

Seattle City Clerk's Office

Comptroller File

147040

NOTICE: IF THE DOCUMENT IN THIS FRAME IS LESS CLEAR THAN THIS NOTICE  
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FILE NO. 147040

COMMUNICATION OF

Kenneth Gilbert relating to the danger of the use of canoes in Lake Washington.

9-4-35 27165  
12-3-35 1571  
12-10-35 11001

MAY 13 1935

DRYSS

H. W. CARROLL

CITY CONTROLLER AND EX-OFFICIO CITY CLERK

DEPUTY

ACTION OF THE COUNCIL

REFERRED

MAY 13 1935

REFERRED

ORDERED

ORDERED

FOR ORD.

TO

PUBLIC SAFETY

TO

REPORT ADOPTED

REPORT ADOPTED

C. B.

ORD.

DISPOSITION

ON FILE

APR 10 1939

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. President:

Your Public Safety Committee

to which was referred the within Communication

would respectfully report that we have considered the same and respectfully recommend that

it be placed on file

*H. W. Carroll*  
CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN

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May 13th, 1936.

Hon. A. C. Van Soelen,  
Corporation Counsel,  
City of Seattle.

Dear Sir:

At the direction of the Public Safety Committee I am transmitting to you herewith a report prepared by a special committee relating to the safety of small water craft in Seattle Harbor, with the request that you prepare a proper ordinance to put into effect the recommendations contained in said report.

It is the desire of the Committee that the regulations to be included in the ordinance shall apply, if possible, to small water craft owned by persons living outside of the limits of the City but operated within the jurisdiction of the City.

The Committee suggested that further information as to the details of the proposed regulations could be obtained from Mr. Paul Sweeney, Acting Port Warden.

Please return the report of the special committee to the Public Safety Committee when it has served your purpose.

Very truly yours,

Austin E. Griffiths, Chairman,  
Public Safety Committee.

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2-1-12-30-35  
**Canoe Upsets; 4  
Escape Death**

**Accident Occurs as  
Child Tries to  
Change Seat**

Thrown into the chilly waters of Lake Washington yesterday when their canoe upset, R. E. Bernasconi, secretary-treasurer of a downtown department store, and his wife and two children narrowly escaped drowning.

Bernasconi's daughter, Daryl, five, was rescued by Raemore Hasselo, general plant supervisor for the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, who plunged into the water in heavy clothing, swam 100 yards to the overturned canoe and pulled her ashore. The other three members of the family swam ashore unassisted.

Taking advantage of the warm afternoon Bernasconi and his wife, Roberts, and their two children, Daryl and Robert, ten, had paddled from their home at 1224 Knox Pl. to the Hasselo home near by. Leaving, they had gone about 100 yards when Daryl attempted to change seats, upsetting the canoe. Robert was trapped under the overturned boat but managed to make his way clear and swim to

the waters of Lake Washington are icy. According to the clipping, the 5-year-old baby was left on the capsized canoe while the others swam ashore. The boy, 10 years old, was temporarily trapped underneath the overturned craft. If it had not been for the heroism of a telephone company employe, who swam, fully clothed, 100 yards to the overturned canoe, the baby probably would have succumbed. It is a miracle that all were not drowned.

It is my opinion that if it were not for the fools and criminals in this world, we could scrap 99% of our laws. Apparently, however, we MUST have measures to protect the innocent from the foolhardy and thoughtless just as much as we must protect law-abiding citizens from criminals. It is the duty of your committee to avoid, so far as it is possible, the recurrence of such an accident as described above.

With best personal wishes.

Sincerely,

Austin E. Griffiths,  
City Council,  
Seattle, Wash.

KENNETH GILBERT.

206 The Commodore,  
4005 15th Avenue Northeast,  
Seattle, Wash.,  
December 30, 1935.

Mr. Griffiths:

Thank you for your letter concerning the safety measure your committee is studying, regarding canoes and other craft. I am gratified that you saw at once the need for action, and that the city council has taken an active part in it.

I herewith enclosed a clipping from this morning's P-I, which sets out the very point I made in my letter. The clipping, as you will note, describes two adults and two children, the latter a baby 5 years old, nearly drowned when their canoe capsized.

I shall pass over any personal opinion I may have of a father who takes his wife and children into a canoe in mid-winter,

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"Just as we have rights we also have obligations as students and as citizens."  
"I am not the only one who..."

206 The Commodore,  
4005 15th Avenue Northeast,  
Seattle, Wash.,  
December 30, 1935.

Dear Judge Griffiths:

Thank you for your letter concerning the safety measure which your committee is studying, regarding canoes and other small craft. I am gratified that you saw at once the need of such action, and that the city council has taken an active interest in it.

Herewith enclosed a clipping from this morning's P-1, which bears out the very point I made in my letter. The clipping, as you will note, describes two adults and two children, one of the latter a baby 5 years old, nearly drowned when their canoe capsized.

I shall pass over any personal opinion I may have of a father who would take his wife and children into a canoe in mid-winter, when the waters of Lake Washington are icy. According to the clipping, the 5-year-old baby was left on the capsized canoe while the others swam ashore. The boy, 10 years old, was temporarily trapped underneath the overturned craft. If it had not been for the heroism of a telephone company employe, who swam, fully clothed, 100 yards to the overturned canoe, the baby probably would have succumbed. It is a miracle that all were not drowned.

It is my opinion that if it were not for the fools and criminals in this world, we could scrap 99% of our laws. Apparently, however, we MUST have measures to protect the innocent from the foolhardy and thoughtless just as much as we must protect law-abiding citizens from criminals. It is the duty of your committee to avoid, so far as it is possible, the recurrence of such an accident as described above.

With best personal wishes.

Sincerely,

Austin E. Griffiths,  
City Council,  
Seattle, Wash.

KENNETH GILBERT.

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# Small Boats Will Be Regulated


Preliminary steps for regulation of the operation of small pleasure craft, including canoes, rafts and "flatties," as a life protection matter, were taken by the city council public safety committee yesterday.

The action grew out of a letter by Kenneth G. Gilbert pointing out that many lives are sacrificed annually in canoe accidents due to lack of understanding of the proper handling of the craft.

Upon recommendation of Paul Sweeney, acting port warden, the council committee appointed a special committee to prepare proper regulations, as follows:

George E. Brown, private boathouse operator; George A. Leis, manager of the Associated Students' boathouse at the University of Washington; C. Fred Harley of the Seattle Yacht Club; J. L. Patton of the Queen City Yacht Club; Lou Evans of the park department; a representative of the Parent-Teacher Associations, and a member of the corporation counsel's staff.

Dec. 20, 1935

George E. Brown,   
 1525 Park Boathouse,  
 Seattle, Wash.

Mr. Brown:

The Public Safety Committee of the City Council is considering the enactment of measures regulating the use of canoes and small boats. The following persons have been appointed a committee for this purpose:

Mrs. Walter R. Power, of the P.T.A.  
 4333 - 1st Ave. N.E.

George E. Leis, Mgr. Associated Students Boathouse,  
 University of Washington.

C. Fred Harley, President Flattie Assn., Seattle  
 Yacht Club

J. L. Patton, Commodore Queen City Yacht Club,

Lou Evans, Seattle Park Department.

Paul Sweeney, Acting Port Warden.

*accepted by phone 1/4/36*

*accepted by phone 1/4-36*

*accepted*

*accepted - Hubert Clark  
 1401 E. Middlelake Ave  
 ME-9730*

*accepted*

*accepted*

I am writing to ask you if you will consent to act as a member of this committee. We believe your interest and work will be of great value. Will you kindly let me know, at your earliest convenience, whether or not it will be possible for you to act on such committee? Also, it would please the Public Safety Committee if you would come together quickly and choose your own presiding officer.

Very sincerely yours,

Austin E. Griffiths,  
 Chm. Public Safety Com.

AP

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## Brown's Pioneer Boat House

Geo. E. Brown, Prop.

1800 43rd Ave., No.

Seattle

Phone E. 3782

Washington

Dec 27. 1935

Ca 9833

Austin C. Griffiths

Dear Sir,-

In reply to  
your letter of Dec. 20. I will be glad  
to serve on committee and help in  
anyway possible.

Any date you may set for a meeting  
will meet with my approval.

Sincerely  
Geo E. Brown

Evinrude  
Motors  
Gasoline and  
Oils  
Marine Ways  
Columbia  
Batteries  
Launches  
Canoes  
Rowboats  
Evinrude  
Boats  
For Rent  
and  
For Sale

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C. F. HARLEY  
PRESIDENT

# EVERGREEN CEMETERY CO. OF SEATTLE

OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF  
EVERGREEN MEMORIAL PARK - WASHHELL CEMETERY  
PACIFIC LUTHERAN CEMETERY - WASHHELL MONUMENT WORKS  
WASHHELL MAUSOLEUM - ROSE HILL MAUSOLEUM

1111 AURORA AVENUE

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

December 23, 1935

Mr. Austin E. Griffiths, Chairman  
Public Safety Committee,  
Legislative Department,  
City of Seattle,  
County-city Building,  
Seattle

Dear Mr. Griffiths:

I shall be pleased to serve on the Committee considering the enactment of measures regulating the use of canoes and small boats. The group which have accepted undoubtedly will be able to offer practical suggestions in this matter but I would suggest that the Public Safety Committee should take the initiative in setting the time and place for us to meet and that the particular situations which have brought the matter of such regulations to your attention should be presented at that time. I will be out of town from January 1st to 6th. Any other time would be quite acceptable to me.

Very truly yours,

C. Frederick Harley

CFH-s

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# QUEEN CITY YACHT CLUB

2715 Fairview Ave. No.  
SEATTLE  
WASHINGTON

★★★

Telephone: CApitol 9602

★★★

Dec. 24th 1935.

Mr. Austin E. Griffiths, Chairman,  
Public Safety Committee,  
City of Seattle,  
County City Bldg.  
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Mr. Griffiths:

The writer has your letter of the 20th in regard to the appointment of a member of the Queen City Yacht Club, to act on your committee in drafting regulations for the use of canoes and small boats.

Mr. Herbert Clark, ~~Manager~~ of the University Moorings, 1401 East Northlake, Phone ME 9730, a member of the Queen City Yacht Club, has consented to represent us on your committee. Mr. Clark is in daily contact with the problems your committee will have to solve and is therefore, in a position to give you valuable assistance. I know you will find him a willing, conscientious and able worker.

If you will contact Mr. Clark direct, I am assured that he will be ready to meet with your committee at any time or place you may specify.

Assuring you that the Queen City Yacht Club is in thorough accord with any movement to make small boats more safe and boating more pleasant, I remain,

Very truly yours,

*J. L. Patton*  
J. L. Patton, Commodore,  
QUEEN CITY YACHT CLUB.

JLP:AA

cc- Herbert Clark.

*Accepted appointment by phone 12/26/35. JF.*

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The City of Seattle  
Washington  
Department of Parks

Dec. 24, 1935

Mr. Austin E. Griffiths  
Chairman Public Safety Committee  
City Council  
Seattle

Dear Sir:

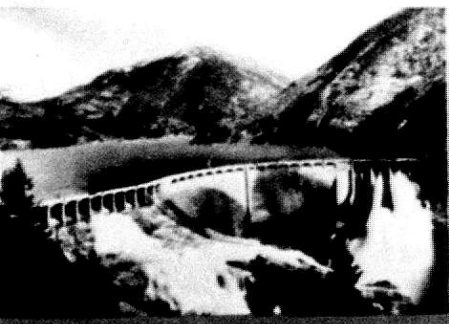
In reply to your recent letter I shall be very glad to serve on the committee to promote regulations concerning the use of canoes and small boats.

I regret the delay in answering your letter, but this was unavoidable as I was away from my office for several days.

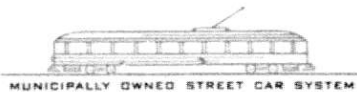
Sincerely,  
*Lou Evans*  
LOU EVANS

LE H

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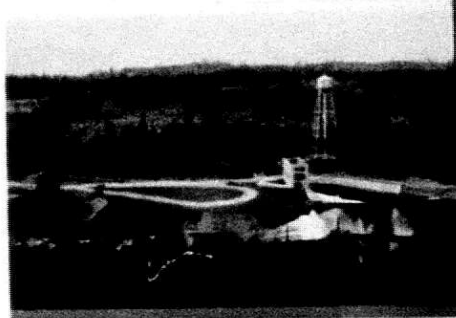
DIABLO DAM OF SEATTLE'S MUNICIPALLY OWNED LIGHT AND POWER SYSTEM



THE  
*City of Seattle*

CHARLES L. SMITH, MAYOR

HARBOR DEPARTMENT



SOURCE OF SEATTLE'S MUNICIPALLY OWNED WATER SUPPLY

December 23, 1935.

Mr. Austin E. Griffiths,  
Chairman, Public Safety Committee,  
City Council,  
Seattle, Washington.

Dear Sir:

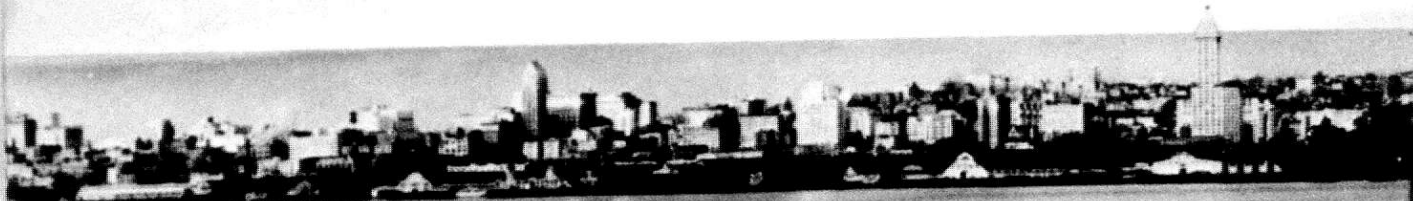
Replying to your letter of December 20,  
wish to say that I shall be pleased to act as a  
member of the committee appointed to consider the  
enactment of measures regulating the use of canoes  
and small boats and to co-operate in every way pos-  
sible.

Very truly yours,

*Paul L. Sweeney*

Paul L. Sweeney,  
Acting Port Warden.

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*Gateway to Alaska*

*Shortest Route to Orient*

Dec. 18, 1935

Mr. Kenneth Gilbert,  
Box 516,  
Issaquah, Wash.

Dear Sir:

Some time ago you sent a communication to the City Council relating to the danger of the use of canoes and small boats in Lake Washington.

The Public Safety Committee has had this matter under consideration, and has appointed a committee of experienced boat operators to assist in the preparation of regulations to be enacted in this connection.

We hope that the City Council may be able to enact some useful legislation on this subject.

Very truly yours,

Austin E. Griffiths,  
Chm. Public Safety Com.

AP

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May 28, 1935

Mr. Paul L. Sweeney,  
Actg. Port Warden,  
City of Seattle.

Dear Sir:

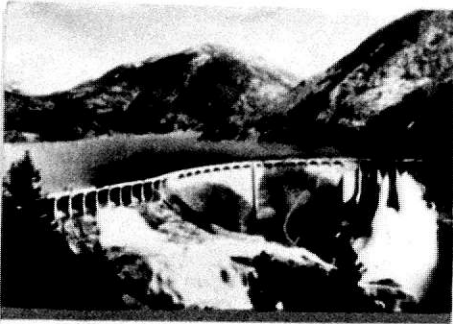
Referring to your communication of May 23, 1935, replying to the communication of Mr. Kenneth Gilbert (File No. 147040) relating to the danger of the use of canoes on Lake Washington, please be advised that this matter was considered by the Public Safety Committee at its meeting held this morning, and the committee requested that you prepare and submit to the committee such regulations as, in your opinion, would be advisable.

Very truly yours,

David Levine,  
Chm. Public Safety Com.

MHS: AP

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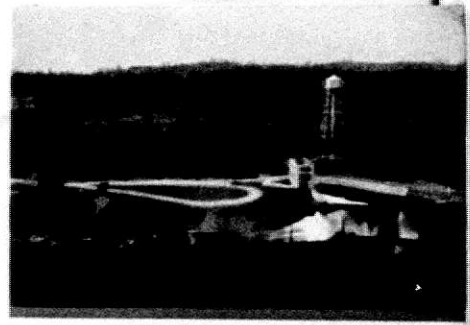
DIABLO DAM OF SEATTLE'S MUNICIPALLY OWNED LIGHT AND POWER SYSTEM



THE  
*City of Seattle*

CHARLES L. SMITH, MAYOR

HARBOR DEPARTMENT



SOURCE OF SEATTLE'S MUNICIPALLY OWNED WATER SUPPLY

May 23, 1935.

City Council,  
County-City Bldg,  
Seattle, Washington.

Gentlemen:

Referring to communication of Kenneth Gilbert, relating to the danger of the use of canoes in Lake Washington (File 147,040) which was submitted to me for recommendation, I wish to advise you that I am very much in accord with Mr. Gilbert and have long been an advocate of more supervision and regulation of all small pleasure craft in our harbor. Undoubtedly many lives are placed in jeopardy and many persons are drowned because of the lack of suitable laws regulating the use of all small pleasure craft, both privately owned and those rented to the public.

I do not approve the methods suggested by Mr. Gilbert because of their inadequacy. As part of more complete regulations his suggestions might be very valuable but taken alone would, I believe, prove to be only an ineffective nuisance.

If your honorable body wishes to develop suitable regulations to govern the use of all small pleasure craft in our harbor, I would recommend the matter be referred to a committee.

The assistance of competent and interested parties would no doubt result in producing effective and beneficial regulations, with a minimum of obnoxious restrictions.

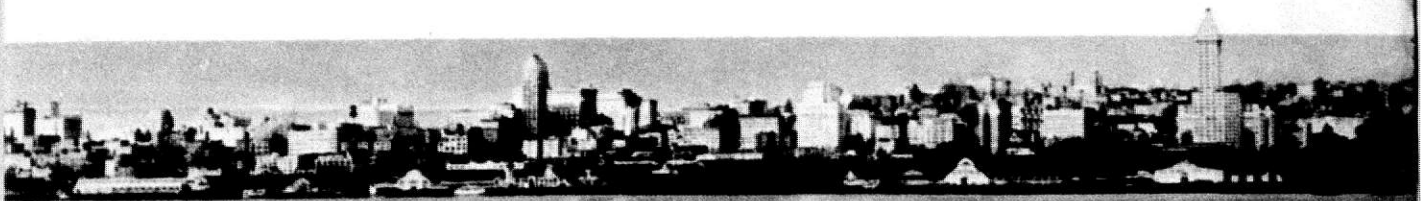
Respectfully yours,

*Paul L. Sweeney*

Paul L. Sweeney,  
Acting Port Warden.

PLS:M

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*Gateway to Alaska*

*Shortest Route to Orient*

BOX 816,  
Issaquah, Wash.,  
April 25, 1935.

*By Griffiths*

To the City Council -  
Dear Judge Griffiths:

*Relating to use or regulation  
of canoes*

Newspaper accounts of the near-drowning of three boys clinging to an overturned canoe off Mercer Island, are a forceful reminder of a matter which, apparently, has long been accepted as being inevitable as death and taxes---the canoe-menace. It is particularly pertinent now because summer is near, and canoeing will soon resume its seasonal popularity. I am calling this to your attention not alone because you are a member of a legislative body, but because of your national identification with recreational activities and your sympathetic interest in human welfare.

Canoeing is an art more difficult to master than driving an automobile. I know whereof I speak because I was literally "brought up" in a canoe, and taught proper handling of it by expert "whitewater men" of Northern Wisconsin. Hence the sight now of one of these frail, tricky craft being handled by an inexperienced dub gives me the same feeling of horror as would the sight of a maniac armed with a gun.

We license car-drivers and aviators, yet permit any blundering fool to take trusting companions out in a dangerous canoe, and drown them.

It is conceded that common-sense cannot be bestowed by legislation. But it is within the bounds of propriety, I assert, to take preventive measures where common-sense is lacking. I offer, therefore, a suggestion which seems to me to be wholly practical and, while by no means a cure-all, unquestionably would save human lives. That alone should make it sufficient.

A city ordinance should require that all boat-renting establishments be supplied with a printed form which must be signed by patrons renting canoes or other small craft. The text of this printed form should contain the following simple rules and cautioning reminders:

- All small boats---PARTICULARLY CANOES---are HIGHLY DANGEROUS unless managed properly.
- DO NOT change places in a canoe or small boat UNLESS ALONGSIDE A WHARF or in SHALLOW WATER.
- DO NOT permit the craft to get in the trough, or be struck on its beam---or side---by waves, especially those from the wake of larger or swiftly-moving vessels.
- DO NOT venture far from shore if the water is rough or the weather threatening.
- DO NOT overload your craft.
- I (or we) have read the above rules, understand them, and hereby AFFIRM that I (or we) CAN SWIM.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It would be necessary for the boathouse proprietor to have this form filled out in duplicate each time a boat is rented, one copy to be kept on file, the other to be retained by the person renting the

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boat, for further perusal. It must be signed---and presumably read---by ALL persons in the boat. Failure of the boathouse proprietor to fulfill these requirements would constitute a misdemeanor.

A further safeguard might well be that no canoe may be rented unless it had the proper width, or beam, to classify it as belonging to the "salt-water type." Such craft is about as safe as the average row-boat, because of their larger dimensions. Whether such a requirement would be regarded as too burdensome and discriminating, is a matter of personal opinion. All canoes, of course, should have air-chamber sponsons and be equipped with the proper number of life-preservers. No boat could be rented to an intoxicated person, or to a party with an intoxicated person in it. Possibly there are city ordinances which cover some of these points; I do not know.

The ordinance, of course, would not be applied to privately-owned craft.

Signing such a form would release the boathouse proprietor from a moral obligation, if not a financial one.

Its application would not eliminate all canoe-drownings. But if it resulted in no more than the saving of one life---whether that be the life of some thoughtless child, or that of a fool-hardy adult---its enactment would be justified. Its adoption in Seattle, and success, might pave the way to making it a state law. In any event, the mere calling of it to your attention relieves my own conscience. I hope that you find it practical enough to make something of it.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

*Kenneth Gilbert*

Austin E. Griffiths,  
Councilman,  
City-Hall.,  
Seattle, Wash.

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