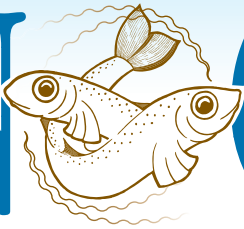


# GRUNION GAZETTE



Long Beach's Favorite Community Newspaper | Follow us on    

## Belmont Pier Damage Means Con Cup Changes



**DOCKS GONE.** The Belmont Veterans' Memorial Pier lost its two docks during a storm Feb. 17, and inspections continue to be sure the pier itself is sound.

—Gazette photo by Harry Saltzgaver

**By HARRY SALTZGAVER**  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Long Beach's Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier reopened Tuesday, more than two weeks after a major storm ripped two docks away from the pier's end.

Marine Bureau Manager Elvira Hallinan said pedestrians and fishermen are back on the pier. However, it will take a more detailed inspection from structural engineers before it can be decided whether the Long Beach Yacht Club can set up its traditional viewing area at pier's end for the Congressional Cup match races.

A major rainstorm Feb. 17 caused large wave action around the pier, detaching both the Aqualink water taxi dock and the lower mooring dock. The docks ended up on the beach, and were declared a total loss, Hallinan said.

"The pier is going to open Tuesday for pedestrians and fishing uses," Hallinan said. "We had to wait for the report from the engineers... They did a post event damage evaluation, and they said there was no significant damage to the pier."

That ruling only applied to pedestrians and vehicles up to the size of a pickup truck, Hallinan said. COWI Marine of North America, which specializes in waterfront facilities, is due back next Monday for a more in-depth inspection of the underside of the pier for a final report.

"When we get that back, we can make a decision about Congressional Cup," Hallinan said. "It will impact all the other major events that take place on the pier — the Pirate Invasion, the fishing derby, etc. — as well."

The next big event on the pier calendar is the Congressional Cup Sailing Regatta. It is the biggest match racing event on the West Coast, with some saying it is second only to the America's Cup.

This year's event is scheduled for March 29-April 2, with a practice day on March 28. Ten of the world's best skippers and their crews compete in a double round-robin of match races over the five days.

Joe Siebert, chair of the Congressional Cup committee this year for the Long Beach Yacht Club

(Continued on Page 26A)

## Neighbors Try To Add Bluff Park Lampposts

**By AMY ORR**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Long Beach history is intrinsic to the Bluff Park Historic District, which stretches from Junipero to Loma avenues between Ocean Boulevard and Broadway.

For the past two years, residents have worked to support the area's heritage through the Bluff Park Historic Lamppost Project. On Saturday, March 25, the Bluff Park Neighborhood Association

(Continued on Page 26A)

## CSULB To Celebrate 47th Pow Wow

**By EMILY THORNTON**  
STAFF WRITER

The 47th annual Pow Wow — an American Indian celebration — is this weekend at California State University, Long Beach. The festivities run from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, March 11, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 12, in the upper campus central quad (1250 Bellflower Blvd.) All people are welcome to attend and participate

in the free event, which features dancing, singing, arts, crafts and food from various American Indian cultures. As one of the oldest and largest spring Pow Wows in Southern California, it has drawn up to 6,000 attendees during its two days, Craig Stone, CSULB American Indian Studies program director, said. It's student-organized and provided to display the school's strong American Indian presence.

(Continued on Page 26A)

## Pool Passes Planning Commission

**By HARRY SALTZGAVER**  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Approvals of an Environmental Impact Review, permits and a height variance at Thursday's Planning Commission meeting have moved the Belmont Beach and Aquatic Center one step closer to fruition. The \$103 million center has been in the works for more than four years — since the Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool closed in January 2013 after being deemed a hazard in the case of an earthquake. A temporary above-ground pool was opened

in December 2014 in the nearby parking lot, but already is bursting at the seams with users, according to assistant city manager Tom Modica. Architect Michael Rotondi was part of a 45-minute presentation to the Planning Commission. He said it was his charge to not only design something functional and sustainable, but "magical" as well. The result is a semi-transparent oval covering an inside competitive pool, dive pool and therapy pools, along with other amenities. Another competitive-level pool

and a recreational pool will be outside to the east of the building. Once the presentation was complete, Commission Chair Donita Van Horik pointed out that the commission had no jurisdiction over cost or sources of funding — the topic of several opposition letters. Instead, the commission was tasked to consider the EIR, Local Coastal Permit and standards variances. Opponents opened the public comment period with several reasons why they believed the EIR should be recirculated instead of

(Continued on Page 24A)



—Gazette photo by Harry Saltzgaver

**GIVING TESTIMONY.** Members of the public line up to testify to the Planning Commission last Thursday about the Belmont Beach and Aquatics Center.

INSIDE  
YOUR  
GRUNION

### Spring Forward

It's that time of year again. Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday. Be sure to set all of your clocks ahead by one hour. It's a good time to check batteries in smoke alarms, too.

COLUMNS

A PINCH OF SALT ..... **Page 2A**

BUSINESS BEAT ..... **Page 21A**

MUSICAL NOTES ..... **Page 16A**

CURTAIN'S UP ..... **Page 17A**

ONLY IN LB ..... **Page 4A**

You are scheduled to receive this complimentary publication until further notice. If you do not want to receive it or would like to discuss any issues please contact us at 562-433-2000.





# IN CLOSED SESSION

by Harry Saltzgaver

## About Commissions...

Last week, the Long Beach Planning Commission spent two and a half hours listening to staff presentations, opinions from community members and comments from each other about the Belmont Beach and Aquatic Center (read Belmont Pool) before approving its Environmental Impact Report and other permits. And it's a sure bet we'll do it all over again in front of the City Council. Even if the naysayers don't appeal the Planning Commission EIR approval (an appeal is the closest thing to a sure bet since Secretariat won the Triple Crown), some of those other approvals involve zoning and other use issues that require City Council approval.

The whole thing then goes to the state Coastal Commission, but that's for another column.

The question I'd like to try to answer today is, "So what's up with all those commissions, anyway?"

Long Beach has a ton of city commissions and boards. Do you have an ongoing category of concerns? Form a commission. The most recent is the Veterans Affairs Commission, which recently conducted its very first meeting.

There are two basic types of commissions or boards. The first, primarily created by the City Charter, has the ability to set policy for a city department. There's a subset of that exclusive club that even has control of the department budget and hiring (and firing) responsibility for that department's general manager.

The three panels with those weighty responsibilities are the Harbor Commission, the Water Commission and the Long Beach Transit Board. Of the three, the Harbor Commission is seen as the most important by virtue of the size of its budget.

Other Charter commissions are the afore-mentioned Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Civil Service Commission and the Citizens Police Complaint Commission. Those commissions have policy- and decision-making powers, but don't control anyone's pursestrings.

The other — and far larger — category is the advisory commissions and boards. Powers of this boards vary widely, but typically

any major decision made there must get final approval by the City Council.

So what's the point? Why do literally hundreds of people volunteer their time (a few commissions and boards do receive a \$100 stipend for meetings) to serve on these things?

It's all about the detail. Commissions and boards have one subject area, one sphere of influence. It's the Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Advisory Commission's job to know all about parking and business in Belmont Shore. They don't worry about parking or business downtown or in Bixby Knolls, and they don't worry about park maintenance or the conduct of police (well, they aren't supposed to worry about that).

Members of the Planning Commission have spent many more hours studying the Belmont Pool issue, both in meetings and individually. The idea is that those commissioners have the expertise to provide an informed recommendation to the City Council.

The very same concept holds true for boards across the spectrum of life in Long Beach, from the Health and Human Services Commission to the Sustainability Commission, and from the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission to the Commission on Youth and Children.

All are comprised of people passionate about something, trying to make their community better. Most are offering expertise to either a city department or the City Council.

There is a downside to having a commission or board for just about everything. It takes staff time to serve those commissions, and we pay for that staff time. Sometimes it's one member of a department; sometimes the entire leadership team of a department is required to attend. Then there's all the time staff spends completing reports, researching issues and implementing policies requested (or required) by this commission or that board.

When then-Mayor Bob Foster took office, he thought there probably were too many commissions taking up too much expensive staff time, and ordered

(Continued on Page 3A)

# Human Trafficking Yearlong Issue

By DR. KRISTEN MARTIN, LMFT

January was National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month. As we continue into 2017, we must not lose momentum in our fight against this very serious violation of human rights.

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fear and/or manipulation to obtain labor or sex from someone. Many assume that sex trafficking only occurs abroad, in extremely poor or violent countries. It's difficult to imagine sex trafficking occurring in the U.S., and terrifying to think about it happening in Long Beach. But it is... And the average sex trafficking child victim is 13 years old.

In January, Gazette Newspapers reported the success of the Long Beach Human Trafficking Task Force (LBHTTF), Project IMPACT and Long Beach Police Department (LBPD) in helping 109 human trafficking victims last year. In 2015, LBPD had 24 cases, 26 arrests and 29 minor victims, and expects to see similar numbers reported for 2016.

Remember, these are only the cases we know about. Sex trafficking continues to be largely unreported due to its concealed nature and common misconception that it's consensual.

To begin to grasp how innocent children can end up in slavery, it is critical to understand the risk factors that make some children more vulnerable to this horrific



life. In Los Angeles County, the Department of Public Health estimates that 80% of identified sex trafficking minor victims had contact with the Department of Child and Family Services. These children typically have experienced trauma, abuse and neglect that has significantly disrupted their living environment.

Traffickers seek, identify and prey upon their victims' vulnerabilities to manipulate and control them. For example, a neglected child who craves love meets a young man who showers her with attention, then forces her to "prove" her love so he can profit off her sexually. She's afraid he'll leave her, and she'll never feel loved again.

Or, a teen is desperate to help his family financially. He gets trapped in a "jobs for teens" scam lured by empty promises of easy money. His trafficker threatens to kill his family if he doesn't continue.

It feels hopeless to escape this life. Existing feelings of shame and unworthiness are intensified. New fears for their own safety or threats of being reported to police emerge. And then lies the ques-

tions, "Well now what good am I? Who will ever love me now?" The initial trap becomes a seemingly hopeless, never-ending cycle of psychological, emotional and physical torture.

Child sex trafficking is not prostitution. Children cannot willingly be prostitutes. This is modern day slavery.

As a mental health resource for LBHTTF since 2014 and non-profit mental health agency annually serving more than 3,000 of the most disadvantaged children and families in Long Beach, Compton and San Pedro, The Guidance Center sees a number of children who are victims of sex trafficking, and provides a safe place for them to heal. For children who may be more at risk, The Guidance Center provides preventative intervention to decrease a child's susceptibility to being trafficked through education and encouragement of healthy relationships, adaptive coping, and safe daily living.

We are grateful that LBPD was among the first to recognize this increasing crisis and swiftly respond by increasing their work-

(Continued on Page 3A)

# Made An Anniversary Of Sorts

Well, I made it.

Twenty-five years ago last Monday, I walked into a little converted apartment on Pomona Avenue and became the executive editor of Gazette Newspapers.

I'll admit, 25 years in the same job, or with the same company, doesn't seem like that big a deal anymore. When it comes to me, it's likely because I couldn't find another job, so I hung on to this one by my fingernails.

Heck, there's even one guy here at the *Gazette*, digital account wizard Jonathan Chandler, who has been a *Gazette* employee a few years longer than I have.

Twenty-five years is not anywhere close to half of my life. But it is more than half of my 40-year newspaper career.

Also, as far as I know, there are only three guys who are still working who have written about Long Beach longer — George Economides at the *Long Beach Business Journal* and Rich Archbold and Tim Grobaty at the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*. And they're all older than dirt.

Just like everything else in our world, there have been incredible changes in the newspaper business in the last quarter century. Our computers, cell phones and internet connections were mere science fiction visions when I came to Long Beach.

Here's just one example — when I wanted/needed to work at home, I had to create a floppy disk at the office to get the files on my home Apple Plus. (Floppy disks weren't really floppy, by the way.) These days, I can connect to our office servers from the



comfort of my reclining chair.

Of course, the world I cover has changed just as much. Gone are the days of reasoned, careful discourse, of researching a topic before coming to a conclusion. Instant gratification is the expectation of the day.

I grew up with the specter of a crooked president who likely would have gotten away with it if a couple of guys named Woodward and Bernstein hadn't gotten a deep-throated word there was something wrong. Nixon's tapes? They were made on a reel-to-reel tape deck.

Today, our president wakes up in the middle of the night and proclaims his paranoia via the wonder of Twitter. Others admit to getting most of their news from tweets. It says way too much about today's society that a 140-character message passes for news.

But I'm off on a tangent (another consequence of being in the same job for so long). I was talking about my time in Long Beach.

The changes we've seen in our city are nothing short of incredible. We watched the Navy sail away and the airplane manufacturing industry pack up and leave. When I got to town back in 1992, you could throw a rock down Pine Avenue on a Friday night without fear of hitting anyone —

and the only thing south of Ocean Boulevard was the Hyatt.

Belmont Shore wasn't a lot better. I never did a count, but it seems like one out of every four storefronts was empty.

I was blessed to ride the wave of Long Beach's resurgence. I watched as the city hooked its star to Beverly O'Neill and her "Three Ts and an R." There were fits and starts — the Aquarium of the Pacific had to struggle to survive all by itself for its first decade, and the Great Recession was incredibly painful — but the city I've come to love has become a real jewel, with a bright future.

Pardon me while I thank the people who have helped me make it this far. John and Fran Blowitz took a chance when they hired the Colorado boy, but we made it work. My coworkers in the editorial department were memorable, with a special tip of the hat to Amy Bentley-Smith and Kurt Helin of the first decade or so. The rest of the *Grunion* team (I'm talking to you, Mo) were great. And Simon Grieve, the publisher of recent years, has been as much friend as boss.

Then there were the wives. That's right, two. One, Reetz, got me out to California. The other, Maria, has literally kept me alive for the last 16 years or so. I have, as I've said before, been blessed.

Finally, there's you, gentle reader. If you weren't there, who would I do this for? Thanks for the memories.

Now let's go make a few more.

*Harry M. Saltzgaver*

## GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

GRUNION • DOWNTOWN • UPTOWN

<b>PUBLISHER</b> Simon Grieve	<b>CONTRIBUTOR</b> Ashleigh Ruhl	<b>ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE:</b> Lorraine Bennett
<b>PUBLISHER'S ASSISTANT:</b> Julie McKibbin	<b>SPORTS EDITORS:</b> JJ Fidler	<b>SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER:</b> José Solís
<b>EXECUTIVE EDITOR</b> Harry Saltzgaver	Mike Guardabascio	<b>GRAPHIC DESIGNER:</b> Michael Wada
<b>STAFF WRITER:</b> Emily Thornton	Paul Slater	<b>DIGITAL CREATIVE SPECIALIST:</b> Jesse Lopez
Stephanie Stutzman	<b>PHOTOGRAPHERS:</b> Kevin Oules • Geronimo Quitoriano	<b>ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE:</b> Pamela Patterson
<b>EDITORIAL ASSISTANT,</b> <b>OBITUARIES:</b> Kurt A. Eichsteadt	Damien Barranco	<b>CLASSIFIED SALES, LEGALS ADV.,</b> <b>ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:</b> Susan Pilgram
	<b>DIGITAL SALES MANAGER:</b> Jonathan Chandler	
	<b>ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE:</b> Gerson Menjivar	

5225 E. Second St, Long Beach, CA 90803 • Office: (562) 433-2000 • Fax: (562) 434-8826  
Email: [editor@gazettes.com](mailto:editor@gazettes.com) or [advertising@gazettes.com](mailto:advertising@gazettes.com) • [www.Gazettes.com](http://www.Gazettes.com)

All materials in this publication are copyrighted to Gazette Newspapers unless otherwise stated.





## OUR MAILBOX

### Animal Lover

Dear Editor,

I have been reading the *Gazette* and your work for a long time. Much if not most of the time we are in agreement.

I have learned to pick my battles. If you saw the piece about the circus on "60 Minutes" last night, then my goal here becomes much easier.

Recently you wrote (A Pinch Of Salt) about the somewhat nostalgic view you had about the Ringling Bros. circus finally giving up their century-old legacy of animal abuse and torture. For those of us who knew the truth there was no remorse whatsoever.

We knew the truth decades ago and showed up to protest when they came to town.

Why? Because we love animals. I hope in my lifetime I will see an end to all animal cruelty in circuses and entertainment. Sadly it was our love for these creatures that created their suffering. We bought the tickets to see them because we didn't know any better. Now we do.

If you did not see "60 Minutes," I can get a link to you but it should be easy to find. It should cure any regrets you might still have about the circus. I too remember going with my family as a child but I think even then I had a sense something just was not quite right.

There are multiple websites and organizations to validate the ugly truth. If what you see there

seems disturbing, look into factory farming. That makes the circus look like a petting zoo. Thank you for your time.

Vince Plodzien  
Long Beach

### Lagoon Progress

Dear Editor,

Reviewing your story about the Colorado "Lagoon Progress Continues," you are spot on. We view the lagoon every day out our back windows, and we have seen how quick and efficient the contractors are.

They are early and ready to move dirt by dredge or tractor by 7 a.m. every morning. Obviously, they have already been briefed on what has to be accomplished before they leave, whether it be at 5 p.m. or well after the sun goes down.

We have observed with admi-

ration precise measurements continually taken along with care for each step of the project. The new wide trail that is wide enough for emergency vehicles if necessary is, well, smooth as a baby's bottom. Our new bridge on the trail will help runoff water enter the lagoon with class.

The 150ish additional new feet of bridge over the lagoon is a marvelous addition and yes, the dirt mound still there is supposed to be there. The north side

of the lagoon is completely newly sculptured now with more trees and plants going in the ground daily

We've heard eel grass is to be put in after official opening. Eric Lopez has watched the progress like a hawk (oh, and there is an Osprey already claiming rights here.)

All of us are anxiously awaiting removal of the blue tarp, fencing and opening of the Colorado

(Continued on Page 4A)

## Another View

(Continued from Page 2A)

force and funding to help combat this issue. Additionally, we're proud to be a part of LBHTTF as they unite LBPD with local agencies to collaboratively work to eliminate trafficking in our communities.

I encourage you to join us in the fight against child sex trafficking. Everyone can help these victims regain their identity, dignity and independence. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act explains how with "4 P's":

Prevention:

- Get informed. Be aware. Talk about it. Ask questions.
- Visit [Socalhumantraffickingevents.info](http://Socalhumantraffickingevents.info) for information.

Protection:

- Provide victims with resources and assistance. The Human Trafficking Resource Center can

be accessed 24/7: [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org) or call 1 (888) 373-7888.

- Help victims get to Long Beach Fire and Police Stations, which are designated "safe houses" for trafficking to be reported without fear of legal consequences for the child.

Prosecution:

- Report suspicious activity or behavior to police.
- Support local and federal

legislation to combat human trafficking.

Partnership:

- Support agencies such as TGC and LBHTT with donations or volunteer.
- Visit [www.tgclb.org](http://www.tgclb.org) or like Long Beach Human Trafficking Taskforce on Facebook.

*Dr. Kristen Martin, LMFT, is The Guidance Center's Intensive and Specialized Services Program Manager.*

## Closed Session

(Continued from Page 2A)

an efficiency study to see if some could be eliminated. I recall only one — the Golf Commission — that was downgraded, let alone eliminated.

That's because every board and commission represents a segment of Long Beach. Every commissioner or board member brings

a perspective that wouldn't be heard without those panels.

Can it be redundant? Absolutely. Are they worthwhile? Most of the time. You can bet the City Council will be leaning on the Planning Commission's opinions about the pool, for example.

That's why commissions are here to stay.

(Full disclosure. I am a Water Commission member.)



4606 E. Second St. | 433-2996 | [www.pollys.com](http://www.pollys.com)

## Living Trusts ~ Wills Estate Planning ~ Probate

From Simple Living Trust to  
Full Estate Planning • \$476 - \$1295

**AARP**  
Legal Services  
Network

Participating Attorney

**Union Plus**  
Legal Service  
Participating Attorney

Discounts also provided for  
Police (LBPOA), Fire, Teachers,  
and Long Beach City Employees

Free Initial Office or Phone Consultation  
Flat Rates ~ Affordable Fees ~ Senior Discounts

**WILLIAMSON & GENTILINI**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
A Father & Daughter Law Firm  
**(562) 431-1956**

1945 Palo Verde Ave., Suite 101 ~ Long Beach, 90815  
[www.LongBeachEstatePlanning.com](http://www.LongBeachEstatePlanning.com)

**-SHOP OUR WEBSITE-**

**WWW.URBANAMERICANA.COM**

**-OVER 5000 PRODUCTS AVAILABLE ONLINE-**

**▪ INDUSTRIAL DECOR ▪ VINYL RECORDS ▪  
▪ MID CENTURY FURNITURE ▪**

**URBAN  
AMERICANA**

**VINTAGE ANTIQUES DESIGN**

**IN-HOUSE RUG DEALER**  
-SPECIALIZING IN KILIM RUGS-

**1345 CORONADO AVE  
LONG BEACH**

**OPEN 10-6 | 7 DAYS A WEEK | 562-494-7300**



Relax...  
We've got your  
Mail and Packages!

Enjoy the benefits  
of having a  
Business Address  
using our Mailboxes.

**Shore Business Center**  
(562) 987-4777 FAX 987-4778  
5318 E. Second St. (At Pomona) Belmont Shore

Open 7 Days: M-F 8am-7pm, Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 10am-5pm (Parking in rear)  
[www.ShoreBizCenter.com](http://www.ShoreBizCenter.com) • [ShoreBizCenter@gmail.com](mailto:ShoreBizCenter@gmail.com)