

The Peninsula Beacon
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The Beacon celebrates 20 years full of news!

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Editor-in-Chief

One day a reporter was on the phone conducting an interview in The Peninsula Beacon office and the crew overheard her conversation:

"So, how long has your dog been surfing?" she asked.

The newsroom erupted in laughter as the reporter strained hard to maintain her composure. But, sure enough, she completed the interview and typed out a story about the legendary surfing canines of Ocean Beach.

That's one example of the daily routine and, today, we are proud to announce there have been 20 years of days such as this. It's The Beacon's birthday!

The Beacon territory is definitely unique, filled with wonderful events and colorful people. There's never a dull moment.

Who can ever forget legends such as the Ocean Beach Spaceman? He created incredibly-detailed geometric paintings and sold passes to a spaceship that would take passengers to another planet.

Does anyone remember the time a Raiders fan bit a chunk off the ear of a Chargers fan while watching a game at the old First Round Draft on Bacon Street?

How about the parrot murder story? Someone poked fun at us for putting it on the front page, but that story generated the most letters to the editor of any single story. Nobody gets away with shooting parrots around here.

It's been a pleasure covering a community with so many events: the Ocean Beach Street Fair and Chili Cook-off, The Peninsula Chamber of Commerce Chamber Chomp, The OB Pier Pancake Breakfast, the OB Christmas Parade and the San Diego Bay Parade of Lights, for example. The opportunity has left us with great memories and experiences: spotting whales off Point Loma,

peeking through a periscope of a nuclear submarine, listening to future stars at Java Joe's, holding court at Pac Shores, seeing record catches at Fisherman's Landing, viewing great games and concerts at the Sports Arena, meeting bright students at Point Loma High, sighting brilliant skies off Sunset Cliffs and watching families fish together at the Shelter Island docks; the list goes on.

San Diego Community Newspaper Group purchased The Beacon in 1989, eight years into the paper's life. The company put the paper back into a weekly publishing schedule and injected a good dose of color onto its pages. The newspaper group has grown to publish six papers, but The Beacon is the sentimental favorite and it definitely has the most spirited readers.

Of course, we've made our share of mistakes typos, misspelled headlines, etc. But the worst was the time we published an obituary about a woman who was still alive. It was an honest but stupid mistake. Boy, were we ever embarrassed.

It's often tempting for a newspaper to boast of being things such as "the community watchdog," but it's much harder to actually live up to those claims. The Beacon staff simply tries to provide a reliable vehicle for communications and cover local events in a fair and objective manner. While the paper hasn't backed away from controversy, it hasn't taken it upon itself to always take sides, either. There have been several times, however, that The Beacon reporters have helped make a positive difference in the community.

Following up on a tip from a local surfer, for instance, a reporter once investigated workmen dumping refuse off the Ocean Beach Pier during reconstruction. The story hit the streets and the contractor was served with a fine.

Stories in The Beacon have even helped bring criminals to justice. Once, a suspect in an unsolved murder was dumb enough to clip the story about the crime to his refrigerator door. One of his acquaintances didn't think that was too cool and told the cops. The suspect was arrested and convicted.

Of course, there have been countless other, less dramatic cases when The Beacon aided the community numerous times when the paper put the word out about fund-raising efforts and public meetings.

The staff always tries to better itself and takes pride in the fact that quality has improved each year. There is a wall full of national

awards to prove it. But awards are meaningless unless we accomplish the number one goal: serve our readers and advertisers.

During the next year, The Beacon will publish more about the paper's history and will plan ways to celebrate the 20th anniversary, and we invite readers to submit their own ideas. We also welcome readers to send in their own stories and tales about The Peninsula Beacon.

Finally, The Beacon staff thanks all of you for allowing us 20 years of great news!