

A Particular Point of View

People Who Live on Boats

By Robert W. Hall

The situation in our harbors with regard to boat owners who live aboard is a classic, emotional issue, where the taxpayers have been misled over the years. This session of the Legislature may be different; we shall see.

On one side are a group of squatters:

1. Who happen to own boats,
2. Who flush their raw sewage in the public rights of way, and thereby threaten our recreational waters.
3. Who pay no real property taxes where they live.
4. Who have taken advantage of a weak Department of Transportation administration to remain and grow in numbers in our harbors.
5. Who have taken advantage and made mockery of the original legislative intent in appropriating money for harbors. The original purpose was to accommodate only recreational or fishing boats under a law that specifically prohibits boats whose principal use is habitation. (Recent testimony by squatters criticizing harbor administration is downright humorous. All harbor

Small boat harbors should be for recreational or fishing craft and not for people who live aboard, Robert W. Hall argues. He is a businessman and yachtsman.

regulations are based on State law. If State law is ever enforced, those living in our harbors would cease to live there.)

6. Who have found a way to circumvent our Land Use, Zoning, and Health Department laws, many of which were written specifically to discourage squatting.

7. Who pay ridiculously low fees for facilities and services that are provided at our harbors, and finally,

8. Who sink the money they save into yachts, many of which are quite expensive. (In the case of the leader of the group, the replacement value of his yacht is \$200,000, and he pays \$65 a month for the privilege of mooring in the harbor.) The taxpayers bear most of the present burden. The squatters do not pay their fair share.

ON THE OTHER side of the issue are the following groups:

1. A loosely knit group of environmentalists who have watched the number of squatters in our harbors grow. The environmentalists are concerned about the raw sewage problem and the lack of sewage facilities in our harbors.

2. More than one thousand recreational and fishing boat owners who are on the waiting list for a slip in our harbors.



Robert W. Hall

3. A small but growing number of taxpayers who are beginning to realize just how badly they are being taken by a weak legislative mandate, a weak harbor administration that has resulted directly from the weak legislative mandate, and a lack of awareness on the part of the State Administration that Land Use, Zoning, and Health Department laws are also involved in this issue.

This is particularly true now that the squatters have testified before the Legislature that their boats are not just boats, but homes. They have testified that they have a constitutional right to be there. If their boats are homes, it is time the administra-

tion got the other three agencies into the act.

HB 1499 WAS passed by the House on to the Senate. The bill seeks to place a moratorium on squatters in order to await a Legislative Auditor's report due during the 1976 session.

The Democratic freshmen in the House who supported this bill should be commended. To the 15 Republicans who voted as a bloc against this bill, we only hope they will belatedly realize they had some incredibly poor information on HB 1499. We hope that, in hindsight, they will side with the broader interests of the community during the 1976 session of the Legislature.

Last, but not least, if squatters ever succeed in remaining in our harbors, just imagine the legal precedent that will be established. Once the Ala Wai and Keehi Harbors fill up, look out Hawaii Kai! Why wouldn't these precedents also apply to vans and campers? Will our public parks, golf courses, and airports remain safe if a van or camper suddenly no longer becomes a van or camper, but a home?

We have no quarrel with those who defend the rights of squatters in our harbors as long as they have no objection to squatters in front of their homes or located in their recreational areas. If they have no objection to raw sewage in the public rights of way, where they live or play, then we will not quarrel with them. If, on the other hand, they would prefer to re-think their position, then we would welcome them with us, against raw sewage in our harbors.

Today in History

By the Associated Press

TODAY IS Tuesday, March 18, the 77th day of 1975. There are 288 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT in history:

In 1776, during the American Revolution, George Washington's troops occupied Boston after evacuation of the British.

ON THIS DATE—

In 1837, Grover Cleveland, who served as the 22nd and the 24th U.S. President, was born in Caldwell, N.J.

In 1902, in Milan, Italy, Enrico Caruso recorded ten opera arias for the Gramophone Co., becoming one of the first artists to recognize the phonograph as an acceptable medium for musicians.

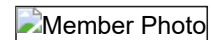
In 1937, more than 400 persons, mostly children, were killed in a gas explosion in a school in New London, Tex.

In 1962, a cease-fire in the Algerian war was signed by French and Algerian rebel delegations in Evian-les-Baines, France.

ONE YEAR AGO: Middle East oil-producing states, except Libya and Syria, ended their oil embargo against the United States.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS: Retired Cardinal Lawrence Shehan of Baltimore is 77. Composer Alan Hovhaness is 64.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY: Customs may not be as wise as laws, but they are always more popular — Benjamin Disraeli, British prime minister, 1804-1881.



Clipped By:
tomanusewicz
Sat, Nov 5, 2022