

FREE VENICE SINCE 1968 BEACHHEAD

February 1990, #241, P.O. Box 504 Venice, CA 90294
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BEACHHEAD WILL MEET ON FEB. 11, 18 & 25

FREE



DEAR VENICE,

by Judith L. Martin

When the Free Venice Beachhead first hit the streets more than 21 years ago, it began with the statement, "This paper is a poem." Many people have worked very hard over the years to publish a number of poems, and a great deal of prose as well. While "Underground" newspapers folded quietly across the country, The Beachhead continued through the good graces of our advertisers, and the good work of our collective members. So many people have helped the Beachhead that it would not be possible to list them all, but they deserve to be thanked. Profusely.

There have been changes. The original masthead was replaced by a second one, collective members have come and gone, and while we were dishing the dirt on local politics, reviewing the restaurants springing up and commenting on human nature, Venice changed.

The difference between the Venice of 1968 and the Beachhead of 1968 and what we've got here and now is, to put it mildly, remarkable. But I shall confine my remarks to the future.

The Beachhead is planning a lot of changes, yet we don't know exactly what they will be. That is because you will be the source of these changes. You are just what the Beachhead needs. You know you have something to contribute. And without you, there might not be a Beachhead much longer.

For some time, we have had a small but dedicated collective covering all ends of the action; We write, we read, we vote, we typeset, we paste-up, we drive to the printer's, and distribute all over town. We get the mail, read your letters and your contributions, we think up headlines and draw cartoons. Some of us still find the time to write poetry. As much as we love this paper, we must come to terms with the fact that it is more than a poem. This paper is a project, one that has involved

itself in the essence and essentials of Venice. Your participation is essential to both the paper and the community.

Now, while you may be hoping that the Beachhead collective would be a group of loyal, like-minded people, nothing could be further from the truth. After all the time I've spent on the collective, (Yes, I hear you collective veterans out there saying "aw, she's just a baby!") we have yet to agree on anything as simple as what topping to get on the pizza. And that's only the beginning.

We get together three Sundays a month to argue about what is important. With all due respect to the current debating team, when you've heard the same point of view on the same subjects over and over, you begin to crave another perspective.

So please add your voice to the cacophony. You can always get a good argument at the Beachhead, and remember, it's free.

In the past, there have been collectives as large as 25 and as small as 2, and since we're currently holding at 5 or 6, we need you. We need you time and your money, we need your interest and concern, we need your input and your output. We need your eyes, your hands, your voice and your brain, and we'd like you to consider becoming a donor.

So, dear Venice, please let us know that you still read the Beachhead, and you still support a free press. Call and leave word at (213) 396-0811, or write to us and send money to P.O. Box 504, (Venice, 90291) or come to a meeting at 11 A.M. Sunday at the Tenant Action Center on Lincoln Blvd. Because, dear Venice, if we don't hear from you, you may not hear from us again.

We know that you have a lot to say about the 90's, and your involvement is the essential ingredient to keep the Beachhead going. And what would you like on the pizza?

Towards Cityhood

by John Haag

I moved to Venice thirty years ago. Soon after that in the early '60's, I witnessed an unforgettable demonstration of the way in which the City of Los Angeles systematically abuses and exploits our community.

Under the innocuous-sounding title of "building inspection program", city officials proposed to inspect Venice buildings, beginning on the Ocean Front, according to a building and safety code enacted many years after most Venice buildings had been built. To gain the support of local civic groups and property owners, they were promised a "moderate" inspection method and easy bank loans for repairs and reconstruction. It was implied that only undesirable buildings housing undesirable people (beatniks) would get the works.

When implemented, however, the inspections were strict and bank loans so hard to get that it seemed all Venice had been red-lined. There was fraud and corruption. Buildings were condemned for reasons that were not true. Owners were told which contractors to employ to insure that repairs would be approved. Some buildings in no better condition than their severely cited neighbors miraculously escaped with only mild citations.

At least one quarter of the habitable buildings on the Ocean Front Walk were condemned and demolished, eliminating hundreds of low-income units. Many

homeowners, faced with extensive repairs or demolition orders, were forced to sell their homes.

Who benefited from all this misery? Certainly not renters, who were forced to leave Venice or compete for a reduced number of apartments. Certainly not homeowners, who had to sell their homes or undertake expensive repairs.

Absentee developers happily bought up distressed properties, especially along the Ocean Front, planning to transform Venice into Miami Beach West. They even commissioned students at the Cal Poly Pomona Architecture and Urban Planning Department to construct a model of their future Venice complete with high-rise hotels.

Community opposition and economic factors prevented that kind of development. It has proceeded on a more modest scale, but in many cases by the same vultures that acquired their property during the building inspection program.

I submit that this example is typical of how Venice is ruled by Los Angeles, not for the benefit of Venice residents but for the benefit of financial interests over which we have no control and often no knowledge. We are merely a colony to be ripped off by imperial Los Angeles.

The election of a Venice resident to the City Council has made no substantial difference in this pattern. Decisions about our community are still made downtown by imperial bureaucrats.

Cityhood continued to page two

With Ruth On Our Side?

(fast waltz) Bad Bob Dylan entry # 346
(c) Well I grew up in L.A. (F) (Em)
(F) (Em) of freeways and song. (F)
(F) (Em) (Dm) The pavement it stretches a hundred
(F) (Em) (Dm) miles long. (F)
(F) (Em) (Dm) I was idealistic, and campaigned with
(F) (Em) (Dm) pride-- (F) (Em) (Dm)
(c) that the one we elected would be on our
(c) side.

Oh the history books tell it, but then they forget,
the bulldozers charge, the neighborhoods "dead".
The gleaming skyscrapers en-marred the view,
As a few thousand homeless are given the boot.

Oh we threw out Pat Russell, our Summa sellout,
the champion of paving all non-rich folks out.
The police chase the homeless, homes we must provide,
Now the Summa/Hughes Empire can pave the Westside.

Well, Ruth fights off traffic from all other towns,
Yet what she OK's here makes us greedy clowns.
OH, We sued the Prudential with logic turned rash--
That if they gridlock Venice, then "we" get some cash.

You assure the reporters that your foes are few,
then you pay high-priced pollsters to reassure you.
You can blame ol' Ms Russell for what is your fault--
While we hand out the blame--- the gold fills their vault.

We must all use less water, to save Mono Lake,
then you let big developers have all they can take.,
You OKed one hotel, with an excuse so neat,
if they recycle their trash, they can gridlock our streets.

Oh, We'd like to save North Beach, but Ruth she replied:
"You're just selfish NIMBY's, and I will decide,
Who builds what and how high in your neighborhood,
and if that's one more mall, well, then that's well and good."

Oh the Mayor was caught helping more than one friend,
Your slap on the wrist brought my trust to an end.
While a "brilliant" solution rises thru the haze:
To develop some ethics, we'll need a pay raise!

So I ask you Dear Public, has anything changed?
Has Ruth voted no on these plans so deranged?
As this town careens t'ward its civic suicide--
Ask yourself next election--is Ruth on our side?

Letters.... LETTERS... 2 Up for Grabs Again

We have arrived at a moment (once again) when the Beachhead requires revitalization. The present staff is tired and burned out. It has done its job. We need a new staff of volunteers to produce and guide our community newspaper over the next few years.

It is also a new and exciting time. We begin our perestroika, for community, for L.A. City, for the County, for the subregion. Everywhere, all over this country, there will be ferment, rethinking and restructuring. The Beachhead can play a significant role in the perestroika for our region, publishing the ideas of our activists, critics and dreamers. Now, as its first order of business, the Beachhead needs to facilitate the process of community crystallization of our vision of perestroika and communicate it to Ruth for consideration and implementation.

We need more advertising, a different format, perhaps a different logo. We need to be programmatic, not polemical. We need to remain democratic and collective.

An up for grabs meeting will be held at _____ on _____. Anyone wishing to get in on the ground floor and be part of a new staff, a new program, and a renewal of Beachhead energy is invited. Donations of money to help the Beachhead put out its first perestroika issue will be appreciated. Previous staff are also encouraged to attend to insure continuity, remind of the purpose of the paper, and give more support. ★

Arnold Springer

★ Collective note: The next Beachhead mtg. will be Feb. 11, at Tenant Action Center 442 Lincoln Blvd., at 11:00 AM. For more details on volunteering, see page one. We'd love to see you on February 11th, so drop in, tune in and help us turn things around.

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to move and
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what you wanted
to squeeze in
to gets between
you and what
matters

Lyn Lifshin

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Free Venice Beachhead-February 1990

Letters



FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD
SINCE 1988

This issue collectively assembled by:
Diane Nickerson, Carol Fondiller, John Haag,
Sara Omari, Malcolm Tent, Judith L. Martin
and Cheri Leslie

prehistory
that desperate ape
humped back
all skeleton
teethed on survival
crawling forth
from out
a gravel shroud
stands
I
raise
my voice
to
those of you
of the future
I was
a man
of grievous
experience
I was
a man
of few
satisfactions
and so
you will be
also

G. BARCHENGER

Random Letters

(Dear readers--this letter arrived severely late to us due to a postal SNAFU. Blame Uncle Sam. We do....)

Dear Venice Beachhead Collective,
I applaud your persistence in publishing. I read it each month and pass it around our office. I believe you still receive an exchange copy of "Random Lengths".

In your recent issue of July '89, I found interest in your "Cityhood Now" article which does have resonant tones of populism in this end of the City. Keep the Heat on.

At some point you might find it valuable if we could meet.

James P. Allen
Publisher of Random Lengths, an independent community newspaper based in San Pedro

Continued from page one

Towards Cityhood

That, it seems to me, is the final proof that if public decisions are to be made in the interests of Venice residents, they must be made by Venice residents in Venice. For that to happen, we must become once again our own city.

On January 18th, eleven Venice patriots met and formed the Independent Committee to Investigate Cityhood. The committee will gather information relating to cityhood in the areas of legal requirements, public services, tax base, resources that would help with the foregoing, and boundaries.

The committee will seek endorsement of its goals and participation of more people from the Venice Town Council and other Venice groups. Its second meeting will be held on February 5th and is open to anyone interested. For information call 399-8922.▲



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POETRY

Driftwood Fire

Like two old fishermen, we sat on the beach, and
waited for our kisses to meet like grunion
brushing against each other on the sand,
but as we piled our driftwood higher, and broke
it into kindling, a lunar ring formed
around the moon, above our pyre.

I pointed, and saw you slip it over
my index finger, and marry me to
a night of icy clouds, shooting stars, and
a long-burning driftwood fire.
I knew a lot about loyalty, but
nothing about fidelity, as we sipped our
late-night wine beside the driftwood fire.

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Free Venice Now and Then

Rick Davidson

I just received a fund raising letter from our councilwoman, Ruth Galanter. She is gearing up for next year's election. RUTH GALANTER II is the theme.

Interestingly it comes as discussions, meetings, committees are happening in Venice to seriously look into the possibilities of a FREE VENICE, i.e., a Venice free of LA (secession from LA). It's the old question of democracy, do "the People" have the right to make the decisions that effect their lives; sometimes called decentralization. It's certainly an idea that has come of age, at least in Eastern Europe. So why not in the US of A?

People are looking into the questions of economic cost, tax base, appropriate governmental forms and other important questions that must be considered by any movement serious about the proposition of a FREE VENICE.

My first concern is political - the question of people's rights, in a word, democracy. In today's world that translates into one person one vote. In my mind, democracy is not only valid, but a prerequisite for a "free" society. In our beginnings in the late 1700s, it was a logical necessity that we formed a representative form of government where different parts of the country, states, elected people to "represent" their hopes, fears, needs, desires in Washington. Then it took days to get from one part of the country to another. Not today. Trains and planes has turned days into hours; even more importantly, television, computers, and fax machines give us the opportunity to do away with representatives and move to direct voting where we can have a one person one vote process. Such a process must be built on the U.S. Constitution where human rights are protected and the old concept of "states rights" is not used to foster segregation as was done in the South. One person one vote may still be a bit in the future. Looking at today's reality, I think we should use what we have and see if it can/will work for us. I don't care who my elected representative is if she/he really represented me. The collective we requires a different process than any single politician making decisions that only serves her/his needs, a party's needs, or \$\$\$ interest. So we're back to the question of decentralization as a transitional democracy on the way to a one person one vote process.

In 1969 I ran for city council as part of the Free Venice/Peace & Freedom Movement. It was an educational campaign to talk about how people's rights were being trampled from Venice to Vietnam, and by the same people in power. We didn't expect to win. My campaign called for community congresses. Following is taken from a Special Edition we put out.

In order to gain control over our lives, our environments, our futures, we must see power placed in the community. To accomplish this, community elected congresses should be established in Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw, Mar Vista/Venice and Westchester/Playa del Rey to direct the councilman. These would not be "advisory councils" as suggested by the L.A. Proposed Charter, but controlling bodies. Each congress would have full control over its own affairs. While working with monthly reports of past voting records and future agenda items, each congress would direct the councilman as to the community's desires. Although the number of councilmen is not increased, they will be more truly representative of their districts. Such a program could begin immediately. I here pledge that when elected I will initiate such a program. I hope every other candidate will accept this concept and pledge themselves accordingly.

The only change I would make is to replace the sexist term 'councilman' with councilperson. I didn't win, but the winner, Pat Russell, formed the Venice Town Council a few years later. It wasn't invested with power we envisioned, but it did have neighborhood councils as its base. It was a start.

Ruth's win over Pat was a painful, yet powerful victory for the people of the 6th District. Now we need to move on to the next stage of democracy: people's control over their own lives. So I suggest that we, the People, tell Ruth that the time has come in Venice, as in Eastern Europe, for we, the People, to make the decisions that affect our lives. And instruct her how we see this happening. First we need to re-form the Venice Town Council by dissolving its corporate structure, and recreating the neighborhood councils as the base of power. Then Ruth, and or her staff, would attend the Town Council meeting to be instructed how to vote on Venice issues. Hopefully she would create similar councils in the rest of the 6th District. If this process was established throughout Los Angeles, it would change our city council from the power brokers they are now into true representatives of the People.

If for political, personal, or power reasons Ruth refuses "the People", then the secession movement should be launched in the Spirit of 1776, so we can begin to throw off the colonial yoke LA has us strapped with.

Remember, FREE VENICE TODAY. Tomorrow Ocean Park!



War Toys to be demolished in auto-mobile crusher on Valentine's Day...

CONTACT: JERRY RUBIN
(213) 399-1000

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CONTINUING GROUPS

AA Monday Evenings at 8 P.M.

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VENICE PUBLIC LIBRARY celebrates BLACK HISTORY MONTH on 2/24 @ 1:00p.m. & is free to the public. Call Lucille @ (213) 821-1769 for more information.

KIDS OF AMERICA has announced that the MISS CALIFORNIA TEENS OF AMERICA contest is to be held in Fresno. The National Organization is conducting competitions throughout the United States. SAVINGS BONDS will be given to the top 5 winners. To apply, write:

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Venice Town Council

AGENDA for VENICE TOWN COUNCIL Meeting
on February 8, 1990, 7:30 p.m. at
BEYOND BAROQUE Center -681 N. Venice Blvd.

- Announcements
- Committee Reports
- Presentation on Synder Project
- Letter on Marina Place Traffic mitigations
- Reformation of Homelessness Committee
- Endorsement of Goals for Investigation of Cityhood
- Fund raising discussion

HORACE TAPSCOTT Trio & CARL BURNETT Quintet will perform @ 8:p.m. as a tribute to the late MARC COBB, a young community activist who died last july. (213) 7596063

General Membership meeting of the Venice Action Committee 2/21 - (213) 392-7477

1990 GLOBAL WALK for a LIVABLE WORLD send off. Show your concern for our planet. (213) 395-4123 or (213) 458-3911

Boston University Auditions for TANGLEWOOD INSTITUTE will be held in L.A. 2/8 For more info/audition appointments, call Mr/Mrs R. Young (818) 991-3082 between 5 and 10p.m.

BURBAGE THEATRE (213) 478-0897 presents world premiere of TRUMPS thru 3/4/90

Airport-Marina SIERRA CLUB Group will meet 2/19 @ 7:30pm in the Community Room @ the Burton Chace Park (213) 641-4028

CLARE opened RECOVERY HOUSE for DEAF and HARD of HEARING. It is the first alcohol recovery support service ON THE West Coast for the deaf & hard of hearing & uses American Sign Language as its primary means of communication.

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POETRY & Performance workshop 2/6 & 2222 and 2/20 @ 8p.m.
Poets KIMIKO HAHN & JIM KRUSOE will read (2/23/90)

"A Night of Erotica" is a pre-Valentine's Day warm-up 2/9/90

JOHN KING, composer/violinist/guitarist performs with PAGE EIGHT 2/10/90
Poets BILL MOHR & TRINIDAD SANCHEZ will read 2/16/90
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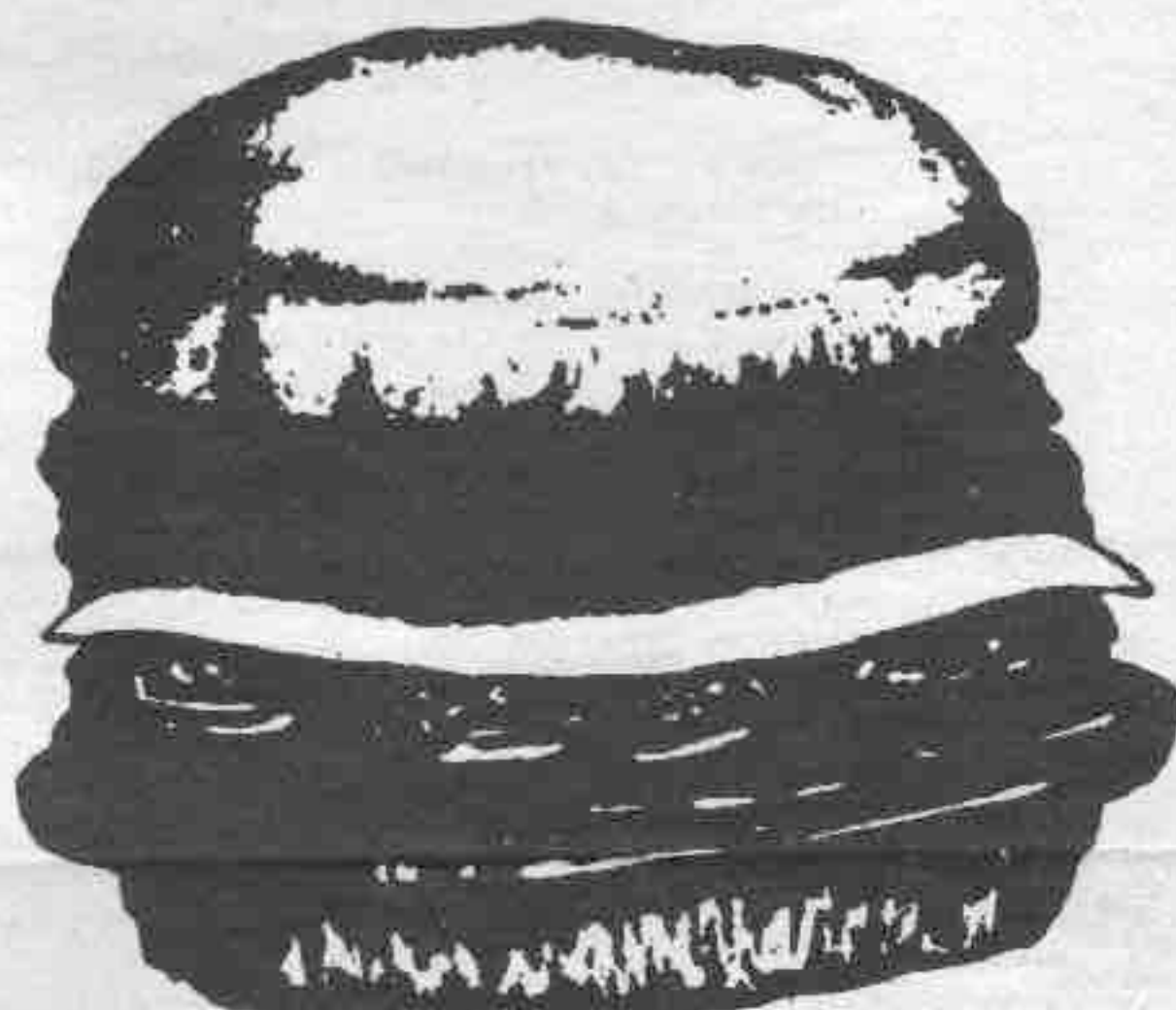


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