

Just 8 Day's of Pacific Beach Nightlife – An argument in support of a Conditional Use Permit in Pacific Beach, California

See www.pbSpirits.com

by Jerry Hall, Resident

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Recently, Channel 10 News [featured a story](http://www.pbspirits.com/2011/02/08/video-prompts-proposed-permit-for-pb-bars-restaurants/) [linked to: <http://www.pbspirits.com/2011/02/08/video-prompts-proposed-permit-for-pb-bars-restaurants/>] where a small portion of video I shot over 6 months in 2010 was used to illustrate typical problems in PB's business district. Some bar and 'restaurant' owners representing the Discover PB Hospitality Task Force were asked what they thought. They dismissed these incidents as sensationalistic and implied that they were just typical problems over a long period of time compiled by myself and the media, alluding to listeners and viewers that the Pacific Beach environment is nothing like the story portrayed.

In reply, I offer a ten-minute video of just some of the things I saw over these last eight days.

You should know that many of situations I witnessed in the last eight days alone were not included in this film – such as the several themed pub crawls of about 20-30 people going from bar to bar (and 'restaurant' to 'restaurant') getting drunk, the chaos of other drunk pedestrians – especially near moving vehicles (many drivers driving drunk or unsafely themselves), the unsafe practices of the various taxis, limos and party buses and their passengers, the incessant number of people urinating everywhere (including ironically just outside my well-lit front doorway), the verbal insults and threats to fight between individuals and groups, verbal and physical disrespect to another person's date (male and female), the littering, vandalism, dumped news racks, trash cans, flower pots, shopping carts run into parked cars... all a total lack of regard for each other and our community.

You'll also not see is the non-stop presence of the San Diego Police who it seems are akin to putting their finger in a bursting dam while they are forced to address the negative symptoms, not the root causes, of what seems clear (if you're not a bar owner) to be an problem that is working against a community. The SDPD brought out an amazing number of resources on St. Patrick's Day including the observation tower, foot patrols, patrol and traffic vehicles and I heard a checkpoint that netted approximately 17 DUI drivers.

What you also won't see is, at bar closing time, the large number of people walking down the street to the closest liquor store – smack dab in the middle of a highly concentrated district – to buy a 24-pack of beer – some even cracking their open outside the store, drinking while they walk away towards home or another party [hopefully not driving there].

And finally, what you won't hear, as I'm not possibly able to convey, the annoying din of the individual bar and 'restaurant's' music, usually heard far from their doorways, interspersed with the typical chatter of the plethora of obviously drunk patrons exiting the bars and 'restaurants', the traffic, sirens, horns, shopping carts and those yelling banter.

What you *will* see in this film of the last eight days are:

1. A pub crawl of Arizonans both living here and visiting from Arizona universities during their spring break. 70 of them participated setting out to visit 13 different bars and 'restaurants' to drink and apparently to get drunk.
2. People being hauled away in vehicles – injured and others unable to walk in ambulances, drunks and criminals (typically fighting) in police cars and paddy wagons.
3. A woman apparently being sexually battered. Unfortunately, I couldn't have imagined what this man was doing and could have easily had him arrested. I believed I was only filming an excessively drunk woman – not a predator taking advantage of her.

4. A wrong-way driver that could have easily struck another vehicle and a fire-engine as it was driving east on the north side of Grand Ave., then crossing the south lanes of traffic to park and apparently hide from police.
5. A drunk bicyclist who miraculously didn't get run over by several passing vehicles (having fallen a few times before I caught him on film).
6. An unconscious man riding a motorized cycle found in a wreck, remaining unconscious as an ambulance took him away.
7. People getting sick and puking in various corners of PB or leaning up against various things because they're unable to walk.
8. You'll even see people donning a gas mask, doing calisthenics and being awarded free shots and beers inside a 'restaurant' – for entertainment? A woman had just completed her round and complimentary shot as I got the camera up. (Ironically that same 'restaurant's' customers were being polled outside by SDSU researchers seeking in part to determine if better information about alcohol beverage content would lead to more responsible drinking.)

Please take a look... is this the next eight days of Pacific Beach you support or are you ready to see some changes (at no cost to you) to fund our police with additional resources? Or, are you happy and want to continue subsidizing this out-of-control party so the bar and 'restaurant' owners can continue to profit?

[See video here online at <http://www.pbspirits.com/2011/03/21/8-days-of-pacific-beachs-nightlife/>]

My question to you is this: how did these people, most if not all filmed in the business district, get so drunk? The bars and 'restaurant' owner's representatives are saying it's the patron's personal responsibility, the pre-loading (drinking) and home parties they attend – that they're unable to know how much the person had to drink beforehand – even though they also claim they are highly trained to do just that. In contrast, [research shows](http://www.pbspirits.com/2011/02/13/telling-sdsu-study-on-overserving-from-local-bars/) [linked to <http://www.pbspirits.com/2011/02/13/telling-sdsu-study-on-overserving-from-local-bars/>] they are chronically over-pouring and over-serving and that most people are leaving their establishments far more intoxicated than when they arrived. Perhaps the patrons are getting drunk in these very establishments?

In the end, if the owners continue to fight community efforts to effect change, all the while being unwilling or unable to control their staff and follow state laws, perhaps they should relinquish their licenses to those that will?

You are invited to leave your comments at pbSpirits.com.