



FOUNDED 1962

FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION



2329 Fairview Avenue East

Seattle, Washington 98102

Phone: 325-1132

Number 133

Newsletter

Spring 1999

The Floating Homes Association's 37th Annual MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, April 22, 1999

George Pocock Memorial Rowing Center
3320 Fuhrman Avenue East

7:30 PM

"VESSEL SCAM"

Will the huge floating buildings on north Fairview E be allowed to remain?
The trial is still set for April. How do we keep this from happening again?

ASSESSOR'S BOMBSHELL

Harley Hoppe, the Association's Tax Consultant, and a representative from the Assessor's Office will talk about our recent dramatic increase — and what we're doing about it.

TOUR MANIA

With the Tour only three days away, the drums will be beating on Westlake and Fairview. Come and hear what they have to say.

HARBOR PATROL DOCK ID PROGRAM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS
COOKBOOKS AND SWEATSHIRTS ON SALE
COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS

Be There!

Turmoil:

April 1999 promises interesting times for the Association.

Our campaign against the Vessel Scam careens into trial this month. Tax appeals are due April 30 for many moorages around the lake.

Then, the Sunday after the Annual Meeting, our ambitious bicoastal Tour of Homes descends on Westlake and Fairview.

Pay your local property taxes under protest this year. Use the convenient sticker on PAGE 3.

Cross your fingers.

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**FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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(2037 FV)

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(2331 FV)

Phone: 325-1132

Office Hours:

9-1 Monday

noon-4 Wednesday

Messages monitored in-between



Rule Beaters



Photo by Peter Eglick

Rome Ventura's Lake Union Crew Rowing Club is two floating buildings at the foot of Allison on Fairview. Although they are equivalent to nearly 20,000 square feet of commercial space and attract well over a hundred people a day, they were installed without permits.

The neighbors cried foul.

The city responded by slapping Ventura with a Notice of Violation and told her to go through the permitting process like anybody else. Since her buildings shamelessly violate the land use code, she sued the city instead. Waving Coast Guard registration numbers and other documents, she said the city couldn't touch her because the feds have jurisdiction over vessels. And besides, she claimed the city told her it was OK to go ahead when she showed them her plans.

Now, the Association, the Eastlake Community Council and the 3100 Fairview Condominium Association find themselves in federal court as intervenors in the squabble between Ventura and the city.

Harbor Patrol Dock ID Program

The Seattle Harbor Patrol is in the process of updating business and residential address identification information. While nearly all residences and businesses on the lakes have clearly posted addresses visible from landside, many don't on the waterside.

Numbers should be at least 3" in height and reflective. The Harbor Patrol and the Seattle Fire Department are combining resources to prepare pre-fire/pre-response plans for floating communities. If you notice their personnel on your docks, it is part of the information gathering -- such data as depth, cleat location, length of docks, etc.. The Harbor Patrol will forward a general exterior layout of each moorage to the SFD for computerized entry in the Pre-Fire Plan. Such information will then be available to fire and police personnel during an emergency prior to arrival.

It would be helpful if every moorage had a contact person(s) to assist with this project. Also, any moorage that would like the Harbor Patrol to assist with placement or application of addresses, call 386-9146 or fax 684-4878.

The Community Policing Bureau has approved grant funding for these address signs. Learn more about this at the FHA Annual Meeting on April 22nd.

Judge Rothstein:

Structures, Not Vessels

As of this writing, we are still going to trial in April over whether Ventura gave the city proper information before they approved her project.

By Bill Keasler

A Summary Judgement ruling in March by U.S. District Judge Barbara Rothstein denied developer Rome Ventura's claim that her Lake Union Crew rowing club's floating buildings are vessels.

So, the good news is that Ventura didn't get away with simply declaring her buildings to be vessels and thereby exempt from city regulation. This remains a very pesky problem, however. Another related case which tested the boundaries of what is and is not a vessel, involving live-aboards and houseboats, was recently settled. There is at least some interest on the City Council in looking at both cases to see if there isn't a way to clarify the situation.

Meanwhile, even though she lost the point in court, Ventura has managed to use her "Vessel" scam as a wedge to plant her buildings on the Allison street end. Now that they're there, there're some signs they may be hard to move.

Although what, exactly, will be decided at trial is still subject to furious lawyerly debate, the question in general is whether Ventura gave the city enough information to make proper decisions on her project and, if so, whether the city actually said it was OK to go ahead.

The city is nervous about the uncertainties of a trial on these points and has lurched toward settlement a number of times recently. The Association's coalition thinks Ventura's evidence is wispy at best. No plans showing anything like what is there now were ever presented to the city. Nevertheless, things could come to an abrupt halt at any moment if the city settles with Ventura.

Come what may, this should be a hot topic at the Annual Meeting.

Tax Appeal

By Bill Keasler

What's the Problem?

Turn the page.

The next two *Newsletter* pages show a black and white reduction of a three-by-six foot color glossy exhibit the Association used as part of its presentation to the King County Board of Equalization on February 24th. It illustrates the wild variations in value per square foot the Assessor has assigned to real property along the south end of Fairview.

Two classes of property jump out at you from the exhibit. One is floating home condos and cooperatives, subjects of the Assessor's special floating homes project last year. The other class is everyone else, including rental floating home moorages! You can tell the difference on the exhibit by the fact that the values for condos and coops are at least twice as high as their neighbors'.

As you can imagine, this got the attention of the condos and coops. They asked the Association to help. We hired Harley H. Hoppe and Associates to research the situation and work on our appeals.

What's Happening?

Hoppe's research revealed that the pattern on Fairview extended all over the lake. He and the condo/coop owners also uncovered numerous errors and inconsistencies in the Assessor's work.

The presentation in February was an attempt to educate **the Board of Equalization, the appeals body for tax assessments**, about the unique aspects of floating homes. (Special thanks to the more than 50 Association members who came and packed the hearing room.)

Hoppe and the condo/coops are now working on their individual appeals which are due April 30. The Association itself continues to investigate why the Assessor decided to single out some moorages and not others for special treatment.

What to Do

Hoppe recommends sticking the notice at left on *any* tax (including personal property) payment check to the County until the dust settles a little on this issue. You still must pay your taxes, but **using the sticker carries no obligation** or liability and makes it easier for you to participate in any adjustments which might eventually be made.



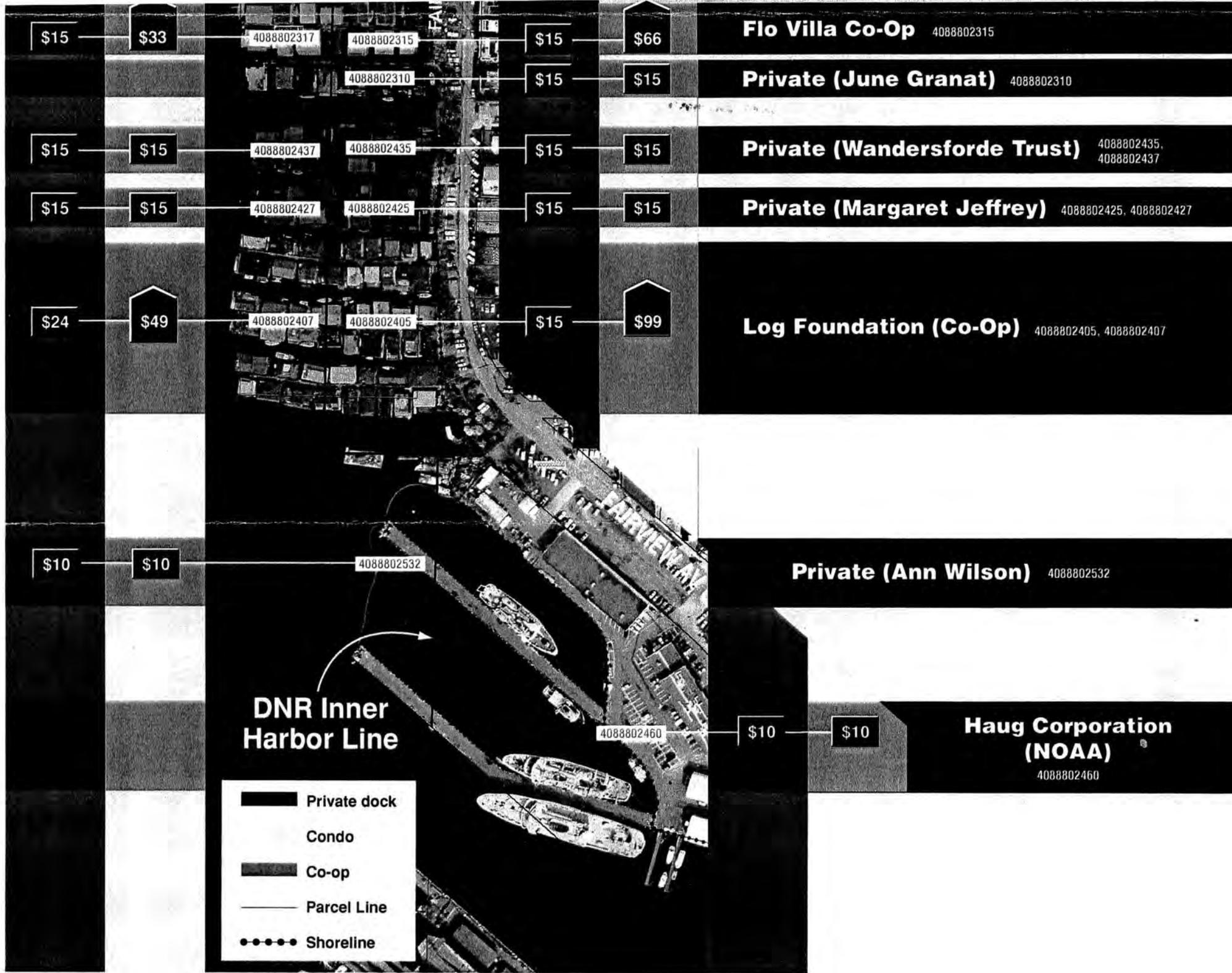
Pay Under Protest! Stick This On Your Tax Payment

PAID UNDER PROTEST
Violation of Article VII, Sections I & II
Washington State Constitution

(It really does peel off)

Fairview Ave. Nonuniformities

DNR		Aerial View	FEE		Property Description
Was	Now		Was	Now	
\$15	\$15	4088802307	\$20	\$20	Private (Marina) 4088802305, 4088802306, 4088802307
\$20	\$20	4088802306, 4088802305	\$20	\$20	
\$6	\$38	4088802303, 6764008888	\$20	\$27	Phoenix Moorage (Condo) 4088802303, 6764008888
\$12	\$12	4088802287, 4088802285	\$15	\$84	Tenas Chuck (Co-Op) 4088802287, 4088802285
\$12	\$12	4088802252, 4088802250	\$15	\$15	Private (Paws) 4088802250, 4088802252
\$12	\$12	4088802242, 8807208888	\$24	\$24	Union Harbor Condo 4088802242, 8807208888
		2468418888	\$24	\$87	Fairview Moorings Condo 2468418888
		4088802341, 4088802340	\$15	\$196	
\$15	\$49	4088802327, 4088802335, 4088802325	\$15	\$49	DOX Corporation (Co-Op) 4088802325, 4088802327, 4088802340, 4088802341



\$15

\$33

4088802317

4088802315

\$15

\$66

Flo Villa Co-Op 4088802315

4088802310

\$15

\$15

Private (June Granat) 4088802310

\$15

\$15

4088802437

4088802435

\$15

\$15

Private (Wandersforde Trust) 4088802435, 4088802437

\$15

\$15

4088802427

4088802425

\$15

\$15

Private (Margaret Jeffrey) 4088802425, 4088802427

\$24

\$49

4088802407

4088802405

\$15

\$99

Log Foundation (Co-Op) 4088802405, 4088802407

\$10

\$10

4088802532

DNR Inner Harbor Line

- Private dock
- Condo
- Co-op
- Parcel Line
- Shoreline

Private (Ann Wilson) 4088802532

\$10

\$10

Haug Corporation (NOAA)
4088802460

4088802460

Peg's Log

By Peg Stockley

A New Book from One of our Own

Houseboater Beth Means has published her 10th book entitled "Teaching Writing in Middle School: Tips, Tricks & Techniques." Publisher is Libraries Unlimited. Co-author is Lindy Lindner. Lindy is Beth's sister and is a middle school resource teacher in Colorado.

Welcome to the Kalakala

The ferry Kalakala is new on the Lake Union water-scape and I'm personally delighted. It takes me back to my growing up days in Seattle when riding on the "Silver Slug" was a special treat. The art deco landmark was towed under the Aurora Bridge to its new home on the north shore, near the Skansonia, on St. Patrick's Day. It has been berthed on the downtown Seattle waterfront after a dramatic tow from Alaska, where it was literally stuck in the mud after finishing its career as a shellfish-processing plant. Restoration work will be continuing as funds are raised.

Get Well Wishes

Our best thoughts go to Dick Wagner, houseboater from the Old Boat House Condo Moorage, ex-President of the Association, and director of the Center for Wooden Boats, who is recovering from bypass surgery.

Houseboater Leads Stardust Space Probe

Don Brownlee, Professor of Astronomy at the UW and Portage Bay houseboater, led the recent NASA dust-collecting mission which is getting the first direct sampling of one of the solar system's oldest residents. The Stardust spacecraft will intercept the comet in 2004 and is scheduled to return to Earth in 2006.

Let's Go to the Movies!

Outdoor Cinema will be returning to Gas Works Park this summer in an expanded version. In its first appearance last year, the crowds attending watched the silent movie "Metropolis" accompanied by The Young Composers Collective performing an original film score. This year, Outdoor Cinema will present another great silent -- "Hunchback of Notre Dame". The YCC has received a PONCHO grant to produce the music. Dates are: Friday, July 31 & Saturday, August 1; Friday & Saturday, August 7 & 8; and Friday & Saturday, August 14 & 15. Admission is free. Producers are working with adjacent neighborhoods to make this event something all can enjoy.

Passages

Three long-time houseboaters passed away since our last issue and they will be missed.

Two were from Flo Villa: **Lois Oswalt** and **Merlyn Proctor**. Lois died in January. She had lived on her houseboat since 1965 and helped form the first corporation. A world traveler, she also enjoyed carving, tennis, water color, reading, "Eastern" religions and the game of bridge. Merlyn died in March. She lived on Flo Villa but also spent many years on her houseboat on Tenas Chuck. Friends and family gathered on her houseboat to remember her surrounded by flowers that she loved and a feast of food. One fun reminiscence was from a houseboat neighbor who would hear Merlyn in her dinghy knock on her deck with an oar with a pot of coffee aboard when it was time to have a cup of coffee afloat. Or, rumor has it that a goose was once seen in her living room.

And, Log Foundation neighbors mourn **Bob Humber**, who lived on the 2017 dock for many years with his wife, Dot. A great swimmer, Bob had moved off the lake but was well loved by his neighbors.

'99 Tour Is A-Coming

Sunday, April 25th, is Houseboat Day 1999!

This year, **nine generous households** have volunteered to open their homes on both sides of Lake Union, **four on Fairview and five on Westlake**. Roundtrip transportation will be provided in **Argosy's Queen's Launch** as well as buses. We have a grand mix of houseboats on the tour: the historic, the traditional, the elegant, the artistic and ... **the Sleepless!** Because of the significant outlay of legal and consulting fees the Association has committed this year, it's crucial that our tour is well attended, so make sure all your friends, relations and business associates pay a visit.

As usual, we need all the **friendly faces** we can muster to run this popular public event efficiently. The tour is from **noon to 5 p.m.**; volunteer shifts are from 11:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 2:p.m. to 5 p.m. **All volunteers will receive one free ticket** for the tour. **IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN CALLED BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, CALL OR EMAIL ME RIGHT AWAY FOR A VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT** – or may you be sleepless for weeks! And, if you have any influence with Mother Nature, please **ask for a sunny day!**

Marty Alexander, Tour Chair
281-0927; email marty@water-color.com



Floating Homes Association
2329 Fairview Ave. E.
Seattle, WA 98102

8/91



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Help preserve and protect Seattle's colorful houseboat colony.
Join the Floating Homes Association today!

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____ HB#: _____

PHONE: _____ Condo/CoOp Name: _____

Houseboat: Own Rent Regular Household \$36 New
Moorage: Own Rent Retired Household \$24 Renewal

*The Association's Legal Fund needs your support also. Donations of \$50 or more are tax deductible! Make your **SEPARATE** check payable to SCCCF/FHA and mail today!*

I have enclosed \$ _____ for the FHA Legal Fund.

Floating Homes Association 2329 Fairview Avenue East Seattle, WA 98102 Telephone 325-1132