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Newsletter

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FIFTH ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING TO BE HELD THURSDAY, MARCH 30th: The Executive Committee announces that our Fifth Annual Business meeting and election of officers will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 30th, 1967. This year for the first time we will meet in the attractive "Blue Flame Room" of the Seattle Gas Company's building at 815 Mercer Street. There is ample off-street parking.

In mid-March every member will receive an official notice by mail. This communication will include copies of the Financial & Organizational report, a By-Laws Committee report and the report of the Nominations Committee. The offices to be filled are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Trustee (five year term) and two members of the Executive Committee, one year terms.

The Executive Committee feels that in many respects this is the most important business meeting in the history of our Association. It strongly urges that members, and particularly Moorage Representatives, make every effort to attend. The reports will deal with the latest developments in such important matters as (1) sewage collection systems for moorages, (2) Zoning of Lake Union, and (3) the new comprehensive Houseboat Ordinance now in the drafting stage. Remember the date--Thursday, March 30th.

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NOW IS THE TIME TO CHECK YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT: This year the King County Assessor has sent every floating home owner an explanation of the procedures used in arriving at the tax valuation of Houseboats. This information has appeared in past issues of the NEWS LETTER but there is obviously much misunderstanding. We urge you to read it carefully. This slip came with "Assessor's Form No. 1" (blue) which is NOT a tax statement (these will come later). It is NOT to be returned but is your personal copy. At the bottom of the page the figures represent the assessed valuation of your property. To get a fairly accurate idea of the tax you will be required to pay, multiply this figure by 6.8, which approximates the millage levy. If you have any question or feel there is any inequity or mistake now is the time to do something about it. Call the matter to the attention of the Association or contact Mr. Thomas Walker (before 9:00 a.m.) MA 2-5900, Ext. 379.

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CITY LIGHT OUTLINES PROCEDURES FOR QUICK RECONNECT OF SERVICE: In recent months the Association has received a few complaints of hardship delays in reconnecting electrical services in houseboats that have moved. This was taken up with Mr. George Weigle of City Light, who is both sympathetic and helpful. He outlined some suggestions which should minimize such problems in the future. They are: (1) Take out your Electric Reconnect Permit, Bldg. Dept., \$3.00 as far ahead of the moving date as possible; (2) Have the Bldg. Dept. electrical inspector check out your houseboat and get an O.K. for service before you move; (3) Check the new moorage to see that your pole is correctly placed to prevent house-drops (incoming wires) from rubbing on the roof; and (4) Phone City Light Service Order Dept. MU 2-3000, Ext. 52 with your request giving the day of your intended move, your KCA Number and the correct addresses of your new and old moorage. If you have any questions contact the Association.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS WILL SYNDICATE SEATTLE HOUSEBOAT FEATURE: The Seattle Bureau of the Associated Press, the nation's largest news gathering organization, has prepared an illustrated feature on Seattle houseboats which will soon be distributed to member newspapers. An AP staff writer was a guest on our Christmas Cruise. Both the Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer are AP members and hopefully (would you believe both???) will use the story. While we have the reputation of being a "houseboat city" the facts are that we must take a back seat to many communities from Portland to the Atlantic Coast. Portland now has more than 600 floating homes with new construction adding to the number monthly. Florida not only has a big houseboat population but one developer is bringing into being an entire "floating village." Stores, offices, as well as homes are afloat. We still have too many people who think the only proper use of water is to fill it or pave it.

FIRST HB SEWER CONNECTION IN: MOORAGE INSTALLATIONS STARTING SOON: Thanks to the progress made in the past month in the selection of suitable materials and in practical methods, the installation of sewage collection systems should be underway during this "construction season," which means this spring, summer and fall. Work on designing the country's first houseboat moorage sanitation system is in the hands of

a sub-committee of the City Council's official "Floating Homes Committee" and is made up of representatives of the Engineering and Health Departments and the Floating Homes Association. Kenneth Kennedy, Association president, and John Mattson, architect, are our representatives.

While the method is applicable to only a relatively small number of houseboats, one installation is in. This is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brown, 3206 Portage Bay Place East. Bob is vice-president of the Association. Their floating home is the only houseboat on the Brown property. This "single houseboat" installation is one of the various systems that will be in use. The breakdown of the 54 houseboat moorages illustrates why some variation will be needed to meet specific conditions. There are eight moorages with but a single floating home; there are 12 with from two to four for a total of 31; there are 14 with from five to nine for a total of 87 and there are 20 with from ten to fifty for a total of 344. Thus the overwhelming majority (431 houseboats to be exact) are moored at the longer piers or floats where the most practical and approved system will consist of an underwater collection pipe, serving the houseboats by gravity flow, and carrying the sewage to a common sump from which it will be pumped into the public sewer. Our existing pier or float lengths range up to 370 feet.

Making the transition to sewer connections will create certain complications which can best be met through cooperative action through the Association. Some moorages (the majority) are now ready for such installations. Some will need to make certain structural changes or other improvements. In a few cases a complete new installation will be called for. In other words there will be unavoidable displacements and relocations in some instances but the Association feels it can keep inconveniences to a minimum. Owners of houseboats on public property (street ends or state waterways) should realize that they must soon move and plan accordingly. They are illegal now and once the sewage collection systems are in they must go as they cannot comply with the sanitary requirements. The Association will, of course, assist in finding a moorage for any good quality houseboat.

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WE CHALKED UP ANOTHER GOOD FIRE LOSS RECORD IN 1966: WE CAN DO BETTER: Total property losses in the seven houseboat fires during 1966 were under \$1,400.00, according to official figures provided the Association by Gordon Vickery, Chief of the Seattle Fire Department. Separation of houseboat fires from other dwelling statistics began in 1965 at the request of the Association.

The distribution of the fires were: two at 616 West Ewing and one each at 612 West Ewing, 2031 Fairview Ave. E., 2217 Fairview Ave. E., 1125 North Northlake Way, and 2460 Westlake N. The report says "three of these fires were attributed to careless disposal of smoking material; one was caused by defective electrical wiring; one by the ignition of paraffin wax on the stove; one by an improperly installed smoke pipe; and one by sparks from a trash burner. One fire resulted in an estimated loss of \$850, one a loss of \$400, four with minor losses of less than \$50 and one with no loss."

In 1965 (the first year such statistics were compiled), there were eight fires. That report stated: "Three of these fires caused damage in excess of \$100 but less than \$500. The damage caused by the other five fires was less than \$100 in each instance. Three of the fires were caused by smoking, one by illegal burning, one by ignition of food on the stove, one by a defective electric heater, one by an over heated circulating heater and one by sparks on a wood shingle roof."

This is a pretty good record but not good enough. All these fires were preventable. All resulted from carelessness. The travel time from the fire stations to any of our moorages ranges between 3½ to 2 minutes. Report any fire promptly by calling MAIN 2-3344. We should also cooperate with the Department's inspection program. When firemen call, invite them in. They will point out any danger areas. This is a service we should welcome. We have the best fire department in the U.S. It will pay to cooperate.

LAKE UNION ASSOCIATION SETS SATURDAY, MAY 20TH AS CLEAN-UP DAY: This is a tentative date and more detailed information will come later. But plan now to participate. More boats (small, to work waterways) and more volunteers will be needed. Last year many a ton of dangerous and unsightly drift and debris was removed. But only a few did it.

FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION
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