your name and why you were where you were, you have not committed a crime.

A group of Venice residents have formed the Venice Survival Committee. You may notice them on the Ocean Front, wearing green VSC armbands. Their function is to observe and record instances of police malpractice, such as the ones mentioned here. If you think you've been illegally detained or otherwise harassed by the Man, and want to find out if there are grounds for a lawsuit against him, contact the VSC at our new phone number: 392-4563 any day between noon and midnight. Or come by the office at 1727 W. Washington Blvd. (same hours).

THE POLICE SHOULD NOT CONTROL THE COMMUNITY - THE COMMUNITY SHOULD CONTROL THE POLICE!

No Rights in LA's Parks

by Peter Young, attorney, Neighborhood Legal Services

Venice residents have stalled the enactment of a Los Angeles ordinance which would severely curtail speech and assembly in the public parks, including the Venice Beach, and hand the police a potent weapon in their campaign of repression against young people.

The proposed ordinance was attacked as "blatantly unconstitutional" by the Venice office of Neighborhood Legal Services and local citizens at a meeting of the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners July 3. The Board postponed further action for a month, promising to give the proposal a "line-by-line" review.

The regulation -- requested and pushed by the Los Angeles Police Department as a "means of controlling young people," according to a representative of Councilman Thomas Bradley -- would give the Commissioners the power to prohibit meetings, rock festivals and other gatherings at their whim.

And, like other regulatory laws, it would lend itself to discriminatory enforcement against those the police consider undesirable. Violations would be punishable as misdemeanors.

The proposal gives the Commissioners the authority to designate "suitable sites" for "meetings, lectures and assemblies," and provides that "no person or group shall use other sites for any such purpose without permission from the Board." It also requires a written permit for use of the selected sites.

In a long line of decisions stretching back to the late 1930's, the U.S. Supreme Court has consistently struck down permit systems which make "the peaceful enjoyment of constitutional freedoms contingent upon the uncontrolled will of an official." An ordinance which lacks "narrow, objective and definite standards" obviously leaves the licensing authority free to deny permits to groups with which is disagrees.

The Commissioners could also effectively deny speech and assembly rights to all poor people under the proposal by insisting on prohibitively expensive measures "for the protection of persons and property."

Finally, since parks, as the Supreme Court has declared, are for the use of the public and have traditionally been used for assembly and discussion of public questions, the exercise of these rights may not be confined to selected sites.

Another provision which would bar the use of "any sound amplifying system" outside areas set aside by the Board without a written permit also clearly violates Supreme Court decisions requiring precise standards for permit systems and holding that only loud and raucous amplification may be prohibited.

A third objectionable clause bars all persons from being in parks or beaches between 1 and 5 a.m.

The Commissioners, however, have a record of disregard for constitutional rights of assembly and speech. Last summer, after denying a permit for a gathering at Elysian Park, the Board's president declared he didn't care what the Supreme Court had ruled.

The Commissioners have attempted to discourage public opposition to the ordinance. Several Venice residents waited more than two hours to speak at the Board's June 26 meeting, but as it neared an end the Commissioners quickly shuffled the agenda and postponed consideration of the proposal.

The Board also refused to make copies of the 13-page proposal freely available to the public. Several persons were told there was no way they could obtain or view a copy. Others were advised they would have to come up with copying charges of 75 cents for the first page and 50 cents per page thereafter.

When it was pointed out that these charges discriminated against poor people, the Board responded that "interested persons" could view the proposal free of charge at its offices on the fifth floor of City Hall -- which leaves open the provocative possibility that 20 or even 50 "interested persons" could descend on the offices at one and the same time.

Hopefully, a large number of people will turn out at the hearing on the ordinance -- date

force a meaningful public hearing.

If the ordinance is passed by the Board of Commissioners, opposition will continue before the City Council.

FIGHT BACK--

The Coalition Against Repression is mounting an active campaign to defeat the proposed L.A. City ordinance which would limit assembly and speech in City parks (see story by Peter Young). They are urging everyone to go down to the meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation at City Hall to force them to hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance. The meeting will be scheduled for some time in August. Contact the Coalition at 653-8516 or Free Venice at 392-4563 at the beginning of August for details on date and time.

The Coalition is also holding a "park-in" at Elysian Park on August 24 with rock bands and everything to dramatize the hearings. A party on Saturday, August 2 at 8 p.m. at 700 Greentree in Pacific Palisades has also been planned.

Welfare \$\$ for Housing

by Steve Clare

State money will soon be available to help meet the "critical unmet needs" of welfare recipients in California. "Special Shelter Payments" of up to \$500 will be granted to families for the following purposes:

1. Renters who are presently living in substandard rental units and need money in order to move to more suitable housing may obtain funds for cleaning deposits, utility deposits, moving costs, and -- if required -- first and last months rent advances. Additional money may be secured to purchase household appliances such as stoves and refrigerators if such items are needed.

2. Property owners in danger of losing their homes because of taxes, encumbrances, assessments, or delinquent payments may receive grants to pay those expenses. Housing repairs necessary for safety or sanitation may also be paid for with grant money.

3. Families who wish to purchase their own homes may, under certain conditions, get shelter payments to pay closing costs, real estate fees or to use for down-payments.

In order to qualify, families must be receiving welfare benefits through one of the following programs:

- Old Age Security (OAS)
- Aid to the Blind (AB)
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Unemployed Fathers (AFDC-U)
- Aid to the Totally Disabled (ATD)

Welfare recipients on General Relief (GR) do not qualify for Shelter Payments.

The state legislature has already allocated funds for this program and Governor Reagan is expected to ratify that appropriation within the next two weeks. The money will be divided among California's fifty-eight counties but within each county, it's FIRST COME -- FIRST SERVED. If Venice residents are to receive their fair share of these funds, applications should be made as soon as possible. Forms can be obtained from the Venice Service Center. For further information call Jean Parker at 392-4811.

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FREE VENICE in SOLIDARITY with SAND CITY

by Walt Sheasby

Sand City in Monterey County has become the scene of a struggle for liberation that can only be called a second front, a second beach-head, to that of the Free Venice movement. The goal of the people of Sand City is "participatory democracy," a new life where ordinary people can make the decisions that affect them. The outcome of the struggle in this little beach town of 520 residents may well give hope and encouragement to everyone in this country struggling for a better life.



CALABRESE

Sand City is a town that was designed to serve profits not people. Nine years ago, wealthy businessmen got together and incorporated the town as a tax dodge modeled after Emeryville in Oakland. Attracted by the lowest tax rate in California (20 cents per 100 dollars), some 61 businesses have moved into the town, pushing aside the town's poor people. The town's millionaire mayor, Phil Calabrese, owner of a giant construction and cement company on the beach, says that until this year things had been going "just fine" in the sleepy little town he helped incorporate ("strictly as an industrial city," as he put it).

Last year many people in the Monterey area were brought together by the Peace and Freedom Party campaigns. This February Peace and Freedom activists, over thirty of them in Sand City, joined with other dissatisfied residents (including former George Wallace supporters) to launch a recall campaign against Mayor Calabrese and the City Council. At an April City Council meeting angry residents served the "city fathers" with the successful recall petition and demanded that a date be set for a recall election. The election has been set for August 19th and so far four candidates, all supporters of the recall, have entered the race.

Calabrese has been claiming that the recall is a plot to turn the area into "a hippie haven, a holding area for the traffic in narcotics". But the recall movement includes many of the town's middle aged poor whites who have held on to their homes despite the sprawling growth of warehouses and gravel pits. They have come to share the vision of a new future for Sand City that has united the hip residents with black residents and dissident GI's living there while stationed at nearby Fort Ord.

Robert Lynn and Brad Avery, two candidates for the City Council associated with the Peace and Freedom Party, have been the main spokesmen for those who see Sand City as a potential oasis for the poor in a land of vested interests.



LYNN

Robert Lynn, a potter and philosopher, and a former teacher, envisions the replacement of Sand City's arrogant plutocracy with a New England style town hall democracy. Lynn says, "we could have a city government which is actually run by the people, with the City Council taking orders on specific issues." He sees the beach town with its magnificent dunes surrounded by industrial eye sores being converted into an area of rare beauty. Indus-

trialists would be compelled by taxes to radically improve their property, while landscaping crews of hippies developed the entire town into a kind of park. The squalid shacks and lean-to's would give way to packed-earth geodesic homes for the poor made with the sand that is the town's most important resource.

Brad Avery, the black co-owner of the A&W Auto Repair and an army veteran of nine years and four battle stars, says that the present office holders have proven themselves to be racist and that Sand City is run like a Mississippi town. The town's mayor, Calabrese, is currently facing trial for alleged assault on Avery's black partner, Melvin Williams. Calabrese denies that he is a racist by pointing out that he employs "Negroes, Indians, Portuguese -- you name it," at his construction firm.



AVERY

Recently the City Council enacted a 9 page anti-litter ordinance that outlawed everything from airplane leafletting to political posters on private businesses. That brought grins because the A&W garage is the only business that displays political posters right now in Sand City, and those are of Eldridge Cleaver. Avery has had other encounters with Sand City justice. After an argument with the mayor, he found his garage business ringed with "No Parking" signs that made his repair work impossible.

Two attorneys appealed to a Federal court judge who issued an injunction against the "No Parking" ordinance.

Supporters of the recall campaign have been subjected to police harassment and even eviction. The City Council has used housing codes arbitrarily as a way of condemning opponents' houses and forcing eviction. The condemned houses have then been bulldozed to prevent their repair and re-occupation. Recall supporters claim that these evictions have been used as a way of influencing the coming election.

There is a lot at stake in the situation at little Sand City. Sacramento is watching the development closely and may try to intervene to save the power structure. Calabrese has developed a "Domino Theory" about the recall campaign. "If they succeed here, why, many other little cities -- with little chance of offering any resistance -- are going to be faced with the same thing." He may be right. In any case Mexican-American groups are studying the Sand City campaign to see if the same things can be done in towns where farmworkers are a majority without power. Reporters for the mass media are descending on Sand City. And the people of Sand City are themselves carrying cameras everywhere and jotting down notes and writing journals and poems about what they are doing. They too are aware that they may be making history.

There are many Sand Cities, many potential beach-heads, for the movement to liberate America. Free Venice declares its solidarity with the people of Sand City in their struggle against the same breed of profiteers who rule Venice. The call goes out to "create two, three, many Sand Cities!"

(Quotes are taken from a full-page story on Sand City that appeared in the June 30th San Francisco Chronicle written by Michael Grieg).

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Venice PFP Reports

by Steve Clare

(The following is the text of a leaflet distributed at the FREE VENICE Family Reunion & Picnic, July 13th. Copies of the leaflet and petition may be obtained any day from noon to midnight at 1727 W. Washington Blvd. Or call 392-4563.)

HUNGRY KIDS DON'T LEARN--and there are hungry school children in Venice. Unfortunately, no program has been instituted to provide these kids with nutritious, hot breakfasts. The Los Angeles School Board, which is presently sponsoring drastic cut-backs in all areas, certainly cannot be counted on to start such a program, no matter how much it is needed. If hot breakfasts are to be provided, the Venice community, it appears, will have to provide them.

The Venice Health Council is a community organization whose goal is to secure comprehensive health care for the Venice community. Clearly, the nutritional needs of our school children should be their concern. The Council has formed a non-profit corporation to administer a planned medical clinic, but there could be other uses for this corporation that the Council has not yet considered.

The Venice Peace and Freedom Club recognizes the urgent need for a hot breakfast program and knows that the Health Council could be instrumental in fulfilling that need. Contributions for such a program, made payable to their non-profit corporation, would be tax-deductible. The Council itself could employ its influence, organizational talents, and medical resources to institute the program.

Therefore, the Venice Peace and Freedom Club asks you to join with us in signing and circulating the following petition:

We, the undersigned residents of Venice, hereby request that the Venice Health Council institute a program of HOT BREAKFASTS for Venice school children, which might be financed through tax-deductible contributions to the existing non-profit corporation controlled by the Council.

The petition is not an "official" petition. Any Venice resident may sign. You don't have to be 21; you don't have to be a registered voter. If you are willing to contribute time, food, or money to the program or carry our petition, please check the column marked "I will help." We will contact you.

This petition represents only one of many attempts of the Venice PFP to return power and responsibility to the community where it belongs. Venice has become the target of greedy and irresponsible land speculators, realtors, contractors and politicians who, with the help of the Los Angeles Police Department, are attempting to destroy our community and eliminate all low-income residents from the Venice area.

Few of these people who so effectively and completely control the fortunes and future of Venice even live in this community.

The Peace and Freedom Party is committed to returning the decision-making power to those who are affected by those decisions. Join us in our effort to FREE VENICE and, when you register to vote, register Peace and Freedom.

THE COURSE OF

The Venice Coalition is continuing its opposition to L.A.'s Master Plan for Venice and investigating ways for the Venice community to produce its own plan. A loose grouping of governmental and volunteer organizations in the Venice area, the Coalition is now discussing the possibility of a community-wide election to select a body of Venice residents to oversee development of a community plan. For information call the Venice Library, 396-2469.

Meanwhile, the "Venice Community Plan," better known as the Master's Plan for Venice, is proceeding along the winding bureaucratic trail. Before public hearings on it in the City Council, it must go through the Planning Committee of the Council. If you're a letter-writer, write to Bernardi, Braude and/or Nowell urging them to hold public hearings in the Planning Committee on the Venice Community Plan, file number 146089, so that they can be informed as to the real effects this plan will have on the community and can make a better recommendation to the City Council.

The Youth of Venice Summer Program sponsored by NAPP is underway with the opening of a summer swim program for Venice children and adults at the Sand and Sea Club in Santa Monica Thursday 10 a.m. to noon. Transportation will be provided. Other Youth Program activities will include an ethnic history course, a great books reading program, reading improvement programs, and a course in legal rights for laymen. Persons interested in any of the programs should sign up as soon as possible, because attendance will be limited. For information call Ferne Roberts at 399-7737.

The trial of Anna Haag on a charge of interfering with a police officer has been postponed to 9:30 a.m. on July 31st in Division 63, West Los Angeles. Anna is chairman of the FREE VENICE Art Festival Committee and a member of the Venice Health Council board of directors. She was arrested on April 18th by L.A. police officers Jones and Fleming after she asked the charges against several juveniles in custody at Rose Ave. and Ocean Front Walk.

Attorney Michael Hannon has volunteered to conduct Anna's defense. Hannon was one of the founders of the Peace and Freedom Party. As a candidate for L.A. County District Attorney last year he received 410,555 votes.

The Canal Assessment District has been passed by the Los Angeles City Council but the fate of our canals is still in doubt. Someone has to do the work and it may be that no one will want to -- at least not for the price the City is willing to pay (or more precisely -- have us pay). We'll know soon; the White Elephant will be put up for grabs on July 16 and bids, if there are any, will be opened August 27. They may have to bring the project back for review if bids are more than 5 per cent over the City's estimate (18.5 million, if it hasn't escalated since last count). Venice residents who have not yet made the pilgrimage to City Hall may get their chance.

Regardless of the outcome on the 27th, our protests will be heard at least once more. The Western Center on Law and Poverty is now preparing a law suit to invalidate the Canal hearing proceedings. As soon as it is filed, Western Center will call a press conference to make public the contents.

SEPTEMBER 13th IN THE CANALS

The Canals are alive and well, and living in Venice is still possible. Be there....Bring friends, children, picnic lunch, happy thoughts. Enjoy sunshine, music, each other -- and all the groovy things that will make September 13th a day to remember.

What's a plebiscite?

WEBSTER SAYS--

pleb'-i-scite: a vote of the people of some region as to choice of sovereignty...

FREE

VENICE!

can you dig it?

you can help - sign up at
1727 W. Washington Blvd.
392-4563

HUMAN EVENTS

Venice resident Terri Volpin and a friend, while walking to the market on the evening of July 15th, stopped to observe two young men being interrogated by L.A. policemen Manlove and Tomas. Manlove approached Terri, told her she could observe as well from his vehicle and shoved her into the police car. She was taken to Van Nuys jail and charged with failure to disperse. The charges were dropped next day, but Terri lost a day's work and suffered bruises from handcuffs. A lawsuit against Manlove is being investigated. Meanwhile, Terri has volunteered to join the Venice Survival Committee police observation patrols to counteract the tactics of Manlove and other L.A. police who seem to think that a group of two or more Venice residents is an illegal assembly.

The idea of a Venice community radio station has captured the imaginations of several Venice residents who would like to see a truly free radio station open to anyone to broadcast anything. There appear to be ways of doing it without a first class operator's license and a lot of money. If anyone has information on how to do it or is interested in helping to set one up, please contact the Free Venice office at 1727 W. Washington Blvd., any day between noon and midnight, or call 392-4563.

when we run venice

There's talk about freeing Venice, and a lot of hard work being done and more in the planning stage. But what if you just sort of let your imagination do its thing for a minute -- start thinking about what you would like to see in a Venice already free and self-governing. What would you institute -- do differently -- eliminate? What would you tax? What would be free? Should we have a Mayor / City Council type set-up or can you think of a new and different way of doing it? Maybe, if we take the leash off our imaginations now, we can learn to deal creatively with problems as they arise...maybe we can avoid the traps, power trips, and plain dullness of the system which has never worked for us.

A "When we run Venice" column (500 words or less) will start appearing regularly in BEACH-HEAD...if you write the articles.

*The country surrounds the city
The back country surrounds the country
"From the masses to the masses" The most
revolutionary consciousness is to be found
among the most ruthlessly exploited classes:
animals, trees, water, air, grasses*

Gary Snyder



The August WIN is a special double issue about Ecology; a radical perspective on man's relationship with the natural world that surrounds him.

Contributors include Paul Goodman, Allen Ginsberg, Lewis Herber, Keith Lampe, Red Power leader Nawana Tawani Shoush, Gary Snyder and Kerry Thornley, and Smokey the bear.

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DECLARATION OF FREE VENICE 1969

When one section of a city proposes to break off from the whole and assert its right to self-government, it is only reasonable that the causes be stated clearly for all to understand.

We, who have worked with our friends and neighbors to make our community a better place to live for all the people, have concluded that the City of Los Angeles has intentions and plans hostile to the interests of a majority of Venice residents. Among the freedoms we claim is the freedom to choose the community we want to live in and, having made that choice, to remain. As Venice residents we claim the right to make our own plans for the future. As members of the community we claim the right to propose laws and regulations reflecting the needs and desires of our own community.

The City of Los Angeles and all its agencies of Government have systematically disrupted our community, harassed our residents and enforced laws and regulations contrary to our customs and aspirations.

Early this year, 2,200 Venice residents petitioned the Los Angeles Planning Commission to reject their Master Plan for Venice, to oppose any freeway for Venice, to allow Venice residents to create our own plan for our own community and to hold its hearings in Venice at hours convenient to working people. The Planning Commission ignored our petition, washed their hands of the freeway, thus leaving the decision in the hands of the State Division of Highways, and refused to let us make our own plan when the City had already appropriated money for other communities to make their own plans. That is one of many petitions for redress of grievances that have been ignored. "Probably 90% of the people in Venice won't be living there when the freeway comes," according to Planning Commissioner Melville Branch as quoted in the L.A. Times, June 22nd. The Commissioners are making their plans, knowing they will destroy our community.

The Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety has imposed unreasonable requirements and conducted inspections of a punitive nature in Venice resulting in the demolition of usable buildings, the dislocation of hundreds of residents and preventing the development of local enterprises.

Our parks and recreational facilities are governed by regulations unsuited to the conditions of our community. The Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department requires prior censorship of artistic works to be presented in Venice facilities and is now planning to limit assembly and speech in the only public areas available for such use.

The Los Angeles Planning Department and Assessor's Office have collaborated with absentee land speculators and profiteering realtors to concoct the Canal Assessment District, which will remove hundreds of Venice residents from their community and close our canals to public use. When we wished to protest, over 200 of us were locked out of the Los Angeles City Council Chamber. At later hearings, the Council microphones were turned off when we tried to speak. The City Council voted unanimously to spend \$2,500,000 of public tax monies in this private venture without allowing the public even to speak. That kind of taxation without representation is being planned for other areas of our community.

The Los Angeles City Council gave the southern part of Venice, including the canal area, to the Sixth Councilmanic District without the consent of the people and now proposes to select their Councilman without consulting the voters.

The Los Angeles Police Commission has used its licensing power to suppress local enterprises.

The Los Angeles Police Department has terrorized our community, breaking into our homes, confiscating our property, harassing and arresting residents without justification, beating residents on the streets and in the jail and denying us use of public places for peaceful assembly. Since November, 1968, the L.A.P.D. has ignored our demands to cease using the brutal Metro Squad in Venice, refused to give us access to the police blotter, impeded our efforts to defend residents victimized by the police and obstructed our attempts to identify officers guilty of criminal acts. On April 20th the Los Angeles Police Department declared a peaceful assembly on Venice Beach illegal, then arrested and beat over 200 persons, at least half of whom are Venice residents. They have threatened further violence should we assemble again. On June 18th, Captain Sillings, Commander of the Venice Division, was instrumental in denying our application to hold a community parade in Venice on July 4th, a national holiday. The police have denied us freedom of speech and assembly, have subjected us to unreasonable searches and seizures, imposed excessive bail and brutal punishment prior to trial.

Venice residents accused of crimes are transported and tried outside our community by juries unrepresentative of the Venice population. The courts of Los Angeles deny us a trial by a jury of our peers.

In 1925, when Venice was still an independent city, opponents of annexation by Los Angeles claimed that "Annexation means slavery!" They lost the election, but history has proved them correct.

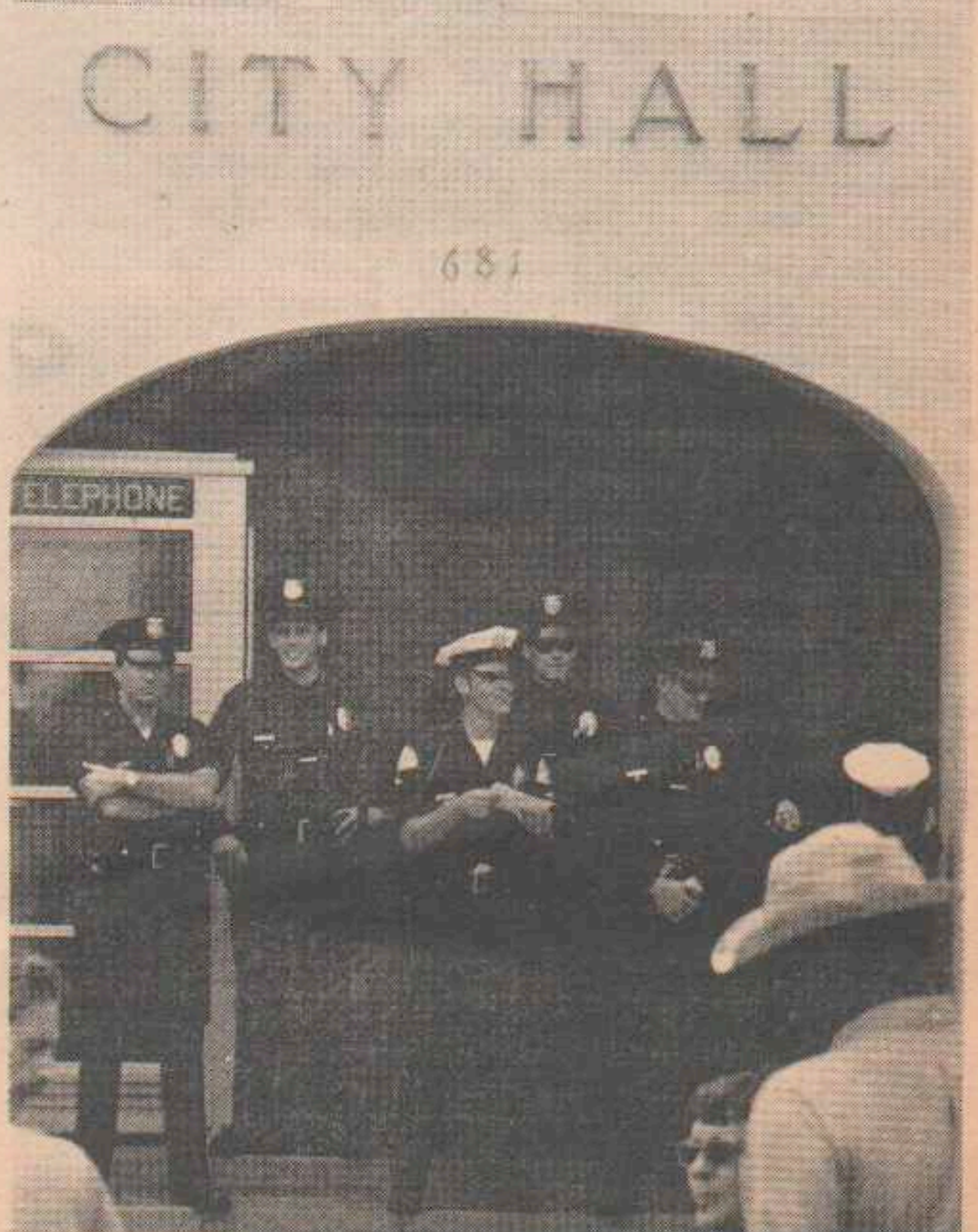
Most of old Venice has been destroyed and whatever remains is slated to go. Community groups find themselves in continual conflict with the City government. Now the City of Los Angeles plans to get rid of at least half the present population, using police violence to stifle opposition.

When the actions of a government add up to tyranny, it is the right and duty of responsible persons to take action against that government. We, therefore, declare ourselves dedicated to separation from Los Angeles and to self-government for Venice.

We call upon all Venice residents who love our community to join with us in our efforts to achieve self-government. We call upon all citizens of Los Angeles who demand self-government for themselves to support our struggle in any way they can.

We propose to work with all elements of our community, to develop a vehicle of government which will include all residents equally, and to implement the desires of our community to the best of our ability.

free venice organizing committee



(Photos by Bill Edelen)

John Johnson

What could have uplifted the spirit of a besieged community more than a Fourth of July Independence celebration? A day to show our independence and to reaffirm in our own way our desires and duties to free ourselves from our besiegers.

The Free Venice Organizing Committee decided to have a Fourth of July parade to kick off our drive to free Venice, relating the independence of the colony of Venice from the Empire of Los Angeles to the independence of the American Colonies from the British Empire. The parade would have traveled north on West Washington, across Rose to the Ocean Front Walk, and then south to Windward where our Declaration of Independence would be read.

The police recognized the threat of a community parade with children, flags, and balloons from the very first. Before they would grant Free Venice an application form for a permit, they wanted a downtown conference with many attendants and secretaries at which they requested all the vital information about Free Venice along with maps and multi-colored descriptions of the gala event.

The application was submitted on a Friday (the next Monday being too late) and was promptly refused acceptance in a manner typical of bureaucratic harassment -- inaccuracies, they claimed. After a further attempt at submission on Saturday when no one was there, the application was finally accepted disguised as a registered letter.

On June 18th the Police Commissioners' hearing on the parade permit was held. Six Free Venice members along with a lawyer went down to participate in the spectacle. Our parade stood out on the lengthy program -- it was the only item recommended for denial.

FVOC spokesman Jane Gordon stepped up first to speak in behalf of the parade. After being subjected to several questions about the FVOC, she objected, maintaining that such questions were irrelevant and suggested that they start discussing the parade. She was told to be seated.

Rick Davidson then took the stand and told the commissioners that FVOC was a group formed to solve community problems and that the parade was to celebrate Independence Day, a traditional national holiday. Rick gave a thorough description of the parade, carefully explaining how the parade had been planned to give minimum interference to emergency traffic. The head commissioner, with his copy of BEACHHEAD in hand, asked Rick if it was true that a celebration would be held along the route even if the permit were not granted. Rick replied that that was true.

Then the barrage of imported complainees began. Various police, firemen, and ambulance drivers read their lines about how the parade would interfere with emergency traffic (the planned police parade) and how it was on April 20th. The emphasized point was that there was a reported feed-in to be held on the beach which would attract about 30,000 people and that the added traffic from a parade (of at most 700 people and a few cars) would grossly interfere with emergency vehicle access. It was also stated that we couldn't have vehicles on the Ocean Front Walk since it was not constructed to support vehicles.

The only complainee from the community who was present was William Bestor of the Venice Tram Company, who said that the 4th was one of only 16 days in the year on which the Tram Company showed a profit and the parade would cut deeply into the profits for the day.

After stating blatantly that it was not the goodness or badness of the organization at issue (even though nothing had been mentioned on that subject) the head commissioner called the vote. No one voted for the parade.

It was suggested that we go back and re-apply but we decided against that obviously futile process. Instead, we began putting out leaflets advertising a sidewalk parade which would obey all traffic regulations and which the police had already assured us was completely legal with no permits required.

Meanwhile, we wanted to deal with the problems of the Tram Company and the reported feed-in. It seemed that the complaint from the Tram Company was due solely to a lack of understanding. Consequently, three Free Venice members met and talked with the Tram manager and secured not only his understanding but also one of his finest trams to lead the parade down the Ocean Front.

The feed-in was being put on by Green Power, headed by Cleo Knight. After weeks of unsuccessful attempts to talk with him, we were finally able to persuade him to come to a meeting. We discussed the Fourth, pointing out to him that he was coming into a community (unlike Griffith Park) where there already existed an undeclared war with the police. We told him that we thought that his plans for bringing tens of thousands of unsuspecting persons to an anticipated slaughter without any preparations for first aid, lawyers, or bail money was irresponsible. Furthermore, we informed him that by not complying with the wishes of the community, he was making our problem more difficult. But he chose to proceed with his plans anyway.

Capping the parade preparations was a press conference at which a total of 14 news agencies, including 4 TV stations, were represented. It was explained that the parade organizers wished to avoid a confrontation with the police at any cost. Favorable coverage of the parade brought Venice's secession efforts to the notice of millions of Los Angeles residents, many of whom have similar hopes of freedom for their own communities.

At a Wednesday night meeting, July 2nd, last minute plans were drawn up. Already numerous reports and rumors of a giant police build-up had been brought to our attention, including several remarks from police officers which were very threatening to both the parade and the community. At the meeting's end, however, we still planned to follow through with our celebration that Friday.

& CANCELED

Jane Gordon

Thursday started after an all-night rap session among the parade organizers. We had been getting steadily more reports and rumors about what the police had in store for beachgoers on the following day. Nothing we could "prove," or we'd have taken it to court long before. Just second-hand stories about numbers, preparations and intentions. One cop's kid was heard crooning, "my dad's gonna break a lot of heads on Friday, nyah nyah...." Material for barricades began appearing on street corners. Reports of huge trailer-size mobile stations for the pavillion. The lady at the Recreation Center advised us not to plan on using the grassy area on that day. When asked why, she was "not at liberty to say." There were several reports that the police were hoping to start an incident with the people in the parade and then use that as an excuse to bust everyone on the beach. Police were telling people they were expecting

dangerous "revolutionaries," who wanted to "take over Los Angeles." And on and on.

The all-night session produced the decision to postpone the parade, to hold a silent vigil at Venice City Hall, and to put out a statement clarifying where the blame lay -- with the police. We regretted having to concede the beach to the cops on a day which should have been for the people but we felt positive that cancelling the parade and warning people to stay away from the beach was the only way to avert a gigantic police club-in. We felt it absolutely essential to point out to people that we have a lot of work to do before we can control the actions of the police in our own community, and that physical confrontations could only harm our ability to proceed with that work.

We got the statement run off (FREE VENICE WARNS OF VIOLENCE JULY 4th) and started calling the press early Thursday morning. We kept it up all day, delivering copies and reading it over the phone. We ran off leaflets with a more graphic version of the same message and began getting them around on the Ocean Front,

in the canals, at the library, all over. Police were later seen tearing them down.

People started calling to find out if the parade was really cancelled as they had heard on the radio -- we explained that it was postponed until we felt we could celebrate independence without intimidation and illegal police activities. We also encouraged Venice residents to participate in our silent vigil at the Venice City Hall to mourn the fact that our community would be occupied territory on Independence Day.

Thursday evening at the last meeting of the parade committee, we went over our plans and worked out details. Some participants decided to warn of the police trap by making signs which they planned to display during the morning at all major streets leading into Venice. The meeting adjourned and the sign painters went to work.

Anticipation was high, but we were not dejected. We had done all we could to ruin police plans for a bloodbath. We hoped it would work.

||||| PRESS STATEMENT, JULY 3

Month-long preparations by the Free Venice Organizing Committee for a festive July 4th celebration ended abruptly today with a decision to cancel our parade and to warn all persons to stay away from Venice Beach. Parade organizers made this announcement after an all-night discussion of massive police preparations including possible use of the National Guard, daily police maneuvers along the Ocean Front, and mounting police intimidation of Venice residents. Concern for the safety of all involved convinced us that the sanest course is to cancel all our previous plans and to urge non-residents to avoid Venice.

The parade will be held at a later date when the festive atmosphere can be sustained. However, we intend to issue our Declaration of Venice Independence on July 4th as planned and to re-double our efforts to secede from the oppressive City of Los Angeles. We do intend to assemble at W. Washington Blvd. and Rialto Ave. at 1 p.m. and urge those present to join us in a silent vigil at Venice City Hall.

We mourn the fact that the Los Angeles Police Department has destroyed any possibility of a celebration in the Venice community on the day meant to commemorate American Independence.

The police began predicting a riot on Venice Beach weeks ago. We know of no instance that the police have prepared for a riot without producing one.

The police have stated publicly that hundreds of police from several divisions will be massed on Venice Beach, that shotguns will be used "if necessary," that the National Guard will be available at 15-minute notice and that minor infractions, such as bringing a dog to the beach will result in arrest.

The police have been less candid when asked to confirm stories about the locations of command posts and internment areas (one of which will be located, ironically, in the Venice Recreation Center), use of helicopters, warnings to shopkeepers to close and board up their shops and threats to Venice residents of certain arrest if they remain in Venice on July 4th. Their

military-style preparations include a "parimeter" to be closed to incoming traffic and within which pedestrians will be subject to unconstitutional searches. The "parimeter" corresponds almost exactly with the Ocean Front segment of the postponed Free Venice parade.

We have repeatedly made clear to the police, the press, and our own participants that we were planning a festive occasion, that experienced monitors would insure an orderly event, that we would strictly observe traffic regulations and avoid at all costs a confrontation with police. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the police will not allow our community celebration to continue without a confrontation which none of the organizers or participants desire. We believe this because we have received insistent and increasing reports of police intentions to attack beachgoers; finally, we have heard statements by individual policemen that our parade would be an "illegal assembly" (despite verbal assurances from Capt. Sillings, commander of the Venice

Continued on next page.



Chris Bunch

FREE VENICE WARNS OF VIOLENCE

division, that our sidewalk parade is *not* in violation of any law).

The scope and pattern of police preparations prove to us that anyone present on Venice Beach from Santa Monica south to Windward Avenue will be in danger of arrest and violence from L.A. police. We will provide an example for avoiding police violence by postponing our parade, despite a month of time-consuming and expensive preparations.

We cannot take responsibility for leading our people into a certain trap. Despite our precautions, we cannot exclude the possibility of police provocateurs creating an incident. We decided against simply changing our parade route because we cannot justify our celebrating while others are being arrested and beaten on the beach. We hope that the seriousness of our decision can be communicated in time to others who intend to come to Venice tomorrow. Their safety depends on staying away from Venice Beach.

There was never any question in our minds that the

police could stop us if they chose to do so. Their victory is a victory of sheer physical force, the kind of victory that can arouse satisfaction only among those who believe that might makes right.

The police plan to celebrate their independence from any superior authority by indulging in unrestrained violence against unsuspecting beachgoers. Our silent vigil at the Venice City Hall (a building presently occupied by L.A. police) will express our sadness at intimidation against a community whose special character includes tolerance and non-violent customs.

This temporary victory of police repression will prove hollow in the months to come. Far from discouraging our efforts to free Venice, these intolerable police intrusions only strengthen our resolve to separate ourselves from the tyranny imposed on us by outsiders. We intend to live in our chosen community and control our own institutions long after the savagery of the Los Angeles police is only a bitter memory.

(Photos by Mauna Berkov, Bill Edelen, John Heller, Chris Shoemaker and the Los Angeles Image.)

The photos on this page show some of the L.A. police preparations for Independence Day in Venice, including buses, vans, cars, boats and helicopters. Police tore down warning-signs posted by the FREE VENICE Organizing Committee, which held a silent vigil at Venice City Hall, also occupied by L.A. police.

The BEACHHEAD staff wanted to reprint in this issue the Conrad cartoon from the L.A. Times of July 4th. It showed the Spirit of '76 with a Tory on the sidelines commenting, "Just a bunch of long-haired, trouble-making kooks...!" Conrad and the syndicate that handles his cartoons both gave us permission to reprint. The L.A. Times refused permission. Sorry, folks.

Printing costs for this July 4th EXTRA were paid entirely by contributions from Venice residents. Thanks from the staff of BEACHHEAD.

JULY 4, 1984

by Steve Clare

1984 -- some fifteen years ahead of schedule. A glance at the Ocean Front Friday morning, July 4th, should have convinced all but the stone blind optimist. The war machine had finally been unveiled. An awesome sight to be sure. The people of Venice knew well what was in store for those who would come to celebrate the folly of our ancestors.

Surprise, surprise. So sorry, Captain Sillings. My apologies to Tackaberry. Those 50,000 human beings heard about your plans to wipe out Venice Beach and decided to go elsewhere. Rather inconsiderate of us and a terrible waste of tax money (some \$50,000 -- I wonder how many school books that would have bought).

About 100 of us gathered at Rialto and W. Washington at one o'clock. We walked to Venice City Hall to conduct our silent vigil. The few pathetic bolts and cogs (probably defective) that couldn't be fit into the machine assembled on the beach were grinding with frustration on the steps. Among the rejects

was our once proud pugilist, officer Leader.

And would you believe, would anyone believe the antics of our boys in blue. THEY HAD TURNED ON THE SPRINKLING SYSTEM. That's right, folks. It had been going since early morning and was still on full blast when we arrived. They wanted to get us all wet; there's a little child in all of us, I guess.

Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on how much one enjoys getting sprinkled), there was room on the sidewalk out of range. We lined up single file to face at once our City Hall and their Bastille. Water, trickling across the sidewalk from the saturated turf, washed between our toes and cooled our feet. A small child sat among the sprinklers. Another devastating weapon of repression had been disarmed.

The vigil lasted a short half-hour. All went well. Just as on the beach, there was not a thing the Man could do but watch and wish for better days to come.

At about 10 p.m. on July 4th Anna Haag urged people on the Ocean Front to leave the scene of a police mop-up operation personally supervised by Capt. Sillings, Commander of L.A. police in Venice. The Commander was apparently trying to make up for a day of few arrests by dispersing a group of residents at night with no photographers around (see evening of July 4th article).

Sillings reported to the Evening Outlook on July 7th that Anna was "helpful" on the 4th. Angered at the report, Anna asked the BEACHHEAD to make it clear that her actions were due entirely to concern for the safety of her friends and neighbors. She rejects any implication of collaborating with Sillings' occupation forces.

an open letter to Captain Sillings (Commander, Venice Division, L.A.P.D.)

Commander,

Your occupation of Venice Beach on July 4th required hundreds of men with clubs, pistols, shotguns, motorcycles, cars, trucks, buses, vans, police boats, helicopters, tactical operations mobile units, field hospitals, internment areas and mobile reserves. Your Community Relations Officer, Lieutenant Archbold, told the Los Angeles Image (July 11th) that the "protection" cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

During the 15-hour period, your troops produced 61 arrests, most of them for minor offenses which were ignored on the same beach only a few blocks south of your field headquarters. \$2,000 or more per misdemeanor arrest, Commander, does not suggest the kind of efficiency for which the L.A.P.D. would like to be noted.

Massive use of troops and equipment clogging the Ocean Front area for a crowd estimated by the Evening Outlook (July 5th) at 3,500 seems hardly consistent with the L.A. Planning Commission's hope of 100,000 beachgoers daily on Venice Beach. Your Community Relations Officer can be dispensed with, we assume, now that you have adopted saturation tactics.

"It set the theme for the summer," you told the Evening Outlook on July 7th. "Whatever it cost, it was worth it," you said.

Worth it for whom, Commander? To your troops standing all day idle in the summer sun? To the citizens who had to run an obstacle course of men and machines to get to the beach? To the taxpayers who have to pay for your paranoia? Or was it worth it to you personally to play out your battle games before a community amazed to find itself in an armed camp on the birthday of our Independence?

The Venice community declined your invitation to a shoot-out on Venice Beach. We successfully warned away thousands, despite the efforts of your troopers to tear down our posters and intimidate our sign-carriers.

It is not our custom to produce violent confrontations. Vocal, yes; violent, no. It is not our custom either to engage in suicidal actions.

Since assuming command of the Venice occupation forces, you have treated our community as your enemy. That is logical, considering the designs on our community of the profiteers and politicians whose hireling you are, you and the mercenaries you command.

You can and do use force and the threat of force to subdue the vitality of our people. You have that power, which we do not have, nor want, nor respect.

The only power we have is the power of persuasion. It is with that power that we expect to defeat you and to banish your methods from our community.

Those like yourself who are prepared to use force and violence on our beach, in our streets and even in our schools are in a minority in the Venice we know and intend to preserve. We depend for our survival on creating a non-violent community.

We do not intend our beach to be a battleground. We expect our children to sing and dance and play on the beach, safe from all Commanders. (Scores of children were hurt and lost in the panic your men produced on our beach on April 20th.)

Opinions among us differ, Commander, but all of us agree that Venice residents should control their own affairs, including police affairs.

Therefore, we are a "threat" to you and your strong-arm tactics. The threat, however, is political, not physical, if you are capable of making that distinction.

Sincerely,
John Haag, for the Free Venice
Organizing Committee

Meanwhile, Back At The Front...

by Lynn and Walter Davis

IMPRESSIONS FROM OCEAN FRONT WALK & SUNSET -- July 4th:

10:00 PM-- The newsmen and TV cameras have left. It has been a surprisingly peaceful day, despite the several hundred police present, the buses and portable booking stations; and the police ambulances crammed so full of policemen they could not possibly have room for injured patients.

10:15 PM-- The bongo-playing in front of Gwyndolyn's has been ordered to cease as per City noise ordinance. The music stopped promptly and without objection. The LAPD bus has pulled up and suddenly the area is swarming with foot patrolmen. Police cars are coming from the direction of the Pavillion at 3 or 4 minute intervals. Anyone who is in the area is suddenly subject to arrest or harassment...

A young couple is walking up Ocean Front Walk, seemingly engrossed in each other. A cop approaches from behind and shouts, "get moving!" The young man turns to question. The cop grabs him by the neck and shoves, yelling, "move!" The young man turns around again and is thrown to the ground and handcuffed. His girl runs at the officer screaming, "turn him loose! He hasn't done anything!" A police car backs up, an officer jumps out and grabs the girl in a painful wristlock. He walks her about 20 feet up the boardwalk, and though she is making no effort to resist, another officer jumps from a car and puts her other arm in a wristlock. Screaming in pain, she is led to the waiting bus, doubled over to keep her arms from breaking.

A thirty-ish couple is sitting on the bench enjoying the evening air. A cop walks over to them and growls rudely, "where do you live?" The man starts to answer, pointing in a southerly direction. "Then that's where you're

going! Get off that bench! Move it!" The woman, shocked, starts to question but is promptly led off by the man.

A girl, leaning on a friend's arm and crying hysterically, comes from the direction of the police van. She is a friend of the couple busted for not walking fast enough. "It's so damn frustrating," she sobs. "They've got guns and clubs and you can't do a damn thing but watch the pigs hurt people." Her friend is fearfully trying to quiet her.

An old lady of about 70 walks by, shaking her fist at police cars, shouting, "Gestapo! Gestapo! This time I fight!" The cops glower, but do not stop her.

10:30 PM-- Venice Survival Committee members arrive at the Front, observing police and writing down badge and car numbers.

There are perhaps a dozen of us in front of our apartment building. A police car pulls up and turns in our direction. We step back on the porch. The car backs up to turn around, and the rear wheels sink into the sand. Someone yells, "Dig it in!" They do. A small crowd gathers, people are laughing and cheering. Four or five hippies, having had their fun, go over and start shoving the disabled car out, amid jeers of "let the pigs root it out!" and "don't help them -- would they help you?"

For a few minutes there is a steady line of police cars bringing in prisoners from the direction of the Pavillion.

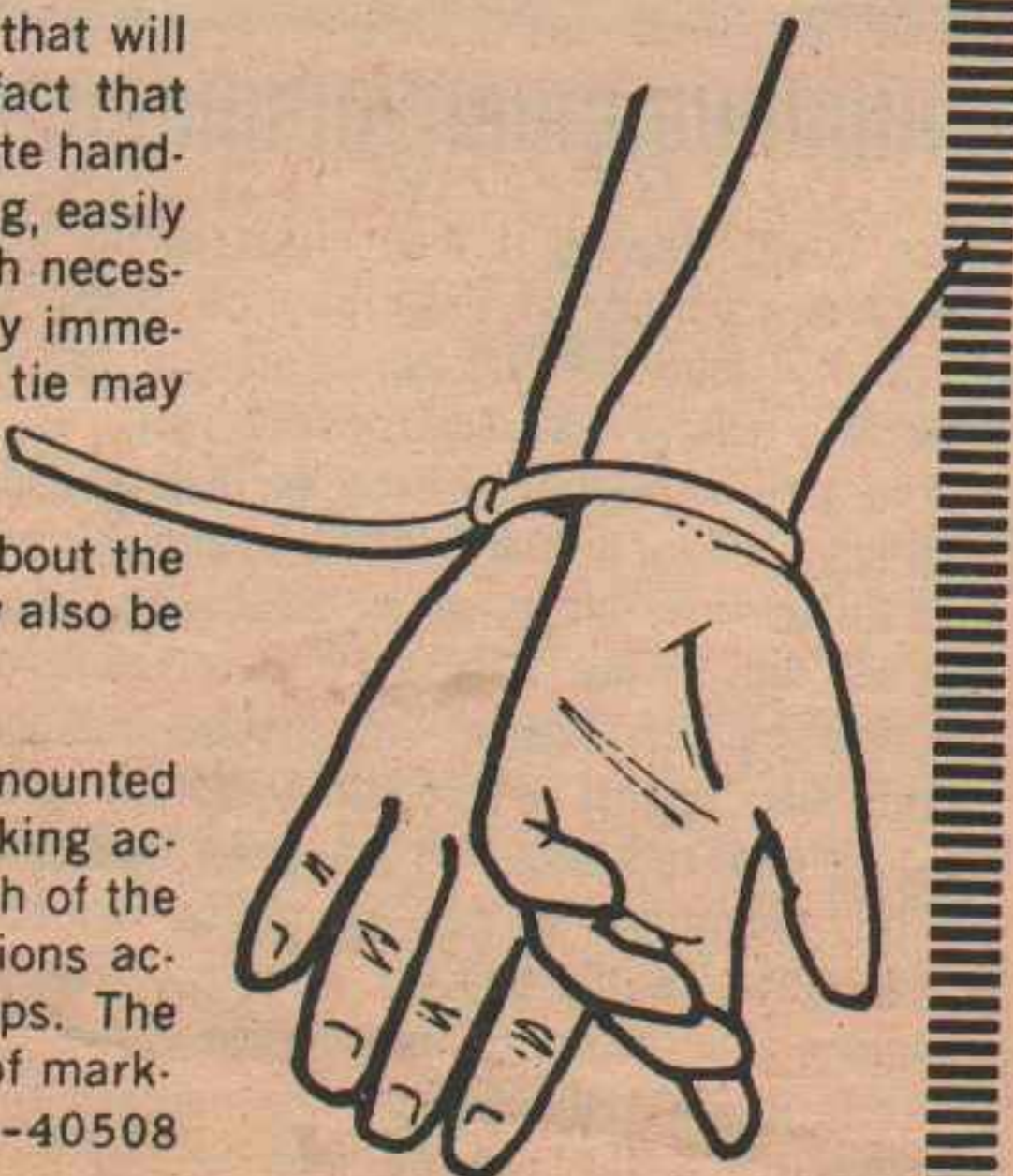
11:00PM-- The bus pulls off. The beach is nearly empty and all is quiet again. Several police cars leave. Old ladies who were awakened by the commotion return to their apartments shaking their heads. "That's something. I don't believe it. It can't happen -- not here. It can't...."

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