



100th ISSUE!

**SPECIAL
PHOTOPOSTER**

FREE VENICE

SINCE 1968

BEACHHEAD

FREE

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Photo by Allan Hurwit

Venice Street EXTRAVAGANZA

The street performers of Venice are getting together. An association is being formed, official like, called The International Street Performing Arts Association. And they've announced a free concert for all the beautiful people of Venice on Saturday, April 15, from 1-5 pm., on the grass near the Venice Pavilion.

This unique, first of its kind street performers concert will feature all the Boardwalk favorites: Ed Brown, the singing piano mover who, besides pulling his piano down the walk, pulls in 1/4 of the SideWalk Cafe's gross on any sunny beautiful weekend; Uncle Bill - Venices own King of the Blues, who holds forth whenever the spirit moves him at the Breeze Ave. pagoda; Captain Hook - Canaligator-in-Chief; Jingles and Frank - Music's Odd Couple, plus 'Don', the Mad Cosmic Violinist; Regina 'Star', the exotic snake and mask dancer; and an extra added attraction, the Los Angeles Juggling Company.

Also included will be the mellow duets of Venices own Roger and Jolene; Swami X, the mad MC from Brooks Ave. lawn (if he can get his body back from NYC); Joseph Baruch, this communitys only resident oud and dumbach master, and several belly dancers from Venice and the teeming ghettos of Southern California; and last but not least, all the way from Quebec, the Diamantose who were street theatering their way across the USA and now have become regulars in our Venice street performers scene.

Jingles the Master Planner

Both the Festival and the Association are the brain children of Jingles, the Universal Bell Giver. Jingles spent twelve years performing in Philadelphia and New York's Greenwich Village. He did concerts, clubs, and even a

few porno papers, "with just my bells and guitar". After a heavy bout in the hospital, he jokes, "I escaped Fun City and ventured to the sunny land of hopes and dreams called Marina del Venice, tried selling my collage art work on the Ocean Front Walk, but the police chased me Brought AnnaBelle (my guitar) outside, and my big sized bells, set up in front of the old Fruit Tramps store, and decided to become a street performer."

"Been doing it now for almost three years. I love the excitement of playing to people, against the background of helicopters -strolling police cars, barking dogs, rollerskaters, skateboarders, some winos, and all the other energies which help to create the setting for street performers in Venice. Jingle Bells are my worldwide trademark. Been handing them out for over 15 years now. Each bell carries a clip on it to hang on your body. Jingles is my name and bells are my claim to fame."

"Putting a concert together like this one has been a dream of mine for a long time. The many creative, beautiful, energetic people here in Venice, they've helped to make this show a reality."

Jingles is the first half of "The Odd Couple of Contemporary Music". His partner is Frank. After many years of jamming and forming one band after another, Frank finally joined forces with Jingles in 1976. Their music has grown and developed over the past years, and they have been entertaining Venice Boardwalk audiences every weekend in front of the Sidewalk Cafe. "The merchants are funny" says Jingles. "They appear to like us and despise us simultaneously."

Frank is the straight, conservative, quiet fellow, and Jingles is the crazy, kooky dressed wild, bell ringer. Odd, talented, and energetic

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Moe Stavnezer

During the past month there has been a lot of activity around and publicity about the proposed retail/office/ art studio development at Main & Rose. In addition to the article in last month's Beachhead, there have been stories in the L.A. Times, Herald Examiner, Ocean Park Perspective, S.M. Independent-Journal and the Evening Outlook.

The appeal by the Venice Town Council, Legal Aid, and Cheryl Rhoden/Mike Tarbet (from Ocean Park) has yet to be heard by the State Coastal Commission. At the request of the developers, it was taken off the March 15th agenda and is now scheduled to be heard on April 18th or 19th here in Los Angeles.

During March there were a couple of meetings between the developers and some of the people involved in the appeal. The thrust of these meetings was to see if all parties could agree on some ways to offset the impact the development will have on the Venice/Ocean Park communities. The discussions centered around some provision for low income housing, an affirmative jobs program for poor people, especially minority people, and space for the Venice/Ocean Park food co-op. The specifics discussed would take a very long article but generally the developers have agreed to all 7 items. The agreement is, however, based on a number of "ifs" especially the one concerning low income housing. At a community meeting called by the Venice Town Council there was an overwhelming decision that the ifs were far to "ify" and would not balance the negative effects the development will have on the community. The Venice Town Council will not, therefore, enter into an agreement with the developers but will continue its opposition at the State Coastal Comm. A committee to deal with this issue was formed and hopes to call another meeting of the community possibly in the first week of April. Please call 822-4725, 326-6876 or 821-4304 for more information. ☺

folks. Jingles has been busting his bells to get this festival off the ground. "It's my dream child, my baby" said Jingles, "and I'm putting myself into nursing this concert till April 15th!"

Snake Lady and Ed Brown

Regina Star, born and raised in Holland, will perform African, snake, and gypsy dances. A seasoned street performer, she has appeared at the 1977 Festival of Fools in Holland, as well as in Rome, Barcelona, London, Istanbul, and in the new world. Her favorite places are parks open air markets, and beaches. Star dances with snakes. "My fascination for snakes began after a friend gave me one as an x-mas present" she told the Beachhead. "I worked her into my act, and she is now my faithful dancing partner; graceful and inspiring".

Like many of the other street artists, Star considers Venice a special place, a must stop on the US street theater circuit. "Of all the places throughout the entire world in which I have street performed, I find Venice the most

Continued on p. 10

ADVERTISING & A FREE PRESS

"No matter how superior the quality of a newspaper's news performance, it will not flourish long if it cannot retain the advertising that it needs to stay in business. That is a sad but incontrovertible truth about press freedom in America."

—J. F. terHorst, L. A. Times, 2/8/78

The Beachhead may very well have the best content for the least cost of any newspaper since I. F. Stone's Weekly. The staff is volunteer, the supplies are often scrounged, no contributions are paid for. And yet every month requires another \$400-plus for printing and postage. This money comes from our advertisers. Thus it is an incontrovertible truth that the Beachhead needs its advertisers to stay in business. But we do not see this as a sad truth. It is rather a happy truth. Happy because our advertisers are part of the community the Beachhead represents. Happy because the advertisements give real information to real people about real services in a real community. Happy because each advertiser is important but none is large enough to unduly influence the newspaper.

The quantity of information that we can present is limited by the dollars we have to pay the printer which, in turn, is determined by the number of our advertisers. This factor, however, is more or less determined by the energy of the staff — the amount of editorial material we can deal with and the number of businesses we can hustle for advertisements. So advertising and free expression in the Beachhead are compatible and that is a happy truth.

At least it has been up to now.

The March 16 issue of the Argonaut carried an announcement that a new newspaper called the Ocean Front Weekly will soon appear in Venice. The OFW will be edited and co-published by David Johnson who runs the Argonaut and by Tom Victory who was the former advertising director of the Argonaut. The paper is to be distributed free to each resident and business in Venice and Ocean Park.

This venture is a threat to the happy fact of the Beachhead. The Ocean Front Weekly will need many more advertisers much worse than we do for the OFW will also have to pay the printer and the postman but in addition it will have to pay the staff and turn a profit for its publishers. Moreover, it will have to pay back the subsidies incurred until it can acquire sufficient advertising to hold its own, which it must be presumed the Argonaut will provide. The OFW can therefore be expected to vigorously hustle all potential advertisers and to publish nothing that would offend any of them, much like its progenitor.

Now it may be that Venice is ready for its own Argonaut and has become too establishment to continue supporting the Beachhead. We on the staff don't think so but we are a bit worried. Not by competition regarding content but by the bleeding away of advertisers in sufficient numbers to destroy us. And it wouldn't take too many. We run very close to the margin.

Venice needs the Beachhead, now as much as ever, and the collective will continue to do whatever it can to keep on printing. Whatever choices our advertisers make with respect to the new rag we hope that they will continue to advertise with us. As long as our circulation is maintained it will be in everyone's best interest.

As for you, dear reader, express your appreciation to our advertisers once in a while by patronizing them and by letting them know that your patronage results from their association with the Beachhead.

Perhaps then the incontrovertible truth of free expression and advertising in Venice can remain a happy one.

Dear Beachhead,

I was dismayed by the negative tone of the comment in a recent issue about the late Mrs. Mirtle Wilson.

I never met Mrs. Wilson; I know her only from 10 years of reading in the Beachhead about your disagreements with her. Apparently she was not a lady to back away from a fight. By the Beachhead's own reports she appeared at many meetings, at which she was often alone in representing her views on what was best for Venice, and at some of which she was vastly outnumbered and even shouted down by opponents of her views. She was, however, unafraid, and seems to have been seriously interested in Venice. She was here to stay; she did not, as so many other Venice spokesmen did, give 2 years of her life to Venice and then move on to the mountains of Mendocino.

The local papers carried a report several years back, as I remember, of her battle with the Safeway then open in Washington Square. Mrs. Wilson discovered that the original proposal by Safeway included "dockside delivery" of groceries to boatowners. This was made impossible, of course, by the city's abandonment of the Canals Project. Since she was strongly in favor of that Project, and wanted to dramatize the city's abandonment of it, she sailed up the muddy canal parallel to Anchorage School with a friend, in a rowboat. They then bought several loads of groceries, and armed with a copy of Safeway's original proposal, demanded "dockside delivery". The unhappy manager took the easier course and sent out a boxboy to deliver her groceries. The boxboy had to climb over two fences and wade through ankle deep mud to effect 'dockside delivery' to her rowboat.

Now, that's not a lady to have cheap shots

made at her after her death, whatever your disagreement with her views.

Sincerely,
Joan E. Del Monte
Venice

(We entirely agree! Mrs. Wilson was indeed a Venice person, in a sense one of us. In mentioning that she did, at times, favor a freeway thru Venice, we did not mean to take any cheap shot. If we did, we apologize).

notice!

CHANGE OF MEETING DATE

The Venice Town Council is changing its regular meeting date from the 1st Wed. of each month to the 3rd Wednesday. The coordinating committee is changing its meeting from the 3rd Wed. to the 1st Wed.

The meetings are held in the Venice City Hall at 681 North Venice Blvd. - 7:30 pm. The next V T C meeting will be on April 19. For information call: 396-6876 or 399-1925.

The next meeting will feature a discussion on rent gouging with a report from Ms. Kate Bartola of Councilman Wachs' office (he is trying to push through the City Council an ordinance to stop rent gouging. Also, Tim Brick will discuss CHAIN, a statewide network of groups interested in housing.

The Venice Town Council salutes the Beachhead on its 100th issue, and looks forward to the next (100)!

Letters

Dear Beachhead;

I talked to you on the phone about my correspondence with the Coors Co. I have enclosed some of the correspondence which you may print. I have stopped drinking coors beer.

Sincerely,
Jose Luis Gonzalez

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

Thank you so much for your letter of Nov 12. First, let me assure you that in spite of what you may have heard, this Company does not require any of its employees to take a lie detector test as a condition of continued employment.

As do thousands of other employers, we do use the polygraph to confirm the questions that applicants for employment here must answer on their employment applications. In this regard, we are concerned only about two things: 1) Whether they are in sufficiently good health that they can work here without being a danger to themselves or to our other employees; and 2) whether they are really seeking honest employment with us rather than access to our facilities so that they will be in a position to sabotage the facilities and put us out of business. If you can tell us another way in which we can determine these essential facts about our prospective employees without the use of the polygraph, we will happily dispense with it because we don't like it any better than you do.

In closing, I send you my warmest regards and the sincere hope that we can always be friends.

Cordially,
W. K. Coors
Chairman of the Board
Dec. 2, 1977

Dear Mr. Coors;

This is my third letter to you and I am now answering your one letter to me in early December. In this letter you asked me to tell you a better way than lie detectors in your brewery. You are worried about sabotage, Mr. Coors. You are a very rich man and could bounce back if they sabotaged your company. Mr. Coors, you have to draw the line someplace and trust your workers as fellow human beings. Stop your paranoia and lie detector tests. Hire a top notch M. D. and psychiatrist. Trust them. Trust people again. Stop being a fascist. They also need your trust, not only your paycheck. Tonight I stopped drinking your fantastic beer. I drank two six-packs of Coors a day for two years.... but will never drink another coors until you stop the lie detector tests.

Sincerely,
Jose Luis Gonzales
Jan 26, 1978

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

This will answer your Mailgram of Jan 26. I am sorry to say that we cannot comply with your request therein, and we are very sorry to lose you as one of our valued customers.

Again, let me remind you that no employee of ours has ever been forced to take a polygraph examination as a condition of continued employment. Any employee who believes that he has been unjustly wronged by the management here, he is privileged to confirm his side of the issue by polygraph examination if he so desires and management is bound to accept the findings and to rectify the wrong accordingly. This is a far more reliable way of getting at the truth than the personal judgement of a psychiatrist.

Applicants for employment here are subjected to polygraph examination to verify the facts of their employment application. In every case, the prospective employee is shown a list of the questions to be asked and decides for him or herself whether or not to undergo polygraph examination. Independent public opinion surveys indicate that 97% of the people asked have no objection to the use of the polygraph in this manner. Again, I do not believe that there is a psychiatrist in existence whose personal judgement would be as fair to the employee applicant as the polygraph test.

It follows that 3% of the general public are going to be unhappy with us, which, of course, includes yourself. I am sincerely sorry that we have to lose you both as a customer and a friend.

With warm regards, I remain
Cordially,
Bill Coors

Dear Beachhead:

Here's my buck,
hope it brings you good luck,
I've been reading your rag
for quite a while.
Cause it's full of good news
and some very heavy dues
and there's always a line
to make me smile.

So keep up the good work
tell it right and don't shirk,
I'll be looking forward to the
next edition.

There's no doubt it will be great,
Beachhead, I can hardly wait,
You're the vanguard of
the people's coalition. Love,
Leo

F. SCOTT CABARET: NOSTALGIA RIP-OFF FARCE

By Joan Friedberg

Farce: To make more pretentious or agreeable by padding or seasoning. Ridiculous or empty show; a mockery.

It is said that tragedy and comedy are very closely related. This truth was brought home to me one Saturday night when I went to the newly opened F. Scott Cabaret, formerly the St. Charles Place. I half expected that the new place might be a bit of a rip-off. But how little was I prepared for the full reality of this pompous prince mingling with the common people.

In front of the place a sign reads: "Attendant will park your car," as if the place were located on Admiralty Way instead of seedy old lovable Windward. Two attendants stood outside waiting for the cars that never materialized.

The inside of the new F. Scott is basically the same as it was except that Jim Mabry's mural and Dirk Hamilton's poster have been plastered over with mirrors, and the addition of about 50 little round tables makes it look like Swensen's Ice Cream Parlor.

My companion was asked to remove his hat before we would be admitted. "We don't allow people with Levis," says the little pastry in a plunge front mini-dress at the door.

But we were feeling obstinate and a little drunk, so I said, "Are you kidding? Everyone wears Levis around here." "Well," she looks at me suspiciously, "we're trying to keep out certain..." in mid-sentence she realizes she's about to insult me and stops.

We must have been intimidating because we were allowed in, the cover charge, \$2 per person.

Inside, waiters in black and white penguin suits bounce around serving drinks. "Would you like to see a menu?" one says to me. Ok, I look at the menu. The drinks are all \$2.75 and have names like,

"Begin the Beguine," "Red Sails In the Sunset," and, of course, "Tender Is the Night."

In the meantime, a piano player is giving us a rendition of "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered." I decide to bring my parents here next time they're in town.

The overwhelming feeling of the place is BORING! It's the kind of place that will always be half empty until the nostalgic older gay crowd discovers it.

Sunday morning, I wake up and think of that sign out in front. Attendant Will Park Your Car. I start to giggle, and then I start to gag. That's what I mean by comedy and tragedy being so closely related. Still ringing in my ear is the voice of the plunge front mini-person at the door, "We think this place will go over."

In the meantime, Fitzgerald is probably turning over in his grave. This isn't nostalgia. It's an anachronism.

COMMUNITY LEADS ITSELF by The Oakwood Tattler

"What I want as a Black woman, and what I imagine all Black people in this society want, is for all peoples of the world to become personally aware of each other, and of each other's wants and needs. We need to know each other as fellow human beings created by one entity for one main purpose in one world, not as programmed word-images -- conjured up by a minute minority of ill-informed, prejudiced minds -- projected via visual media to the ignorant majority.

"Our society is one built on a social structure of separatism bridged by jet airways and freeways that takethewell-to-do and the uninformed speedily past and superpersonally over the problems of the struggling masses. This same society teaches that social equality and individualism are not compatible. To that I say "bullshit." For any individual to succeed in this society he or she must be considered socially equal in order to compete, and competition is what this capitalist economy and society was founded upon.

"What I want as a member of this society is for people to look, not superficially but soulfully, and see that if each person were honestly given an opportunity to succeed in his individual endeavors, ethnic crime would be almost non-existent. For crime represents the basic animal instinct for survival and surfaces in all human beings when their lives, or the lives of their loved ones, is at stake. I want us to see that we of all races in this county are pawns in the games of a few elite who control and amass fortunes through programmed ignorance, who have systematically instilled in us a materialistic hunger that benefits no one so much as themselves. To see that materialism is a tool of separatism; so that we are all either the "haves", the "almost haves", or the "cannot haves". To see that the real effect of a separatist materialism is the ghettos, junk yards, and trash cans that much of the world has become.

"I want all people to become knowledgeable of others and of themselves, to become more critical of their government which, through the use of a Constitution supposedly of, for, and by the people, and the people's ignorance and permissiveness, condones separatism and denies equality, liberty, and justice for all.

"What I want in my lifetime is to see the elimination of the separate, multi-colored political campaign platforms, to see that candidates opting

to represent all of the people of the United States speak to all the people -- and we hear them as a united people."

That amazing speech was given by Doris Oliver, an Action Project tenant and spokesperson for her building, at a fund-raiser sponsored by the Venice Town Council for the new Tenants Association. We were in the common room of a Senior Citizens apartment building, also a HUD-backed project, only this one had a security guard on duty, locked entrances, and neat grounds which prompted one Action tenant to wonder aloud at the difference in management of the two properties. Not a whole lot of people showed up at the fund-raiser, and those that did were mostly white and/or elderly and it was hard to tell if they really heard Ms. Oliver's eloquent plea for unity against the dehumanizing effects of corporate greed. But enough money to fund a Tenant Newsletter was raised, and I know some of the people there heard her, for their organizing energies are bursting forth this Spring like all those strange new weeds and flowers we are seeing that have lain dormant in the earth and are now brought back to bloom by the recent heavy rains.

And high time, too. Rick Davidson was there. He is an architect and community activist who first turned me on to the possibility of a "Green Machine" in Venice, to be built in the shape of a pyramid with solar collectors, wind generators, and beaded glass walls. It is an almost totally energy self-sufficient, low-income housing project designed by Glen Small with the help of students and is only waiting for sufficient grants and a permit to become a reality. And then there are the cooperatives -- eating, building, living, law, health, theater, even dream collectives. And the possibility of rent control in Santa Monica and at long last some legal recognition that renters are people too, and not just dollar signs.

Steve Clare heard her. He and other law students, with the help of the National Lawyers Guild who provide the attorneys, have opened a Tenants Help Center at 1301 Main St. in Venice.

Ed Pearl, who produced the pot-luck, music, and video-tapes fund raiser for the tenants, was there, too. He and Moe Stavnezer have led the fight to stop that high-rise, exclusive boutique and studio complex planned for the intersection of Rose and Main streets. The forces for commercialization of Venice, people who don't live here -- and if they do, are gonna split anyway as soon as they get theirs -- are moving on that spot fast, folks. Be aware.

Across the street, at the Venice Library, Addie Phillips ran programs for three successive weeks on school desegregation and tenants rights showing what an involved administrator can do to make a public institution a public resource. The panel discussion on desegregation was a whammy, too. Enough points of view were represented to make it a real learning experience instead of your usual knee-jerk rally.

Dennis Hicks, a producer of film strips promoting integration of the schools, made the case for concerned and consistent community involvement in LA Public Schools desegregation plans, noting that a quality program would only come about from continued struggle within the system.

David Salmeron of Barrios Unidos pointed out that in his community the problems of communication and survival precluded any discussion of the niceties of an integration plan. Bob Duran of the Black Panthers said that community control of schools was probably a much more important issue than the School Boards desegregation plan, since the patterns of school segregation only reflected the racist patterns of the society at large. He pointed out that the Panthers in Oakland had opened and run a highly rated community school as a pilot project, and that it was the type of thing he was interested in seeing developed for minority education.

Bob Wells of the Venice Town Council held that the School Boards plan was too limited and made a counter proposal that would, he said, address itself not only to the completeness and fairness of integration, but would also take into account that "Third World peoples" have a right to their indigenous cultures and don't want so much to be assimilated into the dominant culture as be recognized by it. His proposal featured bilingual Spanish/English educational materials for all students, in every phase of the education process, even including restroom signs.

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FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

PO Box 504, Venice, California 90291

Collective Staff: Arnold Springer, Wendy Reeves, Gerry Goldstein, Chuck Bloomquist, Joan Friedberg, Olga Palo, Mike Wells, Nancy Bennett. Special thanks to Osah Harmon.

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One matters: the Venice Town Council

4 by Terry Bloomquist

[Staff note. Terry (Teresita Noemi) Bloomquist was born in Mexico (Aguascalientes) and is a naturalized U.S. citizen. She is a registered nurse working part-time at St. John's Hospital, the mother of six, a Venice homeowner and a recent graduate of Pepperdine. She has been active in the Venice/Ocean Park area for 16 years. She has taught English as a second language, was on the board of directors of the Ocean Park Community Center and is active in the Parent-Teacher Council at St. Clement's School. She was involved in the Venice Town Council during its formative period and served two years as chairperson of the Oakwood Neighborhood Council - Area 4.]

Some five years ago the first Venice Town Council meeting was held in the Venice High School Auditorium. For the previous six months, meetings had been held in order to bring that March 12 meeting to fruition.

The idea behind the Town Council was to bring the people into their governing: a grass roots effort. I think that all those involved had their own idea of what it should be. What it could be. It remained to figure out how to bring it off.

In the last months of 1972, several of us met and discussed how to pinpoint our most important problems in order to present them clearly, coherently, cogently and concisely. A formula that always sounds deceptively simple. At earlier meetings, Venice west of Lincoln had been divided into six areas. Ours was Area 4 and had some 5,000 inhabitants. It was no easy matter to spread the word to them about the function of the VTC - the government of the people. Bilingual flyers were printed and a half-dozen of us covered our area.

- Election -

Since Mexicans make up a large proportion of Area 4, it was felt to be most important that they be represented. The blacks being a more vocal minority would, it was felt, be well represented. This indeed turned out to be the case.

The night of the election for representatives (five plus one alternate) I had made up my mind that if no other Mexican ran, then it was incumbent on me to nominate myself following the procedure decided upon previously.

It was an exciting night and the meeting brought some 60-70 people. Some say that God has a wild sense of humor and I believe it. Not only was I elected, but since I came in with the most votes I was made chairperson for our Area.

The night of our first VTC meeting on March 12, 1973, was an electrifying and incredible experience. I don't know how the other representatives from the different areas felt. I was scared stiff. Quite a few of the representatives seemed very much at home and were more than ready and capable to speak out for their area and make demands. We too wanted our area's problems dealt with - all we had to do was learn how. The auditorium seemed full - actually there were approximately 150 people present.

It was a long, tiring meeting, as were all of the subsequent meetings...but we were on our way. Or so I thought.

That night we decided that since we weren't sure what the VTC was going to actually do, the word "Advisory" should be deleted from the title. It was difficult to establish procedure while at the same time carrying it out. However, we were able to establish that a rotating chairperson would be used. That is, each area would take turns at chairing the monthly VTC meeting.

The representatives were a marvelous blend of people - machinist, teachers, lawyers, artist, retirees, housewives, students, physicist and former Vista volunteer, minister's wife, musician, etc. Didn't it seem that maybe, just maybe it could be done. That our beaut-

iful motley group could stand together and work for each other and in turn for their respective areas.

- Community Problems -

Area 4 had come with its list of "community problems," as had all the other areas. There were problems common to all areas (traffic and dogs) and problems unique to certain areas. Area 4 protested police harassment, Area 1 lamented the lack of police.

Only the first meetings were held in the Venice High School auditorium. The lack of parking and location made



photo by Gerry Goldstein

it impractical to hold our meetings there. We eventually settled into Israel Levin Center, thanks to the ever-generous Morrie Rosen.

The problems corroding our area were primarily the lack of jobs, lack of housing and poor police relations. A much-needed crossing guard at Westminster School was a particularly sore point. There were other problems but these were the ones that we focused on. There was not much we could do about the first two - they were handed over to Councilwoman Pat Russell to work on while we worked on the others. Police relations did improve some and we did eventually get a crossing guard at Broadway and Washington. It was heartening to have all the areas supporting us in our attempt to get that crossing guard. A committee was set up, letters written, meetings arranged and it finally happened.

With the proposed extension of the Marina freeway, a meeting was finally set up with Pat Russell to present the community's viewpoint - we didn't want it. While it was Area 5's territory we turned out en masse and vigorously protested this act which would so devastatingly affect all of the areas. Pat Russell was somewhat upset that over 200 people turned out and intimidated that such force was not necessary. Not so. First you've got to get their attention - and we learned very quickly that people - large numbers of them, were a magnificent way of getting attention. Another great aid was the media. We made sure that they were informed when anything of prime importance came up. Plans for the by-pass were quickly set aside and we rejoiced in the people's victory.

Mention of a Marina by-pass is cropping up in the newspapers again. They never give up.

When the widening of Venice Blvd. came up, again we made ourselves felt. A large group of us went to the South Coast Regional Commission in Long Beach to protest. We left here about 8:30 am and were heard about 4:30 or 5 pm.

Most of us went to a great deal of trouble in order to spend the entire day waiting for our issue to come up. It seems that we upset the opposition - their actions confirmed this. To our short, concise and polite presentation, they reacted with loud, sputtering disclaimers and did themselves a great disservice. We were terrific!

- Attendance -

One of our VTC meetings was televis-

ed for City Watchers and presented on Channel 28. As was to be expected, there was an unusually large turnout for the meeting. Our Area 4 meetings, however, were usually poorly attended unless there was trouble in the community. At one point, we had only one person at our meeting: the janitor's wife. She soon found out that she had made a mistake in where she was to meet her husband and left.

As the months went by the presentation of area problems at the VTC meetings served to bring out rather clearly how our needs and priorities differed; it also tended to separate us. Who could get excited about dogs' rights when peoples' rights were so woefully neglected. Some representatives resented the time spent on the canine problem when jobs were all but non-existent. It was hard to listen to speaker after speaker protesting the unfairness to dogs when others felt that their problems were so much more pressing. I could see that some of the Area 4 representatives were growing disillusioned. I felt disheartened by their disillusionment and by the fear that our differences and priorities were slowly and irrevocably separating us.

All too soon even the representatives stopped coming to the area meetings and, at times, didn't make it to the general meetings now being held in the old Venice City Hall.

By the end of 1974, things in our area had come to a dismal halt. It seemed as if a committee of one wrote up the flyers, had them Xeroxed, delivered, saw that the meeting place was clear and on and on. It was time to evaluate whether it was worthwhile to continue like this or whether it was time to step out even though it meant that these things would probably not get done.

In retrospect, some might say that we were given an impossible task. At no time were we given power or authority to carry on this government of the people. In fact, when the position of community liaison was created, several representatives from the various areas protested. To them, this was a clear infringement of our VTC prerogatives. However, some of the Area 4 representatives merely saw it as one of their own getting a job; ergo, a good thing. It was not a coincidence that at this same time, our vitality as a group was evaporating. Our power had been "people power" - the power of the group and that too was going.

- Maybe Next Time -

Today, the VTC continues trying - it's incredible! While the original structure of the VTC has changed, it continues pinpointing the problems gnawing at Venice. It continues going to public meetings, writing, making itself felt and above all, keeping us informed. Now what do we do?

People are power and strength. This has been shown repeatedly. Maybe if we could concentrate on the problems and not our differences, maybe if enough people turned out at the meetings to help solve these problems...maybe next time. After all, we did it once, why not again and again!

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Get That Filthy Rag Out of My Yard!

5

by Carol Fondiller

The Free Venice Beachhead. My funny Valentine. Your columns not so straight. Shakey grammar. Earnest, pompous, sincere, mistaken, precise, and homey.

One hundred issues. Who'd uv thunk it! Who'd've thought that The Free Venice Beachhead would be cherished and needed enough by the community to survive all the staff changes, world events, fashions, to still be put out, month after month. This December will be the 10th year of the publication of The Free Venice Beachhead.

Let me see now, 1968. The Pacific Ocean Park Pier was still up. And the Metro Squad, the elite corps of the Los Angeles Police Department, was busy "getting the garbage out" in their own inimitable fashion. Long hair, beards, beads, and bells were looked upon with suspicion and fear.

The City of Los Angeles had unleashed the Master Plan on Venice. It involved upgrading the community to the extent that no one who earned under thirty thousand dollars a year could afford to live by the Ocean. The Canals were to be widened and dredged, and the surrounding property owners would be assessed for the building of a yacht harbor for, according to the architectural renderings of the project, very thin, tall, blond people who wore white deck shoes.

The Ocean Front Walk, to the joy of Werner Scharf, one of the largest property owners in Venice, was to be turned into a Miami Beach, complete with limited public access. To the City Fathers upgrading the community meant degrading the poor. "Be realistic. Venice is the only undeveloped beach near an urban center in the Southern California area. Be realistic." When we would trot to City Hall, we would be threatened by some of the property owners and speculators.

My God. Nearly ten years!

Flashing the peace sign, the finger, picketing the police state, being misrepresented in the press and media, Peoples Park, anti-war demonstrations, Acid Rock, Hard Rock, Granny Glasses, incense Day-Glo psychedelic posters. "What sign are you?" "Spare Change" "Far Out" "Bummer!" "Power to the People" "Let it Flow" "Why are you turning me down? If you're interested in Women's Liberation you have to believe in free love!"

The Peace and Freedom Party originated in Venice. An alternative to the Demopubs and the Republicats, it became an umbrella organization for various community efforts.

The Venice Defense Committee would patrol the Ocean Front Walk to monitor the police who were busting hippies for playing music without a license. (They were wearing bells.) The Free Venice Organizing Committee was bent on being able to survive surmount the pressures of government and real estate interests to get us out.

I never thought I'd ever say "let's see, was it '68 or '69? No, it was the year that the cops busted the L.A. Free Press Love In" How time flies! Never thought I'd say that either.

After trying to get the newspapers and the media to print a straight story without too many quotes taken out of context, after chcking down bile after hearing our side misrepresented, and seeing television cameras focusing only on braless bosoms and bare feet while making snide remarks, people decided to put out a community paper, so at least the neighbors would hear another side besides the Chamber of Commerce!

The Free Venice Beachhead was assembled by volunteers. Everyone who worked on the paper had a say. I remember seeing the paper fresh off the press. I'd never smelt anything as fresh and clean as the smell of that first newspaper. The print rubbed off in my hand.

Local business people put in ads. People sent in articles. It just kept going. I was always surprised when we met again to put out another issue. People began asking when the next Beachhead was coming out. "I didn't get my last Beachhead!" "Get that filthy rag out of my yard!" The Beachhead became a part of Venice.

At one of the innumerable pilgrimages to Los Angeles City Hall, Councilman Arthur Snyder, vexed at those Commie Hippies who opposed his pro-development pals, waved a copy of the Free Venice Beachhead. Alleging that this was put together by outside agitators he went on, turning bright red. "This pamphlet is not financed by these people" he said, waving the 'pamphlet' at us. "It's paid for by interests outside Venice! Outside the City! Outside the state! Outside the nation! It's paid for by MOSCOW GOLD!"

I was standing next to John Haag in the back of the chambers. I bellowed out: "The shipment's a little late this month, Art!" Never let it be said that I let a cheap laugh at someone

else's expense go by. I knew then that the Free Venice Beachhead had attained credibility. It had been slandered by a politician.

But it's strange. How many leaders, politicians, and movers and shakers so distrust the people whose votes they seek and whose interests they pledge themselves to protect. They can't comprehend that amateurs, volunteers, will work on something without any hope of getting paid ----- in money.

I remember the meetings of deciding what to call the paper, whether or not we should give it away free, should we apply for government grants. Yes, everyone should be able to get it, and government grants meant being watched by the government. So that idea was mixed. Not that we aren't watched anyway.

Sometimes split by ideologies, sometimes disorganized, I remember one time after leaving the Beachhead for awhile, I came back and new people were running it. I came to the meetings, and went to the place where the layout of the paper was to take place. No one was there. No note or explanation was on the door. After finding out where they were, I went there and was greeted by closed, hostile faces. I repeated my endeavors for awhile, but the meetings were kept from me. I stopped going. I found out later I had been purged because I was not a Marxist-Leninist. Well, at least I found out what I wasn't.

There were clashes, re-organizing, but the Beachhead kept on. Charlie Manson and his family came to Venice. Tye die clothes came and went. Nehru Jackets went into the free boxes posters of Che, Huey, and Angela were put on walls and taken down, Nixon interpreted the War on Poverty to mean kill the poor. Reagan applied Lysenian logic to the problem of the farm workers. And the Beachhead kept printing the stories of what would happen if the City of L.A. got what it wanted. It also gave extensive coverage to the trials of Russell Means and Skyhorse-Mohawk. The community newspaper went on. An underground community newspaper.

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CANAL ABYSS

by Mary Lou Johnson
See photo of Mary Lou on page 23.

Come one, come all
All you hippies, have a ball!
Now's the time, today's the day
Ask no questions, groove and play
Lose your blues, pay no dues
Style your life, discard your shoes.

In the process of a much needed desk cleanup, I came upon the above piece of doggerel jammed in the back of a drawer. Something I'd amused myself writing when I first moved to the canals. Even then it had a faint aura of nostalgia about it. THE CANALS! What emotions those words have evoked in me over a period of years; curiosity, fear, desire, passion, anger, sorrow.

My first experience of the canals was many years ago when I was in my early twenties. I had picked up (or allowed myself to be picked up by) this guy in a bar who took me to his place for a night-cap. It's all a very vague and boozy memory of California moonlight and jasmine, and walking over an incredible bridge and a funky little house. (Although "funky" was not then a hip word but a word used by Blacks meaning a bad smell.) And it was all a magical mystery tour that lingered dimly in my memory.

Years later I moved to Venice. I lived in a house trailer (not a mobile home), and I had been politely informed that my presence was no longer desired. This kept happening to me in all the trailer parks in Santa Monica. For those of you who don't know about trailer parks, they are monuments to conformity and prejudice, and are microcosms of the worst that our society offers. Anyway, here I was in a trailer park in Venice, the jumping off spot of the nation. (You would never know by looking at that black elephant Washington Square, that where it now stands housed at one time a couple hundred happy low-income people in their trailers.)

I had read about Venice - All bad - and heard from my friends about Venice - All bad - but, I

had no choice. My first impression confirmed all of these "all bads." When I stopped in the Saucy Dog (The Pelican's Catch to you nouveau-arrivees) most of the customers looked like they were waiting for either a fix or a trick. After cowering in my trailer for a couple of weeks, I finally ventured out to Hinano for a beer and met some people who didn't carry switch blades or brass knuckles, and the fear gradually dissipated, but THE CANALS were something else; Bikers & Dopers & Blacks & Chicanos & Pollution & Poverty & Knives & aborted babies floating in the water & Dope...

Eventually, I moved out of the trailer park and lived on Ocean Front Walk. (Just to make you pea-green with envy, I had a perfectly elegant apartment for 125 dollars a month, utilities included!) My daughter was completely happy at Florence Nightingale School (now Anchorage), even though my friends had told me "You can't send Johanna to school in Venice." And I considered myself really privileged to live on the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

Johanna was told not to go to THE CANALS, but one day she came home dripping wet because some kids had pushed her into THE CANALS in a market basket. I was sure that typhoid and pelegra were the mildest eventualities to be expected from this excursion, and examined her closely for rashes and open sores for weeks afterwards.

One day a couple of years and moves later, she came home breathless. "Mom! They're having a big party in the canals, and it's real neat Mom, and it's okay and everyone's invited and please, Mom, come with me. They've got music and corn on the cob and watermelon and come on, Mom, it's real neat!" So, I went, and it was real neat and that was the first Canal Festival.

By then the pinch, which was later to become a squeeze, was starting to be felt and we were gradually being pushed away from our beloved Pacific. But after that first festival, a sneaky thought had entered my mind. "If all else fails, I can move into THE CANALS." I wonder how

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A Political Perspective: Power of the Press

6

by RICK DAVIDSON & BOB WELLS

The control of information is one of the most effective means any establishment has of maintaining its power over the people. In a small way a community newspaper, open to the people, is an attack against such control.

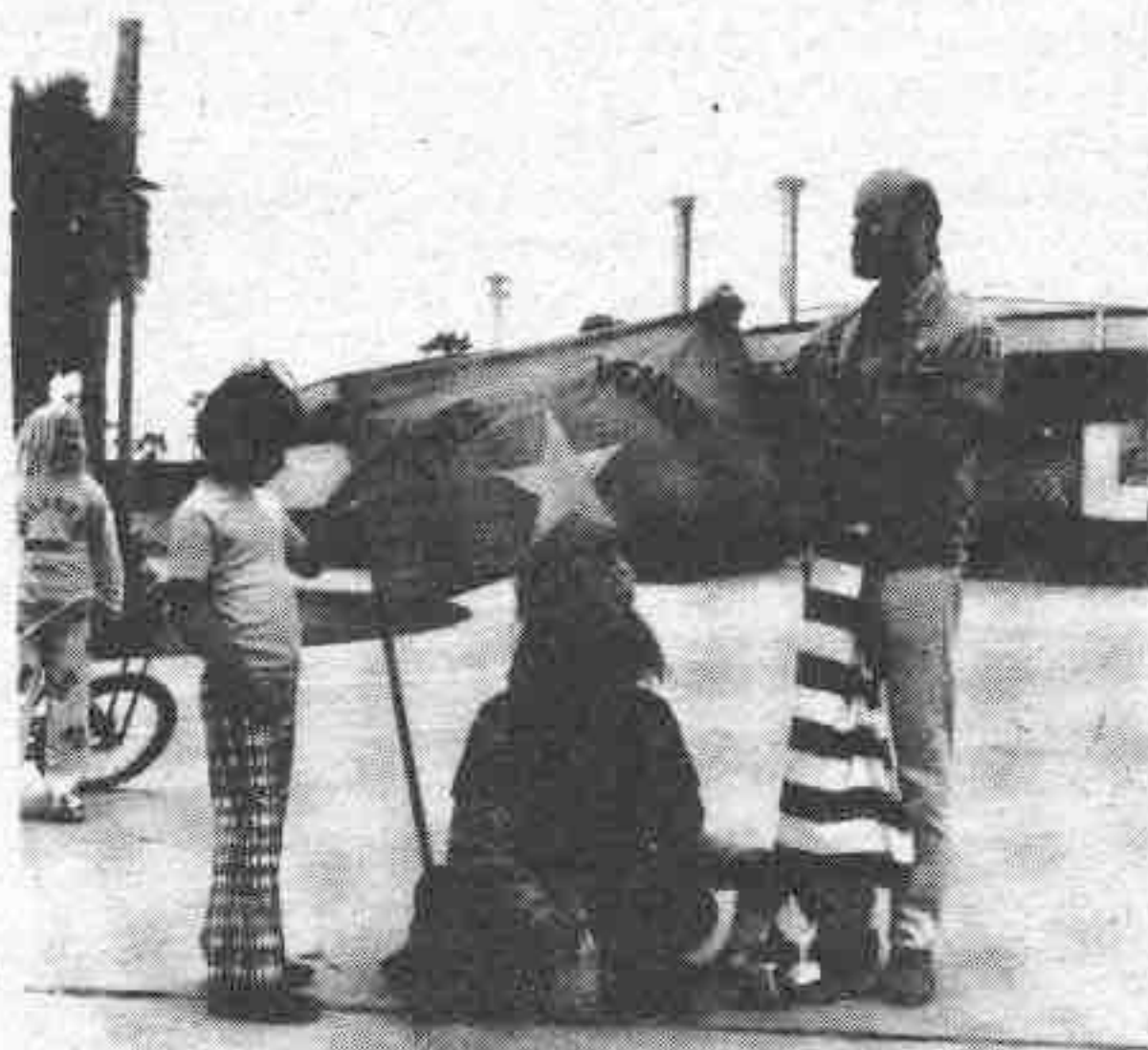
During the sixties the L.A. Times and the Herald-Examiner were not interested in the poverty pocket on the Pacific Ocean called Venice of America. That allowed Venice's reality to be defined by the Santa Monica Evening Outlook, a local paper whose "outrage" against the poor, the minorities, the elderly, the youth, and especially the "radicals," was constantly exposed over the years by its outrageous headlines.

In an effort to voice the community's outrage against such situations as the illegal war in Indochina on the one hand and the destruction of the communities of Venice on the other, local Peace & Freedom Party activists created a newspaper. The name FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD was selected to symbolize a small beach-head of sanity in this insanity we call Los Angeles of California.

Everything in Terms of Politics

The paper was the product of a group of people who were beginning to understand everything in terms of politics. Yet the paper was not to be just another political sheet. Because politics is conceived as a process interwoven through the whole fabric of life the paper was to be a living poem everyone could help write. The first editorial in December of 1969 spoke directly to the point:

This paper is a poem. It is the first of a series. Your participation will determine how often we appear. This paper is a poem for the people. We decided not to sell it to some of you but to give it to all of you. It's a poem for all the people. It is



L. to r: bystander with Phil Chamberlain and Bob Wells. Photo by Gerry Goldstein.

also a paper made by people who love to make poems and dig doing a newspaper which is also a poem.

The entire process of putting the paper together was one of collectivity; there was no "editor-in-charge," no "copy boy" and no "girl Friday." Decisions for each issue were made democratically by everyone who participated on the issue. One meeting would be the editorial meeting where each article was read, usually by the author, then discussed. If changes or corrections were suggested they would be worked out with the author. Since the paper was conceived as a poem and by political people, no editorial changes (sometimes called censorship) were made by the staff, other than grammatical corrections.

This is not to say that there were not many long and heated debates over what should go in, what was relevant to Venice, to the particular issue, and all that which goes on with any paper of limited space. An important difference with the BEACHHEAD was that the author was right in the middle of the debate, arguing his or her point.

The next stage was design and layout. Often this too was full of debate, argument, and outright division among the staff, but no matter how heavy the arguments, once it came back from the printer our paper brought out our political egos in place of our artistic ones, and with the pride of new parents we distributed our poem through Venice.

The connection with community politics made distribution a very important part of the process, and too often our distributors and ad-getters didn't get the credit they deserved.

Venice and Vietnam

As we have already indicated, the paper didn't emerge from a vacuum or for the purpose of making money. Its creation was a direct result of the two-fold war against the people: the war in Indochina against the Indochinese people and the war in Venice against the poverty and working people's communities. One purpose of the paper was to draw out the similarities of the two wars, in fact to show that they were not two, but in reality one war -- a war for profit, where "We the People" were the casualties on each battlefield, and the giants of industry were the generals conducting both theaters of war.

While we often criticized the Evening Outlook for its right-wing politics, the BEACHHEAD was not conceived as a "liberal, objective, middle-of-the-road" paper. The staff had definite points of view on what was happening in Indochina and on what was happening in the U.S. of A., especially in Venice. The paper was intended to express a point of view which couldn't find any other outlets. This is easily seen in our articles beginning with the History of Venice, which was a study in the contradiction between landlord and tenant -- both on the scale of the individual renter and on a community-level scale between Venice and L.A.

An important aspect of the contradiction was the police power ("To Protect

and To Serve"), and the question of who they served. Free Venice activists were not anti-cop per se, but we were against the existing political system of greed and power that used/directed the local police against the people just as the generals were directing the military against the peoples of Indochina -- in each case those being used were earning a necessary living -- but at what price? In Venice, when the local police could not hold down the population the Metro Squad was brought in. They're the shock troops of the LAPD.

And so the articles in Issue No. 1: "VENICE SURVIVAL COMMITTEE," and "COP OUTING." Everyone in Venice knew the power play going on over Venice, so that our first article on "VENICE & THE MASTER'S PLAN" was simply a reminder that L.A. had things in mind for us.

Earlier Versions of the BEACHHEAD

We should note that the BEACHHEAD was our second attempt to create a community newspaper. The first was THE HUMAN EYE. In the days when "head shops" were replacing the coffee houses of our earlier period, THE HUMAN EYE hit the streets with bold headlines, "VENICE FIGHTS BACK," and the entire first issue (only two were born), dealt with police harassment, mass arrests, and beatings of Venice citizens.

These were the years of the Flower Generation -- bare feet, long hair, and bells. And dope. One could look out one's window in the morning and tell from the level of daze or exhilaration on the Oceanfront that a new batch of peilocybin or methedrine or whatever had arrived on the beach.

People these days have trouble believing what the police were doing then.

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you can't fool Mother Nature

It was the same ocean battering harmlessly against much of Venice Beach that nearly destroyed parts of Malibu in the recent storms. As a longtime Venetian and an even longer time self-styled proletarian, I sometimes found myself hard-pressed to have sufficient sympathy for the stricken Malibuscians. The idea of million-dollar pieces of property going down the tubes may not be funny but it is certainly amusing.

While Venice suffered a few flooded alleys and some erosion beneath the fishing pier, Malibu was a mess of mud and battered bulkheads, an object lesson to all those who've been carrying anti-environmentalist banners the last few years. In front of the Coastal Commission Venice and Malibu have both been battlegrounds; those who would fill up every available inch of ground with revenue-producing construction or paving have, with great hue and cry, been prevented from doing so perhaps five percent of the time.

The consequences, in Venice, of this effort have been primarily economic, and very complicated: the community has probably been kept a little more heterogeneous, and perhaps been made a little more exclusive at the same time. I question any logic which says the Coastal Commission's denial of permits has been a major contributor to rising property values (and rents) in Southern California's inflationary real estate market; economic forces far more reaching than the Commission are at work there.

In Malibu, the consequences have been something else again: sure, prices have gone up, but their impact on people is strictly defined. In a neighborhood where only the rich can afford to own the property, only the rich can afford to pay a higher price for it either. The rain, on the other hand, brought a whole different flock of chickens home to roost. To builders trying to fill the Santa Monica Mountains with condominiums and ranch houses, the rain said they were misguided and foolish. To owners clinging to their dubious right to prohibit the public from access to the beach in front of their homes, the rain shattered the myth that mere property laws could forever define ownership of the seashore in the face of Mother Nature. I hope the Coastal Commission and other agencies responsible for coastal building per-

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THE VENICE Peace & freedom party

by John Haag

The first office of the California Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) was located in Venice at 1415 W. Washington Blvd. There in 1967, a small group of civil rights and anti-Vietnam War activists did much of the work that began the ambitious task of putting a new political party on the ballot.

Convinced that neither the Democrat nor Republican parties would offer an anti-war candidate for President in 1968, the group proposed a new party that would run candidates at every level, who were opposed to war, racism, and poverty. The platform and candidates would be chosen by party members after the party qualified for the ballot.

Beginning with 30 registrations on June 23, 1967, we had to register over 66,000 California voters in the new and unknown party by the end of the year. As the registration drive slowly gained momentum, the Venice office was moved to a more central location in Los Angeles. PFP voter registrars continued to work in Venice, one of the few communities where it proved worthwhile to go door-to-door.

Eventually the "Venice registration drive", as some critics described it, spread throughout California and by December had become a sort of state-wide, floating anti-war demonstration. We qualified for the ballot with over 105,000 voters registered in the PFP, 1,600 of them in Venice.



The Venice PFP's first experience with local issues came early in 1968 when the LAPD Metro Squad was sent to Venice to "clean up the hippies". We organized demonstrations against the scores of unjustified arrests and helped to get legal aid for those arrested. Later that year a new Venice office was set up at 1727 W. Washington Blvd, where we worked on local campaigns for Congress, State Senate, and Assembly, and on the Eldridge Cleaver for President campaign.

After the 1968 election the Venice PFP decided to concentrate on community organizing in Venice. Our first project was a community newspaper. The first issue of the Free Venice Beachhead appeared in December, 1968. The paper's 10,000 copies were distributed mainly door-to-door by PFP members on their own streets.

In 1969 we set up the Free Venice Organizing Committee to coordinate Venice projects, encourage community control of community affairs, and look into the possibility of seceding from Los Angeles. Early in the year we circulated a petition against a proposed freeway through Venice which was ultimately defeated. We started bringing together all elements of the community to oppose the city's "Master Plan" to turn Venice into a Miami Beach kind of development and we held the first public meeting to oppose the canal redevelopment plan, which would have turned that area into a "junior Marina".

Rick Davidson ran for City Council that year emphasizing the issues of the Free Venice Organizing Committee and proposing grass-roots decision making more binding than that of the Venice Town Council, which was started later by Councilwoman Pat Russell.

The "Free Venice" idea proliferated. There was a Free Venice Art Festival on the Ocean Front every weekend for several months. There was a Free Venice hot-line, started independently of the PFP and a Free Venice Food Co-op not connected with either the PFP or the Free Venice Organizing Committee. The Beachhead became a collective independent of the other groups.

In 1970 the Venice PFP office served as the state office of the Party and was mainly responsible for preparing the Party for the 1970 election. We published three issues of a party newspaper, then, with the Long Beach PFP chapter, organized a state convention in Long Beach to update the Party platform and plan for the election campaign. After the convention we published

the revised platform and information about candidates and organized its distribution to PFP members throughout the state.

Venice furnished two of the seven candidates for state office. Marge Buckley, who ran for Attorney General, got the highest number of votes of any PFP candidate on the ballot, and I ran for Lieutenant Governor.

In 1971 and '72 the Venice PFP office was also the office of the PFP National Organizing Committee. With independent political parties in other states, we helped to form the national coalition People's Party that ran Dr. Benjamin Spock for President in 1972.

Several Venice PFP members went to other states to start ballot drives: Steve Clare to Pennsylvania, Sari Nielsens to Hawaii, Eric Garris to Idaho, I to Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Louisiana.

At the end of 1972 the Venice PFP office closed and only occasional meetings were held after that. However, in 1974 the Peace and Freedom Party candidate for Governor was Elizabeth Keathley, a Venice resident.

For several years the Venice Peace and Freedom Party was the focus of intense political activity involving hundreds of Venice residents in efforts that made their mark both in Venice and beyond. Although no longer organized in Venice, the Party is still on the California ballot.

And in Venice others have taken up the struggle that seemed so hopeless in 1969 to preserve our community and the people in it, and to let us read about it in our own free newspaper.

A VIEW FROM HERE

by Elizabeth Sunnysky

(Staff note: Elizabeth Sunnysky was a member of the Venice Town Council, North Beach Area Council, and the Venice Renters League)

I heard that the Beachhead staff was looking for some articles for the special 100th edition that would more or less constitute a retrospective look at community activities and actions by Venice people who have been involved directly in them. I had been planning to write something current about the movement toward whole-istic childbirth which is happening - statewide and nationally - because I have been following and working with that movement over the past year or so. As I think about my experiences during the past five years in Venice, I feel what I am doing now is closely related to both my past here and to the future. And I think that is a perspective worth exploring.

Presently among many of us I sense a certain frustration about what appears to be a lack of forward, positive movement within the community and even within ourselves. In the past 10-12 years there were many more people visibly working to preserve this community as a place where people would feel welcome and safe to grow, to share democratically in decisions affecting it, and hopefully, to unlearn the alienation we all learned from the larger "community."

Some people feel that many of those who could in the past, be counted on to give energy to almost every community effort have disappeared into the woodwork or at least into their "own trips". Often disappointment about that is expressed pretty passionately; I know it is felt passionately. It is painful to think that this place is being sold out from under those whose home it has been. It is painful to experience setback or defeat on issue after issue that affects the community, especially when it seems that more people working in familiar ways might turn developments around.

Bob Dylan said in a recent interview that he felt people who were visible and vocal in the 60's had fallen back to re-group and get something together for the long haul (I am paraphrasing) and that by the 80's people who were "doing anything will have their cards showing again". I feel in some ways that's true in Venice as well; it's also true that some have already dropped back in under tremendous pressure and so, there are some cards already showing.

What is real though, for us, is that, however badly we wanted to do it, we haven't as a community, been able to preserve Venice as either the kind of diverse place we were, or the one we wanted to be. To try to analyze where and how we missed the mark or to place responsibility for where things are now is a job I wouldn't even attempt. I know, though, that many of the people who struggled here for the survival or creation of 'that special' community are people who were economically just not able to make it as real estate and Development interests swept into Venice. So, some are gone as their rents and other conditions get unhandle-able. And some, I know, have been forced to switch gears for a time, to work at finding a way to integrate convictions, needs, and a livelihood into something

that will survive because it is durable, and as well promote long range change.

What I think we may be experiencing is an ebb, not an end, and that when there is flow again, it won't be too late to use what we are learning to create something we want. My own experience is that when we let principles rather than personalities direct us, we are able to blend personal strengths and needs with insightful organization and process; we are able to real-ize a nurturing living arrangement with each other, one which is designed to be sustaining through the changes. If we couldn't do it a whole town at a time, we can do it a group at a time, and I think as we begin to feel steady in our new structures information will be shared (as it is, of course, now) and effective working networks will emerge. Importantly, we will have the staying power that is needed.

And not just for Venice. It's always been hard to work for both the whole and our own right-lives simultaneously, and there haven't been many models, but we are getting smarter. And if you know where to look, even now, some folks are already putting together some sane, loving arrangements which can serve as models. The Farm in Tennessee is an example.

I do disagree with Dylan about one thing. He said by the 80's when the cards were finally showing that we wouldn't be able to get back into the game. The new ways that are gathering form now are also new in a way I don't think he is seeing. The game will not be closed.

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COMMUNITY HOUSE re-visited

by Mike Clare

(I visited an address today where so much of my growth as a young man, a carpenter, and a human being had taken place. The address was that of the Community House - 468 Howland Canal. How different it looked and sounded and smelled now then in the Summer of 1970....)

Time: Summer of 1970

Place: Venice, California

I am just new from high school and new to Venice. I am new to a lot of things these days. First time away from home and into something as different as this place. Certainly different from the shot and a beer mill town from where I'd just come. I left in order to find out who I was, away from most of that which determines who I should be. I haven't the vaguest notion as to how to go about this, but family bonds are strong within me, within my family.

The sun and the ocean are warm here. The people here are warm. They seem to be caring, caring about themselves, about each other, and me. Some are strong and joyful with all the beauty of living and being human. Some are strong and angry with the injustices that keep us from feeling joyful. There are the dreamers who dream behind their various drugs. We are all creative but there are those here that express it in such ways as to touch many. In this community of humans I found all sorts of wondrous beings.

This place -- Venice. Why the name? The canals!!! Fingerlets of sea grasping little islands. Islands of refuge for old people and little children. Dogs, cats, loots, mallards, and white domestics. Freaks, pot-heads, juice-heads, junkies, Straight Satans and Sinners. Gentle people, angry people, creative people. Human beings. Trying to be human.

"What is this? What do you mean you want to take our sidewalks and turn them into private boarding ramps to the shiny yachts that will someday sail through here? Someday you say, because the canals have to be deepened and lined with concrete. Christ, more concrete!!!! What will happen if you use too much and they get filled in as the other 13 or so miles of canals that were once so much a part of this place? No, you say. The yachts are too important. More important than what? Me? Us? To you we say---- NO WAY.

photo by Janice Yudell



Sure, the sidewalks are crumbly, but my children have learned to walk gently. NO WAY! At least they can't be run over.

You say the water is dirty and people have not been too careful with their beer cans, but a shot from the hose cleans 'spot' off. Water doesn't cut gasoline or motor oil. NO WAY!

No! A 2 or 3 story apartment building would not look better or feel more comfortable than this old, run-down shack I call home. A home that I've worked hard for, for 30 or 40 years, and now you've fixed my income and fixed your taxes so that I can't repair the leak in the roof. If this keeps up much longer I'll have to eat oatmeal for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. But - this is where I want to live. NO WAY!

Sure my landlord hasn't fixed the toilet or replaced the glass in the front window. It's hard to think of such things in Palm Springs. But I'm handy and cardboard will do for now. A friend promised to lend me a snake in awhile. I'll get around to it. This is where I want to live.

What makes you think that your life is more meaningful than or takes priority over mine? Bullshit. Bullshit and NO WAY!

At least that's what a lot of people said. The people who cared and there were a lot of them.

Building a Community House

A house was slated for demolition that summer at 468 Howland Canal. The bulldozers were there and had laid waste to the garage. The tenants possessions were being tossed out into the light drizzle. All of this in his absence. This action was brought to the attention of some members of the Free Venice Organizing Com-

mittee. People with foresight who saw this action as a portent of things to come. Using the language of legalese they were able to stay the dozers.

What now? The slumlord, by trying to milk every last penny from his investment, had let the structure get so run down that the City had declared it unfit for habitation. They hadn't talked with the artist who was living there. After all, he didn't own it.

"Allright" We'll bring the building up to code. The people of this community will try. Free Venice entered into a rental agreement with the slumlord. The contract stated that as long as it didn't cost the slumlord anything, the people would have 4 rent-free months in which to bring the structure up to code. And on the 5th of the month, and for each month thereafter, the people would pay \$75 for the privilege of enjoying the fruits of their labor. A perfectly reasonable contract.

The City estimated a cost of \$2,000. to bring the building up to their health and safety standards. Economically unfeasible. Tear the shack down. But they granted the people 6 months to try. Quite benign, don't you think? But you must remember it wasn't costing them.

What was it costing, and whom?

The back alleys of Venice could be gleaned for some of the materials, but money had to be raised for the rest. There were permits to pull. Shingles to buy, along with plumbing tape, electrical conduit, wire and fixtures. A whole realm of materials that I now work with every day. How could the money be raised?

Community gatherings! After all this was the community's house. The Community House-468 Howland Canal. Gatherings that would bring us together as a family of humans. A family that cares for, and lives, and helps each other. Family gatherings. What wondrous moments we shared.

Roasted corn cobs, classical guitar recitals, poetry readings, Bastille Day with 'cuisine francaise et films revolutionnaire', speakers from the Venceremos Brigade about to embark on a journey that touched imaginations. Festivals of life, proclaiming our struggle to preserve these canals. Canal Festivals. People from all over the Venice community gathered and the money was found to cover the expenses.

How we worked

Workers were needed. Voluntary workers were needed to realize the conditions determined by the City for a safe and healthy structure. But more important, to realize our dreams of Community House. There were a lot of us that summer, and for the summers that followed.

We worked, and with our backs glistening with sweat in the warm, sweet, Venice sun. Boy next to woman, moving earth into the cavities that used to be sidewalks. A strong and bearded carpenter/teacher, explaining to the boy what a stud was. Making pipe connections with a plumber/friend and smoking with out pocket pipes. Talking design and layout with an architect/teacher/friend. So many people/friends unnamed. And through it all, my brother and love.

All of us laughing and singing and dancing to the strains of the player's guitar. Crying to the strain in our backs and hearts. Six months was so short a time and there was so much to be done. But it was done. Our spirit was the creator. It passed final inspection, and although we were paying \$75/month to the owner, the house belonged to the community.

What We Created

What Now? All of this energy we had generated kept on flowing. An exquisite mural was painted on our wall. The exterior wall for all to see. A perfect grill, welded together, for our barbecue pit that had to and still does hand on a wall because the City declared it unsafe.

Our earth was turned and tended and an organic garden sprang up from the seeds of our labor.

Old beer cans and wine bottles were stored there awaiting transfer to the means of recycling them to new and shiny beer cans and wine bottles.

People chose to buy good food together in order to feel not so cheated by losing that pitiful token of their self-worth so readily. We learned about food and what it was worth to us, and how little it was worth to a few. Hence the Food Co-Op was born.

A switchboard was organized to dispense pertinent information to those in need. The phone was seldom quiet at 468 Howland Canal.

A vest pocket park was relocated there after having to move from two other locations because of the City's tyranny.

And through out this entire struggle The Beachhead had been our voice. And such a strong one it was. It asked for help and we got it. It answered statements from the Evening Outrage (Subversives, Hippies, Commies) with "we the people". That's because the Beachhead, the anti war movement, the Community House, were in fact the people. Thank you for being strong enough to express it 99 times, and over again for the 100th. ★ ★ ★

VENICE'S MIDNIGHT SPECIAL

by Eric Ahlberg

We moved to Venice in 1970. We had heard such bad rumors about the place that we carried around knives for protection. We moved into a small house on Horizon St. The previous resident had raised puppies inside and probably never cleaned up. We washed the dogshit out and moved in, me and my love. The walls shook with our ecstasy and we kept score on the wall, with two winners. Horizon is the most crowded street in Venice, ya got yer roly-polys and yer toothpicks, and the Trading Post liquor store with all that wierd hunting stuff in the rafters and spare change winos outside. Running down Main there's the Gas Co., the Hardware store, the laundromat and then the banks, where we all exchange pieces of paper which allow us to eat, pay our exorbitant rent and boogie. Ya had yer Sandbar, and Venture Inn, hard, nasty bars. You had yer house full of Hell's Angels and Satans on Venice just a few doors from the Women's center. They were burned out by a crazy rowdy they had beat up who came back with molotov cocktails for them. You had yer Dr. Easyscore over the drugstore at Windward and Pacific. You got yer shut-in's, marginal cases, lonely routines.

But whoever you are ya gotta keep reaping some crop of that green stuff. Most do their share in the production of marketable commodities and sell the time of their life to the men who bombed Hanoi. Men like Dean Funk who publishes the Evening Outhouse and owns big chunks of Real Estate in Oakwood and elsewhere, or Mel Levine, who's dad owns City National Bank, Lincoln & California. Or R.J. Rosenthal and Associated Realtors who are trying to buy up West Washington Bl. and squeeze as much money out of us as they can. These are just some of the men who ensure that things stay as they are, that the people of Oakwood are regularly terrorized by the Metro squad, that the Immigration Officers make regular raids and keep the Mexicans paranoid. And some of us sell the time of our lives to Hughes to where they are developing new ways to help the Shah of Iran, Agostino Pinochet of Chile, Marcos of the Philippines, and Jimmy Carter repress the democratic movements of the people. (Continued on p. 21)

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ONE WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

9

by karen manov

I do not remember even coming to Venice. Maybe I didn't.

Maybe Venice came to me, moving into my being slowly like fog through the canals and becoming a consciousness which manifests itself-- which fades into a grey blur on the borders but which has a clearly focused, intensely hued center.

I live here in the present tense, with an almost forgotten past and an uncertain future. On some days, with each heartbeat, I hear the spirits of souls from past Venice lives cheering me on, in some cases, or droning "doom, doom, doom", like a boardwalk drumbeat, in others.

Just as I do not remember ever coming to Venice, neither do I remember ever becoming a woman.

But I know that I did.

A long time after reaching adulthood. And that who I am now is a self interwoven with the threads of thousands of intimately shared experiences with other Venice women, experiences which maximize the common denominators between us and make the differences inconsequential when we consider what we have learned about ourselves as women -- who we are, and what we want, what we commit ourselves to, and what we will not settle for.

Venice Memories

Stream of consciousness... more than 10 years of Venice memories... Sifting through perceptions, criticisms, personal celebrations and challenges, failures and pains for fragments of subjective description... Knowing that, ten years into feminist consciousness and action, critical analysis of the Venice women's community belongs only in the woman-controlled and read press.... Learning the hard way that as a woman, it is in my self-interest to be minimally self-disclosing outside of the boundaries of real sisterhood.... Finding out that acting in my own self-interest is okay.... Valuing the opportunity to create input/memory from a feminist perspective, but for whose benefit, and at the expense of what? Wanting to play it safe, yet feel a part....

Recollections

Cathy, in 1966, on Paloma Court, smiling cynically and explaining to me, 20 years her junior, that for women, the sexual revolution meant being required to go dutch treat on the abortion.

The old Venice Community House in the canals-- the garden with the huge zucchini. The garden was relegated to care by us women, and we decided not to tend it at all -- and so the vegies grew and grew to impossible sizes. Working on the building as a carpenter, and John G. 'borrowing' my hammer "to do some work", while I was trying to use it - to do some work.

American Friends Service Committee - my first cooperative experiment in pairing men and women in teaching teams as a matter of political principle. Non-violent action training, NRG's, strategy games.

The first Carpentry Collective -- serious struggles over skill sharing versus the politics of survival and making money by doing the work efficiently. My first Venice women's caucus. Feeling solidarity with women in a positive, creatively constructive way. Breaking through the reactionary limits of my previous involvement with "women's politics" when I (we) left the boys on The Left (in 1968) with what I (we) presumed might be permanent custody of the offshoots of my (our) disproportionate share of the revolutionary shitwork. When I began to really think in terms of "we" instead of "I".

The first Venice women's center (Westside Women's Center) -- grand schemes and dreams, crisis meetings every three months while we kept having to re-invent ourselves because we were burning our process behind us. Reclaiming words like witch, dyke, and bitch and cunt and uppity. Reaching beyond sexist socialization, victimization, and apology. Fearing women, loving women. Doing it. Self-help clinics, older women's liberation groups, consciousness-raising groups by the dozens, Sister Newsletter, Radical Therapy, anarcho-feminists, the Feminist History Research Project, the Fat Underground (demanding dignity in the place of derision), the visions

for a feminist health clinic which turned into the Westside Women's Clinic, the Anti-Rape Squad which turned into the L. A. Commission on the Status of Women. The Rape Crisis Hotline. Collective organizing. Scrambling for the rent. Believing, with a leap of faith, that sisterhood could be powerful. Testing it out.

The Intervening Years

The Women's Center -- when the initial highs of self-discovery, political comradeship and idealism began to burn themselves out. Reaching beyond being nice and supportive into being mostly uncompromisingly honest with each other and ourselves. The gradual realization that honesty is a form of revolutionary militancy. Asking -- beyond consciousness-raising, beyond consciousness-raising, then what?

Collective Community Action -- Socio/political/economic collective experiments of all kinds. The first Womanspace, the Venice Building and Carpentry Collective, Free Venice Resistance, the creation of a Women's Building, the "eating" collective which transformed into a living group. A new women's center rising out of the ashes of the old one. The Venice Renter's League.

Further development of a women's culture, lesbian politics and revolutionary feminist theory. Study groups. Problem-solving groups. Videotape and film technology. Another women's center -- another rebirth. Womanspace. The women's shelter. The slow realization, followed by the absolute conviction, that what we set out to do as women separate from men is, for many of us, more enriching, more viable, and longer-lived than are our joint efforts with men. The projects begun with women's energy still continue, in some form, to this day. The projects which included men do not. Still making the joint commitment to struggle against male supremacy. Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis. Political discipline replacing spontaneity. Whilistic politics -- the "isms" of class, race, age, sex, looks, etc., reaching beyond political rhetoric and into integrated political action.

Celebrations -- Canal Festivals where women's presence was uppity and highly visible. Lesbians and straight women dancing in open joy. "Alice Doesn't Day" -- a national women's strike. When Venice men did, instead of us, and we didn't and the mutual support rekindled faith in future possibilities as distinct from current realities. Women's concerts and festivals. A Fourth of July Parade through Venice - with a women's contingent shouting "out of the houses and into the streets". Paula T. playing her autoharp and all of us singing, "We Are Women, We Are Marching Bella Ciao... We Are Marching for Revolution... We Will Win Or Tear It Down".

Update '78

I no longer have to take a leap of faith to believe that sisterhood can be powerful. Sisterhood is powerful. I have tested it out. I know it. I also know that it is another starting point for working with my sisters, beyond illusion, after the loss of political innocence.

In 1972 Marge Piercy wrote a poem. I wish it was outdated. It isn't. As a Venice woman, I can live by it.

"In the Men's Room(s)"

When I was young I believed in intellectual conversation:

I thought the patterns we wove on stale smoke floated off to the heaven of ideas. To be certified worthy of high masculine discourse like a potato on a grater I would rub on contempt, suck snubs, wade proudly through the brown stuff on the floor. They were talking of integrity and existential ennui while the women ran out for six-packs and had abortions in the kitchen and fed the children and were auctioned off.

Eventually of course I learned how their eyes perceived me:

When I bore to them cupped in my hands a new poem to nibble, when I brought my aerial maps of Sartre or Marx, they said, she is trying to attract out attention, she is offering up her breasts and thighs.

I walked on eggs, their tremulous equal: They saw a fish peddler hawking in the street.

Now I get coarse when the abstract nouns start flashing.

I go out to the kitchen to talk cabbages and habits. I try hard to remember to watch what people do. Yes, keep your eyes on the hands, let the voice go buzzing.

Economy is the bone, politics is the flesh, watch who they beat and who they eat, watch who they relieve themselves on, watch who they own.

The rest is decoration. ~

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Dear Beachhead;

You've come a long way; we've had only three issues, but have already learned how hard it is to stay alive. You are one example of what a free press can do, we are another. Viva la diferencia. WE DO have perspectives in common so let's hope we can both continue for another nine years.

Love to you and our
extended community,

Ocean Park Perspective Staff

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Tenant's Center Opens

10

by Jefferson Cohen

When I grew up, they use to say that two things in life are inevitable: death and taxes. It wasn't until I moved to Venice that I heard people say there was a third inevitable--- housing rip-offs. But a new group has formed to help combat such fatalism; it has organized a resource center in Venice to assist people in fighting back on housing issues.

The Westside Tenant Action center, located near downtown Venice at 1301 Main St. at Westminster, is the first of its kind in West L. A.

In its early months, the center will concentrate on legal counseling in tenant rights; helping people to defend themselves against rent increases, unlawful landlord practices and evictions. The emphasis is on self-help, which hopefully will evolve into helping each other. In other words, the center hopes, ultimately, to assist in the formation of tenant organizations and in building a militant housing movement on L. A.'s westside.

L. S. D. Legal Self Defense

Presently, the 20 member staff consists of attorneys, legal workers, law students, and several community people with no previous legal backgrounds. One of the center's first priorities is to train more community people in landlord/tenant law, through workshops and on-the-job training as tenant counselors. It is hoped that these community people will train others, and that knowledge about tenants' rights will spread. The center is actively seeking additional tenant counselors who speak Spanish.

Although an attorney will be present at all times the center is open for legal counseling (Monday & Wednesday nights; Saturday afternoons) the center will not be providing attorneys to represent people in court. "Those who come to us for help, will be shown how to prepare their own defenses--for example--to evictions," explained Steve Clare, a staffmember who has had long experience in Venice housing struggles. "If they need representation in court, people can go to the Legal Aid offices in Venice or Santa Monica, or we will refer them to qualified lawyers and legal clinics where reasonable rates are charged."

The Long View

After the center can establish itself as an institution that "serves the people", it would like to expand beyond solely defensive activities such as counseling tenants in trouble. The center envisions taking the offensive by helping to build a housing movement among those hardest hit by the housing crisis -- poor and working people, Blacks, Latinos, and the elderly.



WESTSIDE Tenant Action Center

The center's long-range work would focus on three areas: 1) building tenant organizations that could be united around demands for decent housing that all can afford; 2) resisting governmental sponsored redevelopment projects ("urban removal") that destroy low-income housing without replacement; and d) agitating for public housing and housing assistance programs for low-income families, and for organizations of tenants in such housing.

This long-range perspective is important to staffmembers. They do not want the center to become just another legal aid clinic. They do not want to end up as a lobbying group, relying on the good graces of a government whose housing programs have consistently ripped-off tenants and taxpayers, while rewarding banks, speculators and landlords. These approaches have been tried before.

The Westside Tenant Action Center is a fresh approach. Its broader perspective derives, in part, from the National Lawyers Guild, the group that is sponsoring both the Venice center, and a Central City Tenant Center in Echo Park. The Guild is a national organization of radical lawyers, legal workers, and law students. It has recently published a \$1 handbook on tenants' rights and organizing tactics for Los Angeles. The handbook will be available at the center, along with the national housing publication, *Shelterforce*.

Help Wanted

The westside center is seeking community involvement. It is planning two projects on which you may want to work. 1) A tenants' rights and organizing conference to be held in Venice, and 2) a research project into how the City govern-

continued from p. 3 Oakwood Tattler

Other points of view were aired but the strongest debates during the audience participation part of the discussions centered on the assimilation/self-determination issue. Other participants were Vilisha Mande of Oakwood Wesley House and the panel was moderated superbly by Para Gaston.

Bob Myers of Venice Legal Aid was on hand for one of the Library panels on tenant rights. He has been doing extensive research into the methods real estate operators are using to soften up and parcel out the Venice community to the market.

Which reminds me of another comment heard at the fund-raiser, on one of the video tapes of the continuing housing struggle in Venice: "Some people say we are fighting a losing battle against the real estate developers. But I say if it takes 50 years for them to push us out, maybe it's not a lost after all."

Now, if only our Councilwoman, Pat Russell, will explain why she hosted a hearing on housing for children but missed that crucial City Council session on rent gouging (a city-wide rent control proposal by Councilman Wachs was defeated by two votes), why Oakwood is continuously plagued by heavy metal, incredibly noisy, almost nightly visitations by Police helicopters skimming the roof tops of residents and scaring hell out of me. And why, when the cops do come down to earth, they attack 9 year old boys in parking lots, we might even begin to feel that our elected officials have some concern about the problems the community is grappling with.

"Get thee glass eyes

And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not."

Shakespeare, King Lear

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ment has worsened the housing problem on the westside. If you are active in housing issues or would like to be, you should ask to be put on the center's mailing list.

At present the center is community funded and its staff is all volunteer. To meet a barebones \$300 monthly budget, it will accept donations from tenants who visit it. Outside contributions will also be sought. They also need typewriters, office supplies, lamps, and answering machine and a coffee urn.

WESTSIDE TENANT ACTION CENTER
1301 MAIN ST. VENICE 399-9255

Street extravaganza (cont. from p. 1)

exciting and challenging".

Ed Brown began playing his Rolling Piano six years ago. Venice has gone through a lot of changes in that time, says Ed. The Rolling Piano has become 'one of the usuals' on the Walk. Ed mused that the vending and street performing in the area may have created some problems for the law. The question is, he says, "will this unique exercise of free speech and social interaction continue to blossom as an expression of love between human beings, or will the demands of a quiet and orderly Beachfront force those who wish to have their voices heard to be silent again."

Roger/Jolene, and Diamantose

Roger and Jolene wanted to be remembered in the following way: "We started playing together in Canada/ We'd been together long before/ We returned to California and played our songs some more/ They gave us both a ticket at Santa Monica Mall/ The people didn't dig it, but a merchant placed the call/ We won the case, but lost the taste for playing in the street/ We loved to play for People, but couldn't stand the heat/ Now we're ready to begin to start, are coming out again/

Jacques and Remi make up the Diamantose, a French Canadian band from Sherbrooke, Queb. They left home in 1976 looking for work in west Canada, but took to street music instead. They spent ten months traveling thru B. C., "Giving back the good energy we were getting all the time from the people who heard us". They're now on a world tour of street performing, beginning with the West Coast. They stopped in Venice five months ago, and found it so nice they decided to stop and enjoy it awhile.

Jacques plays the guitar and mandolin. Remi plays the glockenspiel and percussion. They play original pieces and French Canadian songs. They will also be doing old Irish, Scottish, and French folk, as well as stuff from Dylan etc.

We don't know how many other people or groups will be performing. Lance Wakely's One Man Guitar Harmonica Band will be there. He got tired of Hermosa and we hear he wants to be part of the Venice street-arts scene. Jingles and the Association want everyone to know however that their art is peoples art, its free art, its public art, and its a hell of a lot more Venice than the slick shtick scene on Market St. This Festival is sure to be another in a series of famous Venice Scenes They'd Like to See Because They're Afraid to Be, so get there early. Maybe the Sidewalk Cafe will be taking advanced reservations.

This street show is dedicated to Bingo, everyone's street sister, who graced Venice for so many years, with her beauty and zest for living. One beautiful sister, remembered forever in our hearts, minds and spirit. It is as well dedicated to a brother named Chuck, a poet, who took his life a few months ago. They both shared one love - the love for the street performers music.

THE FIRST ANNUAL STREET PERFORMERS SPECTACULAR IN VENICE, CALIF., IS DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF STREET PERFORMING, AND THE GOALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STREET PERFORMERS ASSOCIATION:

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2. To encourage those brothers and sisters with these creative talents to take part in the total experience of street performing.
3. To provide free entertainment to people who can not afford admission to nightclubs or concert halls, and enable the community to share in the street performers outlet of creative expression.
4. To strengthen the culture of small art towns, like Venice, and restore dignity to street performing.
5. To gain community recognition of the value of street performing, and encourage municipalities to grant permits and/or licenses for performing in places where such activities are now forbidden or discouraged by law enforcement.
6. To legitimize street performing and persuade municipalities to encourage such activities through grants and other such aid.
7. To gain recognition from local merchants as to the value and utility of street performing as a means of stimulating their business as well as the cultural requirements of their customers.
8. To bring street performing into hospitals, prisons, and other institutions in order to provide creative stimulation.

WE FEEL THAT STREET PERFORMING AND THE OUTLET IT PROVIDES BOTH TO THE PERFORMER AND THE AUDIENCE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE. IF YOU AGREE - JOIN OUR ASSOCIATION.

THE FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

Number 1, December 1, 1968

VENICE, California

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10,000 copies FREE to Venice residents

DECEMBER 1968

EDITORIAL

This paper is a poem. It is the first of a series. Your participation will decide how often we appear.

This paper is a poem for the people. We decided not to sell it to some of you, but to give it to all of you. It is a poem for all the people.

It is also a paper made by people who love to make poems and dig doing a newspaper which is also a poem.

Our Subject this issue is Venice. Our purpose is to create a community.

We would like to give you a new poem every day. We hope to do it, for now, every two weeks.

Beachhead is a non-profit enterprise produced entirely by volunteer workers. Every resident of Venice is invited to join our endeavor and help to decide the outcome of each issue.

Any reader can contribute in some way to our next poem. Any Venice resident may join in our collective staff decisions by coming to our next work meeting on Sunday, December 8, 8p.m. at 1727 W. Washington Blvd.

The next poem you read may be your own.

Free Venice!

JANUARY 1969

Residents Oppose Master Plan

More than 80 Venice residents decided January 9th to begin a massive petition drive to demonstrate community opposition to Los Angeles' plan for Venice.

The master plan presented on January 9th to the L.A. City Planning Commission drew fire at an evening meeting from residents and homeowners from all parts of Venice. Opposition was unanimous to any freeway through any part of Venice and residents from different parts of the community were critical of aspects of the plan affecting their own neighborhoods.

Vociferous opposition by Venice residents to the proposed master plan had resulted in a decision by the Planning Commission to delay action on the plan for three weeks.

The community meeting decided to concentrate on circulating petitions which, if successful, would allow additional time for community needs to be incorporated into the final plan.

The petition says:

"We, the undersigned residents of Venice, hereby reject the proposed master plan for Venice."

"We oppose any freeway through any part of Venice."

"We demand that no plan be adopted which does not conform to the needs and desires of Venice residents."

"We demand that all official hearings related to plans for Venice be held in Venice at hours convenient for working people."

The January 9th meeting at the Broadway School was sponsored by the FREE VENICE Organizing Committee. Another meeting will be held on January 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Broadway School, Broadway and Lincoln Blvd, to check progress of the petition drive and to plan for the presentation of the petitions.

FREE VENICE!

DREAM DEFERRED

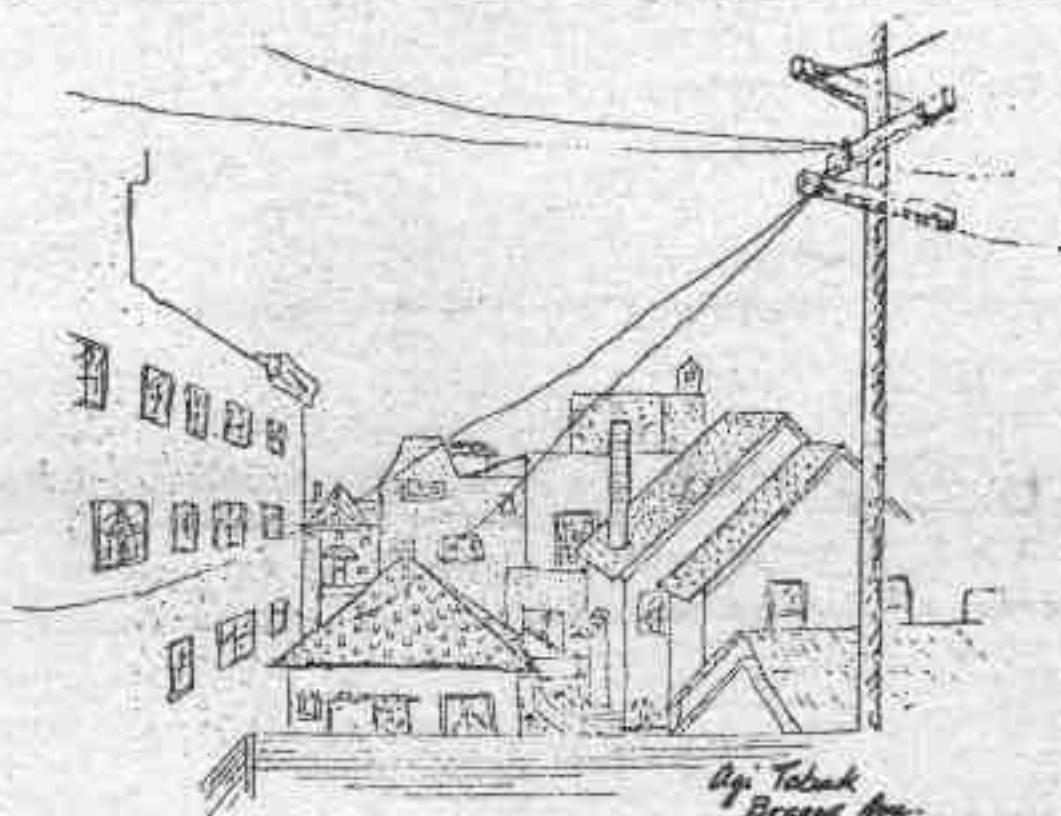
What happens to a dream deferred ?

does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun ?
Or fester like a sore--
and then run ?
Does it stink like rotten meat ?
Or crust and sugar over
like a syrupy sweet ?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load

Or does it explode ?

Langston Hughes



MAY 1969

Hog - Wild Weekend

Monday. A heavy headed hangover day. People congratulating one another that they stayed out of jail, or were bailed out. People talk about their experiences on Hogwild Weekend like Belair matrons discuss face lifts and operations. "I was booked for inciting." "Glad to see you--we thought you were in jail." "Joe's in for failure to disperse." The talk is of lawyers and bail.

Broken bottles, crushed flowers, clothing litter the beach and the ocean front walk. The police cars drive by slowly, like sated tigers.

I had a feeling it would end up like this on the preceeding Friday, when I witnessed the police harass eight young people and take them away. The feeling was further intensified when they arrested a friend of mine for interfering with an arrest, when all she did was ask what charges were these people arrested on. She was jerked to the ground, handcuffed, and shoved into a police car by 2 very young tense officers.

Saturday. 100 people marched to the police station to protest the harassment of Venice residents, while on the roof of the Venice Police Station that still says Venice City Hall, policemen take our pictures.

Sunday. The sun is hot and a salt water taffy smell comes from the ocean. People go to the Free Venice Art Festival and sit in the Lafayette Cafe waiting for the Free Press Party, and watch the police cars race by with 4 men in each car. The side streets are filled with blue Dodge Darts and lithe young men wearing tennis shoes and sunglasses start mingling on the ocean front, their pockets bulging.

One o'clock. 10,000 people converge on Venice to wish the Free Press a happy birthday. People in hot colors seem to vibrate with the hard rock music. The stores are jammed with people buying something cool...girls of all colors and ages display all manner of female things in see-thru dresses. Men of all colors and condition appraise, reject, accept, and approach. An old woman with

AUGUST 1970

2nd Annual CANAL FESTIVAL

The Venice canal community invites all those wishing to demonstrate their solidarity with the Venice community's effort of self-determination to participate in the Second Annual Canal Festival.

Last year the people of the canals, out of frustration with a political system which has excluded them from the planning and development of their community, planned a festival which they thought would be a gathering of a community soon to be destroyed. Then we learned that our combined efforts had succeeded in blocking the project which threatened our community, the festival became also a celebration of victory. This year the city government is trying once more to turn the canals over to speculators and absentee land owners. So determined are they to serve profit interests that its proposed that city funds totaling more than \$23,000,000 be committed to another private marina which will not be open to the public, the planning of which will never consider community wishes, and which in fact will mean the destruction of the community we love.

We urge everyone concerned to come September 13 to a celebration on the canals. We urge people of Los Angeles to participate in our festival and then ask themselves and their representatives if the city should commit public funds to be used in the destruction of a creative, vital, community and the acquisition by private developers of a unique public waterway.

The people of Venice may participate more directly by agreeing to display their art, crafts, photos, anything they make, or anything which contributes to the quality of Venice life.

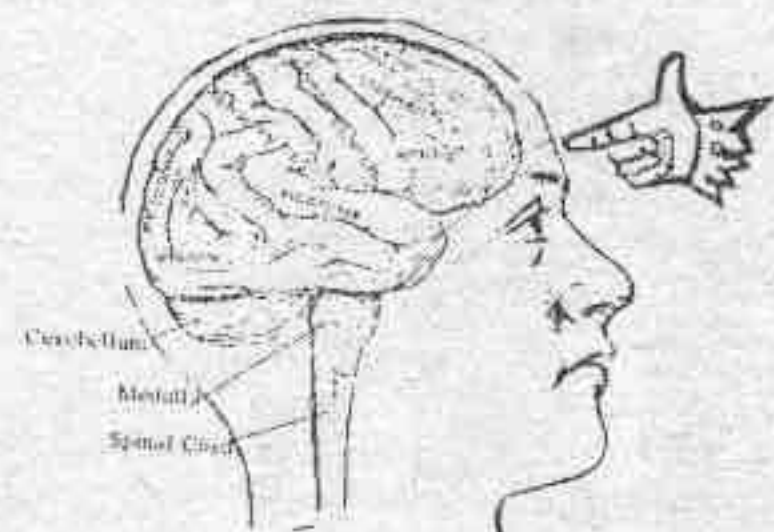
flowers on her hat asks me what holiday it is. I tell her it's the Free Press Birthday Party and her milky eyes glow like opals. She smiles and offers me an orange from the universal string bag that all good grandmas carry. The bearded feathered man takes my picture. An old man tells me to dance, because young people should dance. "I can't dance anymore now, but when I was young.. his old lips smile.

Families go by loaded with picnic baskets and children play with dogs.

Four o'clock. Men with rifles are on the roofs of apartment houses. The lazy sunfilled crowd is ordered to disperse by the police who come in with their clubs. The crowd starts running up the Ocean Front Walk, followed by officers. Some of the crowd tries to run up the alley ways. They are blocked off by police..."But we were told to disperse..." Hands are pulled into handcuffs..."But officer, I'm looking for my ride." "What did I do?" Waiting paddy wagons are jammed with bewildered frightened American citizens. Sirens, screams, curses, children crying for their mommies. The Ocean Front stores close down.... only the bars reopen and Barbra Streisand sings Don't Rain on My Parade.

Six o'clock. The beach is in suspended animation between sunset and dark. A chill wind curls the hurriedly dropped objects on the beach. A life guard truck drives down the beach loudspeakers blaring "the lifeguards love everyone! Free Venice!" And the litter lies on the beach, people lie in jail, and husbands, wives, parents, friends and lovers mill outside the Venice Police Station that still says City Hall, waiting for Monday.

DR. ZANE'S LOBOTOMY COLUMN



A Monthly Column of Advice on All Subjects the Doctor Knows Absolutely Nothing About

Dear Dr. Zane:

Now that it appears the Vietnam War may be ending, doesn't it seem foolish to have considered North Vietnam a danger to our national security? We don't have to worry about them coming here and raping our women and burning our children.

Concerned Venice Resident

Dear Concerned:

You're absolutely right. We should never have worried about the North Vietnamese coming here to rape the women and burn children. There already are plenty of Americans willing to do that themselves. Besides, according to the ghost of J. Edgar Hoover, they were supposed to land in Malibu and not Venice.

Dear Dr. Zane:

I've been riding my bicycle on the beach in Venice for the last three Sundays. I find it an excellent form of exercise and very ecological at the same time. But my problem is that for each of these past three Sundays, I've been hit by a police car. What should I do?

Completely Totalled

Dear Completely:

Odd as it may seem the answer to your problem is a simple one. Stop riding your bicycle on the bike path and ride it on Ocean Front Walk instead. In the past it used to be very dangerous to bicycle on Ocean Front Walk because the police patrolled it with their cars. But now that there's a bike path, you'd be best advised to do your bicycling on Ocean Front Walk - the police feel they can run down more bicyclists on the Bike Path.

Confidential to Desperate: Don't worry. There are many worse things than that. It's not the end of the world just because you've got the crabs. This might just motivate you to do something very important. As Benjamin Franklin used to say, "If you've got an itch, then scratch it."

If anything is troubling you or you would like any question answered, then write to Dr. Zane at P.O. Box, Camarillo and you will be sure not to get a reply.

A 10 YEAR REVIEW

NOVEMBER 1973

PEOPLE'S PARK on CANAL ST.

by Ron Guenther

Much has happened on Canal Street since the Beachhead article of September which brought news of speculators' plans for this part of our community and our lives. The people of the Venice community were successful in delaying plans for converting Canal Street into a mini freeway running through hideously illuminated concrete, high-rise canyons. The tide has begun to turn against our beloved City's built-in mania for automobiles supreme - chop down the palm tree destroy the flowers and grass - smear on the concrete - darkness is bad - light it up - mercury vapor - high-rise - more money.

Community park planners, architects, spokespeople, and many interested people working against the combined power of our own City agencies, have joyously pressed ahead with a community plan for a neighborhood park centered around the old palm tree -- a bit of quiet, dedicated, living green space in the midst of the concrete, automobile, noise jungle that is so much a part of our daily lives, and which the Neanderthals in our City government constantly plan to give us more of.

We are carrying on the fight beyond City government directly to the people's Coastal Commission itself. We need help in planning, landscaping, and in preparing testimony for presentation before the commission. Political power originates at the community level. You can help by attending your area Town Council meeting and making your voice heard there.



WAYCREST

by Agi Tobak

JUNE 1974

AN UNREHEARSED LETTER

the venice, california, morning awakens to a crazy time of an unwritten law saying and meaning poor people aren't allowed to live next door to a body of water, a spring holiday made for tree killers, a political rationing war created by the Marina Chamber of Monsters, a breakdown between the struggling individuals trying to survive with their guts and the power hungry yacht club collective trying to rule and abuse the spirit of venice

listen, the pat russell's morning news was always a boring play of trivialities and nothing new. their atmosphere in venice is a neutral grey. their branches remain alone uncovered by a robe of leaves, their present time is lived for future possessions gains resembling dead symbols--loud Egos wearing the same fucked condominium walled uniforms.

listen, the atmosphere in venice is a cobalt blue. the future is unknown, a mystery, the growing seeds inside us take the form of mud, water sun, light, air, cave. the strength to take the path of a wanderer, a don quixote woman and man, a road leading to the heart rather than to possessions make our morning news NEW and ALIVE. gifts unlearned in schools.

with love,
barbara winchell

DECEMBER 1973

5TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

WE HAVE A HISTORY

by John Haag

The first issue of the FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD came out five years ago on December 1, 1968. It had four pages printed on green newsprint (which faded easily and so was not used again).

The front page contained the familiar masthead, lettered by Bill Olive, a quarter page photo of Venice in 1924 (the last year that Venice was an independent city) looking down the Canal which is now Main Street, the first of a series of articles by Jane Gordon which gave a history of Venice, and an editorial which said in part:

"This paper is a poem for the people. We decided not to sell it to some of you but to give it to all of you. It is a poem for all the people".

"Our subject this issue is Venice. Our purpose is to create a community".

Inside the first issue were an article by Carol Fondiller on an instance of police harassment, the first of a series of articles by Rick Davidson on L.A. disastrous Master Plan for Venice, articles by me on the Venice Survival Committee formed to counteract police abuses and on the concept of a self-creating, self-governing Free Venice, a poem by Dora Bayrack printed in Yiddish, and an article by Phil Chamberlain proposing an outdoor art show. 10,000 copies of the first issue were delivered free door to door throughout Venice.

The BEACHHEAD was not an accident. It began as a project of the Venice Peace and Freedom party.

In 1968 I was the PFP candidate for state Senate in the 25th district. Realizing that I had little chance of being elected, I wanted to use my campaign to raise issues that could be worked on after the election and I hoped the campaign would produce on-going projects.

One of the issues I raised in the Campaign was the fact that the Venice community had no control over "our" police, schools, parks, streets, and city planning. That issue produced the slogan "FREE VENICE".

After the election the few people who had worked on the campaign continued to meet at the weekly Venice PFP meeting and discussed projects to achieve self-government in Venice.

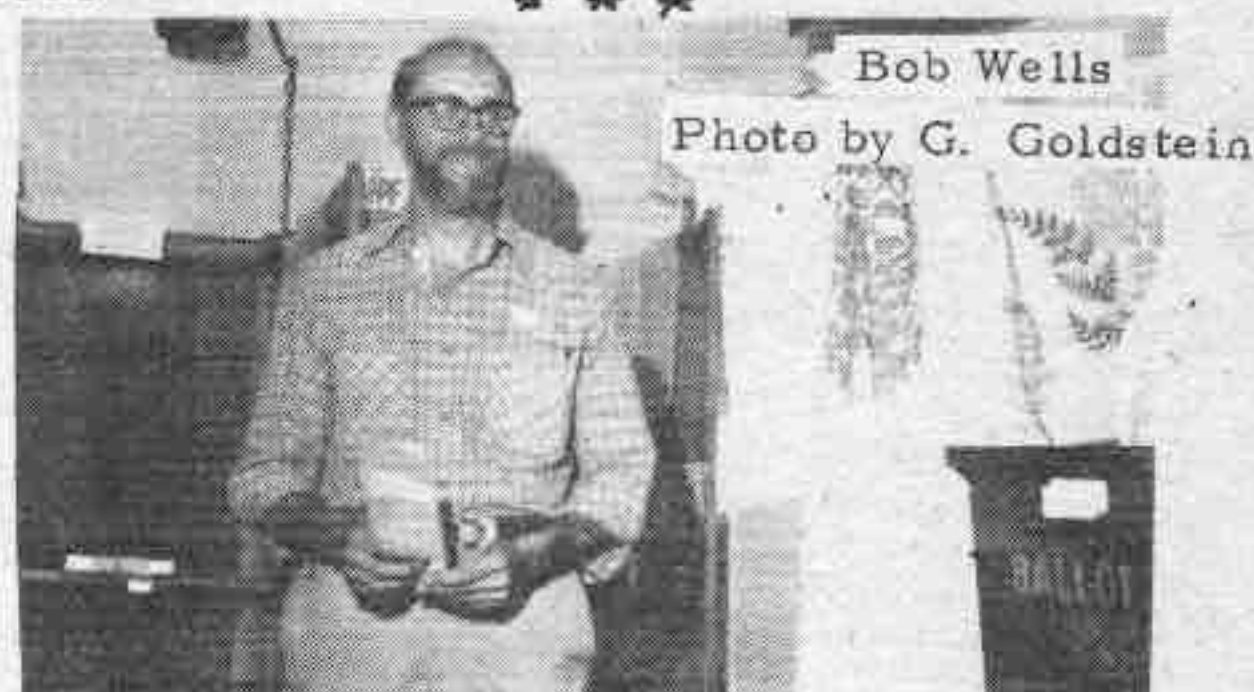
Our first decision was to start a community newspaper that would give information lacking in the establishment press and to give our side of stories that did appear elsewhere. A newspaper seemed logical and the necessary first step to creating a community that could begin to move in its own interest.

We decided that the paper should support itself by ads so that it could be given away rather than sold. Beginning with the first issue we invited all Venice residents to submit articles and help with the paper so that it could become self-sustaining. Within a year the BEACHHEAD was being produced outside the PFP office. It had acquired its own identity and became truly a community effort.

During its first year the BEACHHEAD exposed and publicized L.A.'s plans for developing Venice and issue after issue helped to mobilize community opposition to the proposed freeway through Venice, the Canals assessment district, police abuses and other governmental rip-offs. It was and still is a vital means of expressing our community's problems and achievements.

To continue as a community effort the BEACHHEAD needs your articles and your help with production, and distribution.

Happy Birthday BEACHHEAD, and Many Happy Returns!



PARADE LOOMS

It might be hard to believe radicals from both the right and the left, so-called straights mixed with gays, and all the elements making up the melting pot called America could - in this age - unify for one event. But its happening. Its the fourth of July parade in Venice. Ane, the Venice Town Council's parade a committee says it's more than a "coming together". To keep with the theme of the day, the Venice parade strives to fire that "shot heard around the world". The many peoples will present many different floats, marchers and unorganized happenings. A float, holding a simulated firecracker will be one stimuli to the event. 25th Avenue says its women will ride in a gaily decorated convertible to show-off that neighborhood's beauties. Area school children are talking about their own march. Matter of fact - a lot of Venice people are talking about the way they'll participate in the parade to make their identity known. It should be interesting: The "Spirit of Venice" is going to be on parade on the fourth of July. So why don't you organize your block, or Venice based organization and March with your neighbors?

JULY 4, 1974

VENICE: JULY 4, 1974: Parade

red, white, blue.
flags, hats, kids, dogs

Venice, California, America, World
Blacks, Browns, Yellows, Whites
Together
in celebration

"Viva la huelga"
"War is not healthy"

costumes, drums beating, people dancing,
warmth

COMMUNITY

Freedom to be who you are
within a community

Venice.
supposed to be--
America

by Janet Witkin

JUNE 1975

HARPY DROPPINGS

by Carol Fondiller

The Harpy has been moulting lately and has not kept up with politics, so would someone please tell the Harpy whether it was the marijuana decriminalization law or the consenting adults sex law that got passed? She doesn't want to get busted for sucking on the wrong joint. Now that the Harpy has your attention:

A bunch of the good ol' property owners, 35 to be exact, were whooping it up at the State Coastal Commission hearing on May 13. It seems that the Coastal Commission postponed a decision on whether or not to allow a 2 story mansion to go up on 2 consolidated lots.

The Canal Community has been working on a Community plan that calls for urban parks marine life study, low income housing and more public access. The Argyropolis plan is in direct contradiction to the desires of the community.

Evan Seacrest, property owner, told the Commission, "I'm going to throw you out of here bodily if you support this (the Canals Community plan)."

Eleanor Dufay, another property owner told someone in the corridor outside the Coastal Commission hearing room, "We property owners are going to get you out. We're going to get together and raise your rents so you can't pay them, and you'll have to leave the Canals." Someone from Hettig Realty informed someone, "We're going to get rid of those Town Council people in the Canals."

Hmmm. Town Council must be doing something right.

A 10 YEAR REVIEW

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MARCH 1975

NUDE VENICE LIVES

On February 5, 1975, the Venice Town Council approved two resolutions making clear the Venice Community's support of individual life styles. The resolutions were prompted by the arrest of Venice resident David McCoy on Nov. 16, 1974 after being seen painting the outside of his house on a ladder allegedly while nude. One resolution calls for an immediate dismissal of the 314.1 (obscene exposure) charge against Mr. McCoy; an immediate end to police arrests and harassments for nudity within the entire Venice community; an immediate end to City Attorney Office's prosecution of nudity within the Venice Community.

The second resolution requests that the Los Angeles Police Dept. and prosecuting agencies desist from their present policy of arresting and prosecuting for victimless crimes, such as nudity within the Venice Community.

The Town Council stance was based on U.S. Supreme Court decisions which allow a community to decide for itself what constitutes obscenity. Also involved was the State Supreme Court decision re: Chad Merrill Smith. According to the Smith decision a person does not expose his private parts "lewdly" unless his conduct is sexually motivated. Mere nudity does not constitute a form of sexual activity. Examples of actual "lewd" conduct are listed where a defendant was seen masturbating in the doorway of an apartment house.

The Venice Town Council has reaffirmed the pro-nudity stand taken last summer when it was resolved to "oppose any limitation on the present unrestricted right to nude bathing on the entire Venice Beach!"

Since the law is clear on the point that "nude is not lewd" one must question why McCoy is being prosecuted in light of the fact there are at least five witnesses willing to testify that on the date of the arrest there was absolutely no obscene behavior or gestures associated with his nudity.

The L.A.P.D. and City Attorney's office it would seem, are attempting to dictate to the residents of the Venice Community what their life style should be. This is an abuse of police power and goes beyond the slogan "to protect and serve" into the area of "to control and to harass".

Thank you Carol F. Thank you Linda L.
Thank you Sue S. Thank you Joan F.
Thank you Arnold S Thank you Moe S.
Thank you John H. Thank you Milton T.
Thank you Barbara A. Thank you Nancy B.
Thank you Mary Lou J. Thank you Olga P.
Thank you Barbara T. Thank you Jay J.
Thank you David K. Thank you Rick D.
Thank you Marge B. Thank you Jim B.
Thank you Steve C. Thank you Arlene H.
Thank you Ron G. Thank you Bob W. Thank
you Jane G. Thank you Mary Jane K. Thank
you Chuck B. Thank you Gerry G. Thank
you Pam E. Thank you Tom M. Thank you

Photo by Terrance Ford

SEPTEMBER 1976

CANAL FUNERAL

by Mary Lou Johnson

The question most often heard these days along the canals is "when is the canal festival going to be?" There seems to be a general feeling that somehow a Canal Festival Committee lurks somewhere in the wings awaiting the magic moment of resurrection and ---Voila!-- another glorious canal festival for the delectation of more ordinary mortals.

"Tain't so, folks!" As a matter of fact, the mythical, mystical persons whose energy guided the festival from its inception in 1969, have been blown to the four winds like so many dandelion seeds by the nasty breath of high rents, eviction, and the harsh reality of the high cost of being poor in Venice. Names like Mary Jane Kwan, John Heller, Nancy McCullough, and Jo Hyacinthe come to mind -- a new Diaspora, while the few of us remaining find our energies dissipated by the Babylonian nightmare.

The Canal Festival as a survival celebration would be a canard under such circumstances. One single developer, Solar Systems, has permit applications before the South Coast Regional Commission which would wipe out 25% of the remaining open space. Needless to say, these are not applications for low or moderate income dwellings. And that is but the tip of the iceberg. Sounds like a funeral is more in order.

And thats exactly what we do have in mind. No more tie-dyed images of happy hippies bound in macrame solidarity preserving the illusion that "its still happening in the Canals." Our pot of joy has been broken and our life style destroyed: so lets tell it like it is--- not like it was.

The funeral will take place on Sept. 26 from noon to dusk. Come mourn with us. Get out your widows weeds, practice your dirges, wear a black arm band or funeral attire, drape your dog, wallow!

vince C. Thank you Lorrie K. Thank you
Phil C. Thank you Osah H. Thank you
Pano D. Thank you Gail W. Thank you Don
L. Thank you Vickie G. Thank you Karen
D. Thank you Elizabeth S. and thank you
Lizard, Captain Guts, Dr. Zane, Mary
Pranques and The Harpy. Thank you Herbs
& Things, One Life Family, The Temple
of Man, The Fox Venice, The Unnamable,
Very Venice, The Comeback Inn, Jurgens,
The Midnight Special, The Bookshop In
Ocean Park, Cosmic Curl, Sandalmaker,
The Pot Shop, Artists Only, Cheapskates,
Westside Womens Clinic, The Milk Company,
Sister, The Marathon Meatless Messhall,
Hair Dues, The Wicca, and all other
members of the Venice family wherever
they are. And most of all, thank you
Abbott.....Love, Lance.



1968-1978



Ten Years of
Free
Venice.

[illegible]

VENICE INNER VIEWS

16

by Wendy Reeves

"If the Lafayette was transported intact to Des Moines, Iowa, the natives would react as if it was the bar scene from Star Wars."

ED

Why did I move to Venice? About 10 years ago I got a job teaching photography in the Valley. On free days I would ride around looking for places to take pictures. One day I discovered the beach down here. It was the most visual place I'd ever found, so I kept coming back.

Well, I taught that first year and I KNEW I didn't want to go on living in the Valley. Everybody in the Valley looks alike. So I decided, if I keep ending up down here, then I should move here. And I did. That was over 9 years ago.

It started out, being a middle-class Jewish boy, that I thought of myself as a sociologist. I was here photographing all the weirdos and winos and creeps, but I wasn't part of it, I was just an observer. Slowly but surely I realized that that was bullshit; that I belonged down here too, and I was as crazy as everybody else, or I wouldn't stay.

I'm still living in the same place -- the Carlton Apartments. A very strange building. It's not actually in Venice, it's right on the edge of Santa Monica in the old Ocean Park, across from the Oar House.

It's a building mainly of old folks, a lot of alcoholics, a lot of lonely people. I call them trolls -- old folks who really don't leave their apartments much anymore.

Some very positive things happen in there. For instance, the One Life Family moved in 3 or 4 years ago. They have really changed the atmosphere on that corner. They had a little restaurant and they didn't charge regular prices. You would just donate what you thought was a fair reimbursement.

Well, the obvious thing happened: all the street people would go in and eat a huge meal and leave a quarter. So now they're in the midst of re-opening the restaurant. I wonder if they're going to have that same policy?

There's so many different groups of people living in this one little area, it's just amazing. There are the artists -- some very successful artists live down here. There are UCLA people, architects, musicians....

I remember one guy who played oboe professionally. He and a friend who played cello would come down on Sunday afternoons and play beautiful classical music, little duets. That was 2 or 3 years ago. Then occasionally there have been saxophone quartets here. Very good music has been played in Venice.

And when I go away, I always miss those very heavy Jewish accents of the old folks up by the Israel Levin. When I hear my first "Oy, don't ask!" then I know I'm home. You know: "How's the family? "Oy, don't ask!" Those are very beautiful people.

Something I'd like to talk about -- I'm very aware of it -- is the changing rhythm of Venice. Monday morning, you know, is ver-ry slooow. Then Tuesday is a little faster. And it just speeds up. Friday is pretty fast, and Sat-

ED SIEVERS teaches photography at Cal State Northridge; 3 of his photos may be seen on our poster centerfold. He is 45 and has been living in the Venice area for 9+ years.

urday is high -- but not as high as Sunday.

Sunday afternoon is the climax. Sometimes on a Sunday afternoon the energy here is just astonishing. There's so many trips going on, the music is so good, the weather is so nice, there's so many people having fun -- you know, getting away from their worries and their day to day life -- that it's just marvelous to be here, and live here.

Then there's the rhythm as the seasons change. Summer of course is always pretty intense. Every summer there's one thing that's kind of the central happening. A few summers ago the beach was nude. That changed the whole atmosphere. Then bicycling -- that was a revival. Now rollerskating has come in.

People have always come to Venice like it's a zoo, just to see animal life. And the Venice people are very obliging. They do love to put on a show. Where else do you get this wonderful act

that Ralph does, of being very very drunk and stumbling over trashcans? There's Huijo-man; he's always very well-dressed and sings at the top of his lungs. He used to have great dialogues with Swami X. His energy is amazing! How he can do that all day....

If I was ever making a movie about Venice, I know what I'd use for a lead-in shot. I saw this walking to the Lafayette one morning. The light was very soft and there was a heavy fog; you couldn't see much. This young black dude was moving along in slow motion, obviously really on downers, and he walked up to the telephone, could barely put the dime in the slot. He dialed in slow motion and said, "Gi-ive me the wel fare de part ment."

I've seen fantastic things happen in the Lafayette. I saw a drunk take off his pants, showing everybody his scar from a recent operation. And Arturo leaning over saying "Not here! Not here!"

I also saw a couple making love one morning in bright daylight, on the sand halfway between the Lafayette and the waterline. After they were done, everybody applauded. It looked like a job well-done. Where else would that happen?

And I like those people who order a big meal, and by the time they get it they're nodding out and they fall face-forward into their waffles. I've actually seen that.

You know, if the Lafayette and all the customers in it were transported intact to someplace like Des Moines, Iowa, the natives would walk in and react as if it was the bar scene from "Star Wars."

"I used to call it 'creeping Marina'...."

What changes have I seen? Well, I've watched Main Street change from a street that was completely down and out. A lot of it was very old business establishments, with some old guy living in the back, and he'd have a junk store in the front. Gradually those guys got forced out and the junk stores became antique stores.

Recently another whole step is very chic art galleries, and restaurants that sell \$5 and \$6 bottles of wine with the meal. Obviously, these are not for Venice people; they're for Marina people.

I used to call it "creeping Marina." It was like a volcano -- not one that was erupting; it was just oozing its lava down on us, and it was very very slow. Now I call it "galloping Marina," because it certainly isn't oozing anymore.

I think we put up an excellent fight, but in the end we all know what's going to happen. In the end money will win. The old Venice places are getting pushed out one by one.

That's another thing we never realized: we always thought it was going to be a mass invasion. But that's not the way it works in a capitalist society -- it's just lot by lot.

In the old days one of the real highlights used to be the parade on the fourth of July. That was a very very high day. But the last 2 or 3 parades got smaller and smaller. The last couple of years, there hasn't been any parade at all. There's just not enough real Venice people left to do it. The Canal Festival is another example along those same lines.

Our society is getting so sterile, it's really a shame that Venice is going. Well, maybe it won't. Who knows? They have tried to kill it for years, and somehow it always manages to survive.

Venice is really a place for people who've not grown up. And that's not easy in our society, because our society keeps trying to make you grow up. You're supposed to be a responsible citizen. But really what makes 'em angry is: if you don't grow up you're not a consumer, and that's what keeps our society going.

I think that is the common denominator of all the people who are down here -- the regulars, the natives: we have not assumed the responsibility of adulthood. The games change but we remain the same.

We are children, and Venice is a place to play. ★

"I don't know how many people come in sayin they're moving away and NEVER comin back... they go to other states and all, but they wind up back in Venice."

IRMA

I've had this store for over 12 years. I don't know why I've stayed with it this long, because I still don't like the liquor business. I like the people and all that, but I don't like the liquor business.

But my husband had got laid off from work and all you could hear out of him was a liquor store. We looked and looked, and when we came to Venice, I liked the area right from the start. I never knew Venice before. And this was the store I really liked at the money we could afford, because we couldn't afford a big fancy one. So we bought the business and got a lease on the building. And that's how we got in here.

My husband's name was Ted. Be a year Monday since I lost him. He was wonderful. But after we bought the store, he was sick almost from the time we got it, so I was just about running it.

I've done most of the lifting, the boxes... When they took my kidney out, they said I'd be a semi-invalid. But heck, that was in '48, and I've done everything since then.

Yes, I've stayed here alone at night and run the place. I have, I'm not scared. I always feel like I got too many friends, you know, I'm

IRMA ARMOUR owns and runs Armour's Liquor Store on Windward Avenue. She gives her age as "over 21" and has been working in Venice almost 13 years.

just not afraid.

'Cause we got nice people here, really. They're just down-to-earth people. I've had very few problems. Once in a while I do; but still, they all respect me.

I know all my regular customers by name. There's a lot of 'em call me Mom, a lot of colored boys especially. It used to make me mad when I was younger, but it's okay now, I'm used to it.

There's so many of 'em know my name. Like some guy come in here the other day, "Are you Irma?" And he said, "Well, somebody told me, go up to Irma and you'd get a good deal. I just wanted to know where Irma was and what she looked like." (Conspiratorial whisper:) Maybe he thought it was a cathouse (laughing).

It tickles me, because so many of 'em come in here and say "Hi, Irma!" and I don't even know 'em, never seen 'em before.

Sure, I get winos in here. And I don't like selling liquor to somebody if I know they can't handle it -- that's why I haven't liked the liquor business. But even most of them, they're good guys, they're good people.

I try to straighten some of them out. If they'll quit, I'm really glad. I argue them out of that other bottle, sure I do. I say, "You can buy some food, but nothing to drink" -- you know. And the most of 'em, they don't get mad at you. Just sometimes they do. "Whadya do this to me for?" But it's for their own good. 'Sides, I'm just not gonna sell it when they're drinking.

Yes, we've been held up. My husband got shot in the leg one time when he was robbed. But



they didn't get anything, 'cause he shot back. Eleven days later he had another hold-up. They didn't get anything that time either -- there

(Irma continues next page.)

(Irma, cont.)

was 3 of them and he still shot again. The police laughed and said they was gonna call it Ted's Corral instead of Armour's Liquor Store.

And we had the till tapped a couple of times, when we weren't here. But the clerk was, it was carelessness on his part for leaving the drawer open.

But that was all. Other than windows bein' broke. And that was really by some mixed-up guys who just wanted a bottle or a package of cigarettes.

You know, they broke those windows 3 times in 3 months. 'Course the guys that did it, they were my customers, with the exception of the last time. They didn't do it to get even with me, they were just all winded-up or pilled-up. They even came in and apologized -- but that didn't pay for the windows, which cost around \$300.

Can you imagine an old lady like me gettin' up at 3 o'clock in the morning and drivin' over 30 miles? 'Cause I live down in Portuguese Bend, south of here, by Abalone Cove. Annie called me, and Al came in and stayed til I got here. It was raining that morning, and I had to park my car up a ways, because we had a bad place in the road. And here I was with my umbrella and flashlight, and goin' up the road at that time of morning.... I thought, "Boy, I'm gettin' too old for this!"

When the telephone rings in the middle of the night, I just hold my breath, 'cause I know something happened at the store. I had that responsibility, honey, 'cause Ted was sick so long. But I like it, and I don't want to retire.

I could name and name and name the guys I know around here. Of course a lot of 'em's gone now.

I remember this one gal that they called Corva. She was about, oh, probably must have been 45. Every time she'd get half-looped, why she'd want to go off to the hospital. One night she came in the store and said, "Ted, call an ambulance for me." She already had her gown on, ready to go. But Ted told her, "No, I'm not gonna do it." So she just goes outside and calls the ambulance herself.

When they came she was standing at the door waitin'. And they said, "Come on, Corva." They took her so many times, they knew her by her first name.

What fascinates me is the people who come in here for awhile, and then they leave Venice. The next thing you know, they're back. I don't know how many people have come in the store sayin' they're moving away, they're NEVER gonna come back. And they go to other states and all that, but they wind up back in Venice.

Yep, I've made a lot of friends, I hope. I still get letters from customers that I've had way back -- they're in rest homes or something like that.

How 'bout.... Did you know Bennie, the big black dog that always was around here? He was so ugly, he was cute. They called him "The Venice Bum." Everybody'd always buy pepperonis (Irma concludes on page 25.)

"When we first came as kids, it was a big change from Hollywood where there was one black kid we used to chase home every day, to going to school

DAVE

in Venice & being in the minority to Mexicans & blacks."

We lived in like Hollywood up until I was 7 when my folks bought a house in Venice. I grew up on Wavecrest, one of those court streets, right between Pacific and Main. There's really a nice stretch of Wavecrest there -- a lot of trees.

We had a neighbor, Leo -- a funny little old man. He must have been over 90. He used to be a big-time concert violinist; he'd even played for the Queen. This one time he heard him playing and then we heard him like throw down the violin, then we heard all this screaming and yelling. He had arthritis and he'd realized he couldn't play anymore.

And his sister was really off her rocker. She would like try to put hexes on my mom. She'd put up little Voodoo dolls in the window, no kidding. Was she weird.

She called my mom "Dat Voman." Cause my mom -- you know, long red hair, dressed in long dresses -- like a hippie I guess, a little bit.

When we first moved to Wavecrest, no one really got together that much. And then slowly my mom began to make friends. I remember my brother and I, when we were 9 or 10, we'd always go to eat cookies over to our neighbors' house. These 2 ladies, they were real nice.

One of them was married to John Haag. He was the heavy-duty politic guy in Venice, like. Politics was a big trip for awhile. But I'm only 21 now, so I was pretty young. When everyone was doing that, I was more or less a kid getting

(Dave continues next page.)

17

GARY "A lot of people don't really capture the magic of Venice. They see the gloss, or they see the scum, but they don't see the heart...."

Yeah, I was born here. Shit, my mother got pregnant turnin' a trick on Pacific, are you serious? (laughing loudly.) You know Bob Howard? That's my blood cousin, 2 years older'n me. Taught me how to walk and talk. No wonder I'm confused! In fact him and me are the last 2 living survivors from the old Venice Pirates; that was a gang.

I was 12 and Bob was 14. I was the youngest by 5 years except for my cousin. They let us in 'cause we were such good thieves and we had all the dope connections. That was our thing.

They was startin' the Marina and startin' to play around, rich people comin' down here, you know? It was weird man; on one end of town everybody's broke and hungry, on the other end of town there's nothin' but affluence and money.

You think that only started 10 years ago? No, man, it started slidin' in early, way down on the Peninsula here. Before they built the actual Marina. The Marina TYPE -- plastic, got money, kick all the poor people out, all the old people out, take over the neighborhood. Marina money-type people, down on Jib and all of those streets. They started movin' in, and as soon as they started movin' in we started stealin'. Venice Pirates.

I remember exactly what it was like bein' 15 years old

GARY GARDNER was born in Venice 38 years ago and is a well-known street person. Except when the police have proved something against him, he has lived here all his life.

in Venice. Me and my cousin was dealin' heroin -- we had all the dope in town. Venice was so nice and so trustworthy you could walk up and down the beach with a knapsack full of kilos, sellin' lids. You could walk anywhere around here and never get ripped off or stopped by the man, I'm serious. It was that free and easy at one time. The police just sort of ignored it. Really. That's why I'm pissed, dammit; look what they did to my house. The money moved in and said "Get the freaks out of here, put the heat on, kick the bums off the streets, move everybody out and let's buy the buildings, raise the rent, and we'll make it Marina del Rey from Marina del Rey to Malibu. I'm serious man, they're DOIN' it.

Guess what? Now they're startin' to come in from the other side, have you noticed? Malibu money is comin' through Santa Monica banks and hittin' northern Venice. Check it out, that's what they're doin'. It's a squeeze now. They're comin' from both sides. And who knows what new money's gonna come from the fuckin' east and start squeezin' us from Lincoln down, movin' the poor niggers out. They've lived there 30, 40 years, what'd you gonna do, buy up their land and kick 'em out? In Ghost Town -- do you know where it is? Lincoln to Electric, then from California north to Rose. Do you know where Tortilla Flats is? That's Mexican Town. They're tryin' to move everybody out that was born here, they really are. People're forced to leave, because like the rents. Economic situation here has changed. This used to be a free and easy community. But (Gary continues on page 27.)



"When I first moved here, I was envious of people who'd walk around all day doing whatever they wanted, & I thought, some day I'll be able to do that."

MARILYN

I moved here from Silverlake in April of '72. I was teaching public school in Pasadena and a friend said, "Hey, come to Venice, we need a free school." There was a lot of interest in that here at the time.

So me and another public teacher, who also quit, moved to Venice and started our school. We were located at 10 Westminster, across from the Lafayette, in a studio right in back of the market. Although that was just our indoor place; we really used the whole community and the people in it for our schoolhouse.

The tuition was on a sliding scale from 0



Marilyn and Bagles

Photos these 2 pages by Wendy Reeves

to \$90 a month. Our enrollment was between 10 and 25 kids usually, ages 3 to 13. It lightened the load a lot on Westminster, having the children around. It was neat.

I did that for 4 years, at which time it became a cooperative. But it's faded out. Probably the reasons are, #1) the people who would send their kids to that type of school have left the city and gone to the country; and #2) the ones who are still here definitely don't have the funds now and they send their children to public alternative schools. I mean, it's not something anybody in their right mind would think of starting in Venice today, the community has changed so much.

When I first moved here, the thing I really loved most was, there were so many people having the space to do what they wanted, no matter what kind of person they were. I was envious of people who would just be walking around all day long, doing -- whatever.

And I thought, someday I'll be able to do that. So, after being in Venice for 4 years, I created that space for myself, in which I could support myself by doing what it is that I do whenever I do it.

If you had an idea that was good for you and good for other people, you could convince anyone to do it with you. And I feel that that is still true. There's a lot of encouragement for growth, for finding your niche and what you want to do with yourself. There's more often

MARILYN SITCOFF is 34; she & Bagles have been living in North Beach for over 6 years. Dubbed a "New Age Entrepreneur" by one friend, she sells clothes at the Windward/Ocean Front vendors' lot and can often be seen doing t'ai chi ch'uan on the lawn there.

that you'll find support than being put down.

I've gotten into all new kinds of things here. But you have to have discipline and inner direction to be productive in this kind of life-style, or else you can get spaced out and not accomplish anything. A lot of people say, "I have to leave Venice, I can't get anything done down here."

I started selling on the beach about two and a half years ago, on the lot at Park and Ocean Front. Anybody could set up there.

At first it was just local people who'd decide they needed extra money. So they'd go in their closets and take out some stuff, and they'd come out on the street and it was other local people who bought from them. It was a quick way to get some cash and buy what you needed. Now we're mostly selling to tourists. We've become

(Marilyn continues next page.)

INNER VIEWS

DAVE, cont.

stoned, know what I mean?

Later, like when I was about 16, our block got to be a real communal thing. I'll never forget it. We'd have block parties you know, and all the women would get together and fix meals. There'd be punch, and someone would donate their stereo. It's not a street you can drive on, so you can just set everything up in the middle. We really had nice times. Some great people were living there then.

As a kid I used to spend a lot of time up on the Channel. My stepfather was a sailor, so we'd spend summers there. I remember we used to ride our bikes around dirt lots where there's so many condominiums now. There was apartment buildings and a lot of really nice old houses -- I mean, I don't remember that far, to when it was just a swamp -- but it was a lot less developed than it is.

I was talking with some people a while ago and they told me a story about the canals. I forget how long ago, but the canal people were circulating a rumor that it was REAL dangerous to live there, that women got raped all the time, and so on. Make 'em scared -- "Oh my God, it's dangerous, we can't move there" -- and the rents won't go up. They could go on with their trip and not worry about it.

I guess the beach WAS pretty dangerous at one time, but you know what? It's cleaned up a lot. Especially this last summer with Janice, she



Photo by Ken.

DAVE BREITMAN, a.k.a. Slavin' David/Rock'n'Roll Dave, has lived in Venice 14 years and played guitar the last 8, including 6 months as lead for the Canaligators. He is 21 and currently working at New Par's Restaurant.

would want to go out at night, and you know, I had this attitude (exaggerated macho protector): "I'm not going to let you go out there on the beach alone at night." So we'd walk around together a lot, and I'd notice it really seemed quite tame. People are still getting ripped-off I guess, but as far as people getting mugged or killed, I don't think it's intense at all compared to New York or even San Francisco. Or downtown L.A. let's say.

But I do know one thing -- I hate to use the phrase, but I grew up calling it Ghost Town -- you don't go there at night, especially if you're a girl. Streets like Broadway and Vernon are not good.... well, it runs from Main Street to Lincoln and from about California to Rose. The area towards Rose is more Mexican. That used to be pretty rowdy too.

When we first came as kids, it was a big change from living in Hollywood where there was one black kid and we used to chase him home every day, to going to school in Venice and being in the minority to Mexicans and blacks. That was at Westminster elementary.

We were walking along one day on West Washington, and all of a sudden two black kids jumped out from behind a building and just started wailing on us, for no reason. And I remember there was a black guy driving by in a bus and he was yelling "Yeah, get them honkies, yeah, do 'em in, yeah." So we realized it wasn't too cool.

But I never really had any bad bad experiences. Just stuff like, there were dudes in school that were like "after you." You were just hoping you weren't going to see them on your way to get the milk for your mom.

My brother jumped in it more than I did. He was older and tougher than I was. He'd be a challenge to them. I got by good because I was more the little red-haired kid and nobody really wanted to mess with me 'cause I was small.

Now in junior high school, that was a little worse. Mark Twain, that was a pretty rowdy school. I don't know how it is now.

I left Wavecrest when I was 17. It wasn't exactly all my own idea to move out so young. But I'm happy I did. I think it's a really important thing to learn to work at an early age. I mean, working's a drag, but like I've worked a lot. Even when I was 14 or so I had a job. I didn't have to but I wanted to.

Then when I got out of high school -- I didn't actually graduate, but when I finished with it -- I had like one Last Hurrah, one last carefree summer in Venice. All I remember is getting stoned all the time, running on the beach with my friends, body surfing, going to concerts, having a great time. Then, you know -- it was like all downhill from there (laughing). Well, not down hill.... But I started to

work. I got my busboy job at the Flasco over in the Marina, which is what I made my living off of for 3½ years. That was when I went into manhood, earning your own food.

And I got my own apartment. My first place was in the Gondolier, right across from the Marina Pacific Hotel. I was really proud of myself, 'cause I was only making about \$75. And since I've been living on my own, I've just been seeing the rents go up and up and up.

Meanwhile my mom and stepfather broke up. My mom took my little sisters to northern California to kind of start a new life -- get away from Venice and the drug influence. 'Cause like my brother and I, being in Venice we were exposed to a lot of stuff, and we got into drugs at an early age.

One thing that's always amazed me in Venice is the real street people freakos. Like Gila -- I know you've seen her. We call her Miss Hostile. The one who screams and rants about God "...AND YOU'LL GO TO HELL, AH, AH...YOU'RE GOING TO ROT FOREVER..." Gila really gets heavy.

Someone who stood out for me was a character known as Crazy Ed. He's nobody that important but it amazes me to see the same person coming back and forth to a town and living as a derelict and being able to stay alive that long. I just saw the guy again last night, and I remember seeing him back in '67. You know: big huge guy, kind of like a cave man, big beard, real crazy, always drinking wine or beer.

There's ones that aren't violent, just crazy -- like that opera-singer. I know all these people. I got into a big hanging-out-on-the-boardwalk scene about a year and a half ago. Everytime I wasn't at work, I spent from morning to night on the boardwalk. I got really lost into being the cool dude with the guitar.

I guess it's only been pretty much recently there's been a lot of street music -- unless I was kind of oblivious maybe, as a kid. When you're a kid, all you do is go out to the sand and the water.

But even 3 or 4 years ago I don't remember that much street music. Where it did happen was down on Washington Blvd, by the Venice Pier. My buddy Hook of the Canaligators used to play there.

There was also a guy named Dale -- he played guitar, blues stuff, and a foot cymbal. He used to hang out in that doorway between New Par's and Wagner's Health Food Store. He was kind of a fixture there. He'd stand with his little act and have his case open and he'd do a little hustle on the people walking by.



(L to R): Hook, Mighty Malnourished Michael from Milwaukee, & Slavin David doing a street gig on the boardwalk. Photo by Irene

Tourists? I'm trying to remember. I think that's only the last couple of years too -- I mean, so many people from like Glendale and Beverly Hills, coming to the Land's End restaurant or like that. I mean, The Sidewalk Cafe -- how many people there live in Venice? Especially on weekends.

One thing that's kind of appalled me is like I notice tourists walking by and loooooooking. Starting like we were aliens from another planet. It starts to get to me. I feel like they have no right to pass judgement on me.

But where else on a Sunday afternoon can you look out your window and see 3 of the most crazies going through their number, and one girl without a shirt on ranting and raving, and Gila who I told you about before says to the one, "You never said hi to me when we were in Camarillo." And the great thing was, you knew they were really there.

Where else but in Venice? &

MARILYN, cont.

one of the tourist attractions.

Well, then somebody leased that lot, so I sold in front of a friend's house, after that I sold in front of the architect's firm, and then I moved up here (to the Windward parking lot).

We pay 10% of our gross sales to the owner of this lot. One of the vendors monitors that;

every weekend we turn it in. It's a real tight-knit group up here that's vending; we don't have any rip-off problems.

We've been fighting to keep selling up here since August. It's not a police issue -- we're following all their guidelines. It's the City that says it's illegal to sell outside of a building; it's actually Building & Safety who we're fighting. Legal Aid is handling it for us now.

Is Venice dying? Well, the world I live in isn't dying, because I fight to maintain it. But it is changing a lot. I remember the first 3 years here being very different from these last 3.

I remember on sunny weekends in Venice when you would come out on the walk and the congo drummers would be playing at Breeze Avenue, that the only other faces you would see were local faces. On Sundays when you came out, you knew EVERYBODY, everybody.

I was just flashing back on the first 4th of July parade. It was wonderful. Perfect example of a Venice affair. Everybody in Venice liked nothing better than to have a nice big celebration.

And last year there wasn't one. Like the Canal Festivals. The last one of those was a Canal Funeral, in which the Canals as we knew it were laid to rest.

"13 women at a time would not be strangled in this area...."

The thing that hasn't changed at all in the past 6 years is the inside communication network. Beachhead's very important in that regard. I've always read it, I love it. When we had the school the paper was very supportive of us.

Also there's certain people.... all you have to see is one catastrophe, like for a woman to get raped or to hear that a building's being torn down, or being built -- and there's a communication network so people immediately know what's happening. Especially in North Beach.

For instance, a person who could set it in motion would be, oh, like.... Moe is the type of person who would know exactly who to call to let everyone know something real fast. (Moe Stavnezer, community advocate and regular Beachhead contributor). Or Linda Lucke, or Carol Fondiller. It's just people who've been here a long time, and you could say "Hey, have you heard such and such is happening? You gotta do something WHAMMO about it." Like when Bingo was raped: by 7 o'clock that night there was a huge demonstration. The women were ORGANIZED. And some men, too, although it wasn't really asked that they participate.

You know, people say "Aren't you afraid to walk around here alone at night?" And I'm NOT. It's funny, because during the day the people who hang out on benches are harassing and they get on my nerves; but at night I feel safe knowing that they're there. I think local people are safe, because other local people are watching out for them.

And some people asked me, "Well, aren't you afraid of the Hillside Strangler?" And I'd tell them that only one woman would have to be strangled in North Beach and there would be, not guards, but.... people on patrol, all night long, so it wouldn't be able to happen again. 13 women at a time would not be strangled in this area. Once it would probably have been true of the canals too, although they have changed a lot more.

Sometimes I wake up and it's such a beautiful day and I really love Venice, I think it's the perfect place. During the week it feels like it's always been, because you only see local faces. And there's other times when I think I cannot be here for 5 more minutes, because my space isn't respected, my sound waves aren't respected, my being isn't respected, I'm being talked at, yelled at, harassed and BUGGED -- by people who come here to have their freedom and at the same time have no respect for anybody else's. When that happens it makes me crazy. It's one of the drawbacks in a community I sometimes equate as the last stop before Camarillo.

I do feel that my days in Venice are numbered. Possibly due to financial reasons, but also by the fact that if Venice becomes like it is on weekends 7 days a week, then I would choose not to live here anymore.

Although I think the people who are left, if we are going to stay here and have to pay the rents and higher prices, one of the things we'll still have is the spirit. And hopefully part of Venice will be preserved.

Now do you want to interview Bagles?



many others who had been even unaware of their existence, or who thought about them as a pox on Venice, also entertained this thought - after the hippies hipped us? Sort of like the old song, "Don't Tell Your Best Friend 'Bout Your Old Man."

Anyway, the day finally came when I had to move again. The pinch became a squeeze became a shove, and through the machinations of some canal friends, I became a resident. My second day here, I was awakened by a loud banging on my door and was told to "get my ass down to the vacant lot at the end of Howland because they're cutting down the Sapote tree!" "When in Rome" and all that, and I rushed down to see people defying bull-dozer and chain saws, to save some dumb looking tree. But it was all very exciting and I was swept along and whirled into the vortex of canal activism. Scarcely a day went by without some community activity - some political, some poofery.

There were camp-fires and Coastal Commissions; volleyball and Venice Town Council, pot-lucks and police confrontations, media and mediation. I raised chickens and rabbits and my monkey roamed free and I was inspired by the belief in self-determination. It was glorious and exhilarating and I really believed that our strength and unity and dedication to the common good would have results. Venice was the vanguard and THE CANALS would show the way. Power to the People was there for the taking!

Oh, sure, there were the troglodytes Myrtle Wilson and the Dufays and that weird looking one with the short hair, but no one could take them seriously. We were smart and strong and hard working. We had Ron Guenther, as reliable as the priest at mass, who would be at the Coastal Commission every Monday morning; we had Steve Clare who was so bright that you knew logic must prevail; we had Judy Weiner "Ms. Ecology" Herself; we had gentle, loving people interested not only in their own preservation, but dedicated to sharing with those less privileged. And, we had fun!

Then, one by one, as if planned, these people had their homes sold from under them. Each representative of the Area Council was engaged in a struggle to remain in the area. Energy for political work was diverted into a struggle to survive. People left the canals and new people who were attracted by the canal mystique tried valiantly to pick up the torch, but to no avail.

By the eighth year the Canal Festival degenerated into a commercial tourist attraction, with young people coming from Pacific Palisades playing Hippie For a Day stoned out on downers; pissing on your lettuce! Canal people started closing their doors, and realtors started opening their offices. The stampede was on. Get your little canal fixer-upper, artsy-fartsy, cutsy-pie here! Can't lose! Bound to increase in value! THE CANALS are IN!...

The next year a last gasp effort to raise consciousness was made when the Festival was decently laid to rest by the Canal Festival Funeral of 1976, the year of the Bicentennial. The route of the funeral procession was dictated by the permits before the Coastal Commission, for the development of some 25 lots in THE CANALS. The police stopped at my house in the morning to get black arm bands to wear to the funeral. I was touched. Later that day I was to find out that these same hypocrites had amassed an army of police cars and motorcycles.

Provocateurs and collaborators laid siege to the canals; denied citizens their rights, beat people in full view of national T.V. cameras, confronted and menaced children. (Who, in the true spirit of Venice kids, managed to "pop a few wheelies" behind their backs when they were making like the Gestapo.)

I awaken to the sound of Hammers
Mother Mary, Come to me.
Speaking WORDS OF WISDOM:

REALTY.

BEYOND ILLUSIONS



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NEW AGE BOOKS, MAGAZINES & COMICS

A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE: POWER OF THE PRESS

(continued from page 6)

19

Straight Venetians would hear reports of police brutality in Elysian Park or on Sunset Strip and they'd say, "Police just don't do those things." Then they would see cops clubbing kids bloody on the oceanfront and they'd be ready to march on City Hall (we threw many a picket line around the old police station on Venice Blvd). One longhaired kid told a television reporter he and a friend were walking barefoot down the Speedway when four men, wearing straw hats and hawaiian shirts, bermudas and sneakers, jumped out of a car with guns in their hands and slammed him and his friend against a wall.

"One of them pointed his gun at my head and said, 'If you don't want to go to jail, get out of Venice.'"

"What did you say to them?" asked the reporter.

"I said 'Yes officer, no officer.'"

"But how did you know they were police?" asked the reporter, her eyes getting wider.

The kid shrugged. "Nobody else would do a thing like that."

The Roust of Oakwood, 1969

Finally, in December '69, the cops staged a massive daylong roust of the entire Oakwood community, where people had no illusions about police to begin with. On the excuse that they were "rounding up dope pushers" (a problem they still haven't dealt with eight years later), police cars would block both ends of an Oakwood street, everyone on the sidewalk would be lined up, searched, and checked against lists of "suspects." People were pulled out of front yards. If they went inside, their doors were kicked in. Arrests were made. Half an hour later more cops would block the same street and do it all again, making still more arrests. The first ones to go were the known community activists. Community people who protested were handcuffed, beaten, and booked.

White cops in a Black community. It was the village of Ben Suc brought back from Vietnam. Or maybe it's just that My Lai was a lynching.

This was the same month that an army of L.A. commando cops armed with machine guns surrounded and besieged the Black Panther Party office on South Central Avenue.

It's even clearer now, looking back (and it was very clear at the time), that the U.S. paramilitary establishment was bringing the Vietnam War home. The weapons and the tactics were the same, in many cases the personnel were the same, and as far as they were concerned the enemy was the same -- us. The Venice canals were known at City Hall as "Viet Cong country."

We took this as nothing but a compliment, and in time we were obliged to accept our own government's assessment: that if we and the Vietnamese were both "the enemy," then that meant we both had the same enemy -- and that enemy was U.S. imperialism, clearly exposed in Vietnam, but also beginning to reveal itself here at home.

Two Tacks by the Enemy

Mass pressure from the community finally brought the police siege of Venice to an end -- that, plus help from outside liberal forces (like the Community Relations Conference of So. Calif.), the equivalent at the local level of the liberal power-brokers in Washington who were beginning to rein in the warhawks who were getting the system overextended into a quagmire. The Venice Division commander was reassigned (to a better division); the Metro Squad was pulled out and replaced by "community relations experts."

The system now took a new approach to its insurgent province of Venice. Instead of broken heads and rousts the police shifted to "Community Teams" and coffee klatsches -- the stateside equivalent of "civil action" and Vietnamization in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile the police forces were murdering Panthers all across the country, including many in Los Angeles -- the domestic counterpart of the Vietnam Phoenix Program.

Our resistance has forced City Hall imperialism to revise its timetable for

Venice. Instead of using cop pressure to "drive the undesirables out" (that's what they called us, quote unquote), they've now decided to lay back, maybe for a decade, and see if the tax assessor and the high-rolling developers can't accomplish what the Metro Squad failed to do. Once again, their aggression defines our resistance.

Two Tacks By Us

A whole generation, and in Venice an entire community, had been jolted loose from the American dream, and our side, too, took different tacks.

Operating admittedly off a lot of romanticism, the Free Venice organizers sought to reproduce for disaffected whites the "cultures of resistance" that we perceived in the Vietnamese and the Blacks. For dozens of individuals, and at times for entire neighborhoods, people's entire social lives revolved around the struggle. Our contacts with each other, our meals, our parties, our love affairs, travelled along an infrastructure of councils, committees, meetings, canal festivals, demonstrations and arrests, and kitchen-table skull sessions on tactics, strategy, and politics.

Others who also felt the anxiety of being alienated from their own society sought the answers not by joining with others in struggle, but in the privacy of their own bloodstreams or their own brains, first in personal drug trips, then in the exhilaration of escapist religions.

For our lifetimes the crisis of U.S. imperialism at home and in the world is the defining condition of American society. Since its defeat in Indochina imperialism has been using the soft tack and the velvet glove. But eventually that glove will have to come off again, revealing the iron fist that's always inside.

On our side, it's our opinion that the culture of resistance will prove the enduring option, and not the out of personal escapism. The cult of the trippers has produced classic stool-pigeons like Timothy Leary and Greg Allman, and at least one complete religion (the Moonie church) funded by the CIA. We politicians, of course, have had our police infiltrators, our informers, and our sellouts.

The difference is that this is a violation of the basic ethics of community and national resistance to imperialism, while it is a natural extension of the individualism of the escapist movement.

There is no solution to the "identity crisis" within the limits of imperialism. In a contradictory but true way it is by merging oneself into a culture and movement of resistance that a person can resolve the profound alienation of modern life and arrive at true knowledge of self. This is the lesson of all resistance movements. Our eleven years experience in the Venice resistance has proven this is still true.

Through it all one of our strongest bonds has been this newspaper, the FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD. It tells us something about ourselves and our community that through many changes of staff, Venice has continued to produce, and to need, the BEACHHEAD, for more than ten years. Like the oceanfront streetsheet that preceded it, the BEACHHEAD is a human eye in an increasingly inhuman world.



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drunk old woman in Venice Bar

that woman at the bar
that old drunk woman
the one with no teeth
and stringy greasy hair
and that big dusty hat
and dingy piss stained levi's
and puke caked corduroy shirt
with flaky dried mucus on the sleeves
her face was'nt always wrinkled and gray
and mottled with festering sores
although her insides probably were
at least since birth
i know her, i've watched her grow up
and i've watched her die- all the same
i guess this is the only dive
in the neighborhood that allows
her to drink- i mean sit at the bar
man does she smell like shit
and if she catches you in a drunken haze
when you go to the bar to get a drink
she'll try to kiss your mouth
and who knows where that fuck'in tongue has been
but like i say i know her although
just barely- i've seen her grow up
i remember walking down the street
and seeing her in the school yard
playing on a swing- i mean long ago
when her missing teeth were gone
to make space for new teeth- not rotten and/
abscessed

she called my name and i knew her
and i said hello and laughed with my friend
because she was weird even then
we didn't feel any pity we just laughed
but then we were young
and we thought we had troubles of our own
i remember hearing the rumors
about her mother filling the house
with Christmas gifts- dolls and dresses
and games- then not allowing the
children to play with the toys at all
and of the late night sessions
that her mother spent changing the diapers
of plastic babies in the dark
seemingly out of sight but really
everyone watching around corners
and through stairway banisters
but the old lady was smart
she never blackened an eye
she always kicked and pinched
the spots that didn't show
or maybe cause an accident
like falling down stairs or fingers
caught in doors and
dad never saw anything because
he was either blind or a coward
and he always called her a whore
and the pinches and the kicks
and the old man insisting made
deep bruises that nobody could
see except that she was weird even then
but please don't forget i barely knew her
i only watched her grow up
even as a child she was ugly as hell
and you'd never have noticed her if
she was'nt so fuck'in strange
and then her breasts took the shape
of a woman and her brain and her crotch
became sensitive and after all the old man
said she's a whore
so she takes some lanky teenage soul
and she place her fat pink ass
on the concrete floor of her father's garage
and man it's cold
and her ass turns red
but her body takes it all in
with an overpowering thirst
but she's craving more than a stiff prick
and the cold damp garage
with it's smell of motor oil and musty canvas
and lawn fertilizers and wood and rusty metal
is really a warm suburban home
and the cement floor really a toasty
king-size bed- but only for a second-
i was on a date that night and
i just barely knew her- really!
i did see her baby once though-
it was in a carriage in
the school yard and she was sitting
on the swing next to it eating
candy and smoking cigarettes
she'd bought with the money
from welfare and the baby was ugly
and weird looking and you've
got to believe that i barely knew her
i heard that when she moved back with her
parents she took her old room
and the baby slept between her
mother and father and
then there was someone else to
fill the house with gifts for at Christmas-
the next time i saw her she was riding her

(to bottom of next col.)



Photo by Craig Stanman

Venice Beach '76

Was Bingo and Lingo
And young Freedom Star
Regina, his mama
And kites way up far
J.C. and the kite man
Sabina and Mo
Pale ladies exclaiming
"Where did they all go?"

The "colorful natives"
Of Venice, now gone
Like those in the "Island"
Of Huxley's swan song.

Ruth Clark

'Scoriated
red 'n raw
nuke country this Venice

Pagoda of the hostile Negroes
ghostown....trashers
'luminum mashers, boardwalk drivers and easy rider
screamies, padded cells and bearded bras

Motors running and the lights off inside
guts spilling cars towing
a patch of green and a palm circled by
dog shit and cellophane

My Northbeach, my ass
them again
everytime I want a cheap meal outside

Dudley Jacobson

(drunk old woman, cont.)

bicycle down the street and i thought
she looked so young and a week later i
saw her hanging out at the Hempstead Terminal
drinking with yesterday's black studs
and she looked old
but not as old as she looks now at that bar-
lets get the hell out of here
before she notices me
after all i just barely knew her

Steve Effingham



Lady Venice

Oh Venice,
Sometimes you're such an old lady,
groaning under the weight of change;
And then, on an autumn afternoon
you're an incredibly beautiful nymph,
seductive in your pulsating energy
and rich with colorful people who are:
sipping cappuccino at The Sidewalk Cafe,
skating at sunset on Ocean Front Walk,
singing Simon and Garfunkel songs for
a few tossed coins,
shucking and jiving down the beach
(mostly jiving),
working out, biceps bulging, near the
paddle tennis courts
where several bronzed residents are
whacking the ball with studied vengeance.
In this scene too are:
down and outers (the usual older drunks
and young stoners) unaware of the day,
the time, the planet,
would be shamans of the Holistic Age
(post-Aquarian) practicing T'ai Chi,
exchanging knowledge of pressure points
and herbal teas,
street people selling their rags, rugs
and miscellaneous treasures,
artists and artistes;

All this on an autumn day at sunset
(tangerinish pink),
palm trees sharply etched against
the horizon -
this could only be Venice/West,
everyone's fantasy at one time or
another,
temporary paradise, a place to dream
where the very ground simmers with
untapped energies.

Myra D. Goodley

Once Venice

Venice you change agent
you
rich ones moving
poor ones
building big ones
newer ones
to melt those
fading years
into the sea

Voices rage
in muffled protestations
crying babies can't pay their rent
while your aunt
counts the change
and another knife wound
spills drops of dirt
caught in cobwebs
divine grace
calming ocean
continues to continue
while bodies come and go
beats, hippies, artists
come and go
Perkoff, Lipton, Keouac, Ginsberg
jazz sounds
can still be heard
behind trash cans
in the alley way
of your dreams
played out

Don Rothernberg

Los Angeles Sunset
in Venice-by-the-Sea

Sunset was lovely last evening!
'Twas enough to hold one breathless --
a brightly etched vermillion
melting to a soft magenta sky,
as the one eyed sun was swallowed
by a mild receptive sea.
The beach was thronged with watchers
softly coughing at the close
of yet another day of industry
whose noxious fumes gave rise
to such a brilliant closing of that day.
Sunsets here are breathless
at the end of every smoggy day!

Donald Johns

We came to Venice because it seemed like a more supportive environment to try to change the world in. We put our phone no. up on the bulletin board of the Women's Center as a crash pad. Saw some amazing Heratary, beat-up, old man in the can, three kids, two in diapers, bathtub full of smelly diapers, run off with a bikini.

Somewhere along the line I started working with the Midnight Special Collective. It was barely a year old then. That was a time when if you wanted to change the world you joined a collective and meeting, meeting, meeting, six hours, eight hours, laughter, tears, anger, fights. People come, people go but I sailed on through, to keep it going. Went and saw a slide show in Oakwood about young black men, arm around their lady, then laying in a pool of blood, shot by a rival, a policeman. Saw a kid's liver on the sidewalk of Mar Vista Gardens, next to the shotgun holes in the cars. Saw my neighbor's son, arm around his gal, then shot dead breaking in a rival's house. Tory. I seen Nazi signs and KKK crosses and "Puck Mexicans" in Oakwood. So what are we gonna do about all these kids dying and killing their brains with PCP. Smoke a joint and boogie?

We are all immigrants here running from wars, starvation, poverty, jail, prison, rivals, loneliness, family, lover. We are Haitians, South Africans, Japanese, Mexicans, Negroes, Irish, English, German, Californian, Indian, Chilean, Guatemalan, French, Chinese, Hungarian, Mongolian, everybody.

We are international, the Workers of the World, let's Unite



YOU CAN'T FOOL MOTHER NATURE

(continued from page 9)

mits and mountain building permits take heed, it was an expensive lesson and one some communities can't afford to learn anymore.

Suck in Venice. I don't foresee any mudslides verifying the wisdom in limiting residential construction on Ocean Front Walk. We are faced, rather, with the forces of economics, politics and unlightened self-interest, and for all the work that's been done to "save" the community, trouble lies ahead. While activists have fought to save some low-cost housing and prevent high density, high-rise construction, the tides of time and money have gradually been transforming Venice. Like it or not, it is well on its way to becoming the haven for the well-to-do we've tried for years to prevent it from becoming. It will probably end up a more quaint, picturesque haven as a result, but it will be a haven nevertheless. And if we allow the powers that be to build a limited-access highway from the Marina bird sanctuary to Santa Monica Main Street, we will have a very polluted haven to boot.

Venice's "deal" may very well go down with the Marina By-Pass. It's one of those ideas which keeps coming back to haunt us every five years or so, totally detrimental to the fundamental health of the community and sounding like an easy answer to someone else's problems. The irresponsibility which allowed the Marina to generate overflow traffic without having to provide a means to accommodate it is once again being stuffed off onto good old Venice. With luck we can arrange for this By-Pass, should it be built, to be covered with mudslides every time it rains so its builders might learn what Malibu learned last month. Sometimes I think these little calamities are the only way.

In one hundred issues, the Free Venice Beachhead has established an image of raw-saged idealism, radicalism, humanism and realism. It allows Venice to bear witness, in public, to its failures and triumphs, to form a dialogue with itself. That it has succeeded is proven simply by the fact of its survival; how well it has succeeded is highlighted by the recent confiscation by a canal property owner of an issue which criticized the position she and her cronies took on canal redevelopment. This same property owner refused for several months to provide some of her canal



photo by Gerry Goldstein

tenants with proper trash cans. We hardly need resort to more examples like this to characterize this woman's attitude. That she is afraid of the Beachhead, that she might very well be afraid of the Bill of Rights were it a document introduced to the nation next week, is characterization enough.

A lot of people are still afraid of or uncomfortable with Venice as a whole, let alone the Beachhead: older Angelenos who remember its seedier past, young adults who think of it as a breeding ground for crime and violence. Those who've lived here for a long time know the difference between "normal" and "chronic" crime. Laurel Canyon, Mid-Vilshire, Hollywood, any number of places are as seedy, as dangerous, or more so. There are no skid-row slashers, hillside stranglers, pillow-case rapists or major gang wars in Venice. Even if there were, neither I nor the Beachhead have to apologize to anyone afraid of or uncomfortable in a community where derelicts, minorities, lawyers, families, artists, seniors and so on mingle freely on a day to day basis. If they're afraid of this place, it's their loss much more than ours; we have enough parking problems as it is.

Someday the same people who are now afraid of Venice may solve all our problems for us. They will simply buy the place, put bars on all the windows and send the rest of us packing. Beachhead and all. Venice will be a fond memory, and what's left will be a sad suburb of Marina Del Rey. The Venice they'll own and inhabit will be just another swinging beach town, and they'll be welcome to it.

But this bitterness and pessimism, where does it come from? I should talk, right? I've been here for nine years, a drop in the bucket to some, and I seem to be surviving the economic transitions, I can pay the doubled rent, much as I don't want to. And I've served on a few committees and done my do-gooders' turn for community activism; once in awhile I still pitch in. But sometimes I feel like I'll slowly but surely continue to become part of the problem if I don't do something outrageous to become part of the solution, maybe torch something, or start a crime-wave to scare right thinking citizens away from this den of iniquity.

When these brainwaves get most intense when the frontal lobes are nearing the breaking point, it's Venice itself that slaps me in the face and says "cool it!" Spring comes along and it's time to wax

the surfboards of the psyche again, hoping summer leaves us with enough momentum to get through another four seasons intact. Soon enough there will be other summers, and I hope the regulars, all of them, will be out cruising the Walk, because they belong there.

Venice at its best is a timeless place, and the Beachhead chronicles it distinctively. May it still do so a hundred more issues hence.

-Jim Bickhart

High Spirits Precipitous Planning



Community Plan Analysis text written by Jim Bickhart, Mo Swamezer, Arnold Springer for the North Beach Planning Task Force P.O. Box 5864, Santa Monica CA 90405

Nothing has made me feel as proud as to be involved with this newspaper and this community. And in today's U.S.A., being involved with the destiny of a community is a rare occurrence, unfortunately.

What really excites me is that I, Me, am a part of history. Written History. I stayed in a place long enough to be remembered. I tried to change things. And some things have changed. A little.

No, the millennium has not come. There's still poverty of mind, hunger of body, and soul, there are still people who'll walk all over you to get more than their fair share, and developers are still trying to slide by without enough parking spaces. Women still get called vile names and raped. Blacks and Chicanos still bear scars of racism on their souls, and taxes are now forcing out the middle class. And artists come to Venice for the ambience and shut themselves away from it.

People come from Woodland Hills to get away from Woodland Hills and they bring their fences and their 3,000 square feet of living space along with them, and the neighbors be damn ed, and they never go out to the beach and they live behind their fences.

And the condominiums are filled with rich trash who blast their stereos just as loud as any of the "undesirables" they replaced, leading lives of quiet desperation while counting their gold chains. But the idea of a mixed income community is not equated with spitting on the flag.

And a lot more people are asking if the highest and best use that the beach can be put to is a Howard Johnson Hotel on the Ocean Front. Many people are even questioning whether real estate developers and speculators have the right to displace a community for their own gains. Is that really the American way?

When I hear of the gentrification, as the English call it, when the Bright White, Young Middle Class move into an urban area and renovate the old houses and start moving out the old tenants, I get a bitter satisfaction of saying, Yes, I told you so. I said that when I wrote of the invasion of the Afflu-Nip.

I remember how the Evening Outlook used to report any picketing or rallies called by the Free Venice Organizing Committee. They always said it was non-violent with such surprise.

But they never mentioned the people who were threatened by Hottie Reality, illegally evicted by Hottie Reality, or the threats made by Mr. DuFay or Mr. Moore to various people at many meetings.

And some of the far out radical ideas that have been talked about in the Free Venice Beachhead have at least gained respectability as rational ways to solve problems, such as public access to beaches that are paid for by public funds, low-moderate income housing, decent health care for all. So there's still a need for this community paper.

Thanks Beachhead. Keep on Truckin'.

Community House Revisited (cont. from p. 11)

How It Turned Out

Our community house had blossomed into a community center. Then, I had to leave Venice for awhile. I left knowing that the people, the community, myself, we had all made a statement. I just wasn't certain what it was.

I returned 4 years later to find the skeletons of 2 and 3 story apartment buildings, in modern Marina motif, standing on the lot at 4th Howland Canal.

I listened to the screaming of circular saws and the pounding of hammers, sounds which are quite familiar to me now. Friendly in another context. I smelled the breath of the newly-cul lumber and the bite of the pouring concrete.

I wasn't saddened though because the

Community House still exists, in my heart. It faced the sparks within me that have now burst into the flame of my being. Being alive, being a part of the whole, being the whole. In the struggle we had stated our human-ness. Within a society and under a system which doesn't tolerate such things, not for long anyway. Too much of a threat. Someday I know that those fires will burn so hot within all of us again that all that keeps us from expressing, and prevailing, in our humanity, will be consumed.

A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE or HUMAN RIGHTS in AMERIKA

22

By Red Bird

(Staff Note: Red Bird is a Venice resident who has contributed to this paper in the past. The following article was written collectively by folks who are either indian themselves or knowledgeable of the Skyhorse -Mohawk case)

The Paul Skyhorse-Richard Mohawk case, in which two American Indian Movement activists are being tried for the Oct. 1974 murder of cab driver George Aird, is a real Alice in Wonderland affairs.

The three chief witnesses against Skyhorse and Mohawk, to wit: Marvin Red Shirt, his girl friend Molly Broussard, and Marcy Eaglestaff, were caught red-handed, literally, with blood on their clothing and with a bloody knife, at A. I. M. camp in Ventura Countys Box Canyon. All testimony showed that these three hired a cab to take tem to Box Canyon after a night of drinking. On the way Marvin Red Shirt took over driving the cab, whose driver was seen by a witness with a rope around his neck. The cab driven was later found stabbed to death at the camp.

Who is being prosecuted? Not these three. They were given immunity from prosecution by the DA of Ventura County in return for testimony against Skyhorse and Morhawk. The latter had indeed been seen in the camp by witnesses, but nowhere near the victim or the murderers. No tangible evidence was produced against the defendants, in contrast to the multiple evidence against the real murderers. Motive for the murder by the defendants is non-existent, where as the motive for the murder by the three witnesses is abundant in their drunken state and admitted argument with the cab driven over the fare.

The sinister hand of the FBI appears in the fact that Doug Burham, a former A. I. M. security guard, undertook the defense support for Skyhorse and Mohawk, but after a so-called investigation, decided that they were guilty and should not be supported. Shortly after that, in 1975, Durham was exposed as an FBI informer. For many years, he admitted, his job had been to work within the American Indian Movement and to provoke guerrilla training in Box Canyon.

Another FBI informer, Blue Dove, a white woman masquerading as a native American, also exposed as a long time paid informer, testified in the trial that she had accompanied Skyhorse and Mohawk on the day of the murder to a demonstration in downtown L. A. against

the FBI terror in the South Dakota Indian reservation and later took them to a bar. It seems that her assignment was to monitor and undermine A. I. M. activity wherever possible.

The defendants have now been in jail since 1874 in Ventura and L. A. Counties. Open racism came to a head in 1976 when the "distinguished" members of the Ventura County bar, in the presence of local judges, put on a skit entitled "People against Tonto", in which the defendants were ridiculed as savages. This was so raw that the California Bar Association, in an unprecedented intervention, requested that the case be moved out of the county, thus supporting a defense motion to the same effect. The judge in the case had to agree and the case was transferred to Los Angeles where the trial is now taking place.

Judge Dotson, who is presiding, was especially appointed to try the case. This after he was defeated for re-election by the voters of Santa Barbara County. His appointment thus introduces some sort of financial bias on the part of a judge to extend the trial as long as possible and prolong his pay check. This was exactly the basis for a defense motion to disqualify the judge, who has continually shown his bias against the defendants.

When the trial opened in June of '77 (its still going on) and Marvin Redshirt testified in a drunken state to his strange version of the events of that fateful day, and admitted under cross examination that he had lied to the police, lied to the grand jury, and that he had lied "a thousand times", but that he no longer drinks or lies, the judge ordered him removed for physical examination and detoxification. The DA, realizing his case was badly shattered, something obvious to the entire courtroom, then offered the defense a "plea bargain" in which the defendants would plead "no contest" to a lesser charge and be released on the basis of time already served in prison, that is 3 years.

But Judge Dotson would have none of this. His statement that he was making a financial sacrifice in continuing the trial sounded rather hollow, but he refused the "pleas bargain" even though the prosecution's case was paper thin, and he denied the motion by defense counsel Leonard Weinglass, Skip Glen, and Peter Young among others, to remove himself on the grounds of financial bias. This situation was so embarrassing that the Chief Judge of the California Supreme Court ruled that henceforth a judge

defeated in an election could no longer be appointed for a special case.

So the case grinds on and on. The defendants who have "pro-per" rights to defend themselves (with the assistance of counsel) have been at various times, deprived of these rights because of fights in jail, which fights were really beatings by prison guards on various pretexts. Other prisoners have stated that bribes and privileges have been offered them to testify as to alleged confessions by the defendants.

The latest revelation in the defense case is the testimony of a woman prisoner that Marcy Eaglestaff, while in jail, told her the true story of the murder of George Aird by herself, Marvin Redshirt, and Molly Broussard, and that the defendants were not involved. The motive was their prejudice against the cab driver as a "nigger lover" because he told them he was married to a black woman, as well as the argument over the taxi fare.

The defense has completed its case and the DA is now attempting to rebut. And this travesty continues, where the D.A. of Ventura County has the power to disregard evidence of guilt at his own discretion for whatever motive, where the culprits caught red handed go scot free, where the judge prolongs a trial for his own financial benefit, where FBI dirty work intrudes, but the judge refuses defense evidence of this, where A. I. M. activists become innocent victims in a tragic farce, and where the tax-payers pay millions of dollars for an obvious miscarriage of justice.

The case will go to the jury shortly and a full courtroom of interested spectators on the 15th floor of the L. A. County Courthouse will be welcome to the defense and their counsel, one of whom is a long-time Venice resident.

"Indians... have so long been without any protection from the law that outrages and depredations upon them have become the practice in all white communities near which they live." "The Indians own lives are in constant danger." "In instances in which the Indians themselves have endeavored to get redress through the courts, they have, in the majority of cases, to the shame of the Southern California bar be it spoken, been egregiously cheated."

Abbott Kinney, Report on the
Mission Indians in California

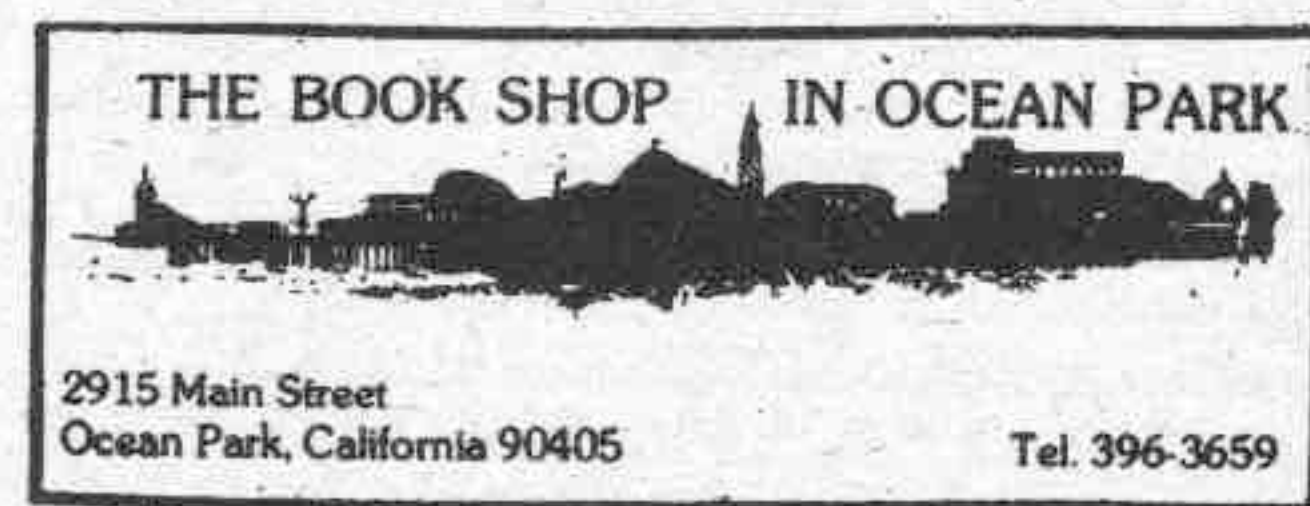
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Small Markets of Venice

The Trading Post

The Trading Post, on Main St. in Venice, is one of the many small, family type grocery stores which dot the Venice community. Along with such places as Nick's (Ocean Front Walk at Wave Crest), the L&M (at Rose), La Tapatia (across from the Fire Station on Venice Blvd.), and the Dell Market these small community groceries serve the needs of the people here, many of whom can't get out to the supermarkets on Lincoln Blvd. Each grocery has a distinct personality, marked in large measure by its proprietor.

Norm Heiserman runs the Trading Post. He came out to Venice from Washington D.C. 4 1/2 years ago and bought the store. With the closing of Safeway Circle and the Ritz Market on Windward, Central Venice was left without a market so Norm converted what was essentially a liquor store into a small grocery. About 98% of his business comes from the surrounding community. Seven of his eight employees are residents of Venice.

The store is located in one of our towns oldest brick buildings. Heiserman knows little about the structures history except that in the 1940's it was a machine shop, then it was an auto body shop.

Food in the Museum

Today the Trading Post looks like a museum. Stuffed animals - Pelicans and other birds, Moose heads, old rifles and leather pouches adorn the walls. An original mural done by local Chicanos (Raymond, Bobbie, and Gloria Barreno, Henry Vasquez, and Shirley Gomez) shows a scene of indian and trappers. Outside are four scenes of classic Chevy's. The artists suggested this theme to Norm as a way to keep the buildings' exterior graffiti free. The cars are favorites with those young people who also favor spray cans. The Trading post paid for the paint and for the work of the artists.

Norm describes himself as a civic minded person. He feels that the area has many problems which are not being addressed by the Councilperson. He thinks the area should have better police protection. He believes that high rents are a problem because they are forcing many low-middle class families in their 30's out of Venice. The high rents, he says, are not justified by the taxes paid on these properties. He doesn't know what can be done about the problem though.

Panhandling and Prostitution

Norm says that panhandling is also not good for his business. People are scarred away by certain unsavory types parked outside his store, but there is little he can do about that. Drugs are also a problem in the community which is not being addressed. As for the prostitution which was so visible over the past several years, Norm says he was certainly aware of it, since the block Main/Windward/ Pacific/ Westminster was particularly active, but he says he wasn't effected by it one way or the other

Dangerous Traffic on Main St.

Norm has been active in the recent attempts by local residents to get a traffic light at Horizon and Main. Several months ago a little girl was killed at the crossing and since then a number of serious accidents have occurred. Sunny Gould of Horizon is still in the hospital, in traction, with several broken bones, as a consequence of being hit by a car while in the crosswalk. Norm thinks that the provisional arrangements made by the City after the storm of protest raised by area residents, are insufficient. He thinks the Councilwomen should put in a traffic light, just like she did by Alans Market on Washington St., and he wonders to himself about challenging her at the next election. Venice, he says, needs to get behind one of its own if it ever expects to get the City services and attention it needs.

Shoplifting Plagues Businessmen

One of the problems businessmen face around Main and Windward is the problem of shoplifting. According to Norm one of the reasons Safeway and the Ritz both closed was because of extensive shoplifting. As an example Norm cites the following statistics. While the State normally allows businesses to claim shoplifting incurred losses of up to 1% of gross, he was allowed to claim 3% after an audit. And, he says, his losses were really more like 5%. Although alot of people who steal food are poor, he thinks that many do it just out of spite, to see if they can beat the man and the system. ***

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COASTAL COMMISSION

23

MOE STAVNEZER

The Coastal Commission has been around for almost half the life of the Beachhead and so have I. Since most of the articles I've done have been about coastal issues, this seems a good time to recall, and reminisce about, the people & issues of the past five years. There is little doubt that the Commission has helped shape the Venice of today and, though not so obvious, Venice has surely helped shape the Commission and the law.

The Beginning

I really don't know who in Venice "discovered" the Coastal Commission as an alternative to the status quo of the City (damn the community & full steam ahead) but at the time it was quite a find. One of the first names I heard was Allan Emkin of Legal Aid. Allan's interest then & now is housing for low income people. He was one of the first people in the state to argue that "all the people" included the poor. (In perspective it should be remembered that Prop. 20-which established the Commission- said not a word about housing for the poor.) My recollection is that he was our first coastal "expert." The First big permit I ever heard of involved a large development on the Thorton Av. parking lots. A group called L.O.V.E. in Venice went to the Coastal Commission & stopped that project- the community's first big victory. L.O.V.E. was (and throughout this meandering I know I'll forget to mention all those involved) Phil Bell, Lance Diskan & Jim Bickhart. L.O.V.E. became the North Beach Planning Task Force, which is where I got involved, and then expanded to include Madearis, Dave Stolzer, Alan Statman, Rob Kettell and others.

Very quickly other people got involved- especially in the canals. As it became obvious that the Commission might help in preventing, or more realistically in delaying, the destruction of the community, people began paying attention to it. A great deal of this coincides with the formation of the Venice Town Council. Marina del Rey was historically seen as a threat to Venice and when the same kind of expensive development began on the Peninsula, the Canals were obviously next. Enter Steve Clare, Marvena Kennedy, Ron Guenther, Bob Wells, Elizabeth Elder, Rick Davidson, David & Jolie, Judy Winer, Dave McCoy, Terry Timmons & Terry Donihue. They were among those who drew up plans, developed arguments, took photographs, and went to countless Commission hearings.

Its fun to remember, though difficult to convey, the amount of really creative energy that was generated by all these people in the first couple years. Venice people were at the cutting edge in both the permit decisions & in public input in the development of the Coastal Plan. Then as now, the stress was on preserving the community for those who lived in it, especially the poor. The North Beach Planning Task Force and the Canals Area Council created community plans and constantly testified at hearings. I remember 2 hearings most vividly. Both dealt with the part of the Coastal Plan regarding the continuation of the Coastal Commission. The construction unions brought busloads of hardhats who got a day's pay to pack the hall, stamp feet & threaten all of us who testified. The atmosphere of violence was so thick that it felt, to me, like a physical object.

Victories & Defeats

In those early days the major issues were City projects; The Venice Waterways Project which would have created a mini-Marina in the Canals; the widening of Venice Bl. which meant the destruction of all the housing on the median strip. We stopped them both. Those were the big victories. There were also smaller ones. We stopped the growing trend to convert apartments into condominiums, forced the City to close off Canal St & replace a palm tree (they had opened the street & destroyed the tree illegally), and many others. There were also, of course, defeats. Most memorable to me- mainly because of the poster on my wall- is the struggle to stop the destruction of an

old, beautiful oak tree so that an apartment could be built. All along the coast, Venice, like that tree, was a symbol of resistance against the wholesale destruction of a community.

As times & issues changed so did the people involved. The focus on the canals became more intense for private developers after the waterways project was scrapped. Enter Rueben & Noreen Press, Arnold Hansen, Monique Shick, Helen and Bert Fallon et al. Enter also the archetypical villains using a potent brew of money and the threat of violence to wedge an entrance into the development of the canals. They eventually won most of the battle but even now are not building because of a law suit against the Commission and the developers. Then there's the Silver Strand- 37 acres of land north of Washington St, east of Pacific, and adjacent to Ballona Lagoon; a proposed development of some 360 homes. The first 3 times this project came before the Commission it was denied. The fourth time, in as many years, it was approved with some stringent conditions meant to protect the lagoon and provide public access to the Peninsula beach. At every turn, no matter what compromises were suggested, the major land owners would not give an



Mary Lou Johnson: See her article on page 5.

inch. It is unfortunate that people who own 1 or 2 lots identified so closely & supported the greedy few. Here, as in many instances in Venice & along the coast, the Commission has served to balance environmental necessities against developmental pressures. (I saw an out-of-state bumper sticker that proclaimed "Saving the New River Is Progress"- it reminded me of the Silver Strand). But even this balance will result in some 300 expensive homes which will have a profound effect on all of Venice.

Throughout the past couple years permits have aroused the ire of a number of people & groups in various areas in Venice. People from North Beach, Oakwood, the Oxford Triangle and the Peninsula have appeared at the Commission to oppose a variety of developments. Many have been successful. Other people have appeared sporadically throughout the last 5 years depending on the project involved. Among them have been Linda Lucks, Arnold Springer and Carol Fondiller.

Right now, and during the past 6 months, a number of issues have emerged at the Commission, development on the Ocean Front in North Beach (especially on those lots which are now used for parking), demolishing older buildings (where rents are still fairly low) to build new ones, and of course, the proposed retail/office center at Main & Rose. The Commission, especially at the State level, has been good on the first two while the third has yet to be decided.

What It's All Meant

I think its appropriate to try to evaluate the significance and success of the entire experience. I am not, however, an unbiased observer. I've been involved far too long for that and so this must be from a personal as well as a community point of view. I think that the major significance has been that the Commission has provided a forum at which we could raise many issues (low income housing, rising rents & taxes, community character, parking and traffic problems etc) on an ongoing basis. Its a forum we don't usually have and I believe that we have



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used it well and effectively. By doing so we have asserted some control over the present and future of Venice. But even this is a mixed blessing. The significance of having a constant forum has also meant constant monitoring and involvement and has been, for the entire community, a seemingly never ending drain on time and energy. Because it often means taking time off from work to get to a Commission meeting and spending money which most of us cannot afford, it is understandably difficult to sustain a high level of commitment. But government in general does not make it very easy to actively participate in its processes though I think the Coastal Commission does better than most. I also think that many of us were, and still are, naive about our expectations of what the Commission- which after all is a government agency- would or could do. It has certainly not prevented Venice from becoming a more affluent community and, through some of its permit decisions, has contributed to this trend (most notably on the Peninsula & in the Canals). On the other hand it has either stopped or scaled down development which was clearly the most detrimental to Venice and the millions who come to its beach.

For me, and many others, its been a first experience dealing with government decision making. I had to deal with and overcome a fear of speaking in public. I had to learn to make "rational" arguments concisely since speaking time is limited by rules! But those are only skills and are far less important than more personal feelings. The coastal stuff was my introduction to a marvelous community of people who are good friends. People I love and respect more than any group I've ever known. It has also put me in touch with people from many other communities (mainly through working in PACE) all along the coast, to know them as people rather than places and to work and play with them on many different levels. Its taught me that "success" is both exhilarating and sweet but is too often fleeting. And that "failure" is dismal but not devastating. Though it may sound maudlin, I have a very classic love/hate feeling about my involvement over the past 5 years and that feeling applies to the community as well as to the Commission.

Happy Anniversary

In closing I'd like to thank every person who has ever contributed to the life of the Beachhead. I learned a few weeks ago that the average life of a community newspaper is 4 editions. This is your 100th and there isn't a community paper in the area that doesn't, in one way or another, measure itself against this paper. What you've accomplished is a vital affirmation of peoples' will to hear and be heard. Eclectic, wonderful, radical, free and sloppy are among the countless adjectives applied to the Beachhead. But they all miss the point which, to me, is that you continue to exist as a very real symbol to and for this very extraordinary community of people. Thank you, thanks a lot. *

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MEMORIES OF NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES IN VENICE

by marge buckley

I came to the Venice Office of Los Angeles Neighborhood Legal Services (LANLSS) in 1967. The office had been in operation about a year. It, like the other two offices in Watts and East Los Angeles, had an open door policy -- which meant that anyone was free to walk in the door seeking legal services. Everyone saw a lawyer and received advice, while only the poor who met the rigid poverty standards could receive further services. Actually, the constant flow of people into the office had created an Augean stable. People came in, cases were taken, but the backlog was overwhelming.

As Director, I immediately closed the doors of the office to try and determine how to meet the needs of the community more efficiently with the small staff and resources.

We became a community office in self-defense. We could not possibly serve everyone who was eligible, or satisfy individuals or the community. One of the first things we did was to begin to relate to the community instead of community service organizations. We formed an Advisory Board made up of Community people from the black community, the Chicano community, the Jewish elderly community and the hip community. An important element in the organization were members of Free Venice (a radical group of anti-war activists). The Board helped to make real decisions, such as what kinds of cases to take: law reform, class actions against government bureaucracy, or individual cases, landlord tenant problems, consumer problems, divorces.

The community began to trust us as we participated in its struggles. One of the first of these was the defense of the Venice Service Center. The Center was unique. It included many agencies, state, local and private, all under one roof, thus eliminating some of the frustrations involved in being sent from place to place. More important, its director made the Center one which belonged to the people, no 9-to-5 hours.

In the summer of 1968, Reagan threatened the Center with a severe budget cut. The entire community rallied with demonstrations and picket lines which the Venice LANLSS staff joined. The attorneys sat on the cement floor all night to give legal assistance to the demonstrators in the event of police interference. It was a long hot summer but when the demonstrations and negotiations were over, the people had won. The Center remained.

In April of 1969, the Los Angeles Free Press held a free rock concert on the Venice beach. On a beautiful clear day, 14,000 men, women and children gathered to join the "Venice Love-In" (as it came to be called). Many bands played on the Avalon Ballroom Pier, while narcotics agents, dressed in flowered shirts and straw hats, wandered through the crowd, pointing out pot smokers to officers who watched from hotel rooftops.

About 3:30 p.m., the crowd was asked to sit down, when the "narcos" became obvious. A small scuffle with about 50 people North of the pier, led the police to declare an unlawful assembly. Most of the people were unable to hear the order to disperse. The police immediately began to drive people off the beach and onto Speedway where they were caught in a trap. In the ensuing melee, many people were injured and over 130 were arrested on numerous charges.

The police continued to harass and beat persons who were anywhere near the beach all night and the next day. Many requests for help came from the community and the black community in particular.

LANLSS went all out in its efforts to help the community in this crisis. The office remained open evenings and weekends to co-ordinate the criminal defenses and to push a civil suit for an injunction against the LAPD to end

the harassment of the community. The office was staffed by volunteers from the community who formed the Venice Defense Committee (VDC).

The following weekend, members went out into the community with a bullhorn, urging witnesses to call LANLSS. Police beat and arrested a local activist. I was called to the rescue and immediately contacted the police, the D.A. and the media. Five hours later he was free and we became better acquainted. In December, we were married on the beach and celebrated with the community in the LANLSS office.

During this campaign, VDC members would staff the LANLSS office around the clock to respond to arrests in the area. Their effectiveness was proved in a funny experience. The volunteer had gone to the scene of an arrest and from a respectable distance called to advise the arrestee to call LANLSS, 392-4177. The young man shouted back, "What's that". Again, the number, and again, the shouted "What?". At that point, the officer took a piece of paper, wrote the number, handed it to the arrestee and said, "Call this number when you've been booked." Not all of the LAPD were as kind. The office was under constant surveillance and uniformed officers were seen taking down license plate numbers of cars parked near the office.

The civil suit which was filed in the federal court also had far reaching effects. It was the first time a lawsuit had been filed which classified hippies as a class, and secondly it dared to demand an injunction against the LAPD. The court did not understand the use of that suit. We did not expect that a federal judge would issue an injunction against the police. But the suit was important. It became a rallying point which enabled us to reach the media so that the struggles which were going on in Venice could be aired to the broader community and thus win us allies. Although it took four years, the campaign including the lawsuit was effective. The captain and some of the more brutal officers in the Venice LAPD station were transferred out.

The Beachhead in its early days was hammered out in meetings at our office located at 1711 Pacific Avenue. And after the often heated meetings, the actual paste-up of the layout was done on the floor of the library.

LANLSS also participated with the community in its efforts to stop the City of Los Angeles efforts to dispossess the elderly Jews who lived in the old hotels along the oceanfront, the blacks in the Oakwood area in their small homes and four-family units, the Chicanos in the barrio bordering on the ghetto, the hippies

who lived along the beach and in the canal areas. The stories of the struggles along the canals have filled the pages of the Beachhead and the staff of LANLSS was proud to be mentioned alongside the other organizations. It was a constant struggle on many fronts, with the City constantly pushing on the grounds of "upgrading" the community.

The Community House was a residence in the canals which the City ordered demolished. LANLSS helped the community to win the right to remodel the house once the owners agreed to donate it for the use of the whole Venice community.

A hearing was held before the Los Angeles Building Department in downtown Los Angeles. The hearing room was packed with both the Venice canals residents and realtors and property owners. Tension ran high. The realtors and real property developers got up and demanded that the building be demolished and that we be refused a permit. One builder hysterically announced to the Building Department that real property and its



Marge Buckley and Rick Davidson

owner was not safe in Venice. That the police department was unable to protect them. He told of how the Free Venice hooligans had held up constructions of one of his buildings by bending all of the building rods so that the foundation could not be properly laid. The tone of the real property owners was hysterical. Yet sanity prevailed, and the City Building Department gave us the permit to remodel the building.

People then offered their services, donated materials, and together the house was rebuilt including one of the early murals painted by a local artist. The house together with the lots provided an area in which the Free Venice Food Co-op operated, in which a community recycling project operated, a community hot-line was housed, a community garden complete with compost heap, and an area in which festivals and community gatherings were held.

Another interesting battle occurred when Safeway complained about the amount of business which the Free Venice Food Co-op was taking from them. The City attempted to force the Co-op to pay a business tax, and stated that we should pay taxes as did the other co-operatives. When we threatened to sue, after a very "threatening" hearing in which Venice

Continued on p. 26

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Profile of the VENICE CIVIC UNION

The Civic Union is one of the older property owner groups here in Venice. It does not appear to be dominated by real-estate interests or 'here today, gone tomorrow speculators', people who, too often, seem to determine the fate of our community. The membership of the Venice Civic Union is concerned about Venice and its future from the point of view of Venice residents. The Beachhead reprints here, in part, an article which appeared in the organizations' Newsletter of Feb. We think it is indicative of the Civic Union's 'point of view'.

After the Green Machine, What?

Ideas as to what to do with the Venice area run the gamut from restoring it to exactly as it was at the turn of the Century, to the Green Machine Modular Home idea of Glen Small. City Hall has already offered an open-arms reception to this trailer or modular housing unit enclosed in a tent-covered multi-level, environmentally sound, pyramid structure, for the City owned-median strip of Venice Blvd.

A little less dramatic, but far more encompassing are real estate efforts to turn Venice into an extension of the Marina.

Those walking the stagnant, infested canals, or pushing around the refuse-laden sidewalks on Windward, littered with trash and dog waste, can hardly believe that a fairyland once existed in their paths--complete with canals, amusement parks, elegant restaurants and hotels--the dance hall capital of the world, with tourist cottages nearby and the Venice Short Line bringing in some times 80,000 visitors every weekend to jam the Ocean Front Walk.

Various organizations seek to rebuild Venice and cope with its problems; to name a few, the Chamber of Commerce, the Canal Association, the Women's Chamber of Commerce, and the Venice Civic Union. Because of the divergency of opinion of each group, progress is slow. City Hall tends to turn a deaf ear on such divergent opinions.

The Venice Civic Union has a unique stance. While other organizations go wild with their planning and building ideas, the Civic Union smiles wanely and exerts its impassioned opinion that it is best to do nothing until Venice housekeeping is brought up to standard. The Civic Union views Venice as a woman who is a terrible mother and housekeeper, but has visions of becoming a movie star. What price glory? What price Venice?

Thousands of civic minded, middle-income Venetians have left Venice because of crime, littered streets, dogs running loose, and high taxes. Real Estate interests have had a field day while the most concerned citizens feel they are forced to flee. How many might have stayed despite high offers for their property if the City was clean and crime controllee? How many more will leave because of these conditions?

The most tangible issue begun and carefully executed by the Venice Civic Union was the proposal for a new public library at Westminster Park. The Park is located near banks, post office, shopping, and the beach. City Hall wants the new library at the old jail house site. Remember: two wrongs do not make a right; tearing down an old historic building to replace it with a new library next to a noisy firehouse on a busy highway is dangerous to pedestrians, especially children and old people."

The Venice Civic Union meets on the 4th Tues of each month in the Community Room, Great Western Savings and Loan, on Lincoln Blvd. You can write them at PO Box 444, Venice.

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(Irma, cont. from page 17)

for him. You couldn't fill him up, no chance! Thanksgiving Day he was over to Blaise's --you know, that little restaurant with the tables outside. He was sittin on the sidewalk just DROOLIN. And the people's feedin him from their tables. He'd eat from one, then he'd go to th'other. Skip said when he come home that night, he was so full he wouldn't even eat turkey.

Well, he's disappeared. Been gone over three weeks. We've called all the pounds and everything. Everybody loved him. Even the customers come in sayin "Poor Ben is gone." So if you can do this, remind if anybody's seen Ben, to give us a call or let us know. Somebody might know where he's at.

"...you know Ben, that big black dog? Well, he's disappeared... so remind if any-one's seen him, to let us know..."

Ben'd sit out here in front so much, Skip used to say "Well, that liquor store is his." What he'd do, he'd watch all the winos -- especially Tom, 'cause Tom was a dog-lover. He'd come in and get a sandwich, and old Ben'd wait for him out front. Just the minute he'd start to the beach, why Ben'd go with him. He was eatin with all of 'em.

'Course we're a bunch of screwball dog-lovers down here anyway. Venice sure has its dogs, and they're all cute. I got 3 at home. Ted loved dogs too. He said if he had the money, he'd have a dog farm and take all the old stray dogs to care for.

(to next column)

The Beachhead thanks...

Carol Baum
Angelo and Ethel Bertolini
Myra D. Coodley
Lance Diskan
Feminist Women's Health Center
Lawrence "Jesse" Glazer
Israel Levin Center
Mary Lou Johnson
Laurie Newman
Precision Roller Works
Joe Schulman
Leo Smith
Joe Springer and Jack Weinroth
Temple of Man
Venice Town Council
Westside Women's Clinic
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and several anonymous contributors for financial assistance in the preparation of this issue.

Keep up with what's on around town.

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Changes? Oh, sure. I think it's getting a lot better than it was. These used to be some rough streets, but I've weathered the worst of it. Venice is really coming to the front now. Is it gonna lose its special character? No --, I don't think so.

Oh, it's fun here. 'Course I don't get out on the boardwalk much, I don't have time to. I'm too tied down to this store. But occasionally I do, I'll walk to the beach. You know the part I like? The canals. I love to drive down and look at the canals.

At my age -- over 21 -- I should retire. But I'd miss the people and I'd miss the business. So I'm going to stay with it a while at least. I don't want to be in a rocking chair.

I've always worked, honey. I always found jobs, even during the depression. (Smiling:) I'll be telling my age here in a minute.

I worked 18 years in the garment factories, supporting my mother. I got into it when I was 13; I didn't go through high school. It's a tough job, you ain't kiddin. I feel sorry for these little gals that work in the factory over here -- in the alley, on the next street. They make blouses and things. Most of 'em are Spanish you know; half of 'em can't talk English. I'll ask 'em if they work over there and they tell me they do. And my heart just aches, 'cause that's hard work.

Somebody'll ask me, "Where's your liquor store?" And I'll say, "Venice." "Oh boy," they think, "eeeeuu, that's a jumping-off place." They just have a fit. They frown on Venice. Why? Because every time anything's done or said, they give Venice a black eye. Like when they make these screwy films, they come down here and film all of 'em -- you know that. So that's what makes the bad name.

Now if they spent some time in Venice, they'd know it's different. If I wasn't already living in the other place, I'd love to live here myself. Well, I'm here three-thirds of the time anyhow.

I don't know how much longer I'll stay. I'll just hang around's long as I can. That's it.



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denizens appeared in full regalia, the City chose to forget its taxes rather than to lose a suit and possibly a lot of taxes.

Another semi-successful battle in the struggle to prevent the plastic Marina from overtaking Venice occurred in connection with the development South of Washington. The developer, a self-proclaimed liberal, had supported an Ordinance to provide for relocation costs. He then arranged for eviction of the tenants of an old trailer park, "Trailer City", prior to the effective date of the Ordinance.

Some of the residents came to Free Venice and LANLSS asking for help. And battle was joined. The tenants began organizing with the help of Free Venice. LANLSS provided legal help, and meetings were held with the landlord and developer. In the course of the long legal battle, many of the tenants left, but 15 of them held out to the end. Finally, after long legal battles, demonstrations and the burning of a bulldozer used in an attempt to forcibly eject the tenants, the developer gave in and paid reparations to the tenants.

The office furnished a variety of individual services to the community as well as participating in community struggles. In addition to divorces, defense of consumer actions, assistance in preventing or stalling evictions, there was also advice given on military law, the rights of those who did not wish to participate in the war on the Vietnamese people.

Another struggle which marked the beginning of the end for the concept of a neighborhood legal center which was responsive to the community involved a case which came to be known as the Tuscon Five. A number of Venice radicals were arrested in connections with a grand jury investigation of the buying of dynamite in Arizona. Although all of the people who were to be questioned as witnesses lived in the Venice area, they were all ordered to appear before the grand jury in Tuscon, Arizona, where they had neither contacts, help nor support. They appealed to the office for assistance, and after a discussion with various community organizations and with the office staff, we agreed to furnish legal support to the "Tuscon Five" as members of our community. This was seen as the type of harassment used by governmental agencies to break up and discourage community people.

The defense of the "Tuscon Five" led to extreme criticism, coupled with the fact that Nixon had finally turned his attention to the Office of Economic Opportunity and made drastic changes there, changing the emphasis from community participation to "service to the community".

There had been several attempts

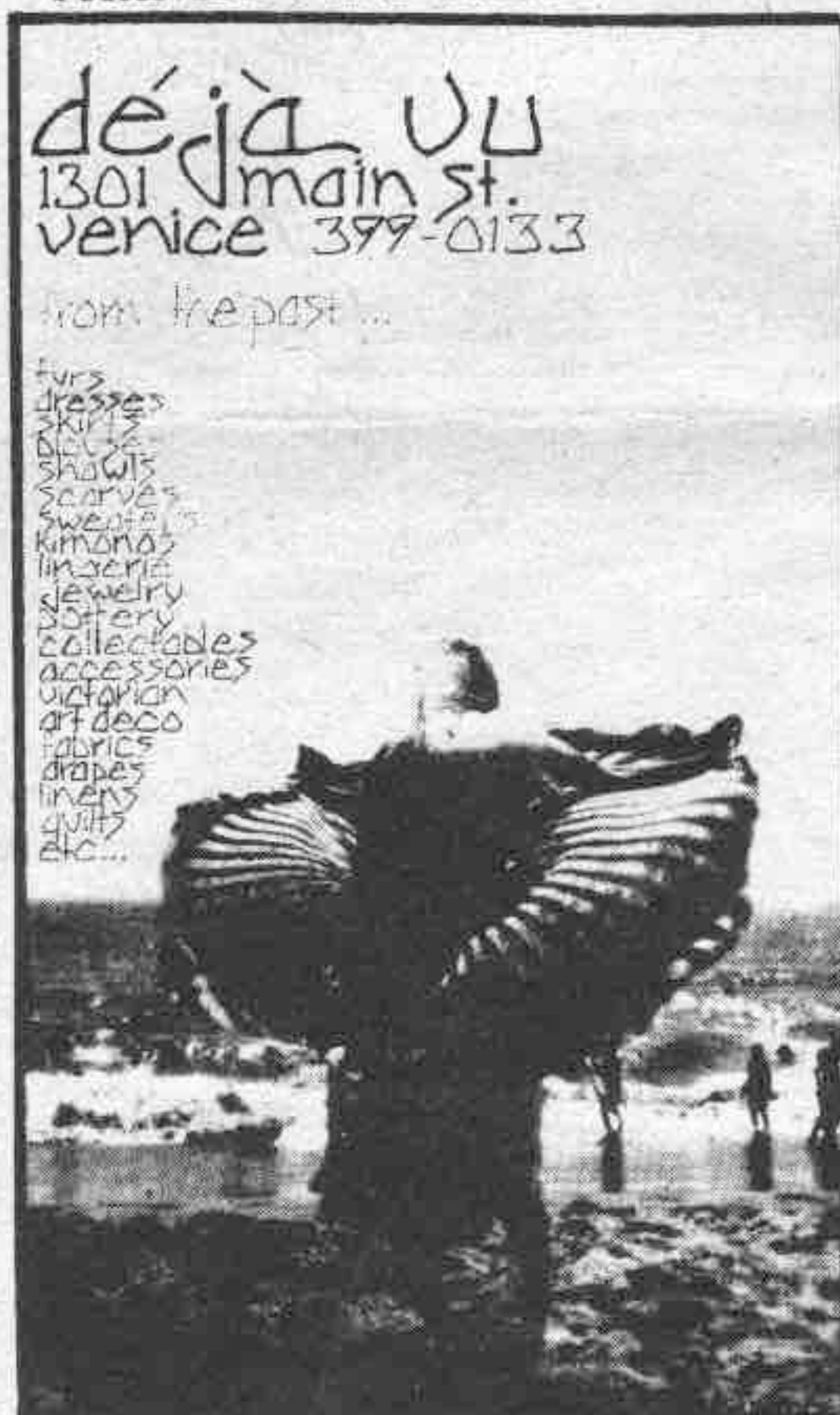
Continued on p. 27



Morrie Rosen, holding sign, and friend.
Photo by Gerry Goldstein.



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THE ELDERLY OF VENICE...

26

or what happened to the
class of 1905?

by Morrie Rosen

Prologue... "To Posterity", Bertolt Brecht.

"Indeed I live in the dark ages!
.... A smooth forehead betokens
A hard heart. He who laughs
Has not yet heard
The terrible tidings.

Ah, what an age it is
When to speak of trees is almost a crime
For it is a kind of silence about injustice!
And he who walks calmly across the street,
Is he not out of reach of his friends
In trouble?

The cattle boats somehow crossed the ocean and from them poured the hopeful humans at Ellis Island, New York City, U.S.A., from East European nations, among them, Jewish humans, young and old, at the turn of the century.

They were supposed to be the class of 1905. But a sad and funny thing happened on the way to the school. They never got there. Instead their need to survive in the new strange land, U.S.A., forced them into sweatshops and factories, women and children along with the men, working, more than often, seven days a week, piece work and take home work, twelve, fourteen hours a day. And somehow, the class of 1905, the class that never did attend school, obliterated the sweatshops and its oppressive working conditions, founded the craft and later industrial unions of the AFL, CIO, and other independent labor organizations.

And so the non-alumni of the class of 1905 helped raise America, as they helped raise their children - with their sweat, sacrifice, and determination to make America the beautiful reality from their childhood nightmares. Their children, unlike themselves, went to schools, emerged as doctors, lawyers, and accountants... and drifted away, light years away, from their parents.

And, the no-class of 1905 drifted too. They came to Venice in the '40's and '50's, fifteen to twenty thousand of them, now their average age was sixty to seventy. And they thrived in their freedom, and their unique and sublime sub-culture along the North Beach of Venice, and they and other elderly represented 90% of the Venice population. They did not "belong" to Venice. They were Venice!

And then the class of 1965 and the class of 1975, and the classes in-between and the classes thereafter, mercilessly, outrageously, and efficiently, decimated the non-class of 1905. And as the evening sun sets, the indescribably beautiful evening sunsets so gracefully descended on the Venice horizon, only fifteen hundred elderly, now in their eighties and nineties, could see the colorful spectrum.

Some humans, they resemble humans, say that the class of 1905, the non-class of 1905 that is, no longer are relevant, that they have outlived their lives, the class of 1905... too bad, too sad, that so many of them subsist on less than \$3000 per annum. Rentals have to be controlled by property owners, not by the non-class of 1905... Profits are primary in a free enterprise America. Let the 1905'ers roam the land they built.

Of course, away from their Venice. And getting less and less, scream silently; where shall we sleep, who will help us? And one Venice haven for the non-class of 1905, Israel Levin Senior Center, screams, not so silently, not so silently, to elected officials on all levels - city, county, state, and federal - and bureaucrats and anyone else... and their response is the same, with slight variations - "the housing problem is too complex... we need time to solve the dilemma."

Epilogue... selections from Bertold Brecht

You, who shall emerge from the flood
In which we are sinking.

Think -
When you speak of our weaknesses
Also of the dark time
That brought them forth.
There shall remain of these cities but the wind
that blew through them!



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to fire me and to cut the budget of the office, curbing their activities in the community, but in each case the community had rallied to the support of the office and demanded that the Board of Directors permit us to continue.

Finally, in February of 1972, Evans & Nowak's syndicated column was devoted to the Venice office of LANLSS and stated categorically that the LANLSS program would be closed down because of our radical activities. That article appeared all over the country except in the Los Angeles Times where I was informed that they were not publishing it because it was libelous. All of those of us who had been named in the article offered to sign releases to permit the printing of that article, but the Los Angeles Times in its usual fearless manner refused to print that particular article.

Later that year it was announced that the LANLSS program was being closed because of its inefficiency and its funds were transferred to a more competent organization, Legal Aid. To those in the know the words "more conservative" were substituted.

It was the end of an era. We had stepped on many toes. We had won some small battles, and we had lost some. But the most important thing about that period was the struggles that went on, the attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, to bring the community together to work on and attempt to solve its own problems.

★★★

GARY, cont. from pg.17

I'm not gonna leave. And neither is a lot of us. We're just gonna stay here.

I used to shine shoes out here on Windward Avenue. I started in 1945. There'd be workin' guys in a hurry, they'd tell me "Here, Shuckin Gary, shine my shoes" and they'd pay me good. Or there'd be some artists or hippie types-- no, not hippie, that's a bad word; they were creative. More bohemian -- creative artists.

See, first they had bohemians, they called them; they came out from San Francisco and started a little art colony here, you know. Then the Beatnik thing came and that was hip, because that was music and art. Then the hippies was mostly just drug-oriented, you know, not that much art really, just party party. That kind of was the downfall. That brought the police heat you know. And then the money started and it changed ALL this.

DAYS OF ST. CHARLES PAST

Do you know when I lived here what this was? It was a wino hotel. You had to step over winos comin' up all the stairs. The first floor was like heroin and girls, maybe a little gambling. Upstairs was speed and marijuana. There were some murders here too.

I could of come in, in the old days, slept in the halls or gone up on the roof -- if it wasn't raining -- and slept in a sleeping bag. Get up in the morning, go down to a whore's door, knock on it an' say "Honey, guess what? I need some breakfast, can you help me?" Boom. "Yeah Gary, come on in, I got a hotplate." Some eggs 'n' shit, you know what I mean?

Right up til a couple of years ago, there was hustlin' girls all up and down these streets, doin' a public service man, come on. People got a stereotype about prostitutes -- you know, she's a junkie, a bitch, blah, blah. No, uh-uh, that's not true. A lot of 'em got 2 or 3 kids at home they're feedin', know what I mean? And no old man, he ran off with somebody or something crazy.

God love 'em man, I miss that. It really pisses me off to tell you the truth they ran the prostitutes out of town. I don't understand that--

to me that's ugly. Whatever happened to free enterprise?

...WHERE THE DEBRIS MEETS THE SEA?

Yeah, I love it here, I do. But we got our problems. See, Venice is where the debris meets the sea. This is where artists don't paint, models don't model, poets don't poet, musicians don't make music. You know, it's kind of stagnant in a way, artistically, last few years. What they're doin', they're usin' the artistic facade to justify their own existence, and they don't create anymore. They just say "I live in Venice, I'm hip, boom boom boom" and they don't DO any damn thing. So it's stagnating, like a pool of water, man -- there's not that much life. There's still a couple of frogs sayin' "Wow man, is my pond dying?" That's what's happening in Venice to me, it's dying, it's changing. It's changing too much for me, too radical, too quickly.

I hope you're not watching a city die, but I'm afraid you are. It's the truth. 'Cause the money comes in and everybody thinks, alright, they're gonna DO something. Okay, like, look at the Sidewalk Cafe. When they first opened it I said, "All RIGHT, Venice is waking up man. They're gonna rebuild this old place and make something hip for the neighborhood, right? Well, they charge so damn much money, can't nobody from Venice eat there! You gotta save up to eat breakfast! Come on, that's ridiculous, we LIVE here."

CYCLERS CONTRIBUTE TO WINE FUN

Remember when they built the bike path? I thought it was a good idea, it would be for Venice people. This way they can ride a bike and not run over the dogshit or the kids on the boardwalk, you know? Hip hooray, I was for it.

Next thing you know we got nothin' but Malibu comin' from one side and Marina del Rey comin' from the other, and ain't nobody from Venice ridin' on the motherfuckin' bike path! So we decided one day, to hell with 'em all man, we're gonna charge a toll. We did, we strung a rope right across the bike path. Bunch of crazies, me, Bob Howard... and when people come up we'd just tell 'em, "Hey, you know what? The only way you're gonna get across man, is pay your dues. We let 'em give whatever they wanted. No set price, anything in to the Venice Wine Fun. The Venice Wine Fun we called it, no "d".

SECRETS OF AN IMPOVERISHED GOURMET

I tell you what, man, anybody ever eat Venice duck? When you're really poor and hungry, you can always go to the canals and get a duck. (Loud laughing.) That's the truth, think of it: roast duck, pressed duck, how you want it? Manchurian Chinese duck, country style duck, how do you like it?

Sure, I done that, I been so damn hungry I had to. And I'm not a panhandler. As long as you know me, you ain't never seen me walk up to somebody and say, give me a dime. I ain't got nothin', I go hungry 2 or 3 days before I ASK somebody for something. (Slyly.) Steal it, yeah.... (laughs). I go down to the Marina, man, go on a yacht and take a radio and eat for a week, know what I mean? To hell with 'em man, what are they doin' in my Marina?

Okay. They took and bought a swamp and made it look kinda cute, added water to it and called it Marina. Fuck no, it's Mud Creek to me. That's where I used to shoot ducks when I was a kid, come on. And they took that land and made it look pretty, that would be nice if they did it the way Israel did, if they built kibbutzes, hooray.

"...THE MONSTER IS EATING THE FLOWER."

But godammit, when they got to finance they're funny little trip by hurtin' poor people, fuck 'em. I will steal from 'em. All I'm doin' is rearranging property. (singing:) Robin Hood, Robin Hood, feared by the bad, loved by the good... -- you know what I mean? Check it out. The words to that are really applicable to this situation, man, and all the junkies and thieves know that.

Why don't they draw a damn line and have Marina Marina and Venice Venice, and we won't have no trouble. I know we wouldn't. You know why we go down to the Marina to steal? Every Venice hometown thief, that's a professional -- I'm not talkin' about little kids or strangers from out of town -- we all steal from the Marina, you know? Because they got it comin'. They're kickin' old ladies out on the street in Venice. And then they're going down on their yachts and kick back and relax? FUCK 'EM. I'm stealin' their rings, their radios, and everything else I can. I'd take their whole fuckin' yacht if I thought I could beat the Coast Guard.

I don't care what they do in Marina del Rey --but keep it in Marina del Rey. Do NOT siphon money off the poor people in Venice to support a rich trip. And that's exactly what they're doin'. Some people don't know it man, it's because they're politically, socially, economically BLIND, man, you know, they just don't SEE how the monster is

(Gary concludes next page.)

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MAP



REFLECTIONS ON MY VENICE CHILDHOOD

28

by Johanna Johnson

Hypothesis: Growing up in a radical, braindrain, rowdy, mess of debris and Pacific Ocean leads to permanent sentiment and admiration of the obscure and chaotic.
Conclusion: Once a Venetian, always a Venetian.

They tell me that it's a dog's world. I smile and say, "Yeah!" They can't understand my unconcerned grin. Far out! A dog's world!

Did you ever see dogs running loose on Venice beach? It's great. They fly along, rough and tumbling, sand spraying, barking, pure chaos. The sun sets and you are just walking along and for a moment you are caught between day and night, remembering and forgetting, up and down, in and out.

Not So Long Age

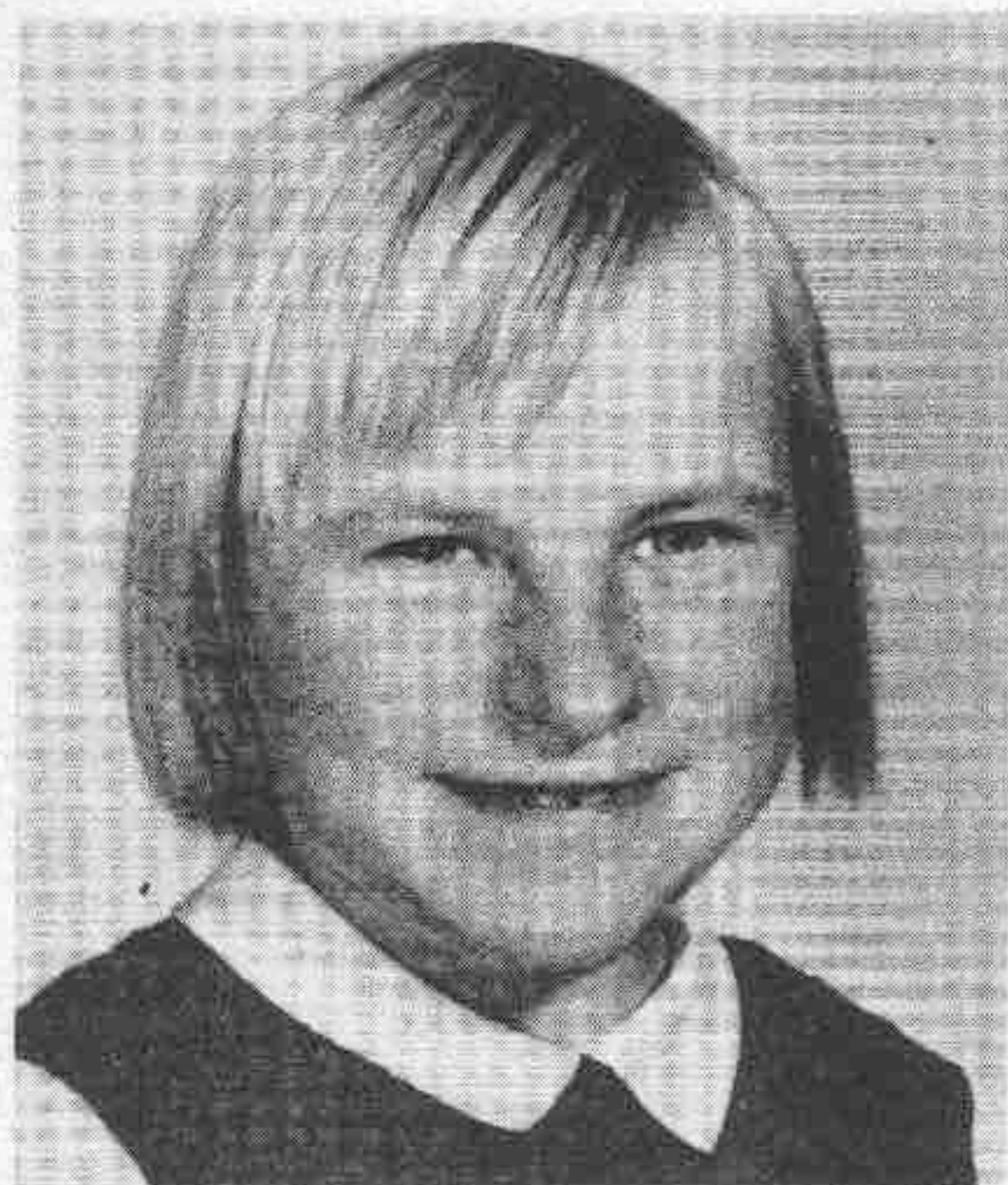
I'm walking south between the lifeguard station and the pier. I look up at the ridiculous condos and they look back at ridiculous me with the same puzzled look as those who talk about this world of dogs we live in. But, they don't know. I know. I know that 10 years ago Jay Adams stepped on a big old nail in the vacant lot that the condos now occupy.

"Hey, Jay. Where ya goin'?" (He just kept on walking.)

"Jay!" Jay was a very independent bugger and I knew that ya went home to get a kiss and a band-aid when ya stepped on a nail, so off he went.

I often spent mornings catching crabs off the jetty. You had to trick 'em----give 'em the upper hand. (Venice kids are sly.) First you show 'em a stick and they, being pompous creatures, grab it for all they're worth; then - Zap! --You stick 'em in a jar. Within a couple hours you'll have a jar full of pissed-off crabs.

The same basic procedure can be used to catch the fish in the canals. I was doing this one warm week-end, clambering down Linnie Canal with my catch of fish and wine bottles, only to be confronted by three chronologically superior and vicious peers - pushing a shopping cart. I must have looked pretty crazy, frantically searching for a place to hide as I realized the doom they implied, and I looked even crazier climbing out of the canal, after getting chauffeured there by these same three snot noses in their wire vehicle. Then I was pissed off. (Venice kids get first hand experience with the Golden Rule.) Oh, well, mom fixed 'em up pretty good when we finally caught up with 'em!



Venice Summer Classics

What it all boils down to is that the Marinas and Afflu-Hips and the plans and permits just don't know this stuff about Venice. Take my conclusion: "Once a Venetian, always a Venetian" All that means to the 'white shorts and sassy' is a new best-seller T-shirt for their boutique.

Speaking of T-shirts (which, along with cut-offs) were summer classics for Venice beach wear, we didn't give a damn what the T-shirt said since it would be lost by the end of the month anyway. All we cared about was that they be raggedy, as the combination of bleached-blondie and raggedy was irresistible to unwary tourists into photography, who could be hustled for untold

quantities of hamburgers and snow cones. Venice kids are enterprising and feisty in a special way. A political, self-righteous, innocently decadent kind of feisty, having learned from X-Swami-X how to outrage and inform.

High School Freak-Outs

Marianne Haney (later to become one of Mark Twain Jr. High's most prominent stone freaks, circa 1973) punched me out in '68 for having the audacity to wear Levis after school. Parker Herman is one of my best friends. In '67 he introduced himself by snatching my lunch (a hot dog) and firing it at my head. Years later we were inseparable. Playing at being high and organic. Making our stab at rock and roll with Ronald Manfredo (a burned-out 6th grader who played guitar with Jimi Hendrix when he was 9!) Running the streets and acting crazy. God! We were beautiful!

Teen-Age Idols of Venice

Jay Adams was a prime contributor to the consistent turmoil. Hopping trams every day to P.O.P. with our noses so sunburned and peeling that you couldn't believe they were still attached to our faces. Jay making bizarre demands of the people on the beach. His bleached blonde hair strapped like dental floss around his head was insurance that people would find him irresistibly cute. And, he was! He even seemed angelic when throwing smashed peaches at the old men on the boardwalk. All the teen-age surfer girls were in love with him. (Still are!) That kid was Venice from head to toe.

Children of Paradise

What a childhood environment! I look around Portland and I think what a bore it would be to be a kid here. There's not much to be amazed by. And then, I remember Venice.

Body-surfing; sunburn; the mystery of Gold's Gym; the threats of hell and damnation from the Hand's of God Ministry; attacking bulldozers in the original Robert Kennedy vest pocket park; Green Power love-ins at the beach; water balloons; skate boarding at the Pavillion; pool hopping in the Marina; Shehady's; Pacific Avenue in the summer jammed with cars - their radios blaring; Deltee Crawford, the black Mayor of Venice, also known as Diablo or Grampa; and all held together by warm nights at the jetty watching yet another glorious sunset.

And the Revolution

Finally becoming a canal resident, disgusted by my surroundings, certain it was all a facade and a farce; playing devils advocate for a mind-fuck; going to Venice High; bailing Mom out of jail because she attacked a bulldozer; going after Ed White with a hatchet and a can of Mace because he called me emotionally disturbed (what did he know, anyway?) More sunsets at the beach, but now accompanied by a 3 or 4 mile jog.

Oh, Venice. I miss you. Why am I here in Portland? (And then I remember Marty's saxophone.)

Keep Strong! Hold Off! I Love You!
Portland, Ore.
1978

GARY, cont. from pg. 27

Like a lot of the old people on fixed incomes and things, look what they've done. Like that rent strike we lost. They raised the rent 110% in one month with NO improvement on that property, just to kick the old people out so they can make it new and fancy and invite the rich Marina kids in.

And I don't think you can stop it any other way except for violence, I really don't. We tried it legally -- went to court -- we lost. We demonstrated. We lost. We had people sign petitions. We lost. Nobody cared enough. We lost because we didn't get enough votes, enough signatures. We LOST. So I think the only way to win is burn down the fuckin building. I don't see any other way. We've gone every other way, you know?

Can you print that? Sure, honey, you can print anything you want. The police know all about me, you can't tell them a secret.

I could tell you about the police, though.

They're cruel and brutal, that's the truth. I hate 'em, with a passion. I've seen the things they do. I have a deep hatred for them because I know what they are. It's not a prejudice -- that's something based on opinions, preconceived. No no. I have personal experience, I know what animals they are, I know how bad they treat people. They roust me 7 times in 6 days, right? Just because I'm here: Gary Gardner, they found him again. Or Don. Or Bob Howard. Or anybody, it could be anybody. I live in this body, and it's the same body of anybody else they want to run out of Venice. I'm not even a separate entity to them, I'm just part of a symbol man, I'm just something they HATE, because I'm not rich. They don't understand how I function, so they think I'm being detrimental to the community.

"YOU KNOW BINGO - SHE DON'T TAKE NO SHIT!"

Talkin about people, they beat the fuck out of Bingo one time. She was walkin home from Doug's Liquor Store, and the police came by and started fuckin with her. "Whad'ya got in the bag, bitch?" That was their first sentence. Ain't that cold-blooded? To her? She was one of the finest women God ever breathed breath into. She lived with my cousin ten years, man.

Well, they took the bag and dumped it all on the hood of the car, broke bottles and all that shit. Just because she was Bingo, man. She represents poor people, she has no social status in the community financially, know what I mean? She has not enough money to back up a fight, so they can do any fuckin thing they want.

So Bingo got mad -- she don't take no shit ever, you know --called 'em a bastard or something -- some verbal abuse. VERBAL. That does NOT reconcile an asskickin, Goddammit, to a girl! They turned around and beat her up. Gave her a black eye, bloody nose, split her lip, everything. She even had to have her ribs taped. For nothin, tryin to get back from the store. That's chicken-shit. That really happened. Bingo. Bonnie Bingham. '47 to '77.

And that's exactly where the police are in Venice, that's just what they do. They're cruel and unusual, what can I tell you? Look around. Anybody can't see that, they got their head stuck in the sand like an ostrich.

(Huijo starts singing outside the window.) Hear him? The Voice. Now I'm glad he don't go. He's a piece of Venice, just like a tree.

I love it here, yeah. Where else can you find people so goddamn colorful? I've been to New York, I've been to Philadelphia, I've been all over this country; I've been in Canada and Mexico; I ain't never found a place where I really feel at home, where I can reLAX, except here.

Now come on, we got the prettiest women in the world, we do. We got the best artists, the best musicians, we got the best of every goddamn thing. Look at the weather, come on man! We got it all in Venice. If it ain't in Venice, I don't want it.

That's the truth. I don't go no farther than Rose, Windward, the beach, and Pacific. Lincoln's a foreign country. (Laughing.) It really is. In Santa Monica Mall, my God, I think everybody's lookin at me, I feel totally out of place.

VENICE IS LIKE A GIRL....

Do you know what being in Venice feels like to me? It feels like a love affair. You know how you fall in love with somebody. First it's hot and flamey, and then you learn more about 'em, and disillusionment sets in. And things start happening, you don't know whether to leave or whether to stay -- I'm sure you've had it happen to you, right? But you stay because there's still some beauty left, you know? So you hang in there as long as the beauty's there.

I'm serious. Venice to me is like a girl. I've lived with her all my life, I'm used to her, she's warm and comfortable, and she's got some bad habits. And now she's straying because she met a rich old man an she's gonna leave me -- huh?

A lot of people don't really capture the magic of Venice. They come through and they see the gloss, or they see the scum, but they don't see the heart, you know? A LOT of people, man, it's really weird.

You know, there's different degrees of awareness, 'cause we all come from different cultures. Come on, it's America, sure, but Philadelphia's different from San Francisco, and Venice is different than the world.

America was founded that way, the melting pot of the world, right? And Venice is the melting pot of America.

This is the bottom, this is the dregs, this is the last drink of the coffee, where you get some of the grains in it, but you still get some of the sugar. You know Don Kirkpatrick? He used to say "Venice is the largest outdoor outpatient clinic in the world." (Laughing loudly.)

Where else can I walk down the street and everybody says, "Hi Gary, how are you?" Know what I mean? I got rich friends, poor friends, all kinds of friends. Where else can I blend? Where. Can you see me in Malibu? Come ON.

Venice, man, yeah. I really love the town. If Venice was to die tomorrow, I could still say, at least there was a Venice.