

Houseboats: Considered water-dependent, governed by different rules

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executed due to public pressure, leading to environmental and zoning regulations.

Both Oregon and Washington state own all the land (with limited exceptions) under all navigable waters, and so are charged by each state’s governments with managing the lands and waters above for citizens’ well-being. Both the states must also abide by federal regulations such as shoreline management plans.

Both states lease lands for moorage and have extensive regulations governing those leases. Though there are places where water-borne residences can only be reached by water, those are rare, so inevitably they must be tied to land that is not part of the lease and anchored with pilings and gangways to access the homes.

Neither state currently issues new leases for floating homes outside established marinas. Federal, state, county and municipal agencies have regulations regarding floating homes that include location, sanitation, zoning and building issues. Boathouses are considered water-dependent structures and are governed by different rules.

In 2018, the Oregon Department of State Lands managed 2.6 million acres with 4,854 active leases, according to Ali Ryan Hansen, the department’s communications manager. The land generated just over \$3.1 million in revenue. Not all of these properties were floating homes. Despite the demand for floating homes remaining strong, there’s only been a small change in floating home leases.

Rising costs

Living aboard a boat/yacht/tug/schooner is a life not cut out for many, but for some there is no other way to live. It’s a dreamer’s life for sure, since it is never as easy or romantic as it has been portrayed. Mariners in Northwest waters are guaranteed use of navigable waters for water-dependent uses but the duration of those uses is not unlimited.

If a vessel owner intends to moor their craft for more than 14 days over state lands, they must secure a permit and follow the lease process or secure moorage in an established marina. There has been much debate between government land managers and shoreline

property owners about “free boating.”

“Our marinas currently have a moratorium on new liveaboards” said Jane Sweet, harbormaster for the City of Warrenton. “Warrenton’s marinas were designed for servicing the commercial and sport fleets, not as living facilities.”

The infrastructure costs for providing service support to these vessels has risen and the cost of liability is also high. That being said, commercial marinas still depend on liveaboards as a main source of income. Both commercial and municipal marinas still have some longtime liveboard tenants, but the number is decreasing.

Another aspect of marina managers’ reluctance to grant new liveboard arrangements is the growing

problem of derelict vessels. While boats are large enough to live on for ages, their costs are expensive to maintain. Hauling charges and transportation costs only add to hard-to-manage fees.

Some owners give up, leaving an unsellable potential floating hazard for the marina to manage. The boat can easily become a ghost ship, morphing from someone’s dream to someone

else’s nightmare. Nearly all marinas are unequipped to do vessel deconstruction, leaving the abandoned ships to do away slowly.

Local action

In view of this situation, the Port of Ilwaco has embarked on a plan to create a vessel deconstruction

facility on port-owned property. A development grant has been secured and a call was made for bids in late 2019. This project will be designed to safely and ecologically deconstruct vessels and transport the hazardous wastes to proper disposal facilities. Plans are to accept boats from all parts of the

region.

“All the bids we received were quite a bit higher than we had planned, so we are revising the plans and seeking other funding to complete the project,” said Ilwaco Port Manager Guy Glenn.

It is heartening to learn that these and other plans are in place to help provide for a future generation to enjoy river living here on the Columbia. River life has a rich and varied history and culture in the Northwest and deserves preserving along with other things that help make us who we are.

Ron Baldwin is a musician, photographer and writer living in Chinook, Washington.

Houseboats in Portland.

Ron Baldwin

LIVING ABOARD A BOAT/YACHT/TUG/SCHOONER IS A LIFE NOT CUT OUT FOR MANY, BUT FOR SOME THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO LIVE.

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Eric Friedman, M.D., is a board-certified general surgeon. He received his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He completed his residency at Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine. Dr. Friedman was born and raised in Philadelphia and in his free time enjoys hiking and traveling.

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Manfred P. Ritter, M.D., received his medical degree from Ludwig-Maximilian-University of Munich, in Germany. He completed his internship and residency at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He also completed a fellowship in esophageal/gastric surgery and colorectal surgery at the same school. Dr. Ritter is board certified and is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

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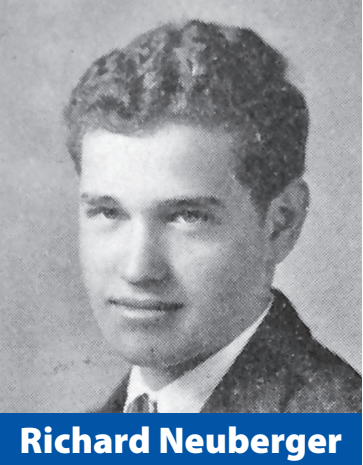
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Richard Neuberger of Oregon: A man ahead of his time



When Neuberger died at the age of 47 in 1960, he was one of the most consequential Oregonians of the first half of the Twentieth Century. Through his writing and political career, he moved the center of Oregon politics from conservative to liberal. He was the first Democrat in 40 years Oregon elected to the U.S. Senate. He was the second Jew elected to the U.S. Senate.

As one of America’s most prolific freelance writers, Neuberger gave voice to conservation values. As Senator, he was one of three original authors of the National Wilderness Act. He also moved the Highway Beautification Act through the Senate.

After decades of research, Forrester has authored a chapter on Neuberger for Eminent Oregonians: Five Who Matter, which will be published in early 2021. Subsequently, he will author a full Neuberger biography.

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