

Long Beach's Beach Coming Into Its Own

Sports watchers will turn their eyes to Long Beach this weekend — again — for the World Series of Beach Volleyball.

For the second year, the Long Beach event is the only FIVB-sanctioned tournament to take place in the United States. The purse, at more than \$1 million, is the biggest yet for a beach volleyball tournament. This is the only time three-time Olympic gold medalist Kerri Walsh Jennings will play for real on the West Coast this year.

Are you beginning to get the picture? This is a big deal.

Long Beach, not Manhattan Beach, is the center of the beach volleyball world these days. Lots of credit goes to Misty May-Treanor, the Long Beach State alum who calls our fair city home and just happens to be the best beach (and maybe indoor, as well) volleyball player to take up the sport.

But there's more to it than that. Take a stroll along Long Beach's long beach any summer weekend, and you'll see dozens of volleyball games in progress, many at city-installed and maintained courts.

There are three different areas where the nets (or at least the poles to string the nets) are permanent — downtown (near where the World Series is taking place), Belmont Plaza and Granada Beach. And they're all busy. Some beach visitors even bring lunch and/or dinner, and make a day of it.

Lifeguards report that the beach is busier than ever this year, and many of the beach-goers are out-of-towners. The word's out — you can come to Long Beach, let your kids play in the water and have a good summer day. Or you can come to Long Beach and find out if you've got game — volleyball game. Either way, you'll have company.

Part of the reason for this turnaround has to be the concerted efforts of city and county officials to clean up the water along the beach. Just five years ago, you were taking your health into your hands if you waded out from Long Beach, and not just from bacteria. A person could get hurt with all the gunk out there.

Today, even watchdog Heal The Bay has to admit that the Long Beach water's just fine. Water quality gets "A"s and "B"s as long as it hasn't rained. And who can remember the last time it rained?

No, waves haven't suddenly appeared along the Long Beach shore. Surfers still avoid our coastline, and continue to disparage our very existence.

Others moan for the "good old days" before the breakwater, when Long Beach more than held its own when it came to breakers. They're certain that wave action would make all the difference to our city's economy, beaches and water quality.

They may be right. But it isn't going to happen anytime soon, if ever.

So instead of complaining that we aren't Huntington Beach, the powers that be have attempted to capitalize on what we are — a long beach with great weather and an almost constant calm sea.

That effort has translated to multiple attractions in the summer. There is a festival or competition of one sort or another literally every weekend. They range from this weekend's Grand Slam of volleyball to weeknight Movies on the Beach.

"Lifeguards report that the beach is busier than ever this year."

There have been failures, to be sure. An effort to make Long Beach the preferred site for open water swimming events collapsed due to lack of interest. The promising privatization of the Sea Festival collapsed from the weight of bureaucracy.

But other efforts have persevered and are finding success. Special events continue to grow.

The most heartening development, though, has been the continued expansion of regular visitors for things like kite surfing, dog exercising and, yes, beach volleyball. The word about Long Beach is out, and the word is that it is good.

Go down and see what all the excitement is about this weekend. You can see the world's best players in action vying for big bucks, but you'll also see hundreds of "just plain folks" playing for bragging rights and a little fun.

While you're there, you might just discover what more people are discovering every summer day:

Long Beach's beach is pretty darned cool.

Domestic Violence World Wide

By ALYCE LAVIOLETTE

Fearful and hopeful, she packed her children and a few of her treasured belongings into the car and fled her home in Illinois.

She had been planning their escape for several months with her YWCA support group. One of the members had learned about Womenshelter, a battered women's refuge in Long Beach, Calif. It was 1977 and there were very few places that sheltered families who lived in the chronic apprehension of an abusive home.

She couldn't tell her family and her closest friends where she was going — or why. She'd kept that secret for years, as most battered women do. She had lied to people close to her about the bruises and the black eye. She guessed they just thought she was clumsy. The psychological wounds, well, she thought they were invisible to everyone else.

She knew that her husband would go to her family and friends first to find out if she and the kids were there. Best they didn't have any answers to his questions.

She asked herself, "Would they be safe, would he try to follow them? Would he intimidate family members?"

She was one of the first women to walk through the doors of Womenshelter, Long Beach's first battered women's shelter. I began working there in 1978 as a volunteer as part of my graduate practicum at California State University, Long Beach. I have been working with victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence ever since.

This week, at the request of



the U.S. Department of State, I will be flying to Vietnam to work with advocates, women's groups, NGOs, survivors, legislators, law enforcement and the media on issues of violence against women. Dr. Courtney Ahrens, a psychology professor and researcher from CSULB, will be joining me.

Dr. David Dowell, a former professor and current provost at the university, got the ball rolling. He asked me if a professor could join me. I thought he was kidding. He wasn't. I contacted Inca McMichael at the State Department and the rest, as they say, is history — or will be.

We will be traveling to Hanoi, HaNam and Hoa Binh provinces. We will be in the city, in mountain and delta communities. Courtney and I will be meeting minority communities, visiting women's refugees and participating in roundtables with women's unions, legislators and end our trip with a media roundtable. Some groups are specifically interested in my work with the perpetrators of family violence, others want to focus on interventions with women and children.

Domestic violence is a deeply personal issue for so many families in this country and for countries all over the world. The pattern is intergenerational and

the toll exponential. As a parent from Jordan High School said, "My children didn't grow up in an abusive family, but they might date or marry someone who did. It is an issue for all of us."

The cost to communities is psychological, spiritual and financial. Workplace production is negatively impacted. Children struggle to learn as exposure to intimate violence, even at low levels, effects cognitive, social and psychological functioning.

But domestic abuse is a solvable problem. Prevention programs can be funded. Mentoring programs can work. Holistic approaches can be and have been created. We can create an atmosphere that promotes asking for help as we have with drug and alcohol abuse.

Great societies are typified by egalitarian and humanitarian treatment of women and children.

Alyce LaViolette, M.S., MFCC, is an expert in anger management and domestic violence counseling for survivors of domestic violence with offices in Long Beach.

Editor's Note: The Gazette welcomes submissions to Another View on issues of general public interest. Pieces should be between 500 and 700 words and should be emailed to editor@gazettes.com. Questions regarding the parameters can be sent to the same address.

Book Obsession Clutters Home

After knocking over different stacks of books twice in the last couple of weeks, I decided to cull my book collection last weekend.

I love books. I realize that makes me old-fashioned in this age of Kindle, Nook and iPad. Heck, I've got a Kindle app on my phone, and have used it to good advantage several times when I was stuck waiting somewhere with nothing to do.

But it's not the same as a book. There's no there there, if you know what I mean.

But why do we — and I know you are out there — keep our books after we read them? I've got a pretty good memory, and I rarely find any pleasure in reading something for a second time. But I'm loathe to get rid of a good book.

Back in my college days, a century or so ago, I moved around quite a bit. I could typically do it in one carload. There was a box of kitchen stuff, a footlocker and maybe a suitcase of clothes, and the book boxes. After a while, there was a typewriter, a cheap stereo and a portable television, too.

I'd move into the dorm, or rent a furnished apartment. Then it was down to the local lumberyard for some cinder blocks and some 1x6 planks. Hook up the stereo, create and fill the bookshelves, plug in the TV and I was home.



The vast majority of my book collection back then were paperbacks, with the few obligatory hard-backed text books. I was an English Lit major, so most of the titles were respectable. There was just enough science fiction, and later Stephen King, to keep me entertained.

When I started to mature, or at least get older, I began buying honest-to-goodness bookshelves. They came from Target, Sears and later, Ikea. I always put them together myself.

I would wait until my shelves could hold no more, even when double loaded, before I'd buy another bookshelf. And aside from the cinderblock and plank type, I never got rid of a bookshelf, either.

At last count, I had six decent-sized bookshelves. And the last time I moved, 14 years ago, I left two or three boxes unpacked. They're still in the garage.

But I had run up against a dilemma. All the shelves were left in the house to add another bookshelf. That meant going through the stacks and getting rid

of the ones I could bear to part with.

I know I'm a dweeb, but this was hard. There's something deep inside me that believes it is a crime to get rid of a good book. I feel like I'm abandoning them.

There are the few volumes I might need again — the dictionary, Strunk & White's "Elements of Style," the different Bibles, etc. And there are those that I like to recommend and/or lend, like C.S. Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia" or "The Screwtape Letter."

But for the most part, I might know that I'll never open that particular novel or biography again. Still, I have to keep it around. It gives me comfort to know there are good words surrounding me, I guess.

It took a good chunk of Sunday to go through three of the six bookcases. It seemed like every time I picked a book up, a memory would come, and I'd have to think about what that particular book taught me. It was almost as good as reading a new one.

And maybe that's the answer. I need my books to remind me. They are always there, with the same message to convey. Maybe I can find room for one more bookshelf after all.

Kerry M. Seligman

GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

GRUNION • DOWNTOWN • UPTOWN

PUBLISHER
Simon Griev
PUBLISHER'S ASSISTANT:
Julie McEbin
EDITORIAL BOARD:
Harry Saltzger, Executive Editor
Ashleigh Ruhl, Editor
STAFF WRITER:
Jonathan Van Dyke
EDIT. ASST./OBITUARIES:
Kurt A. Eichtstadt
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Sarah George

SPORTS EDITORS:
JJ Fidler • Mike Guardabascio
PHOTOGRAPHERS:
Kevin Oudes
William Johnson
Geronimo Outilorano
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES:
Jonathan Chandler
Lorraine Bennett
Jason Price
Niki Castle
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE ASST.:
Leigha Bryson

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER:
Josi Sells
GRAPHIC DESIGNER:
Michael Wada
DIGITAL CREATIVE SPECIALIST:
Jesse Lopez
CLASSIFIED MANAGER:
Bob Jones Sr.
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE:
Pamela Patterson
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/ LEGALS ADVERTISING:
Susan Pilgram

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

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

A MediaNews Group NEWSPAPER