

Huntington storms haven't brought end for The End Cafe

By Tim Woodhull
The Register

D. C. Register
Jan. 14, 1988

HUNTINGTON BEACH — The sun was rising, and John Gustafson already was busy a quarter-mile offshore.

Gustafson, 58, begins his days the same way, carrying steaming racks of fresh cinammon rolls and sourdough bread past screeching seagulls and drowsy fishermen. He walks the length of the Huntington Beach Pier, from the pizza shack where the rolls are baked, past the lifeguard stands and tackle shops out to The End Cafe, which Gustafson has owned 10 years.

The cafe's two-story, apple-green stucco is topped by a darker green, metal roof. Inside, cafe diners on a clear day can see past Seal Beach, north to the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Even on a foggy morning, Santa Catalina Island can at times be seen through the mist. And, looking back down the pier toward Pacific Coast Highway, snow-capped mountains rise in the east on clear days.

Built in 1911, according to city

“I used to come down here and watch the sunrise and sunsets with my kids. I thought it would be a great place to come for a cup of coffee late at night or early in the morning, but the restaurant wasn't open those hours. I finally said to the owner, 'I'd like to buy it.' He said, 'I'd like to sell it.' ”

John Gustafson
owner of The End Cafe

officials, the pier was originally 1,330 feet long. When 500 feet was added in the 1930s, The End Cafe was built at the end of the pier.

In the late 1930s, storms lashed the end of the pier and the cafe was heavily damaged. Rebuilt and reopened in 1940, the cafe was used by the Navy during World War II to watch for enemy submarines.

“Old-timers say strands of barbed wire were stretched along the beaches and a radar installation was built on the pier,” Gustafson said.

When the Navy pulled out after the war, the cafe resumed attracting a steady clientele and

has for the intervening decades.

Gustafson was one of the visitors, bringing his family to the beach. The ocean environment spurred him to buy the restaurant in 1977.

“I used to come down here and watch the sunrise and sunsets with my kids,” Gustafson said. “I thought it would be a great place to come for a cup of coffee late at night or early in the morning, but the restaurant wasn't open those hours. I finally said to the owner, 'I'd like to buy it.' He said, 'I'd like to sell it.' ”

Gustafson had worked in the food-management division of Safeway Stores and as a food-pro-



duction manager for Johnson's Yogurts. But he had no retail experience, so obtaining money to buy The End Cafe was difficult, he said. Finally, a bank agreed to loan the money for the down payment. Gustafson took over the business and began opening earlier and closing later.

Customers responded favorably to the restaurant's new hours, he said.

"We did better than we had dreamed we might," he said.

Business continued growing. In five years, Gustafson paid off the lender and the seller. The End Cafe was entirely his.

But rough times were ahead — for him, the restaurant and the pier.

One month after his final payment, the second storm in nearly 50 years to damage the Huntington Beach Pier struck in the winter of 1983, destroying the end of the pier and The End Cafe.

"I was just at the point, after paying off the loans, that I would be able to set aside a little something for me," Gustafson re-

“Some people get a job and then look for someplace nearby to live. I did it backwards. I wanted to live in Huntington Beach and then looked for a way I could stay here. This is it.”

John Gustafson
restaurateur

called. "But I was back to square one."

Without flood insurance because of the cost of coverage, Gustafson had to find a way to make a living and generate income so he could qualify for a new loan to rebuild The End Cafe.

He bought Maxi's Pizza at the base of the pier to accomplish both goals.

"It kept my name local and let people know we hadn't left the area," he said. "That was important to me."

He succeeded. By the time the pier was reopened in September 1985, Gustafson had made enough to qualify for his loan. He reopened The End Cafe in October 1985.

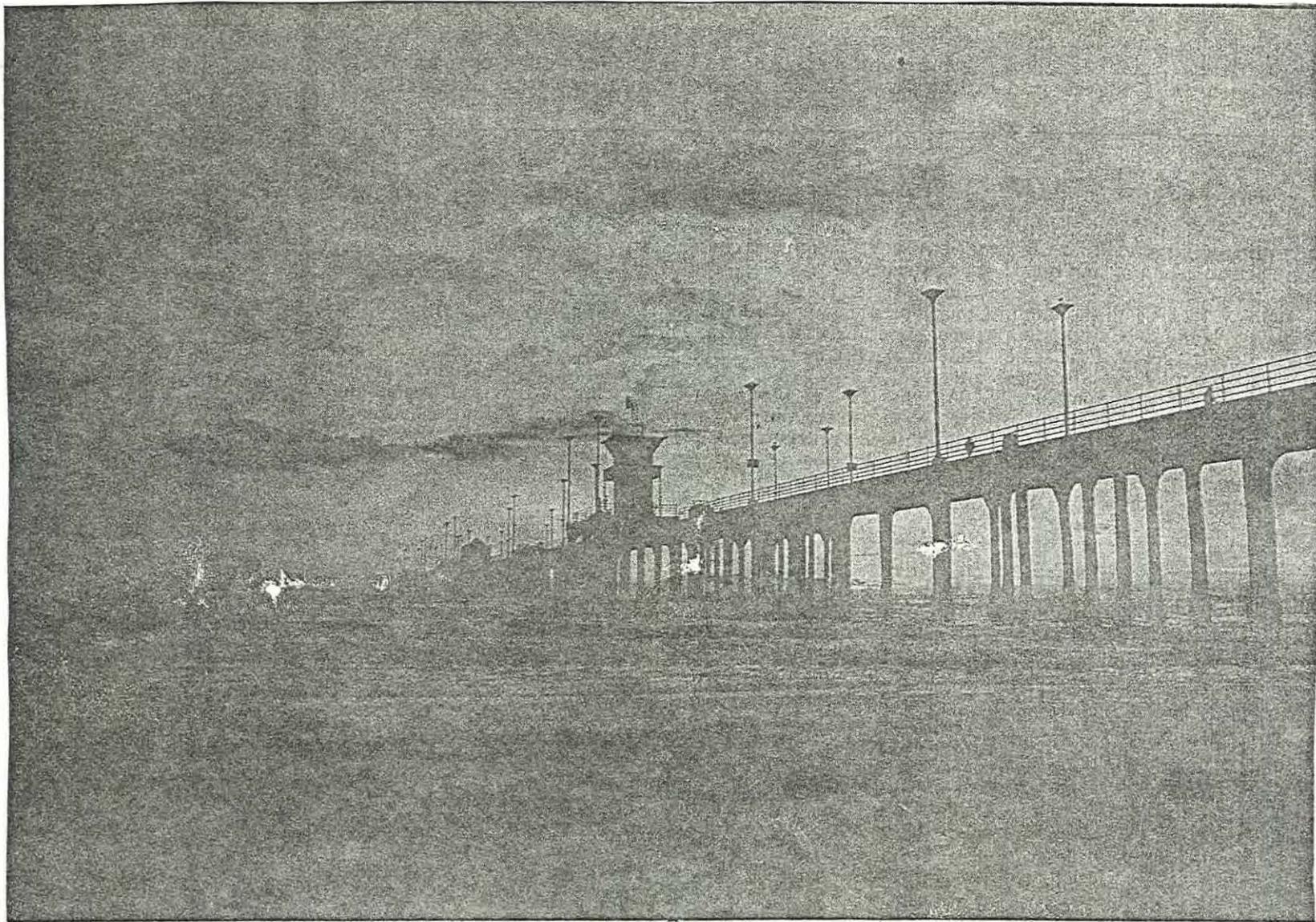
"The grand-opening ceremony was that morning and we were taking orders by evening. It was a great day," Gustafson said.

He also kept Maxi's Pizza and still uses its ovens to provide fresh breads every day for cafe diners.

Gustafson declined to discuss the investment involved or revenues from the cafe and pizza shack.

The walk between the establishments reminds Gustafson every day why he bought The End Cafe.

"Some people get a job and then look for someplace nearby to live. I did it backwards," Gustafson said. "I wanted to live in Huntington Beach and then looked for a way I could stay here. This is it."



Silhouette of Solitude *H.B. Independent Jan. 7, 1988* Independent Photo by Brian Mickas
A series of storm systems have dampened the spirits of the usual crowd of visitors whom frequent the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier, which has proved the ultimate place to seek solace and solitude over the past few weeks.

Ruby's owners plan to expand beyond the beach

One day, they may spread taste of '40s America overseas

By Tim Woodhull
The Register

*O. C. Register
Jan. 14, 1986*

SEAL BEACH — A wind blowing off the ocean along Seal Beach Pier gusted colder by mid-afternoon, and traces of sunshine disappeared. Rain threatened.

Yet, beach visitors had traversed the 1,860-foot length of the Seal Beach Pier to crowd into Ruby's Diner. There was little else to attract most of the pier's visitors that day, except for a small stand next to the diner where deep-sea-fishing-boat tickets and block and tackle are sold.

The 96-seat Ruby's Diner on Seal Beach Pier is the most recent in a chain of Ruby's Diner restaurants to open. Owned by Ruby's Restaurant Group of Newport Beach, company president Doug Cavanaugh and vice president Ralph Kosmides oversee a multimillion-dollar operation with almost 300 employees.

The venture was far from a high-powered operation when it started five years ago, however. Cavanaugh and Kosmides started their business simply because they figured Balboa Pier, without any restaurant seven years ago, would draw hungry beach-goers.

The move by Cavanaugh and Kosmides coincided with the fact that "we were tired of our jobs and decided to make a change," Kosmides said. Cavanaugh left real-estate development and Kosmides his job as an air-conditioning engineer to launch their venture.

Friends since high school, they trusted each other's judgment enough to get into the restaurant business together. Cavanaugh and Kosmides' company includes six restaurants in Orange County: Ruby's Diner operations on Seal Beach Pier and Balboa Pier, at South Coast Plaza and in Mission Viejo. Ruby's also owns Dippy's Restaurant on Balboa Island and Bubbles Balboa Club on the Balboa Peninsula.

The six restaurants are projected to generate \$10 million in gross revenues this year, Cavanaugh said. And he and Kosmides plan to continue expanding their operations.

The concept is simple, Cavanaugh said. It is based on a belief that people enjoy casual dining and eating hearty — though simply prepared — food.

"We really fell into the 'diner craze,'" Cavanaugh said. "We were really lucky to hit it just right."

The taste craze that surfaced within the past five years — meals ranging from hamburger patties and mashed potatoes to pork chops and creamed corn — convinced Cavanaugh and Kosmides that people would forego glitz and glitter if the alternative were satisfying and simple.

And there was nowhere better to serve up such a meal than the atmospheric waterfront, Cavanaugh said. Luckily, there was room on the 60-year-old, 919-foot Balboa Pier. The diner that had operated at the tip of the pier had been closed since 1978. Structurally, the

“We were going to call it the 'Balboa Pier Cafe' or something like that, but that just didn't have much pizzazz. So we named it after my mother (Ruby Cavanaugh) instead.”

Doug Cavanaugh

President
Ruby's Restaurant Group

building that remained "was a mess," Cavanaugh said.

Renovation or a new building could have cost a considerable amount, were it not for Cavanaugh's and Kosmides' construction skills. They spent just \$80,000 renovating the building "because we did the work ourselves," Kosmides said. "We used our personal savings and loans from family and relatives," Cavanaugh and.

The building, which accommodates just 34 diners, was ready in 1982.

"We were going to call it the 'Balboa Pier Cafe' or something like that, but that just didn't have much pizzazz," Cavanaugh said. "So we named it after my mother (Ruby Cavanaugh) instead."

And the restaurant did not sustain heavy damage as similar establishments did during the early 1983 storms.

Since opening the first Ruby's Diner on Balboa Pier, Cavanaugh and Kosmides have expanded their operations. After opening two larg-

er restaurants in Newport Beach and the second Ruby's in Mission Viejo, Cavanaugh and Kosmides opened the Ruby's Diner on the Seal Beach Pier and another Ruby's Diner in South Coast Plaza last September.

Their restaurants have succeeded for a variety of reasons, Cavanaugh said.

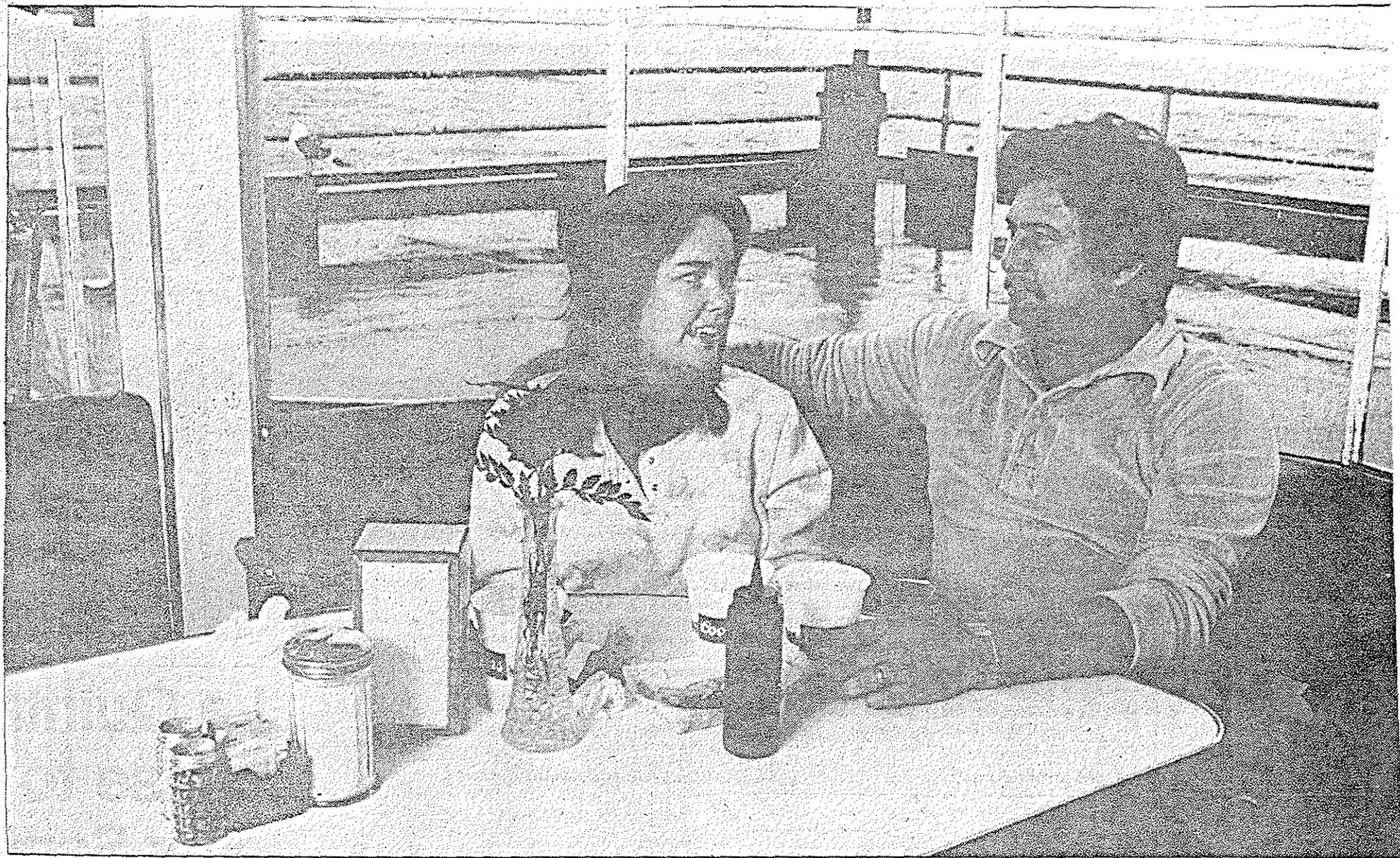
The Ruby's menu, for example, offers large helpings of simply-prepared and tasty foods in diner style, from hamburgers and hot dogs to sandwiches. The meals, which cost as much as \$6 with a soft drink, coffee or milk, are exactly what Ruby's casual customers want, Cavanaugh said.

And the unobtrusive decor has sparked a healthy repeat business, he said. Each Ruby's is a replica of a 1940s diner, with advertisements for soft drinks and the counter, seats, tables and cashier booth from the 1940s. A compact-disc player even plays tunes from the era.

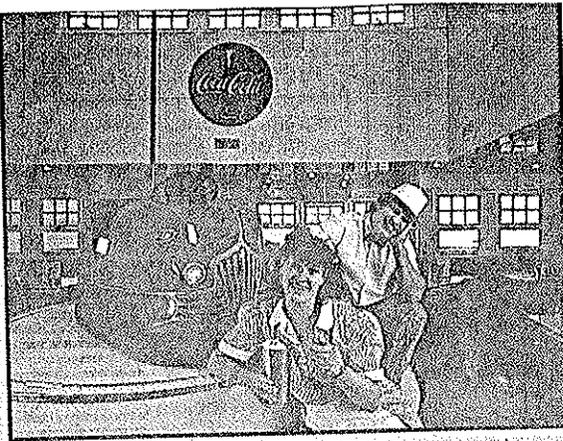
"Nothing past the 1940s," Cavanaugh said.

And that is the look he and Kosmides contend will do well in places from Phoenix to Santa Barbara. But their dream for taking their Ruby's Diner concept doesn't stop there.

"Our ultimate goal is to open a Ruby's overseas," Cavanaugh said. "What could be better than to share a piece of Americana with the world?"



For Janet and Rudy Jureack of Santa Ana, dinner at Ruby's at the Balboa Pier is a romantic event.



Waitress Jill Voboril and cook Ramon Gonzalez share center stage with a vintage bumper car at Ruby's, a '40s-style diner located at the end of the Seal Beach Pier.

Water can make 'em, break 'em

Pier restaurants endure
the risks to have the views

By Tim Woodhull
The Register

D. C. Register
Jan 14, 1988

For a man without many customers on a dark, rainy winter afternoon, Bob Novello was in exceedingly good spirits.

The 33-year-old general manager of The Fisherman restaurant on the San Clemente Pier said the storm could not possibly darken his day. Not here.

"This is the best. I wouldn't trade it for anywhere else," Novello said.

Nor would the other operators of pier restaurants in Orange County. They are, they said, in select and successful company.

In addition to the success of their establishments is the kaleidoscope of maritime sights and sounds they enjoy each day: Sea gulls hunching on pier railings . . . the chug of fishing boats heard in the fog . . . watching surfers in wetsuits waiting for the next evening wave . . . the glow and sparkle of city lights from distant peninsulas . . . and the sight of snow-capped mountains rising as craggy backdrops to sandy beaches.

Four pier restaurants now operate along the more than 60 miles of Orange County

Please see PIERS/19

PIER: Restaurant owners say benefits are worth the risks

FROM 1 coastline (a fifth is planned to open in April on the Newport Beach Pier):

■ The Fisherman restaurant on the San Clemente Pier, owned and operated by Seattle-based H.E.G. Enterprises.

■ Ruby's diners on the Balboa Pier and the Seal Beach Pier, owned and operated by Newport Beach-based Ruby's Restaurant Group.

■ The End Cafe on the Huntington Beach Pier, owned and operated by John Gustafson.

These relatively small and quiet restaurants contrast sharply with the allure and more expensive menu of marina restaurants. Noticeable, too, is the difference in clientele. Rather than aim for tourist traffic, pier establishments are built on local patronage.

Tourism is a leading industry in every beach city, said Doug Cavanaugh, president of Ruby's Restaurant Group. But tourism is strong only in the summer, he said. Area residents are here year-round. They provide the economic foundation for a strong business, he said.

Novello agrees. "There's a misconception that we are heavily into tourism," Novello said. "That is wrong. Tourists provide maybe only 30 percent of our summer income, so that tells you who our main business is. Without local business, we would have nothing."

Gustafson, for example, has owned The End Cafe 10 years. He built his restaurant according to what he thought Huntington Beach and coastal residents seemed to want in a pier restaurant. He dislikes the "glitz and glamour" of restaurants where owners concoct ambiance to lure tourist traffic. He welcomes tourists, he said, but he won't change his menu, his decor, his entertainment or his hours for them.

Gustafson employs a folk singer on weekends. He serves no alcohol

ic beverages. He features burgers, sandwiches and side orders.

To create the "relaxed and casual atmosphere" he favors, Gustafson keeps his two-story restaurant simple: single-ply carpeting, small plants and caricatures of sea life painted on the walls of the first floor.

Gustafson's modest establishment is not much different than Ruby's in Seal Beach or the Balboa Pier. Ruby's is a diner decorated in a 1940s motif. But prices and menu choices are similar to Gustafson's. And, like Gustafson, Ruby's doesn't do much advertising.

"The best advertising is a good meal and good service," Cavanaugh said. "People already come down here to spend time on the beaches, so we don't need to lure them here. We depend on word of mouth. A good meal is great advertising."

The pier-restaurant operators share more than success, though. They also share a knowledge that the lure of the ocean, which helped them succeed, could ruin them.

Nothing so bleakly reminds them of that threat as the photographs inside each of the restaurants. The pictures show the winter storms in January and February of 1983. Most heavily damaged were the Seal Beach and Huntington Beach piers, with the ends of the structures torn away and the businesses there lost.

Cities own the piers on which the restaurants operate and "are protected by standard liability and fire insurance," said Ken Delino, Newport Beach assistant city manager.

But flood insurance is left up to restaurant owners. And none of the owners is covered by it. It costs too much, they said.

"You might be able to get it through Lloyds of London," Cavanaugh joked. "We don't have it. Of any problems we have in this business, storm damage is easily our No. 1 worry."

ORANGE COUNTY'S PIER RESTAURANTS

THE FISHERMAN

Where: 611 Avenida Victoria South, San Clemente Pier, San Clemente.

Phone: 498-6390.

Meals: Breakfast from \$2.95, lunch from \$5.25, dinner from \$9.95.

Credit cards: Visa, MasterCard, American Express.

Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 8 a.m.-10:30 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

Entertainment: None.

THE END CAFE

Where: 321 Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington Beach Pier, Huntington Beach.

Phone: 969-7437.

Meals: Breakfast from \$2.75, lunch and dinner from \$4.

Credit cards: None.

Hours: Weekdays, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.; weekends, 7 a.m.-midnight.

Entertainment: Friday and Saturday, 7-11 p.m.

RUBY'S DINER

(Newport Beach)

Where: Balboa Pier, Balboa Peninsula, Newport Beach.

Phone: 675-7829.

Meals: Breakfast from \$2.45, lunch and dinner from \$2.95.

Credit cards: None.

Hours: Weekdays, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; Weekends, 7 a.m.-10 p.m.

Entertainment: None.

RUBY'S DINER

(Seal Beach)

Where: 900-A Ocean Ave., Seal Beach Pier, Seal Beach.

Phone: (213) 431-7829.

Meals: Breakfast from \$2.45, lunch and dinner from \$2.95.

Credit cards: None.

Hours: Weekdays, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; weekends, 7 a.m.-10 p.m.

Entertainment: None.

— The Register

Gustafson lost his cafe in 1983 to the storms. It took him nearly two years to rebuild and refinance The End Cafe.

"I would need a disaster every five years just to break even on the premiums," Gustafson winked. "It was almost 50 years between storms here. I'll take my chances."

All will, they said, because there is no better place to make a living. Business is heaviest from April through October when pleasant weather brings local customers and tourists to the beaches. And, in the fall and winter months, weekend business helps offset the slow weekday volume.

At The Fisherman on a recent midweek day, for example, few customers stopped in for lunch. And none stopped by the restaurant's oyster bar for a warm grog on the chilly, cloudy, rainswept afternoon.

No matter, Novello said. The Fisherman has been successful for five years. And a slow weekday won't hurt. Besides, what better place to watch the ocean in a winter rain than a pier restaurant.

"It is not," Novello said, watching the storm pelt sea gulls and surfers, "a bad place to be."

Powerful Pacific storm punishes OC



Huntington Beach lifeguards Joe Milligan, left, Mike Beuerlein, middle, and Marc Panis rescue Andrew Bergsetter, 9, bottom,

and Aaron Van Cleve, 11, from the swollen Santa Ana River after they became trapped on a sandbar.

Ron Woodward/For the Register

Sea reclaims Huntington pier's cafe

By Pat Brennan *O.C. Register*
The Register
Jan. 18, 1988

HUNTINGTON BEACH — The End Cafe on the Huntington Beach Pier, rebuilt after it was destroyed by storms in 1983, was knocked into the ocean again Sunday after being pounded all day by powerful surf and gusty winds.

The restaurant toppled when the end of the pier collapsed about 8:40 p.m. and last was seen floating out to sea "like a houseboat," witnesses said.

No one was inside the restaurant when the pier collapsed, but owner John Gustafson said he had been there about 10 minutes earlier to activate a burglar alarm.

Gustafson said he knew he was taking a risk when he decided to rebuild the restaurant after it was washed away the first time during a violent winter storm in 1983. Gustafson said he and the city spent \$1.2 million to repair the pier, which reopened in 1985.

"I lost everything in 1983 and I just lost everything again," Gustafson said Sunday night. "The plan is to get up tomorrow and

Storm at a glance

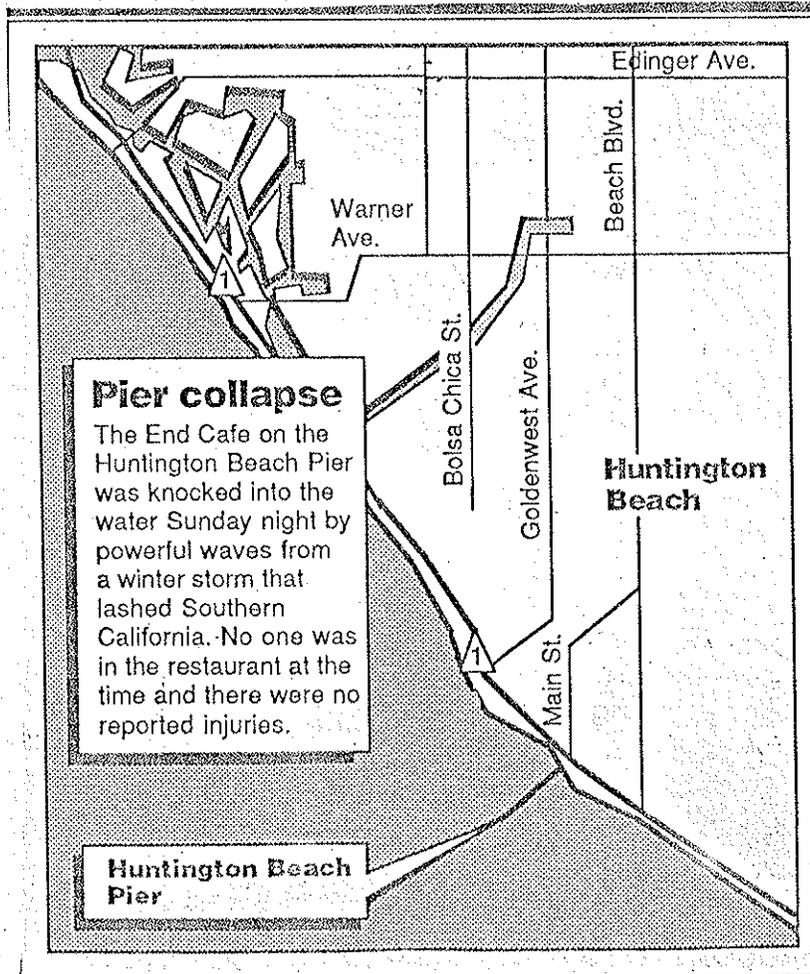
Surf: High tides are expected to carry large waves — some 15 feet or more — ashore about 7 a.m. today, resulting in possible flooding and damage along west-facing coastal areas.

Damage: The End Cafe on the Huntington Beach Pier toppled into the water Sunday night as storm-driven waves pounded the structure; a funnel cloud reported in Coto de Caza damaged several million-dollar homes; the roof of Nutone Corp. on Raymer Avenue in Fullerton collapsed under the weight of rainwater; two boys were rescued by lifeguards from the swollen Santa Ana River in Huntington Beach; trees were uprooted throughout Orange County and electrical power was disrupted.

Closures: Knott's Berry Farm closed rides Sunday, and Disneyland closed early.

Outlook: Showers are expected to end this morning, but partly cloudy skies will remain through the afternoon, along with gusty north to northwest winds.

Please see CAFE/3



CAFE: Restaurant was rebuilt after it was destroyed in 1983

FROM 1

put one foot in front of the other. That's about all I know how to do in these situations."

A crowd of about 40 spectators watched as the pier rocked minutes before collapsing. Lights strung along the pier began to flicker, then died. The end of the pier gave way and the restaurant plunged into the surf.

"I guess it just swayed sideward one time too many," said Dave Schulze, 32, of Huntington Beach. "It floated away like a big, old houseboat."

Several witnesses said there was a deep shake or rumble before the pier collapsed.

"There was a shudder, the pier shook, and then the end fell off," said Dr. Matt Benis, a Huntington Beach physician. "It was like a slam-dunk, straight down."

City lifeguards barricaded the last third of the pier at 8:30 a.m. Sunday after heavy surf snapped a major support beam near its end. The beam was attached to pilings driven into the sea floor.

The entire pier was closed about 30 minutes before a 100-foot section fell into the surf. As the heavy surf, pushed by 30-mph winds, continued

to weaken the pier, police kept spectators a safe distance away. About 100 people gathered within an hour of the collapse.

Huntington Beach Police Sgt. Jeff Cope said the high winds and tides meant more of the pier would likely be lost before this morning.

"The pier is going to continue to fall into the ocean," Cope said.

"There is definitely more extensive damage than the '83 storm," Huntington Beach Mayor John Erskine said. "It looks like we've got a real tragedy on our hands."

Pieces of the pier were washing up on shore as far away as Newport Beach, police said, but the largest portions washed up on Huntington City Beach between Lake Street and Magnolia Street.

Bob Lenkner, 29, of Huntington Beach said a large portion of debris washed on the beach about two miles south of the pier, including a tennis shoe, containers of butter and the restaurant's front door.

The beach was closed to the public and police and lifeguards patrolled the area.

"There's probably not much out there to pick up," Huntington Beach Police Sgt. William Stuart said.

Erskine and others on the coun-



Ana Venegas/The Register

End Cafe owner John Gustafson says he knew he was taking a risk when he rebuilt after the 1983 storm.

cil said they would have to weigh the community's desire for a cafe on the end of the pier and the wisdom of rebuilding on a section of beach battered by storms and heavy currents.

The pier was first built in 1911 and was originally 1,330 feet long. When an additional 500 feet was added in the 1930s, the End Cafe was also built.

Storms in 1930s destroyed the end of the pier and cafe. It was rebuilt and opened in 1940 and used by the Navy during World War II for submarine watches.

Register staff writers William H. Boyer, David Greenwald, Ed Humes and Renee Tawa contributed to this report.

Waves rip away part of Huntington Pier; winds damage homes; waters trap boys

By William H. Boyer *O.C. Register*
The Register

Jan. 18, 1985

A violent storm battered Orange County on Sunday, ripping away part of the Huntington Beach Pier and dumping a restaurant off its end, trapping two boys in the swollen Santa Ana River and dropping a funnel cloud on an exclusive south county neighborhood.

The Pacific storm that lashed Southern California throughout the day also flooded streets and freeways, triggered power failures for thousands of residents, collapsed

the roof of a Fullerton business and led to a rash of fender-benders on city streets and highways.

Late Sunday night, Huntington Beach police closed portions of Pacific Coast Highway north of the collapsed pier because of flooding.

In Coto de Caza, witnesses said one funnel cloud ripped parts of the roofs off several million-dollar homes, scattering wrecked tile across manicured lawns and

Please see **STORM/3**

STORM: National Weather Service warns that low-lying coastal areas could flood today

FROM 1

patios. Another funnel cloud tore a 2,000-pound baseball dugout off its foundation and into a street near San Clemente High School, witnesses said.

Knott's Berry Farm closed its rides Sunday because of the storm, and Disneyland closed early.

Rainfall was heavy in Orange County, ranging from about 0.75 of an inch in Newport Beach and San Clemente to more than 2 inches in La Habra, Trabuco Canyon and Silverado during the 24-hour period ending at 4 p.m. Sunday.

Santa Ana, which received 1.48 inches of rain during the period, has 7.64 inches of precipitation for the season, compared with 4.86 inches at this time last year.

National Weather Service forecasters warned that the intense weather front could combine with high tides this morning and flood low-lying coastal areas from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

The coastal flood warning will remain in effect through today. Rain is expected to decrease today, with partly cloudy skies and a 30 percent chance for more rain by late today, the weather service said.

For two Huntington Beach boys, the storm caused tense moments when they became trapped on a sandbar in the middle of the Santa Ana River about a mile from the coast.

Aaron Van Cleve, 11, and Andrew Bergsetter, 9, were playing in the Santa Ana River with a third friend, Jeffrey Reynolds, 9, shortly after noon when the storm runoff trapped them on a sandbar, said Huntington Beach Battalion Chief William Cooper.

"The water wasn't too high when they started out and, you know, they just went out there being boys exploring things," Cooper said.

Cooper said Reynolds was barely able to make it to shore and then summoned help for his friends.

By the time emergency crews arrived, the quick-moving water was more than 5 feet deep in places, Cooper said.

Huntington Beach lifeguards Marc Panis and Mike Beuerlein, along with state beach lifeguard Joseph Milligan, donned wetsuits and swam to the boys while dodging floating debris as firefighters from Huntington Beach and Costa Mesa floated ropes to the men, he said. The lifeguards then used the rope to help haul the youngsters to shore.

stream."

Cooper said Newport Beach firefighters were stationed downstream to catch anyone who might have been swept away. A Newport Beach police helicopter also hovered over the area to help monitor the emergency, he said.

"This was the first river rescue I've been involved with and everything worked out like clockwork," Cooper said. "Luck in these situations comes from good training."

Coto de Caza residents also had an unnerving experience as a possible tornado touched down in their exclusive canyon enclave and ripped apart the roofs of several homes and destroyed a horse shelter.

Lori Demetre's \$1.25 million Coto de Caza home on Violeta Lane apparently sustained the heaviest damage from the tornadolike winds.

Demetre said she was standing in her kitchen at about 9:30 a.m. Sunday waiting for a break in the heavy rain so she could run her dogs, when, "I just saw things flying through the air."

The winds tore away her home's red-roof tiles, the tar-paper lining underneath and even roofing nails, she said.

Demetre said she did not see the funnel cloud, but neighbor Suzanne Pettay did.

Weather service officials said they had no reports of funnel clouds Sunday, but meteorologist Mark McKinley said, "They do occur every so often," particularly during intense storms.

Other neighbors reported their homes were damaged along with fences and horse shelters before the winds spun off toward the Santa Ana Mountains.

In San Clemente, the high school baseball dugout was blown off its foundation and flung 150 yards across the school athletic field onto an adjacent street, said Joe Miller, the school's baseball coach.

Miller, who was conducting a baseball clinic at the school Sunday, said the dugout was built out of heavy wooden beams and bricks and weighed "at least a ton, if not more."

Miller said witnesses told him the dugout was lifted 10 to 15 feet in the air, smashed into a softball field backstop and sheared off a tree before landing in the street.

In Fullerton, a 16-square-foot section of a roof for the Nutone Corp. at 2330 W. Raymer Ave. col-

lapsed, said Department Battalion Chief John Clark.

Clark said the roof collapse triggered the fire sprinkler system, which alerted his department. When firefighters arrived, "There was about six inches of water on the ground everywhere you looked."

No one was inside the building when the accident occurred, he said. City inspectors will have to determine today if the building is still structurally sound.

The Balboa Pier also was hit with heavy surf Sunday, said Yvonne Boltze, manager of Ruby's Diner at the end of the pier.

"It's scary," she said. "It moves back and forth and every once in a while it seems to go in the opposite direction and you can hear the waves crashing."

About 43,000 Southern California Edison customers were affected by 45 power outages all over Orange County, a company spokesman said.

Outages lasted from 30 seconds to several hours. By late Sunday, all but 400 customers had their power restored.

Traffic accidents, like power outages, were reported in police jurisdictions across the county. Authorities blamed the rain for many of the accidents.

The Orange County Fire Department reported that a traffic accident shut down several lanes of the eastbound Riverside (91) Freeway when a car apparently hit the freeway center divider, seriously injuring two people.

The weather is expected to ease today, but winds will continue to gust up to 45 mph and hail could fall, the weather service reported.

Temperatures will drop into the low to mid-40s at night and rise to the upper 50s during the day.

Low-lying coastal areas were warned by the weather service that the most likely time for flooding would be around 7 a.m. today as tides of about 7 feet carry huge breakers — ranging 10 to 14 feet high — ashore.

A winter storm warning also was issued for the mountains as the snow level dropped to about 3,000 feet Sunday night. More than a foot of snow was expected at higher elevations as the cold front moves east, said Bill Hoffer, weather service specialist.

Register staff writers Pat Bren-



Hai Stoolz/The Register

...the ... the ... that were torn off her house by strong winds.

Bits and pieces of destroyed cafe sought

By Renee Tawa
The Register

J. C. Register

Jan 19, 1988

When wind-whipped waves toppled The End Cafe on the Huntington Beach Pier on Sunday night, its owner, John Gustafson, thought his landmark cafe was dead in the water.

But beachcombers Monday set out to keep alive at least the memory of the cafe, attempting to hoard bits and pieces of the restaurant that washed ashore as though they were treasures from the Titanic.

In Newport Beach, meanwhile, beachcombers searched for souvenirs of a different kind — the gold and silver kind.

The hunt was harder on Huntington Beach's shores because lifeguards patrolled the sand in jeeps, using loudspeakers to order people off the beach and yell at would-be looters.

Allen Powell, 48, was one of those who joined swarms of people who crawled under and stepped over yellow restraining tape and braved ankle-deep waters to comb through the rubble that was strewn across the shoreline as though a shipwreck had occurred.

Powell skipped across tiny sand dunes until he found what he wanted — a grass-green window frame from The End Cafe with glass intact. Powell, in a bright red windbreaker, stood out like a sore thumb in the crowd, most of whom were wearing somber winter colors.

"Drop it," a lifeguard snapped from his jeep.

Powell and a friend scampered back to the parking lots empty-handed, save for a Styrofoam cup from The End Cafe. He was looking for a better keepsake though — something to remind him of leisurely weekend brunches at the cafe with a box-seat view of the ocean. The window would have been perfect.

"Just to take it home and put it on a sign that said, 'Found Jan. 18, the day after the End Cafe saw its

Please see BEACH/7

BEACH: Scavengers in search of souvenirs

FROM 1

end," said Powell of Fountain Valley.

Michelle Ghormley, 19, clutched a single-serving bag of freeze dried coffee that she plucked from floodwaters about 300 feet from the shoreline.

She is sure it came from The End Cafe, and she wanted a souvenir. But she also vowed to keep looking until she found something more symbolic.

"We're just looking around. ... Maybe we can find something that says, 'End Cafe,'" said Ghormley of Fountain Valley.

Closer to the shoreline and about a half-mile from the pier, 60-foot-long, barnacle-covered pilings lay next to 5-gallon tubs of mayonnaise and mauve-colored cushions.

Paul Hoffman, 24, of Huntington Beach half-seriously opened the door of a refrigerator that lay door-side up, without a scratch.

"Is this thing usable?" he joked. "I saw some good mayonnaise over there. ... It's just incredible."

Sandy Manners, 32, was more concerned about salvaging wreckage from the battered pier. She rescued a 2-foot-long wooden plank that was floating in a parking lot puddle and wrapped it in a plastic bag, managing to slip by the lifeguards unnoticed.

"It's my souvenir," said Manners of Garden Grove. "I just wanted a piece of wood. Something small ... just a reminder."

Lifeguards had their hands full, trying to keep the beaches closed and looters away, said Douglas D'Arnall, the city's beach services manager.

Officials were concerned about high tides and potential injuries from the rubble. By midafternoon, nearly a dozen city jeeps had flat tires from nails on the beach, D'Arnall said. There were no arrests of trespassers or looters, he added.

Debris from the sheared-off pier floated as far south as Newport Beach, officials reported.

Julie Yates, 30, wasn't wasting her time at 43rd Street and Seashore Drive in Newport Beach looking for sentimental mementos.

Yates spent all day sweeping her metal detector over the sand like a vacuum cleaner until the machine began beeping. That was her clue to shift through the sand with a metal scooper. Her booty included a gold religious medallion, a gold ring, a silver ring and a handful of coins. Not a bad day for the Costa Mesa artist.

"The storm brings us out," she said. "The sand breaks away from the beach and all the heavy items are left. ... People from all over come here on these days."

Storm damage

Oceanfront property received the brunt of the storm damage. Huge waves battered the coast, undermining homes and ripping off a section of the Huntington Beach Pier.

Brea:	Summary
Brea:	2 homes flooded
Capistrano Beach:	Two mobile homes flooded
Crystal Cove:	Seawall damage and sandbagging to protect houses. Bulldozers creating sandwall to protect homes. No estimate available on damage.
Huntington Beach	Approximately \$4 million to \$5 million in damage to the pier. Pacific Coast Highway closed between Golden West Street and Warner Avenue for about one week due to sand on the road. The End Cafe and roughly 250 feet of pier destroyed. Huntington and Bolsa Chica beaches closed.
Laguna Beach	\$238,000 damage to Aliso Pier, four homes and 27 condominiums. Boardwalk damage and moderate to severe structural damage to homes. Pier, seawall, sidewalk, parking lot and parking meter damage at Aliso Beach.
Newport Beach:	200 feet of beach washed away between the Wedge and the Santa Ana River outlet. Minor flooding on coastal streets. Newport and Balboa piers are closed for safety.
Salt Creek Beach Park:	Closed.
San Clemente:	Some damage to pier pilings, now under reconstruction. The Fisherman's Restaurant closed during pier repair. Some damage to beach patio structures and lifeguard headquarters. A few trees were undermined by surf.
Seal Beach:	\$68,000 in damage to pier and beach parking lot. Local flooding along Seal Way but no damage to homes. Sand berm, 6 to 8 blocks long being built to protect houses.
Silverado Canyon area:	Dirt and debris washed on to roads but has been cleared. No damage to homes.
Surf Beach (San Onofre):	Closed until end of the week.
Orange County general:	Southern California Edison Co reported 45,600 customers throughout the county lost power for anywhere from 30 seconds to five hours. Hardest hit were northern county communities.

Source: City fire departments, Orange County Environmental Management Agency, Emergency Service Personnel, the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Register



Hal Woll/The Register

John Gustafson, owner and operator of The End Cafe for 10 years, wants to make the one-third-mile walk to the end of the Huntington Beach Pier worth the effort for his customers. He employs a folk singer on weekends and prepares fresh baked goods at Maxi's Pizza (The Other End Cafe) at the base of the pier using family recipes. Gustafson has

Huntington Beach pier might be shortened for safety and savings

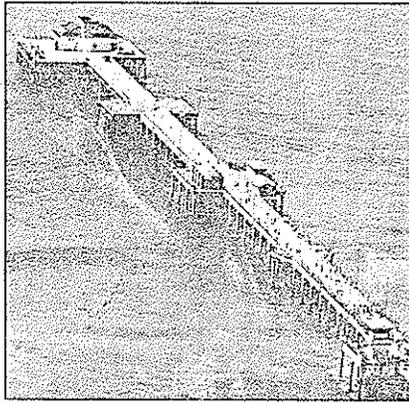
By Frank Mickadeit
The Register *O.C. Register*
Jan. 19, 1988

HUNTINGTON BEACH - Estimating the cost of repairing the city's damaged pier at \$4 million to \$5 million, City Administrator Paul Cook said Monday he probably would recommend that the section lost to Sunday's storm not be rebuilt.

He also said the city should consider lopping off another 200 feet to make the landmark more secure.

"Mother Nature doesn't want us out that far," Cook said as he watched waves batter the pier Monday morning.

The city was not insured for the damage or for the loss of The End Cafe at the tip of the pier, Cook said.



Daniel A. Anderson-The Register

Please see PIER/11

The Huntington Beach pier, in 1985 photo, left, was restored after storm damage in 1983. On Monday, the pier, now missing about 300 feet and The End Cafe, was washed by high surf.

PIER: Restoration estimated to cost minimum of \$4 million

FROM 1

The two-story restaurant was swept out to sea "like a big old houseboat" about 8:40 p.m. Sunday, according to witnesses. Sometime during the night, waves tore off about 300 feet of the pier, officials said.

Cook said that rebuilding the pier to its original length of 1,830 feet would be inviting more catastrophe. The first 1,300 feet of the pier was built on steel and concrete pilings. But the rest — including the 300 feet that washed away — was built on wooden timbers.

"My recommendation is to cut the pier off at the end of the concrete and make the pier shorter by about 500 feet," Cook said.

Huntington Beach Mayor John Erskine said Monday it would be "premature" to say the pier will not be rebuilt to its full length. He acknowledged, however, "The entire structural integrity of the pier is in question at this point."

The City Council will meet tonight to receive Cook's report; city offices were closed Monday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

Some council members were surprised to learn that the pier was uninsured. Cook said the city dropped the coverage when premiums skyrocketed in the wake of 1983 storms that damaged several Orange County piers. The insurance would have cost the city about \$250,000 a year, he said.

"In 10 years, that would have been \$2.5 million, which we thought it would cost to rebuild it, and after that we would be ahead of the game," Cook said.

Before the March 1983 storm, the pier had not sustained serious damage since 1939, he said.

John Gustafson, owner of The End Cafe, also had no insurance. Gustafson, who was in the cafe about 10 minutes before it was swept away, said he lost about \$200,000 in restaurant equipment and furnishings.

But Gustafson said he plans to

rebuild the cafe.

"I'm ready to go," he said. "I was a little numb for awhile but then I got my second wind. We lost it twice, but the third time's a charm."

Some council members wondered aloud Monday why the pier had not stood up better against Sunday's storm, particularly since the city spent about \$2 million rebuilding it and the restaurant after the 1983 storm.

"Certainly, when we replaced the end of the pier, it was with assurance that what we were replacing it with would last a long time," said Councilwoman Ruth Finley.

San Pedro engineer Don Hellmers, designer of the 1983 restoration project, said the pier was strengthened somewhat by using thicker pilings and more cross-beams.

However, he said the 1983 project did not address a structural flaw in the pier: its height above the water.

The last section of the pier, including the 300 feet that was lost Sunday, sits about 4 to 6 feet closer to the water than the rest of the structure, Hellmers said. The amount of space between the planks and the water varies with the tide, but "Four feet is a lot" of leeway to give up, he said.

"The whole end of the pier is too low," he said. "Nobody knows why it was designed that way in the first place."

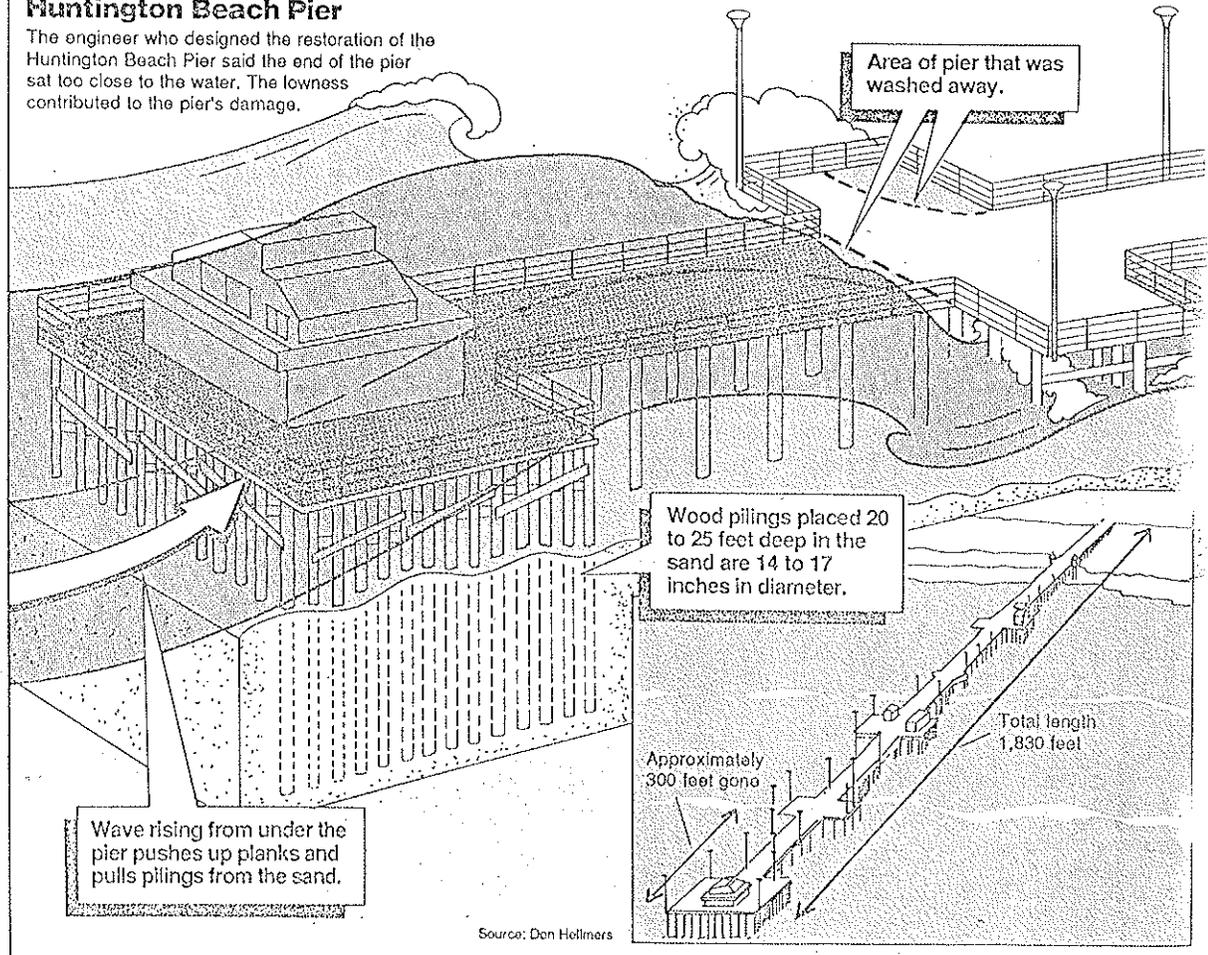
Hellmers and Cook — also an engineer — said the lower elevation probably contributed to the end of the pier giving way Sunday.

Both said that the planks were pushed up and the pilings uprooted by water rising from under the pier rather than from the 20-foot waves crashing down on it. Were the pier 4 feet to 6 feet higher, the rising water might have peaked before it did any damage.

Hellmers noted that several Southern California piers damaged in 1983 — including those at Seal Beach and San Clemente — were

Huntington Beach Pier

The engineer who designed the restoration of the Huntington Beach Pier said the end of the pier sat too close to the water. The lowness contributed to the pier's damage.



Nancy Ward/The Reg

raised a few feet upon reconstruction; they weathered Sunday's storm, suffering only with minor damage.

Hellmers said Huntington Beach's pier was not built higher because only about 50 feet of the pier was being rebuilt. The money used for the project, most of it from insurance, would not cover the cost of raising the last several hundred

feet, he said.

Meanwhile, the City Council on Tuesday was mulling over Cook's suggestion that the pier be shortened.

Councilman Wes Bannister said he was "inclined to agree 100 percent. Twice in (five) years is a little too much."

Finley said she believes Cook's idea to be "good advice," but spec-

ulated that residents might think otherwise.

That feeling was echoed by Natalie Kotsch, member of the Downtown Merchants Association board of directors and the primary force behind efforts to build a surfing museum in the city.

"The community should try to rebuild it, because our pier is the major community attraction at

this point," Kotsch said. "But maybe we should rebuild it right this time."

Without insurance, rebuilding funds would have to come out of the city's general fund, government grants or donations, Erskine said. He noted that Seal Beach resident raised about \$100,000 toward the pier's \$2 million restoration following the 1983 storms.

Most cities can absorb storm cost

Huntington Beach debates restoration of pier, cafe

By Marilyn Kalfus

The Register

O.C. Register - 120-88

City officials wondering how they will pay for the damages from the messy storm that pummeled Orange County's coastline are finding for the most part that they can cover it — this time.

City administrators in most of the coastal cities said they were unsure whether their cities had insurance to cover the damage. But, except in Huntington Beach, they saw little problem in paying for repairs.

No city took as bad a beating as Huntington Beach, with \$4 million in damages to the pier and The End Cafe at its tip.

The Huntington Beach City Council on Tuesday night formally declared the waterfront a disaster area and allocated \$20,000 to hire divers and engineers to inspect the pier.

The council did not discuss a proposal by City Administrator Paul Cook that it not rebuild the 250-foot section that washed away and that it shorten the remaining part by another 250 to 300 feet. That would eliminate all of the pier that is built on wooden timbers, leaving only the portion built on concrete pilings. Cook believes the pier was too long and said the last several hundred feet were not high enough above the water to escape storm damage.

Mayor John Erskine said the council would not decide what to do about the pier until the consultants' reports were completed. Cook said that could take four to six weeks.

Several people spoke out in favor of rebuilding the pier to its original 1,830 feet, a length that made it one of the longest ocean-fishing piers in the state.

"It is unfair that the residents of Huntington Beach lose our pier," Doug Langevin said. "This time, let's use good planning, raise it ... and insure it."

Erskine suggested that the vendors who have popped up selling T-shirts that say, "I Survived the Huntington Beach Pier Disaster, January 17, 1988" donate proceeds to the cause.

Lifeguards reopened the first two-thirds of the pier Tuesday morning, as well as portions of the city beach. Cleanup of debris that washed ashore — mostly pier pilings and parts of The End Cafe — could take four weeks, officials said.

Farther south, in Newport Beach, there was no substantial damage to city property.

David Niederhaus, general services director for Newport Beach,

Please see CITIES/7

CITIES: Most say they can absorb the costs

FROM 1

had no dollar estimate for the cleanup along his city's beaches, but he said the cost would be "negligible."

Many officials said the recent storm was a weakling compared with the one in March 1983, which caused \$70 million in damages in Orange County.

"Compared with '83, this was like a waltz," said Daniel Joseph, assistant city manager for Seal Beach. He estimated that city was hit with \$24,000 in damages from Sunday's storm. "This was nothing. I was here in '83, and I watched the pier wash away."

In some cases, cleanup and repair costs might be paid in emergency aid from the state or federal government.

"It's funny," Joseph said. "I had lunch with an insurance broker Friday and he gave me a quote for wave wash (destruction from waves), but I didn't do anything about it."

The premium would be about \$26,000 a year, Joseph said. The deductible would be \$200,000.

"If we were to suffer the damage Huntington Beach did, we'd wish we had it," he said.

Huntington Beach canceled its insurance after the 1983 storm, Cook said, because the premiums and deductibles were too high. "Had the pier lasted four or five years, we'd be ahead of the game by not having insurance," he said.

The Seal Beach Pier lost only one piling. Another piling was damaged, and a few cross boards need replacing. Joseph estimated the fix-up cost at \$10,000 to \$12,000.

If emergency aid doesn't come through, Joseph said, the money to pay for the pier and an additional \$12,000 or so to repair a flooded asphalt parking lot near the beach probably will come out of the city's \$1 million rainy-day fund.

Laguna Beach didn't get off as easily.

"The big damage is to our Main Beach boardwalk," City Manager Ken Frank said. He estimated it would cost \$100,000 to repair the structure, which collapsed in one 100-foot stretch.

That money likely will come from a reserve fund, Frank said. That will wipe out half of the city's money available to spend on such emergencies.

At its meeting Tuesday night, the Laguna Beach City Council adopted a proclamation declaring the city a local disaster area. Such a declaration paves the way for the area to be declared a disaster by the governor, which would make residents eligible for assistance. However, Frank wasn't optimistic about receiving state or federal aid.

This storm was not the biggest storm to hit Southern California," he said. "We've been hurt a lot worse than this."

This will be the third time in eight years that the Laguna Beach boardwalk will have to be repaired because of storm damage, he said.

Storm damage

Following is a list of estimated amounts of damage on public property in the county caused by the recent storm:

Huntington Beach: Pier, \$4 million; beach cleanup, \$50,000; Pacific Coast Highway cleanup, \$100,000. Total: \$4.15 million.

Laguna Beach: Main Beach boardwalk, \$100,000.

Newport Beach: Beach cleanup, no amount given.

San Clemente: Pier; damage to foundation and pilings at Marine Safety headquarters. Total: at least \$50,000.

Seal Beach: Pier and beach parking lot, \$24,000.

Unincorporated Orange County: Pier damage, broken sea walls, and downed parking meters and trees in Aliso Beach; erosion in Capistrano Beach; downed trees in Dana Point. Total: \$100,000.

San Clemente, which had at least \$50,000 in damages, actually cheated the storm. That city's pier lost 15 to 20 pilings, but the city was going to replace them anyway, said Michael Sorg, director of public services. It had budgeted \$40,000 for the replacement, he said.

San Clemente also had budgeted about \$80,000 to restore its Marine Safety headquarters from the destruction of prior storms. That building took more abuse over the weekend.

City workers still were taking inventory of the damages Tuesday, but, "We're hoping that all emergency work can be absorbed (by the regular budget)," Sorg said.

County officials estimated \$100,000 in damages to unincorporated areas along the coast, including pier damage, sea walls broken, and parking meters and trees down at Aliso Beach, erosion at Capistrano Beach, and trees down in Dana Point.

Scooping up sand along Pacific Coast Highway in Huntington Beach could cost as much as \$100,000, said Bill Reed, city public information officer. In some places, he said, the sand is 10 to 15 feet deep.

The state Department of Transportation is expected to reimburse the city for that expense. And the state is expected to pay an estimated \$45,000 for its portion of the beach cleanup.

In all, Huntington Beach had about \$4.15 million in damages, Reed said.

In Newport Beach, Niederhaus said, "The main expense will be about 100 tons of debris to come off the beach."

The money for the extra work will come out of the regular budget, he said.

Register staff writers Frank Mickadeit and Steve Hawk contributed to this report.

Mother Nature Merciless; Wreaks Havoc on HB Pier

H.B. Independent
By Robert Kinsler

Jan. 21, 1988
State Beach Lifeguard Eric Sturm guided his four-wheel jeep carefully around mounds of wreckage; twisted chairs, nail-gutted boards and wood pilings littering the storm-soaked sands that buffer Coast Highway from the mighty Pacific.

An hour earlier, a series of gigantic waves had swept The End Cafe restaurant and a 250-foot portion of the 1,830-foot Huntington Beach Municipal Pier into the pounding ocean surf.

Now, the merciless sea was spitting the spoils of Mother Nature back to land less than a mile away as emergency officials looked on helplessly in the night.

"I'll show you where a refrigerator came ashore," said Sturm, pointing his spotlight at the heaps of splintered and broken pilings

that had been kicked out from beneath the pier.

A small crowd was already scouting out the scene; gazing through the heavy fog with disbelieving eyes.

Chuck Phillips of Costa Mesa was one of several dozen on-lookers who saw The End Cafe topple and fall into the ocean at 8:42 p.m. on Jan. 17.

"A wave took it down," he explained. "It hit it from the bottom; the entire restaurant slid off."

"We could feel the vibrations ..."

Max Benis of Huntington Beach was also standing on the pier when the restaurant fell into the sea.

"The whole pier was shuddering," said Benis, adding that as the end of the pier gave way it felt as if an earthquake was rocking the

beach.

Huntington Beach police and fire officials blocked off the end of the pier, while lifeguards and additional officers kept the curious off the beach.

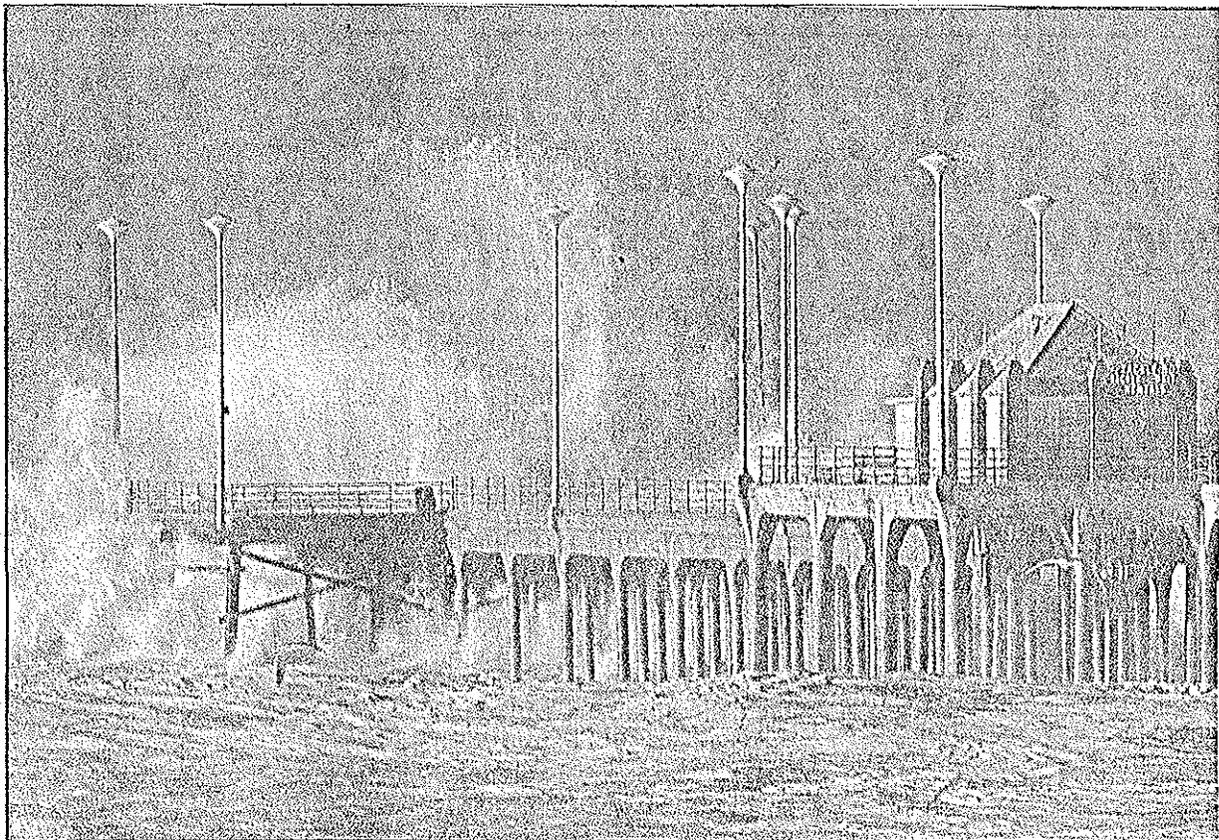
Sturm said the scattered debris could pose a hazard; especially dangerous were the large nails and other sharp objects difficult to see under the cover of darkness.

Fortunately, no one was injured during the disaster.

Cafe owner John Gustafson said he left his restaurant about 10 minutes before the two-story building plunged into the violent swells. As he locked the door behind him, he had no idea that he was in eminent danger.

"I was really lucky," admitted Gustafson, a 20-year-resident of Huntington Beach. "The business had been shut down that morning

(See HB Pier, Page A7)



Independent Photo by Jaqueline Mathew

Waves roar more than 40 feet, pummeling what's left of Huntington Beach Pier.

HB Pier..

(From Page A1)

because of the wave action; it was done as a precautionary measure."

On Tuesday, city and state crews were already hard at work cleaning up the debris as the storm system headed east. Gawking crowds were able to walk on the pier up to the lifeguard tower to get a view of the damaged structure.

"It will take another one to two weeks to clean the city beach," said David Kelly, information specialist for the city. "Damage to the pier and restaurant was estimated at \$4 to \$5 million."

Damage to the portion of Pacific Coast Highway that runs from Warner Avenue south to Golden West Street was estimated at \$100,000. Cleanup crews are expected to have the roadway completely cleared of sand and debris by today.

The Sunday night crisis is the latest blow to strike the historical landmark.

Construction of a 1,300-foot wooden pier began in 1903 and was completed the following year.

In 1914, it was replaced by a concrete structure and the first restaurant at the end of the pier was built in 1933.

The first time the end of the pier and the restaurant were destroyed was in 1939, marking the most violent storm to ever hit the structure until Sunday. The pier was rebuilt and used as a machine

gun post during World War II by the Navy.

However, most local residents don't need a history lesson to remember the storm that struck in February 1983, knocking out about 25 wood pilings when a large wave hit the pier. The End Cafe was demolished several months later because of extensive damage only to be rebuilt and opened again in 1985.

On Tuesday, the cafe owner said he is ready to rebuild his 1,000-square-foot restaurant, despite losses of about \$200,000.

"I'm ready to go when the city is," said Gustafson.

Gustafson said he believes the 1983 storm was stronger than Sunday's tempest.

"The '83 storm overall was bigger, but the affect of this one — the swells that hit the spot — were more powerful. It was a big set that did the mortal damage."

After the 1983 storm, new pilings were installed by the Art Broman Constructing Co. of Long Beach as part of \$1.1 million in repairs.

"It was an act of God," said Broman. "When the swells come in; they get underneath and lift off the pilers and tear it up."

Broman claimed the pier would have been more structurally sound if the elevation were higher above sea level and out of reach of the monster waves that destroyed the eatery and pier.

City Council Declares Emergency in Move To Secure Federal Aid

H.B. Independent
By Melinda Keller 1-21-88

Huntington Beach City Council declared a local emergency because a storm that swept The End Cafe and 250 feet of the Huntington Beach Municipal Pier out to sea may have also washed away a large chunk of the city's budget.

City officials estimated that damage to the uninsured historical landmark in addition to tab for beach cleanup could approach the \$5 million mark.

By declaring a state of emerg-

ency, the city may be eligible for state and federal funds. Members of the state Damage Assessment Team began their inspection Wednesday.

The city will not be eligible for state funding unless Gov. George Deukmejian declares Huntington Beach a disaster area, according to Nancy Hardaker, spokesman for the state Office of Emergency Services.

"The governor will take the report by the damage assessment team into consideration. If the governor does declare the city a disaster area, then he can recommend to the president to do the same, so federal funding can be available," Hardaker explained.

But the city could not wait for the funds to filter down to begin the clean up process Sunday night.

City crews worked around the clock for two days building up the sand to protect concession stands and Pacific Coast Highway from another high tide that was expected to flood the coast Tuesday morning.

(See Disaster, Page A7)

Disaster...

(From Page A1)

But an unforeseen lull in the high winds gave city workers the break they needed to begin cleaning up pieces of the pier and The End Cafe that washed onto shore.

Although Community Services Director Max Bowman expects to open at least a small section of the pier in a few days, city officials are still trying to determine if the pier will be able to withstand another storm.

Council unanimously approved a request by City Administrator Paul Cook to allocate up to \$20,000 for a consulting team to assess the damage and safety of the pier.

City Engineer Les Evans said the pier was inspected a few months ago and was found to be structurally sound even though the last few hundred feet were held up by wood pilings.

"We checked it and found a few broken braces, which we replaced. We felt it was in good shape," Evans said.

The section of the pier that fell into the rough seas rested seven feet lower in the water than the intact portion, Evans explained.

"I think it went down because it was on timber pilings and was lower in the water," Evans added.

Local resident Doug Langevin told council that the city should have listened to the consultants hired in 1983, who suggested that the end of the pier be brought up to the height of the concrete pilings.

"The city chose not to raise the level because all the money was set aside for redevelopment funds. Seal Beach took their advice and they hardly suffered any damage," Langevin said.

Mayor John Erskine assured the audience that council had not considered the possibility of rebuilding the pier, yet. Cook said that he probably would not be recommending reconstruction.

"I've even considered shortening the pier or leaving it at the length it is now, so it will be safe in future storms. It's better if we don't tempt Mother Nature."

The pier has also been a focal point for downtown redevelopment and many questions were raised at Tuesday's council meeting about the future of Pierside Village, which is slated to be built

south of the pier.

"If the proposed under sea level Pierside Village parking structure had been built last Sunday evening, we would have had a new tourist attraction; an underground aquarium, with no windows or fish," Langevin said.

Langevin also told council that if they decide to reconstruct the pier, they should take the advice of consultants and of Mother Nature.

"The storm was saying, 'don't build on my beach.' It's poor planning on the part of the city not to listen to Mother Nature. If we rebuild it, we should insure it," Langevin added.

Cook explained that neither the pier or The End Cafe building,

which the city owns, were insured because of cost.

"We did have a policy on the pier at one time. But after the storm in 1983 hit, no insurance company wanted to insure us without tremendous premiums," Cook said.

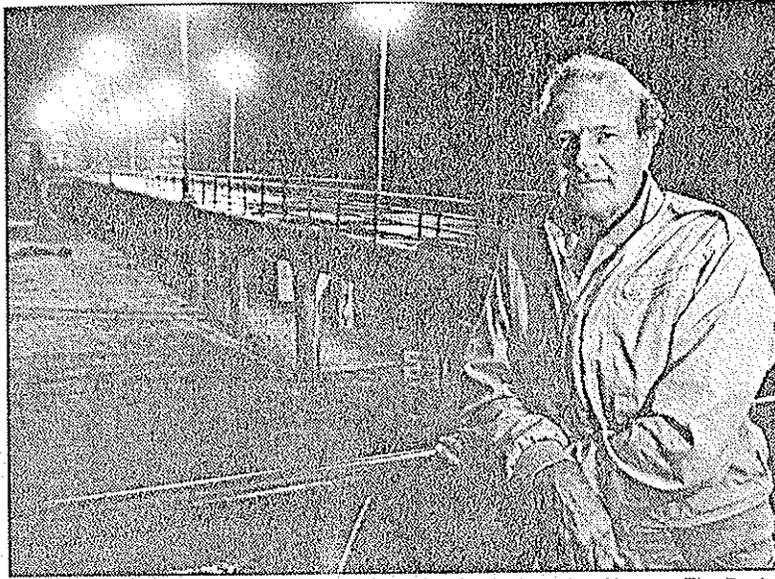
Although the pier was finished in September 1985, insurance companies shied away from renewing a policy because of the extensive damage a storm could induce, Cook explained.

According to Bowman, Pacific Coast Highway between Warner Avenue and Golden West Street will be closed at least until the end of the week and the pier is expected to be reopened within the next few days.



Independent Photo by Juoquine Matthews

Crowds gather on the south side of pier above beach area to make own assessment of damage caused by disasterous storm. The group gawks from the parking lot as sea level, which included the lifeguard station, are under water.



Ana Venegas/The Register

John Gustafson stands at the head of the pier from which his The End Cafe twice has been claimed by the angry ocean storms.

The End Cafe might rise again from sea that claimed it twice

D.C. Register 1-22-88
The ocean keeps trying to put an end to The End Cafe, but John Gustafson says he's ready to make yet another beginning.

It didn't take the 58-year-old restaurant owner long to decide — even after losing his cafe at the tip of the Huntington Beach pier for the second time in five years — that he was looking forward to rebuilding his prized eatery.

"You have to look at it as an opportunity," he said. "We've lost it twice now. Maybe the third time's the charm."

The first time, in March 1983, a major storm battered the cafe and left it hanging precariously from the end of the pier. After the city repaired both the pier and the cafe, Gustafson reopened it in September 1985.

On Sunday, the pounding waves sent the ill-fated restaurant out to sea — and, but for lucky timing, almost took Gustafson with it.

Even though the restaurant was closed that day because of the heavy surf, Gustafson had returned to do some cleaning and to turn on the burglar alarm. As he walked off toward the shore, the cafe collapsed into the sea.

"There had been only minor damage up to that point," he said. "If I'd been there 10 minutes longer, I'd have been shark bait."

Gustafson grew up in Denver, but a trip to Huntington Beach when he was 9 years old convinced him that was where he wanted to end up.

"I was amazed by the ocean, and wanted to live there," he said. He moved to Huntington Beach 20 years ago, commuting to his job as general production manager for Johnson's Yogurt in Glendale. He already was a regular at The End Cafe when he asked the owner if he could

buy the two-story restaurant in 1977.

His wife of 37 years, Alice, runs the Breakfast at the Park restaurant at Central Park. "But I don't get involved in her business. The beach is my place," he said. "If the sand gets out from between my toes I get uncomfortable."

Rebuilding the pier and the cafe will be up to the city of Huntington Beach, which spent about \$2 million for the post-1983 reconstruction. Neither the city nor Gustafson, who lost about \$200,000, had insurance.

City officials, faced with a \$4 million to \$5 million bill to rebuild the pier and the cafe, are mulling the possibility of shortening the pier by about 500 feet to lessen the chance of future storm damage.

Gustafson said he wouldn't mind. He will just bide his time until he can reopen — whenever that will be.

"Once they figure all that out, and we get the restaurant designed, and everybody does what they do, we should have a new cafe," he said. "All I can do is take care of my end of it."

In the meantime, Gustafson will continue to run Maxie's Pizza at the other end of the pier. He started the restaurant as a stopgap after the 1983 storm, and it will play that role again until a new End Cafe rises.

Gustafson will miss the morning routine he has followed since reopening the cafe in 1985, taking steaming racks of fresh-baked bread and cinnamon rolls from Maxie's and walking the third of a mile down the pier to the cafe.

"I don't like to spend a lot of time on being discouraged," he said.

"We'll just learn from what we did last time and do it better."

— John Westcott/The Register