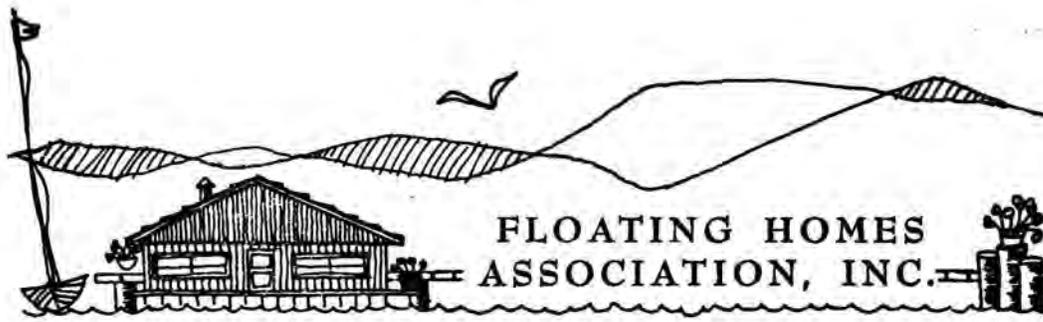


side party



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USE OF NEW SEWER BY HOUSEBOATS IN ITS FINAL PHASE: Plans for the first under-water sewage collection system for a houseboat moorage is now being prepared and will soon be submitted to the City Engineering Department. Others will follow. The Engineering Department will review the plans as a necessary step towards the determining of standards and specifications for such installations. When this is done installation will begin on what is believed to be the "first of its kind" sewerage collection system anywhere in the world.

Perhpas it would be well to recap the three "cost factors" involved in connecting houseboat moorages to the newly constructed sewer which was constructed under a Local Improvement District (L.I.D.). It is being financed by a levy against the abutting property with the City paying some of the cost, particularly for the pumping stations. The L.I.D. assessment can be paid in 20 annual installments. The assessments against the property (not houseboats) were officially levied by the City Council effective in June of this year. This cost is the direct responsibility of the property owner.

As our members know the Association has worked out plumbing standards with the Seattle-King County Health Department. The installation of the required plumbing is now under way. This cost is the direct responsibility of the floating home owner.

The third and final phase is the installation of a collection system at the respective moorages to gather sewage from the floating homes and discharge it into the city sewer. This is also the direct responsibility of the property owner.

While the design of such a collection system presents no unusual engineering problems it is something new. The only problem is the application of known techniques and materials in a new way. While at first glance houseboat moorages all seem to differ, they actually fall into three broad classifications in respect to the design of a collection system. As the Association sees it these are:

- No. 1: A waterfront lot with but a single houseboat alongshore to connect to the city sewer. (Very few of these.)
- No. 2: A moorage with two or more houseboats alongshore to be served by a common sump-pump discharging into the city sewer. (Not many of these.)
- No. 3: Larger moorages with houseboats from two to 11 deep moored at piers or floats extending out into the water. (More than 95% of our floating homes are at such moorages.) Such moorages will require an under-water system with collection pipes fixed to pilings with a gravity flow to a shore-side combination sump-pump which will discharge into the city sewer. The individual floating homes will connect to the underwater pipe by a gravity flow, flexible tube.

To acquaint members with plumbing requirements, the Association has held a series of moorage meetings beginning last January. After an August "vacation" lull, the meetings have been resumed and five were held in September. This phase of our work must be concluded without further delay. Moorages at which meetings have not been held or scheduled are: Brackett, 2818 Boyer E.; Henderson, Fuhrman Avenue E.; and McInnes, 1212-13 E. Shelby. It is to the interest of all concerned that all members get this most important information. The office will assist, but the initiative must come from the moorages.

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THIRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CRUISE SET FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20TH: The Christmas Cruise and Holiday Decorating Committee (Richard Stauff, chairman, EA 3-3240) announces that the third annual cruise aboard the MS SIGHTSEER will be Tuesday evening, December 20. As usual all tickets will be sold in advance by mail. Members will receive full information in the mails sometime in November. The Committee has recommended and the Executive Committee has approved a proposal that ticket sales be strictly limited to 200 and there be a single price for all tickets of \$2.00, whether used by children or adults. Christmas this year will be on Sunday. The Christmas Ship will begin its cruises on Monday, December 19th.

GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICES PROPOSALS LISTED BY SPECIAL COMMITTEE: Installation of plumbing has greatly increased the volume of general repair and remodeling of houseboats. Some owners do their own work. Others must hire it done. The Association has received some complaints. Owners sometimes feel that they have been over-charged and/or that the work was not satisfactory. Those doing houseboat repair and maintenance sometimes complain that owners have an unrealistic concept as to labor and material costs. In the hopes of minimizing misunderstandings, eliminating any unethical practices and insuring fair treatment to all, the Executive Committee set up a special Committee headed by Mr. Howard Larson, an experienced builder, but who does not do commercial houseboat work.

This Committee has made the following recommendations. It feels the householder and the contractor have a joint responsibility to insure good business practices which hopefully will reduce if not eliminate grievances.

1. With most houseboat work, stringers, flooring, etc., it is often impossible to make a firm estimate of the cost in advance. It is recommended that this type of work be done on a "labor and material cost" formula. However, there should be a rough estimate, preferably in writing, of the probably cost. If as the work progresses problems arise which will materially increase the rough estimate, the matter should be frankly and thoroughly discussed by both parties. A final cost that is greatly in excess of the estimate should never come as a surprise (shock is perhaps a better word) to the householder. This has happened.
2. Any work agreement should clearly state the hourly labor cost for all persons involved. Also any charge for special equipment not included in the labor cost. The terms of payment should be clearly understood in advance. Payment of money in advance should not be required except in instances of where a good faith deposit is in order or where the contractor pays cash in advance for materials. Where materials are bought for cash in advance, the householder should pay only on the basis of a supplier invoice or receipt.
3. The final bill to the householder should be completely itemized showing all materials used and the number of hours worked and the hourly pay scale. (Divers or others inserting flotation follow a practice of a flat charge per drum or cubic foot of styrofoam which includes material and labor.)

Mr. Larson points out that these suggestions do not apply to the two reputable plumbing contracting firms now doing houseboat work. Both firms are doing houseboat plumbing (there are no two houseboats exactly alike) on a labor and material cost basis. Before the first houseboat had plumbing installed, it was estimated that \$500 should be used as a "frame-of-reference" figure with some probably costing more and some probably costing less. This has proved to be accurate. Some typical costs taken at random for work done recently have run as follows: \$498.00, \$317.20, \$542.00, \$346.08 and \$475.00.

The Committee also strongly recommends that all owners regularly budget for maintenance. Putting it off "until next year" often greatly increases the cost. The most often neglected maintenance items are (1) flotation (2) stringers and (3) outside painting, including decks. The Association hopes to always have a list of persons and/or firms qualified to do houseboat work. We make "referrals" as obviously we cannot guarantee. However, the Association will refer only those who agree to follow good business practices. The Committee welcomes suggestions: Mr. Larson can be reached at 2031 Fairview East - EA 2-1216.

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NEWS NOTES FROM HERE & THERE: Mr. Pirie MacDonald, Associate Director of the Repertory Theater, has asked the Association for assistance in finding a one-bedroom, furnished houseboat for a staffer from the East. If you can help call the Association or Mr. MacDonald, MA 3-8686... Houseboats were a factor in the new Finlandia Club selecting its building site at 2021 Minor East. Prospectus says: "The view will be unobstructed as there are only houseboats in the Lake in front of it."

FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION
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