

News Around the Docks



Winter-Spring 2009

The Return Of ... *ASK BARNEY!*

On the evening of November 13, 2008 Mr. Barnhill convened a meeting at the Pasta Pelican Restaurant for tenants of the Marina. He covered a long list of topics during the meeting, including an announcement of a possible future special assessment fee. Below is a summary of the meeting, including updates and changes confirmed by Barney during conversations in February 2009.



- 1) History of the Marina – For the benefit of newer residents, Mr. Barnhill began with a brief summary of the Marina's history. He said the Marina started in 1965. That is when Barney began leasing the property West of B dock from Southern Pacific, a lease he held for some 35 years until he purchased the property from S.P. just 5 or so years ago. In 1965, this portion of the property mainly consisted of an old boatyard, including rails (ways) and winches for hauling boats, and the property extended up to what is now Marina Village Parkway. Likewise, he also leased the land and shoreline that now comprises C – E docks, including the parking lot, old barn, etc. This part of the Marina was eventually purchased from Pacific Coast Aggregates, the cement company that operated the silos and the large building behind them (now AC3, formerly the cement packing shed).
- 2) Barnhill Mariner Square LLC – Barney announced that as of Jan. 1, 2009, the land and shore west of B dock would be owned by Barnhill Mariner Square LLC, and that all tenants west of B dock (including the floating home residents on the west side of B dock) would make their monthly rent checks payable to this corporate entity. Shelley and Dennis Martinez are the

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(Ask Barney, from page 1)

owners of Barnhill Mariner Square LLC.

UPDATE: This new management arrangement is on hold for now, and tenants will continue to make out their rent checks to “Barnhill Marina.”

- 3) [Sewer Pit Project in April](#) – There will be some disruption and inconvenience in the parking lot in April when EBMUD plans to add a plastic lining to the sewer pit. The sewer pit is underneath the parking lot adjacent to B dock entrance, and is a central receiving point for all of Alameda's wastewater. From here it is channeled under the estuary and over to the sewer treatment plant on Alice Street in Oakland. In addition to this EBMUD easement, 12” gas main and 5' phone line easements are in the same vicinity. **UPDATE:** Barney reports that as of February, he has received no word on whether this project is still on schedule. Due to the current budget mess at every level of government, it's possible this project may be delayed. One of the residents asked about continuing problems with the phone lines, which most residents rely on these days for broadband internet use as well as regular “landline” phones. Barney said it would cost between \$200,000 - \$300,000 to upgrade the phone line conduits on the docks; a cost he is not prepared to undertake at this time. He related how the phone company continually added more and more phone lines outside the conduit over the years until they simply lost track of them. Fixing this mess would take a major overhaul and investment, so for now we just have to manage. Perhaps wireless internet will someday come to our neighborhood!!
- 4) [BCDC - History, Benches, etc.](#) - Mr. Barnhill recounted some of the history of his Permit dispute with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and the requirement for the new benches, public parking signs, sidewalk signs and landscaping that were completed last summer. To summarize briefly, in 1998, a BCDC staffer was visiting Chevy's Restaurant about a

request for sidewalk expansion, and happened to notice the size of our community, shoreline changes and lack of public access. According to BCDC's records, the 1973 permit issued to Barnhill Marina required public shoreline access points and established the legal number of floating homes. BCDC claimed that there were 26 floating homes at the marina in 1973, and that 15 were added without permit after that date. Mr. Barnhill and BCDC negotiated a settlement in 1998/99 which established a new 20-year permit for the Marina. Barney was also required to add a public walkway along the shoreline, including landscaping, benches, 2 public parking spaces and various signage. This last part was completed Summer of 2008, though with 2 fewer benches than BCDC originally requested.

- 5) [Red Shield lawsuit](#) – Red Shield Insurance is suing Barnhill Marina for \$150,000 to recover costs associated with the sinking of the floating home at E3 in 2005. Barney suggested that we should all be sure to understand what is covered in our insurance policies, whether Red Shield or California Fair Plan. For a comparison chart showing the difference in coverage between these two providers see the chart in the September 2005 issue of “News Around the Docks.” If you no longer have your copy, this issue is available online at alamedafloatinghomes.org. **UPDATE:** Barney is looking into a new source of floating home insurance for us. He is hoping the insurance company used by floating home owners on Union Lake in Seattle and at his Marina at Friday Harbor might be an option for us. Watch for future announcements.
- 6) [Anon. reports of non-payment of property taxes](#) – In October, Marina management reported in a Memo to residents that the County Assessor's Office had received an anonymous letter and 2 separate phonecalls claiming that some marina floating home residents were not paying required property taxes. During the November 13 meeting, Mr.

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Barnhill provided additional information about these anonymous reports, including that the letter writer also cited floating homes at Berkeley Marina, and that the caller actually mentioned a particular resident of our own community who had recently remodelled. Everyone in the marina has been very upset and saddened by these actions, so it was interesting to hear more details. Not that it eased concerns! A sign-in sheet was passed around during the evening meeting that included the option to report the amount of yearly property tax paid. Our neighbor (and Realtor) Angela McIntyre reported that she conducted a data search and found that all homes here pay taxes. She also warned us that there are “vigilantes” in every community who watch recently filed permits and then check to see that the property taxes have been adjusted. As of this writing in February 2009, there have been no further reported actions in regards to this matter. Let's hope it stays that way!

- 7) [Possible Assessment Added to Monthly Rent](#) - Last June 2008, Alameda residents voted in favor of Measure H, a temporary 4-year parcel tax to fund our local schools. Unfortunately, the new parcel tax levies a much higher cost to commercial property owners like Mr. Barnhill than for residential landowners. The measure imposes a \$120 tax on residential parcels and a 15 cents per-square-foot tax on commercial-industrial parcels. As a result, Barnhill Marina received an additional \$28,500.00 tax this year. A number of local business owners (including neighbor, John Beery) have filed a lawsuit against Measure H. If this lawsuit fails and the tax continues as is, Mr. Barnhill reported that he has no choice but to issue a separate special assessment fee to assist with his tax burden. The increase – if imposed – will be considered a temporary “assessment” and will consist of \$50.00 a month for floating homes, and \$10.00 a month for recreational boats in storage or at slips. Again, this rate increase will occur only if Measure H stays on the books. One of our neighbors asked if Mr.

Barnhill's commercial tenants (AC3, Commodore, etc.) would be paying a higher assessment since they pay higher rents than individual floating home and boat owners. But Barney said he had to account for the large parking lot that serves our marina, and include that when computing our share.

- 8) [Thanks to AFHA for Fertilizer Donation](#) – Mr. and Mrs. Barnhill thanked the Alameda Floating Homes Association for last summer's donation of fertilizer for the newly landscaped area near Gate B.
- 9) [Locking the Security Gates](#) – The meeting concluded with a lively discussion about the Security Gates. Management issued a notice last October noting the recent frequency of the gates being propped open for extended periods, sometimes for contractors or just for resident convenience. As a result, non-residents were found wandering the B and C dock late one night last Fall. Meanwhile, we continue to have a problem with our cars being broken into late at night (Roberta Bobba's was broken into recently). Leaving the gates unlocked – especially at night – means we are inviting these burglars onto our docks and into our homes. Mr. Barnhill asked residents to keep the gates locked at all times and to avoid propping them open for extended periods. Marla Blagg asked about the possibility of installing a card-key system to replace keys (which can be lost and difficult to replace), but this was received with mixed reviews and lots of shouting, both for and against the idea. The meeting ended on this note.



A CONCRETE HULL -- NO WORRIES?

by Diane & Bill White

As owners of a floating home with a concrete hull we have occasionally wondered if there was anything we needed to know about maintaining it. Surely it would not last forever without some kind of attention? And was there anything that could go wrong? We asked a few folks around the marina, but no one seemed to know much about it. But two things happened recently to fill this void. The folks in the Sausalito floating home community recently published a series of articles on concrete hull maintenance in their newsletter, "Floating Times." From this we learned that there are indeed things we need to know! And a chance conversation with our neighbor, [Phil Freitas](#), revealed that he was closely involved in the initial development of concrete hulls here in our marina, and knew that some had been treated for long-term safety.



Evidence of corrosion on the concrete hull at slip B3.

A LITTLE HISTORY

First a little history! It looks like the first concrete hull homes to arrive here in our marina were the Barnhill home on A dock (1979) and the the Cox/Puntenney house at slip B3 (1983-84). Mr. Barnhill reports that he designed and built the concrete hull for his home at A dock, researching and formulating the concrete mix to be extra dense and long-lasting, and selecting the steel rebar. In the late 1980s and early 90s, there was a big push to replace aging wood/fiberglass hulls with concrete. The majority of our concrete hulls were built during this period. We conducted an informal count and it appears we now have 21 homes with concrete hulls. Phil Freitas arranged for a number of these hulls to be built by Mark Levy up in Vallejo. The finished barges were then towed to Alameda where they were attached to the floating homes in the dry dock at BayShip. Some of our concrete hulls were built by Ian Moody of Aquamaison in Sausalito. The most recent dated hull appears to be Rosemary Reilly's at B17 which has an Aquamaison date of 1998.

Most of us who purchased homes with concrete hulls assumed that they would essentially last forever. This may be somewhat true, but considering that most of these hulls are now 20 years and older in age, it would seem that some type of maintenance might be required. During a causal conversation about this issue a few months ago, our neighbor [Bill Cox](#) said that he was pretty sure that there are signs of corrosion on his concrete hull at B3 (see accompanying picture).

CONCRETE IS POROUS

According to the web site houseboatrepair.info (sponsored by the Morgan Construction Company), concrete is strong and long-lasting, but there are some inherent problems. Minor cracks are normal in any concrete structure, but concrete is also porous. When a concrete hull is in constant contact with corrosive seawater, deterioration can begin and compromise the embedded steel reinforcing bars (rebar). The iron in the steel rebar is converted into iron oxide or rust. Iron oxide takes up more space than iron, and can lead to a widening of the initial crack or fault that caused the rusting to begin in the first place. As the crack widens, more and more of the rebar is exposed to the corrosive salt water. Eventually the floating homeowner

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(Concrete Hulls, continued...)

may see large cracks, or cracks with rust stains. This may be what is happening at B3. In more advanced cases, there may be damp areas and even some leakage. According to Morgan Construction, these damp areas and leaks can often dry out and then later reappear in a cycle not related to rainstorms.

GALVANIC CORROSION

Another way that the porousness of concrete can lead to rebar damage is through galvanic corrosion (also called electrolytic corrosion). Galvanic corrosion occurs whenever two or more different kinds of metal are submerged near one another in salt water. When this happens, a very weak electrical current flows between them, carrying microscopic bits of metal from one to another.

Some kinds of metal hold their electrons less tightly than other kinds do, and will slowly dissolve when submerged for long periods, while other kinds will last indefinitely. Unfortunately, the steel that is used in rebar will give up its electrons fairly readily, so it is susceptible to damage from galvanic corrosion. The metal in boats, bridges, dams and other objects in contact with sea water is protected from galvanic corrosion by attaching pieces of zinc called “sacrificial anodes.” Zinc lets go of its electrons easily to other nearby metals, so propellers or metal structures don't have to. In some cases, this “passive” anode protection is not effective, and an alternative method, called “impressed current protection” is used where a small electrical current is applied to the rebar or other metal in need of protection.

SPALLING IN SAUSALITO

In a recent email to the editors (Feb. 2, 2009), Stan Barberich, President of the Sausalito FHA, indicated that “there has been a great deal of spalling experienced on many of the unprotected hulls” in their community. What is spalling? Spalling is a breakdown of the concrete surface, such as the flaking or pitting that can occur when exposed to stresses such as saltwater or sunlight. Spalling in Sausalito has ranged from a few square inches, to one case where a 250 lb chunk of concrete fell from a home into the bay!! Mr. Barberich says that lots of folks have also experienced cracking, mostly on the sunny side of the barge where the greatest expansion and contraction occurs. He says that “sadly”, the contractors who built most of our hulls in the 80s and 90s did not specify a “concrete mix with the appropriate additives that would have made the hulls 100% watertight from the beginning.” Yikes!

USING ZINC ANODES – THE SAUSALITO EXPERIENCE

In the May/June 2008 issue of “Floating Times” which is published by the Sausalito Floating Homes Assoc. (FHA), floating home resident and FHA Director-at-Large, Henry Baer in an article entitled “Cathode Protection”, wrote about using zinc anodes on concrete hulls to prevent corrosion of rebar. He recounts how several years ago, he and some neighbors installed 100 lbs of zincs on their hulls that all dissolved in less than 3 years. Thinking that this was a serious problem, Mr. Baer contacted several companies to find out what was happening. The company that was most helpful and eventually hired by the Sausalito FHA as a consultant on this matter, was Corpro of San Leandro. Corpro is an international corrosion-consulting firm that provides galvanic corrosion deterrent systems for BART, offshore drilling platforms, bridges, etc. Corpro's engineers suggested a survey to determine the amount of stray current in the Sausalito marina's waters and possibly locate the cause. This would then lead to a recommendation for the best type of protection. The Corpro engineers were assisted by Ted Eitelbuss who has provided zinc anode protection for Sausalito's floating homes in the past.

In a follow-up article in the July-August 2008 issue of “Floating Times”, Stan

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Barberich described the results. Corpro found that the passive protection method was working well on the concrete hulls that already had zincs installed. This was determined “by accurately measuring the current flow through the rebar and anodes” and “applying standard engineering formulae”. For Sausalito, this means that the more expensive and extensive “impressed current method” is not needed. Interestingly, Corpro also found no stray electrical currents flowing in the adjacent waters.

As to the speedy disappearance of the zincs, Corpro determined that **aluminum anodes** (correct size and number dependent on hull size) would last longer and provide the same protection as zinc anodes – all at a lower cost!

Think you might want to install passive anode protection? In our next issue, we will cover installation methods, and hopefully include pictures from the Sausalito community.

XYPEX AND OTHER PROTECTION METHODS

Do we really need to install anodes, or are there other methods we can use to protect our concrete hulls? During conversations with Phil Freitas, we learned that Phil made sure the barges built under his supervision in Vallejo were treated with a product called **Xypex** to protect against leaks. What is Xypex? According to houseboatrepair.info, Xypex is a “non-toxic, chemical treatment for waterproofing and protection of concrete.” Xypex generates a “non-soluble crystalline formation deep within the pores and capillary tracts of the concrete that permanently seals against penetration by water and aggressive chemicals from any direction.” Miraculous, no? Xypex is permanent and prevents the intrusion of chemicals, water, etc., protecting concrete and rebar from deterioration and oxidation. It seals hairline cracks up to 1/64 inch. It is permanent and reactivates whenever water is present.

Phil says he applied Xypex to a badly leaking concrete basement at Mountain View Cemetery and all leaking stopped. The editors were extremely happy to learn that our concrete hull at E5 was one of those treated with Xypex when it was constructed in Vallejo. Until talking with Phil, we had no idea our hull had this protection. Sure enough, when we inspected exposed interior portions of our hull, we could see a coating or slurry on the concrete that Phil says is the Xypex. In addition to Xypex, **Marine Grade underwater epoxy** can also be used to repair and seal exterior cracks in concrete.

WHAT TO DO?

Most of us have concrete hulls that are still fairly young and in good repair. It seems the best thing to do now is to find out about how our hulls were built and what protections may have been included (quality of concrete, Xypex, etc.). If you see some early stages of spalling or corrosion, you may want to form an action plan. We know our neighbor, Bill Cox, is addressing this now and will share what he learns in future issues. But we can still feel very safe in our concrete barges and know they will last many years to come.

Editors' Note: We would like to thank the [Sausalito Floating Home Association](#) and [Mr. Stan Barberich](#), President, for much of the information provided in this article, and for permission to quote from the “Floating Times”. We also thank [Phil Freitas](#), for his invaluable input, [Bill Cox](#) for sharing his corrosion concerns, and various other online sources as cited above. We encourage Barnhill residents who may have additional knowledge or information about this topic, to please send us email at floatinghouse@sbcglobal.net.]

Photo Gallery



This aerial shot of Barnhill Marina and vicinity was taken recently by Bob Knop while touring the Bay in a small plane with his son. Nice work, Bob!



While visiting Victoria, British Columbia last Fall, Bill White chanced upon the floating home community and took this shot. The large building in the background is a hotel.



Closer view of some of the floating homes in Victoria, B.C. Photo by Bill White.

The Party Page



Beth Remenap hosted an open house at her home last Fall to celebrate the completion of her new hull. Lots of neighbors joined in the festivities and had a great time! **Above left:** Folks congregate on the "party barge" which was moved over to Beth's for the occasion. Folks also met up on the deck of the Schaff house next door. **Above right:** Beth invited her home's original builders: Richard Boland (far right), Lenny Farrauto (center) to the party. Boland and Farrauto built the majority of the homes here in the 60s and 70s.



MERRY CHRISTMAS! Many thanks to **Sandy Priviett and Steve Todar** who hosted an open house holiday party in December at their lovely home. There was a great turnout, delicious food and all were in a festive mood!
Clockwise from top left: Peg Fraga and Mr. Barnhill; Jeanne Godchaux and Maggie Clendennin; Diane Puntenney, Bill Cox and Bill White; Barry Dauphinee and Tony Fraga. **ALL PIX BY DEBBY MEYER!** More next page...





More holiday party pix! **Above, top to bottom:** Vern Beckwith and Beth Remenap; Sally Jessie, Barney and Keith Killgore; Bill Cox and Diane White. **Right, top to bottom:** Floyd Hunter's son, Gary Hunter; Roberta Bobba; Bob Schaff and Bill White. Photos by Debby Meyer.

Last Ride of the Valkyrie



Larry Dalrymple of Boat Service Company tows away the old derelict Valkyrie from E dock.



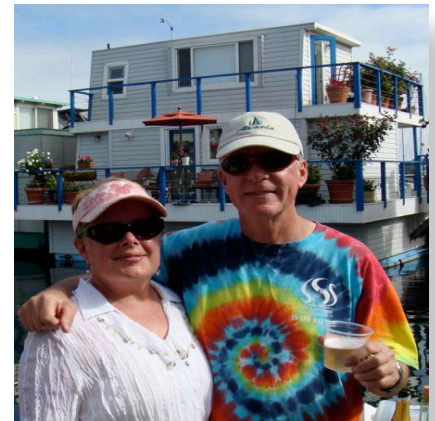
The new coastal scenery along E dock! A serene and uncluttered view. Hooray!

A milestone was finally achieved on E dock in February when an old sailboat called "Valkyrie" was finally towed away for good. The Valkyrie had been abandoned for many years and became a terrible eyesore. Many thanks to Mr. Barnhill and the residents of D and E dock who contributed the funds that made this project possible - you know who you are!!



Message from the Editors

Hello, neighbors! You may - or may not - have noticed that there have been fewer issues of the newsletter during the last year or so. We're running out of steam, I'm afraid. It's become harder and harder to summon up the energy and time to produce the newsletter, not to mention the costs and also maintaining the web site. However we still care deeply about this effort and will persevere. Future issues will be less frequent. We will continue to manage the web site, alamedafloatinghomes.org. All past issues of the newsletter are available there and are searchable via Google. The web site also continues to produce advertising revenue for the AFHA coffers, as the newsletter has in the past.



We want to thank our past contributors: Bob Schaff, Bill Cox, Beth Remenap, Mayumi Stroy and Angela McIntyre for their outstanding articles. And to our photographers: Bob Knop, Mayumi Stroy, Debby Meyer and Art Lenhardt. Many thanks to Peg Fraga and Brian Godchaux for their artistic contributions. And our deepest gratitude to everyone else who contributed, either with kind words, ideas, snapshots or financial donations - you're the best!

LELA AND LIZ GO LIVE

Our neighbors, Lela Bryan Knox (C5) and Liz Williams (D14) recently teamed up to join the world of online "radio" broadcasting! Lela and Liz are developing programs in their areas of expertise for blogtalkradio.com, a web site that opens up the world of "talk radio" to everyday citizens. Lela has already run a test show with Liz assisting at the switchboard as folks called in to listen and participate. Liz plans to start up a series on team collaboration, and Lela has already scheduled some programs on nicotine addiction and achieving personal goals.



Lela will be broadcasting on blogtalkradio.com!

Lela will be broadcasting on Sundays at 10 AM with a program to support smokers who are ready to kick the habit and to celebrate those who have already quit. She will also be hosting a program called "Smoresupport" on Tuesdays at 10 AM where callers will be talking about their dreams and how to achieve them.

If you would like more information about blogtalkradio.com, or would like to be a guest on Lela's show, send her an email at lalab@earthlink.net, or call her at 510-523-1933. Or simply go to blogtalkradio.com and search for "Lela Bryan."

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