

# Walking the Artwalk

## On both sides of the bridges

by: B. Noel Barr, *On the Art Beat*

The night chill cuts through the harbor air, people are laughing and talking as they walk down the city street. Looking at the fantastic displays of color and shape as they step from window to doorway to gallery floor. Fragrances of fruits and wine, mixed with the odd scent of caffeine, inviting one's palate to taste from the evening fare.

Places like The Whale & Ale on Seventh St. in San Pedro, or the Utopia on Linden Ave. in Long Beach share the common mission of helping to ease the hunger pangs of ravenous patrons out on a Thursday or Saturday night enjoying the company of strangers all in the name of art.

The Art Walks of San Pedro's "First Thursday" and Long Beach's "Second Saturday Art Walk" both started about the same time, each with an agenda to show off local artistic talent, thus bringing their respective communities together in this common purpose. People travel from the Westside of Los Angeles and the far-flung southern parts of Orange County to come to these events.

HarboRLiving spoke with one of the Long Beach founders of "Second Saturday," Larry Bott of the Gallery Eleven/Seven on Linden Ave., who said, "Originally it was to bring people to downtown Long Beach. Over the years it has evolved into a cultural thing."

"It is a cheap Saturday night," he added. "You don't have to spend anything to get in. There's food and music. A lot of the same people come every month but there are a lot of new people as well."

Robert Master of the Medea Gallery of Seventh St., said, "In general it [First Thursday] has been a positive thing, historically it was an Art Walk." In recent years it had been become a street fair. Then briefly returning to an Art Walk, and lately it has been themed nights, such the celebration for the Day of the Dead or Chinese New Year. Master has indicated, "The evening should be about the arts and artists, to attract qualified art buyers."

In response to the question of how much value the Art Walk adds to a community, Robert replied, "When done properly it does work. When you bring qualified people who are there to look at art, they are going to also go to other shops and res-



Scenes from Long Beach's Second Saturday and San Pedro's First Thursday's Art Walk are varied and diverse, encompassing the twenty-something age group to the baby boomer generation.  
Photos by: Matt Highland and Terelle Jerricks