



FOUNDED 1962

## FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION



2329 Fairview Avenue East

Seattle, Washington 98102

Phone: 325-1132

Number 137

*Newsletter*

Spring 2001

### The Floating Homes Association's 39th Annual **MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

St. Patrick's Catholic Church Basement  
2702 Broadway East

Thursday, April 27, 2001  
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

#### **FIRE ON PORTAGE BAY**

The Harbor Patrol and Fire Department will Speak to us on the Danger of Houseboat fires. They will also be showing a Videotape of the Fire last summer on Portage Bay.

#### **3X MOORAGE INCREASE APPEAL**

Two Docks on the Lake have been hit with Moorage Rate Increases up to \$1,400/Month. They have Appealed to the Hearing Examiner, but their Moorage Owners say their True Intention is to topple the Equity Ordinance. Hear your Neighbors' Stories. Help us Plot our Defense of the Ordinance.

#### **THE "VESSEL SCAM" - IT WORKS !**

Lake Union Crew is Back. Their two Gigantic Floating Structures have just returned to the Allison St. Waterway under their Own Power. They sport brand new Certification as "Vessels" by the Coast Guard and the City now seems Ready to Let Them Stay. What Happened?

#### **TOUR OF HOMES**

The Sunday after the Annual Meeting is our 2001 Tour of Floating Homes. Buy Tickets, Volunteer, Get Involved.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

#### **COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS**

Face it. This is the real reason you actually come to Annual Meeting, isn't it? Catch up with Old Friends, Make New Ones, Raise a Toast to your Neighbors.

**Cookbooks, Tee Shirts, and Tour Tickets On Sale**  
*Be There!*

#### *They're Back!*

### **COAST GUARD CERTIFIES LAKE UNION CREW AS VESSELS**

They lost at every turn. The city denied their permit. Their suit in Federal Court went against them. Last-ditch binding arbitration failed to stop an order to remove their buildings. Days before being forcibly evicted last fall they sued the city (and us), hoping to stall the inevitable. That worked for a few months. But on January 12, 2001, they were finally forced to leave.

Yet, suddenly, on April 20, Lake Union Crew's massive floating clubhouses reappeared at the site next to the Allison Street Waterway on Fairview.

Their trick was to convince the Coast Guard the structures were vessels. Since leaving in January, LUC has been at Lake Union Drydock furiously working down long a "punch list" of objections to vessel designation provided by the Coast Guard. They eventually wore the Coast Guard down and were granted "Class-T Commercial Vessel" status. This means they can tie up anywhere where they want.

But the point we won in federal court was that, even if they are vessels, they have to get permits for on-shore activity, wasn't it?

Come to find out, unbeknownst to us, the city approved a change of use while they were gone for the site from "recreational marina" to "commercial marina" and "beach, boat and yacht club". Apparently, no public review of this change of use is required.

Astonishing as it may seem, LUC clearly believes the vessel designation and the change of use are enough to allow them to recommence operations.

They lost at every turn, but somehow, they're still there.

# Grocery Ark Rides Out Lean Years

Mrs. Amelia Batrack, a pleasant-faced widow, is the proprietor of one of Seattle's most unusual stores—a floating grocery on Lake Union.

She is also the heroine of one of the most heart-warming success stories to come out of the "lean years."

Hers is not a success story of fame and fortune but of comfort and financial independence for her old age.

Mrs. Batrack's grocery is not a make-shift affair. Long years ago it was a grocery boat taking supplies to residents on the islands near Seattle and taking produce in exchange at times. Soon its useful life on the waters was over and it was partially grounded on logs at 1200 Westlake Ave. N.

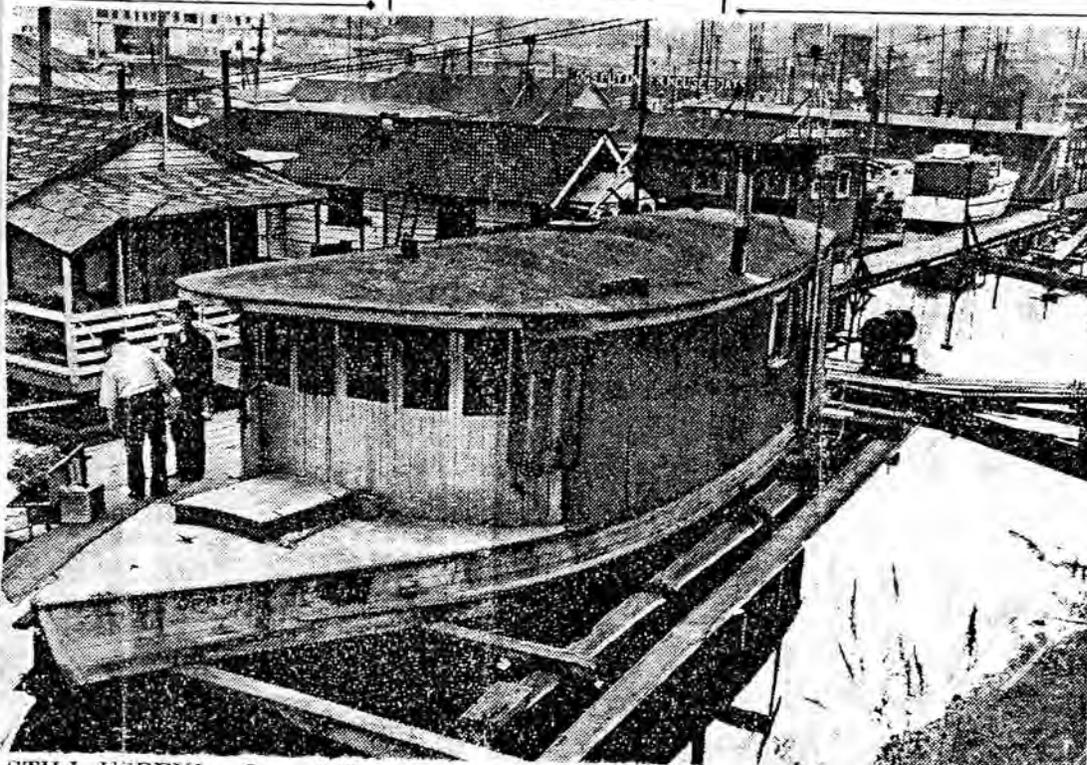
When Mrs. Batrack first took over the empty shelves of the grocery three years ago and used her nest egg of \$40 to buy a few supplies she found she had also taken over a jinx.

Her houseboat neighbors took it



FOODSTUFFS AFLOAT—Ruth Griffin and Donnie Dian Munson make a purchase of Mrs. Amelia Batrack's floating grocery store moored in Lake Union.

—(Pictures by Post-Intelligencer Staff Photographers)



STILL USEFUL—One of the most novel sights in Lake Union is this floating mercantile establishment in which Mrs.

Amelia Batrack retails groceries to the lake dwellers. A pair of customers, C. D. Brown and Norman Busfield, chat on deck.

Widow Runs  
Store in  
Old Hull

This article is (poorly) reprinted in an edition of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* who also owns Lake Union and thought we'd be interested. (We don't know who to blame.)



for granted she'd be moving on before long—flat broke. All of them before her had.

But Mrs. Batrack had a stern-hard-driving ancestry to her credit. And patience.

She had had her own store in Latvia many years ago. But she had come to this country to visit her sister in Chicago in 1914 and the war prevented her return to her native land. Marriage to a man with four children, the trip to Seattle to live, and widowhood followed in time. For several years after her husband died Mrs. Batrack lived among her stepchildren but soon the urge for independence prompted her to take over the store. It cost her nothing but the rent to take it over.

"When I started here, nobody trusted me," Mrs. Batrack will tell you. "The wholesale houses didn't know me so I couldn't put in much stock. I usually could not sell more than six quarts of milk a day. But now (and she says it proudly) I can get credit but I don't need it."

Mrs. Batrack believes she conquered the jinx by being careful about credit—after she got stung several times.

Today she has about 100 regular customers, many of whom are fishermen. She lives in a back room of her grocery store. And although she isn't so keen on living right on top of the water like that

inted from the Tuesday, December 27, 1938  
*Intelligencer*. Jules James, a local history nut  
 Mail in Eastlake, ran across it in his researches  
 sted. Thank you, Jules — and thank you, P.I.  
 ink for the doodles in the headlines.)



Susan and Rune Carlson's old houseboat on its way to Ozell Gaines' Portage Bay moorage site.

## RECYCLING THE BIG STUFF

Rune & Susan Carlson, of Dox co-op on Fairview, just received delivery of their new custom-built houseboat brought down from Canada by tugboat. Their neighbors were all out there on the dock to help transfer their belongings to their new home and to get a preview of the inside. While electricians wired them up to the dock power supply,

Peter Longwood, who represents International Marine Flotation Systems that built and delivered the houseboat, worked with Sid McFarland to get it moored and other utilities hooked up. Instead of selling or tearing down their old houseboat, the Carlsons kindly donated the place to Ozell Gaines, who readers may recall, lost his houseboat in a fire last year.

At the same time workers were getting the Carlson's new place tied up, Bob Kerr, Ozell's neighbor in Portage Bay, along with other volunteers replaced the burned out shell with the Carlson houseboat. The burned houseboat was towed to Lake Union Drydock to be dismantled.

Many thanks to the Carlsons and others who worked to make this happen for Ozell. This is the kind of spirit that makes our floating home community such a great place to live.

### THE FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*President:* **Bill Keasler** (2037 FV)

*Vice President:* **Marty Alexander**  
 (2466 WL)

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 (933 N Northlake)

*Office Manager:* **Jann McFarland**  
 (2025 WL)

*Members-At-Large:*

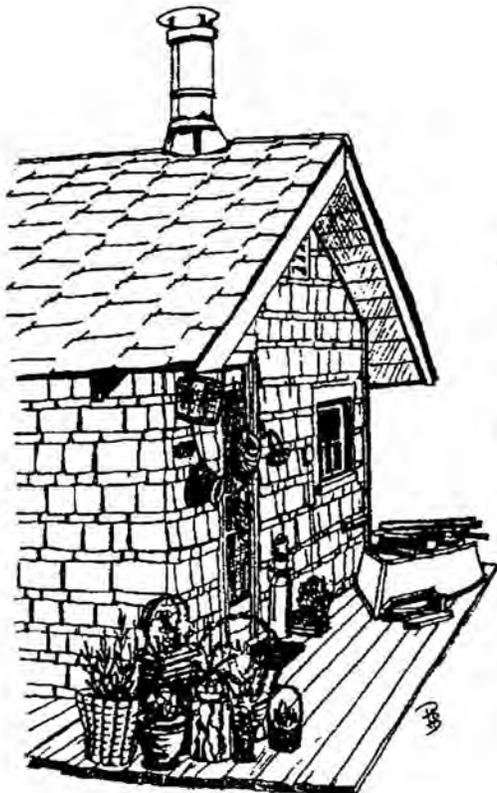
**Ann Bassetti** (2420 WL)  
**Sheri Greaves** (3110 PB Pl)

**Susan Jenkins** (2235 FV)  
**Bob Martin** (2351 FV)

**Jann McFarland** (2025 FV)  
**Susan Susor** (1409 NE Boat)

**Betty Swift** (1213 E Shelby)  
**Phil Webber** (3023 W Barrett)

Floating Homes Association  
2329 Fairview Avenue East  
Seattle WA 98102



# Houseboat Tour 2001

Visit 9 Floating Homes on Portage Bay  
Sunday, April 29, 2001  
Noon to 5 PM

**Call Your Friends, Make A Date**

Tickets and information  
Floating Homes Association  
Phone 206-325-1132 or 323-3489  
or on Tour Day at Pocock Rowing Center  
3320 Fuhrman Avenue E