

THE FREE VENICE BEACHHEAD

Number 3, January, 1969

10,000 copies FREE to Venice residents

THE COURSE OF

The FREE VENICE Art Festival just may continue until Venice falls into the Pacific Ocean. Originally scheduled for 4 weeks only, enthusiastic response from Venice residents caused the organizers to form a Festival Committee headed by Fred Burkhart.

The committee then decided to continue the festival indefinitely. Any artist or craftsman may exhibit his works without charge. A small stage has been made for performers and speakers. There is no charge for admission and coffee is free.

The festival committee is planning special events for the future, such as providing materials for a children's paint-in. The festival will be held every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to sunset at Ocean Front Walk and Park Ave. See you there!

Werner Scharff, owner of the property where the FREE VENICE Art Festival is happening, agreed January 11 to let the festival continue at its present location. He gave responsibility to the Festival Committee to carry out his minimal conditions for continued use of the property.

We would like to see the Festival Committee given a piece of property where they would be free to make their own rules entirely. That may not be possible until Venice is no longer a colony of Los Angeles, when our community will be able to dedicate public land as we see fit.

Meanwhile, the one man capable of forcing the festival to move has chosen not to do so. For that, a hearty Thank-you! from the staff of BEACHHEAD and from the hundreds of Venice residents for whom the festival has become a weekly institution and community gathering.



we can
do better
than this

HUMAN EVENTS

■ The best Xmas gift we got this year came from a dozen members of the Venice family who carried lighted candles through our streets on Christmas Eve, singing us the good, old songs. Thanks, brothers and sisters—may your kind increase.

■ The San Francisco Mime Troupe performed briefly at the FREE VENICE Art Festival on January 4th.

Response to the Mime Troupe from the 400 persons present was so enthusiastic that a street theater group is now forming in Venice. For information call Lee Simon at 399-6462, or Jane Gordon at 399-7681.

■ John Haag, a Venice resident and an initiator of the Peace and Freedom Party, was elected co-chairman of the California PFP's State Committee at its convention late in December. After almost a year of full-time work on the PFP, John spent five months this summer helping to organize the party in several western and midwestern states.

He returned to Venice to run for the California State Senate, receiving 4,996 votes in the election. Since November he has been one of three PFP organizers devoting full time to community work in Venice. The others are Rick Davidson and Jane Gordon.

At the PFP convention, John proposed that the party concentrate during the next six months on building organization at the local, neighborhood level, then mobilize its resources for national organizing during the latter half of 1969.

In addition to their work in the community, Venice PFP organizers maintain communications with PFP groups throughout California, in 25 other states and the District of Columbia.

EDITORIAL

RESIDENTS REJECT MASTER PLAN

More than 80 Venice residents decided January 9th to begin a massive petition drive to demonstrate community opposition to Los Angeles' plans 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 a petition 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 to 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 23rd 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.

Petitions may be picked up at 1727 W. Washington Blvd. Deadline for returning completed petitions is January 27th. For information call 399-7681.

FREE VENICE!

b.b. by mighty quinby

Visitors from outer-space and age-old Spirit-heads were present at the opening of the Beyond Baroque Gallery. The place, with abstractions hinged to black walls rising from a persian-rug floor, filled up quickly with the sounds of vibrating people and rock-n-roll music. Great Chinese Gongs echoed the beginning of the festivities and giant fireworks exploded above the heads of the people. Poets were shot from cannons and while they zoomed through the air they poured boiling-hot word-images on the amazed spectators. Buzzby Berkely entered through the trap-door in the floor leading ten-thousand topless-beautys on roller skates through the hall of amusement. Not that all this really happened -- but, it is the feeling that counts; and it felt like it happened.

Something new (or the rebirth of something old) is happening in Venice. It is taking many forms: One form is Beyond Baroque, a new literary magazine with an art gallery for a front. The magazine is beginning to happen throughout the country -- the art gallery is happening as part of the Venice community. The purpose of the gallery is to be a launching platform and, also, a center for the "Sublime." Yes, the "Sublime" -- the utmost, the apex: A new (old) way of sensing, feeling, acting, and being. Sublime Consciousness: We are beginning to see things in a different light -- we are beginning to get hip to other aspects of reality. What's really happening is not in the political arena, and it's not in destructive revolution: What's "really" happening is all in the Mind. The purpose of the Beyond Baroque Gallery is to let the Mind soar -- a take-off point and a centering place for many minds. Happenings, involvements, and encounters will take place in the gallery and in the mind. Thursday night "Happenstance" will begin on January 16 and continue as a weekly thing. Air Raid Poetry will happen on the last Friday of every month, the day the siren sings. Art shows will regularly take place.

Most important, is that you (the people in newspaper-reading land) come and Happen. The gallery is at 1639 W. Washington Bl. It aims to be a place of expression, controversy, and issues. Bring yourself and your ideas. The gallery and Beyond Baroque office are open from 9 to 5, Monday through Friday.

All other Baroque Happenings will be announced.

Signing off -- mighty quinby, manager of B.B. gallery and mag.

Thanks to the BEACHHEAD supporters, whose first party for the paper netted \$35.00. And fond congratulations to Gwyn Gorg whose new daughter was born while we partied at her house.

COLUMN RIGHT

PHIL CHAMBERLIN'S TRIP

LOGARITHMS

I'm lying amongst the jumble of logs that are piled on the beach at Park across the boardwalk from the art show this column originated in BEACHHEAD #1. In the distance I hear the drumming of the pile driver at work down by the lifeguard station. In a few days that pile driver will begin driving these logs I now lie amongst into the sand in a purely decorative configuration, compliments of the revenue pumped from under the beach by the oil derrick. Is it the karma with which Jim Cayton sank his logs into the earth that prompted Parks & Recreation to freak the beach out with logs directly across the sidewalk? If so, can we expect the Spring season to bring a period of artist activity amongst the Parks and Recreation logs in the same way Fred and George brought Artist Activity to the Cayton Logs?

I lie amongst the logs watching the workmen of Deutch Construction building us a grassy promenade on top of the sand at Brooks, which by Spring I suppose will cause the center of outdoor consciousness in West Venice to shift from the pathetically narrow strip at Rose to the unnamed park at Brooks. Lying here I can almost hear the changing tones of a passer-thru tuning his guitar. I can almost see the sun-browned legs of a trippy chick thru a white lace gown which rolls into translucent folds as the body inside curves down upon the grass to observe the sunset.

This column will announce in the next edition the rules of a contest to name our new park and will set the date for a christening ceremony, during which at one point the band will fall silent while the contest winner announces the name. Meanwhile, put your head behind your own entry.

STATE PFP WILL MEET IN VENICE

The State Committee of the California Peace and Freedom Party will meet in Venice on February 1st and 2nd. In addition to elected members of the committee, all active PFP groups in California have been invited to participate.

Local PFPers will throw a party to welcome the outside agitators Saturday evening, February 1st, in several apartments along the east side of Grand Canal in the block north of Washington St. Anyone may come -- and probably will. A donation will be asked. For details call 299-5327 or 399-0827.

To our knowledge, this is the first time Venice has been chosen as the site for a meeting of a state-wide political organization. To help with arrangements or for further information, call 399-7681.

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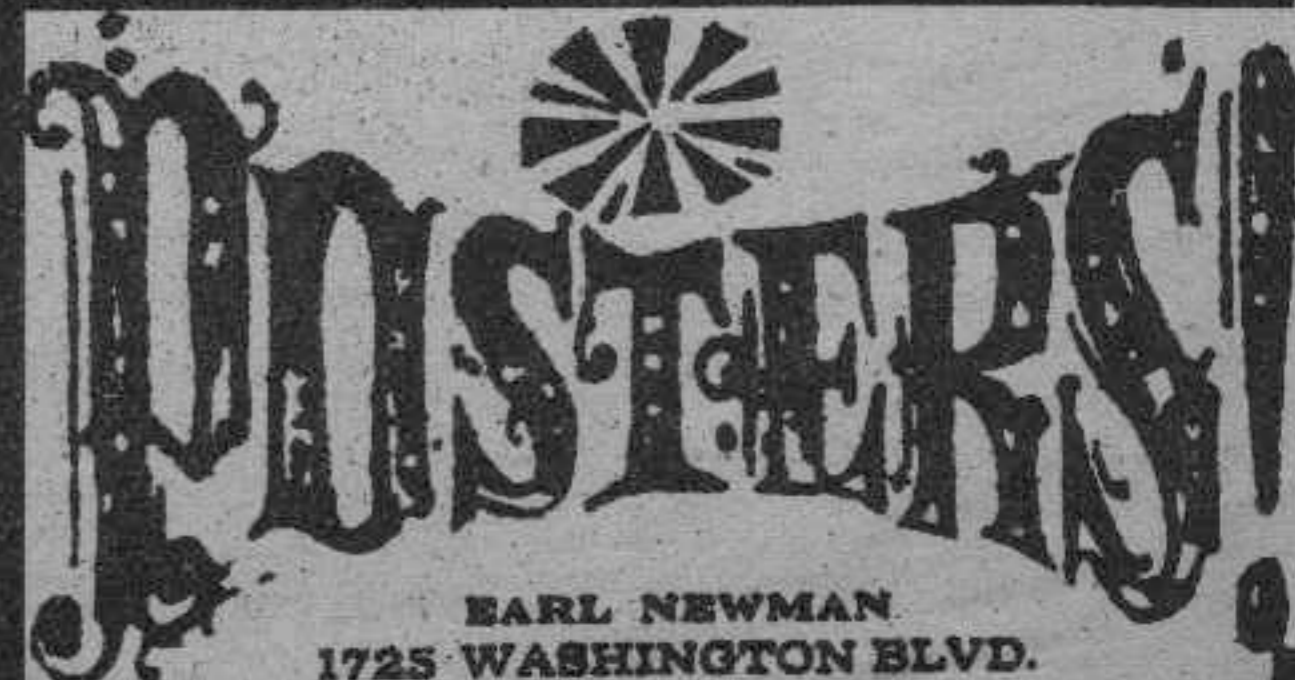
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TO: The Venice Community and the Editors of the
Free Venice BEACHHEAD

The first two issues of the BEACHHEAD were indeed poems. The BEACHHEAD, and Venice with it, should and must go on. There is too much in Venice that has long needed the polarity which can best be provided by a local weekly, for Venice to lose this rare opportunity to take hold of its own future. If it acts now, Venice can become the creative center of the West. The nucleus is here in the form of writers, artists, craftsmen, filmmakers, etc. It is here in the form of a newspaper (the BEACHHEAD), a quarterly literary magazine (our own BEYOND BAROQUE), burgeoning theater, art galleries and poetry reading centers (the Beyond Baroque Gallery contributes a little to the last two). But Venice needs regularly scheduled cultural events publicized by its own newspaper, an art fair, a place to screen experimental films, an end to the disgraceful waste of the Venice Pavillion facilities, and, if it is not too much to hope for, an association of forward-looking, community-culture-oriented businessmen who want to see Venice become a unique cultural milieu rather than a slum to milk dry.

The BEACHHEAD people have made a wonderful beginning. Let's see some action and support NOW from YOU, the people of Venice.

George Drury Smith
Editor & Publisher, beyond baroque
1639-41 West Washington Boulevard.



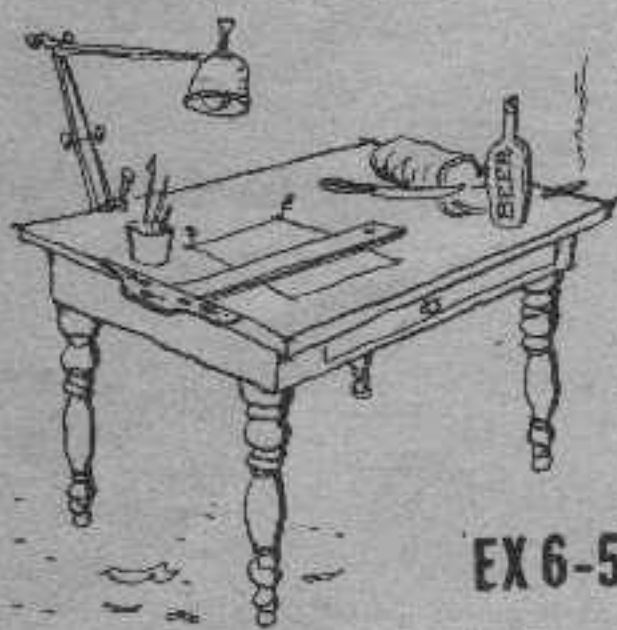
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REREDOS

by CAROL FONDILLER

REREDOS: Old English word meaning back of the altar.

John Ciampa, ex-lawyer, ex-altar boy and one of Venice's handsomest beards, built his own back yard altar with 2 1/2 old couches, 70 chairs in varying conditions of decrepitude, seven lights, saws, hammers, his sweat and the shameless exploitation of his willing friends and accomplices.

"I like the beach," he says, "I like the ocean front. I've been living in Venice for a long time. There was a store for rent and the theatre just grew."

With the help of people like Frank Fleisher, the four-armed marvel of the light board ("The Great Vendor is a Mean Queen" has at least seven light cues in its 35 minutes), who also acts in another of John's plays "High Masque," Carl Beck who is stage manager, caterer and has at last count three parts in "Mean Queen" and Anne Reiner, script girl, prompter, and director of 2 more plays by J.C., a repertory theatre with local people is happening in Venice.

The aim of REREDOS is to have a group wherein the play is not the ONLY thing, where varied art forms will be presented every night of the week.

Ciampa is a Joyce freak. In fact, "reredos" was taken from a passage in "Ulysses." He plans a Joyce reading once a week, where he will start at the beginning, averaging eight pages a night with audience participation and discussion afterwards.

"If you want to be an artist or connoisseur Joyce is required reading, and in reading Joyce there is a special technique." (note: Joyce is McLuhan's ancestor. Joyce must be read aloud! The words must assault, tumble and massage you like acid rock, to numb your intellect til only your id is left standing un-ashamed.)

Other nights will feature music and poetry. All of these events will be surrounded by REREDOS sangria straight from the wine keg and food invented by Carl Beck, with music, mingling and making out.

You must make reservations. Suggested donation of \$25.00 minimum per person entitles you to a six-month subscription which entitles you to come in for any or all nightly activities, and the fete afterwards. A "Sampler's Night" donation is a suggested \$2.00 per person for one night only, provided there are seats. No general admission; reservations at least 24 hours in advance. Call 396-3314 for information. REREDOS is located at 1217 Ocean Front Walk near Westminster, next to the Lafayette Café.

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CANAL APOCALYPSE

by DON ROBERTS

The canal area is the last vestige of Abbott Kinney's dream for a Venice of the West. This area has been reduced in size and is at present losing many of its original houses. It may be of interest to consider these official figures:

16 houses have been torn down (almost all of these have come down in the last 6 or 8 months).

12 houses are marked to come down.

24 houses are candidates for demolition, and most of them will be coming down in the next year.

52 houses represent a tremendous displacement of people in an area as small as the Canals.

People who care more for real estate/property values and their own narrow vision (albeit grandiose) than about people, still insist that there isn't any poverty in the canals. Yet all the earmarks are present: abandoned cars, dilapidated houses and yards, outlaw motorcycle gangs, uncared for children, trash strewn alleys, etc. These "invisible poor" have been displaced and will continue to be displaced. I have yet to find one family that has been able to relocate in the Canals. Few have (I am told) been able to find suitable, inexpensive housing in the Venice/Santa Monica area.

I have talked to many people renting substandard structures. The landlords keep them in the dark as to the legal status of their places in order to keep them paying rent. Many are naive, some are afraid to pursue the matter because they don't have the money to move. Meanwhile, funds and help in relocation are nonexistent. Mark (Proprietor of Mark's Market--Venice Blvd. & Dell) says that business is down 10% and expects things to get worse...many of his customers are gone.

I wonder about the trailer park on Washington Blvd. 105 people are in limbo between a permit, a sale and a freeze. And what about the strange little area between the trailer park and the canals? Does anyone imagine that this area can remain intact with the Marina on the south and the Canal Apocalypse on the north? The double lot next to my house went for \$60,000, and that was with a 6' loss to the city of Los Angeles on 3 sides! The pressure is on, the sky's the limit. Huntington Harbor Jr. here we come. Can central Venice (between Main and Lincoln, Rose and Venice Blvd.) afford to sleep much longer?

Venice Draft Information Service: Mon. to Thurs. 7-10 pm, Sat. 1-5 pm 73 Market, room 2. Call 399-5812.

■ Our frustrations over the Paris Peace Talks cannot detract from the efforts of those on all sides who worked tirelessly to bring them into existence..so it is in respect and sorrow that the BEACHHEAD staff expresses our deep regrets over the death of a fellow journalist, Wm. C. Baggs, co-author of MISSION TO HANOI, editor of the MIAMI NEWS and life-time fighter for freedom and justice.....may we help make his work not in vain.

MY VENICE MOODS

by VIRGINIA BOHANNON

Calm wild cold mild fair dove,
Rare dark hand lend soul love,
Sand palm cool wave high nest,
Rock life moon like pain rest,
Deep blue gull true star tree,
Dawn hope well held feel free.



Photo by Fred Burkhart

The FREE VENICE Organizing Committee, which has aided the Art Festival by providing publicity services, has called upon Venice residents to bake bread or make other kinds of food to distribute at the FREE VENICE Art Festival. Let us break bread together.

Readers respond:

The most damning statement to emerge from the Vietnam conflict is, "We had to destroy the town to save it." Now Venice is being destroyed to "save" it.

Why do people live in Venice? Fairly low rents, a stimulating atmosphere, the Pacific's proximity, unconventional living... all these reasons and more are on the verge of being flushed down the drain in the name of PROGRESS!

Jim Ploss, Venice

"If Abbott Kinney was alive today, he would tell you..to go to hell. Free Venice."

Jill and John Hughes
Lincoln, Nebraska PFP

"FREE VENICE NOW!"

Bryce Anderson
PFP, Seattle, Washington

"Please accept a most hearty Maz-el Tov (Good Luck). I will very much like to serve as New York correspondent for your really fine publication."

M.D. Ben-Ami
Bronx, New York

"Many thanks to the conceivers, producers and deliverers of the BEACHHEAD--very nicely done, and Viva!"

S.K., Venice

"Delighted to see the paper."

Jane and Michael Marcus
Evanston, Illinois PFP

history's now

by JANE GORDON

Before the next installment of Venice's history, I have some things to say about Venice's present--and its future.

I've been hearing all this talk about the master plan, about a freeway route. Everybody is stirring because it's getting a little too close to home. Literally. And, at last, some people are starting to realize that it's no good going to the City officials, relying on the City officials, asking our elected officials to please be responsible to us, their constituency. To us-- without whom they would not be in the very positions of power they now use to raise our taxes, to change our zoning, to suit themselves.

It's no good asking them. They are unreachable by us, little people with no power, no bread. How can we make them hear us? Petitions are one way, and we're attempting to use that way. Going to public meetings is one way, so we attend meetings. But this year, there's an extra added tool, a lever perhaps. This year they need us. This year, there's a municipal election.

It's fascinating to me how people moan and groan--justifiably--about the politicians, then turn around and vote for them! If I were a politician, I'd not be too worried about pulling stuff that might turn people off, not if I knew for a statistical fact that those same people would end up voting for me anyway.

Let's logic this out. If by my vote I help a politician get into a position of power, a position where his decisions count heavily in my life, then I'd better be damn sure the guy is on my side. And in this city election, my side is pretty clearly defined: FREE VENICE.

Which of you politicians is willing to work to help me free my community from the heavy hand of Los Angeles, where it has been foundering for almost 45 years? Step up and let me hear from you, and you've got my vote. Please don't be daunted by my cynical attitude. Be the first to prove me wrong (wrong--because I don't think I'll find anybody to bother voting for this time around).

Mayor, City Council, even Board of Education, the same issue is the decisive one. I want Venice to be making its own decisions, its own future. I want our next 45 years of history written by and for the people of Venice, not by and for the City of Los Angeles.

If you agree with this position, let's get these politicians out here to tell us where they're at. Let's use our lever. My vote plus your vote (given or withheld) can add up to the difference between a man's success or failure. This time, let him fail or succeed on our terms. Democracy means the rule of the people.

Next issue, I'll be getting back to Venice's story, into the thirsty thirties and faltering forties. I've been learning a lot.

VENICE & THE MASTER'S PLAN

RICK DAVIDSON

The frontiersman of America's beginning cast the mold from which the new nation was formed: individual freedom based on the First Law of Man, Power. But 1607 in Virginia is more than just 361 years of time past. During that time the great unexplored wilderness with its untouched resources (excuse Mr. Indian) has been reduced in size to a pleasant four hour flight on United...a flight over fenced areas, once open; a flight over dammed rivers where wild animals drink which are not for eating; a flight over a land to which children are born with a national debt from which they receive little in return...rural America has become an urban nation without developing a workable concept of urbanization.

Still the utopian is dismissed as impractical and too theoretical. I suggest that the past 361 years have proven that the practical individualism of early America leaves much to be desired when looking at the nation as a human family. In this land of plenty the poor are forgotten. Their name has been applied to poverty bills, true! but they have been given no acceptable position in this land of plenty. Once beaten, the American Indian was moved to a reservation; the American urbanized poor have not even been given that.

I believe that we, America, must build into our political/economic system a morality which extends beyond our law courts to provide for the poor (if the system would eliminate poverty... that would be nice too). We must begin to view the world as a family that takes care of itself. Not one that eats itself alive.

How does all this relate to Venice? Although conceived as a show place for the west coast, once the conceiver (Abbott Kinney) died, it took but a few years for Venice to become the beach ghetto we know today. Yet, as ghettos go, it is a good one. There's a wonderful beach, smog is less than most areas of L. A., freeways are close by, the airport is next door, oil wells are not as dirty as they once were and the living costs are not too bad. Times change. L.A. grows, land becomes scarce, our poor reservation becomes profitable and therefore desirable. Now what? "Move the poor out." Where? Where do they go from here? "Anywhere: Santa Monica, Mar Vista, Inglewood." But the rents are too high; besides, undesirable minorities aren't allowed there. "Then Watts. What is wrong with Watts?" Aside from overcrowding, Uncle Sam is clearing that area for incoming industry. "Listen, that's not my problem. I'm busy cleaning up Venice's blight."

This writer says that it is our problem. Communities must solve their own problems..not by removing the problem to another community, but by finding a creative solution within their own borders. And Uncle Sam must begin to think accordingly.

Next issue: the what and how of urbanization.