

No Room at the Docks

Your solution to the Bay Area's housing woes isn't floating.

By Chris Roberts

Leave it to a Millennial to hack

San Francisco's housing crisis. Last month, *Business Insider* told the tale of a 23-year-old woman who solved the problem of finding an affordable apartment by finding a sailboat instead.

For \$350 a month — plus \$9,600 up front for the boat itself — recent Bay Area "newcomer" Sarah Carter sleeps aboard a 136-square foot sailboat moored at an unidentified local marina. The accommodations are spartan, she showers at shared facilities ashore (or at her job at an unidentified "e-commerce" firm, a 45-minute drive away), and her neighbors are "salty" — natch — but after five months of a life aquatic, she'll "break even" on the market rent she'd otherwise be paying, she told *BI*.

A novel solution, but one that's extremely hard to pursue. Live-aboards are rare in San Francisco, where only one of the city's recreational piers — the private marina at Pier 39 — allows people to live on their boats.

Sleeping at sea is legal elsewhere in the Bay Area, like in Emeryville, Berkeley, and Alameda, but live-aboards can account for no more than 10 percent of any marina's slips under Bay Conservation and Development Commission rules.

Carter did not immediately respond to an Instagram message seeking comment, but judging by her Instagram feed, she's tied up somewhere in the East Bay.

Further, in order to host live-aboards, a marina must have bathroom facilities on-shore, as well as a pump-out station to remove sewage. This rules out the Marina District marinas, as well as the boatyard by AT&T Park, although rumors abound of illicit live-aboards avoiding authorities at those docks.

At Pier 39 — where the tenants of 32 lucky boats have been sleeping and showering to the sounds of sea lions for decades

— demand has become so high that there's a three-to-five year waitlist for a slip to open up, Harbormaster Sheila Chandor told *SF Weekly*. "We get 20 calls a day from people looking to live aboard," she says, noting that turnover is random but can take years.

Predictably,

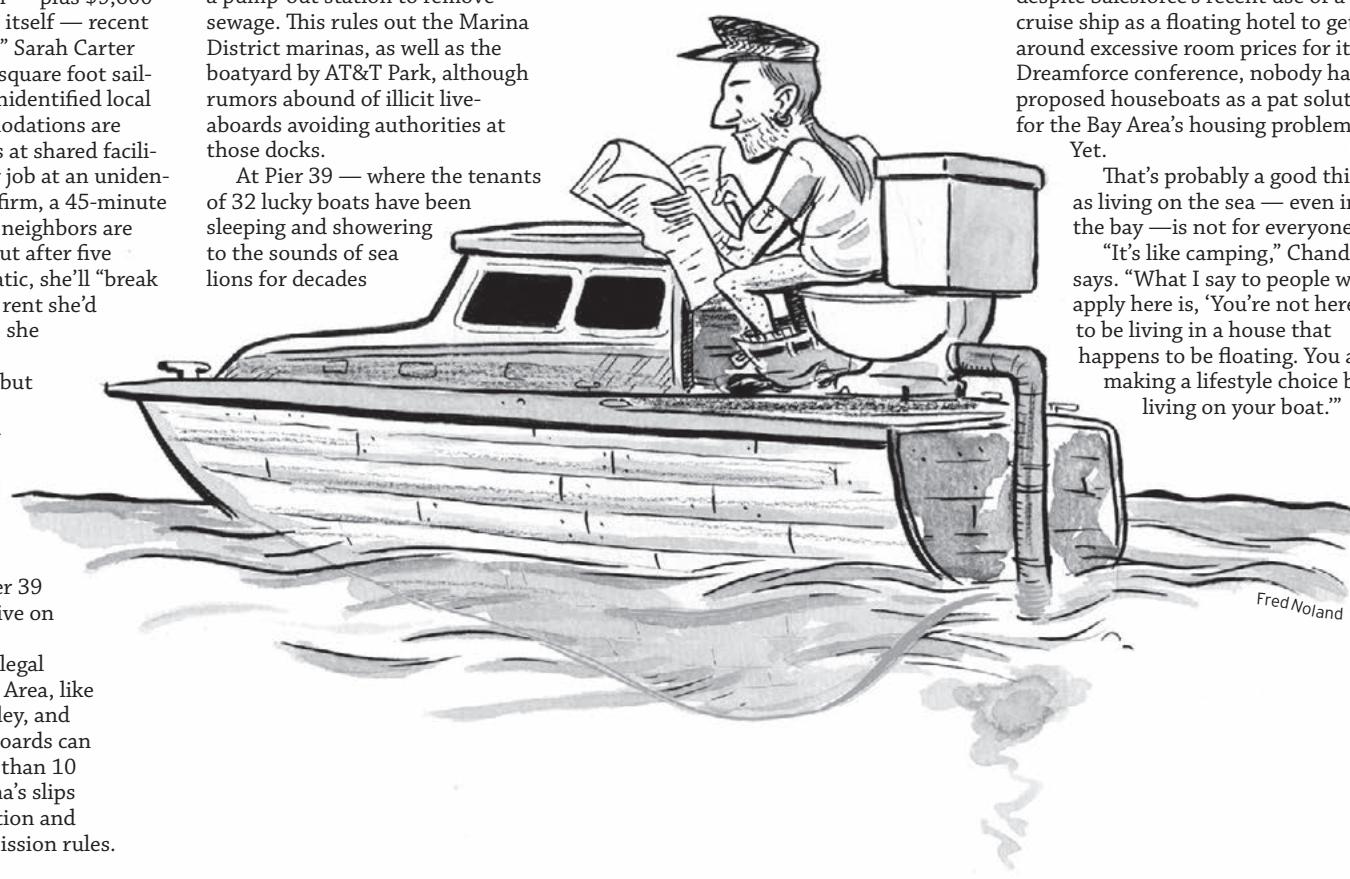
people trying to illegally live aboard their boats has also increased. "People are getting more desperate," says Chandor, who notes that the price of being caught is steep: exile from the marina and removal from the waitlist.

Limited supply and strict environmental protection rules mean that, despite Salesforce's recent use of a cruise ship as a floating hotel to get around excessive room prices for its Dreamforce conference, nobody has proposed houseboats as a pat solution for the Bay Area's housing problem.

Yet,

That's probably a good thing, as living on the sea — even in the bay — is not for everyone.

"It's like camping," Chandor says. "What I say to people who apply here is, 'You're not here to be living in a house that happens to be floating. You are making a lifestyle choice by living on your boat.'"



Rubber Soul Searching

Condom machines are coming to California prisons, but critics say safer sex means more dangerous inmates.

Orgasms are contraband in

California prisons, where sex between inmates, like visible masturbation, is illegal. But just as black market economies for cigarettes and drugs thrive behind bars, so does an illicit sex trade.

That doesn't mean STDs should also thrive.

In July, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in-

stalled condom dispensers in four state prisons: San Quentin, Corcoran, Mule Creek, and California Medical Facility in Vacaville. Three to four more institutions will follow each month over a five-year period.

The California Correctional Peace Officers Association, the prison guard union, predicts disaster.

"Condoms can be used to hide or transport drugs, be melted down into stabbing weapons, or be used as sling-shots to fire projectiles," reads a statement from Chuck Alexander, president of CCPOA. "They're also the perfect balloon for 'gassing' officers." ("Gassing" is when inmates throw urine, feces, or other bodily fluids.)

Joe Orlando, a spokesman for the CDCR, dismisses talk of weaponized

condoms. "It's been very uneventful," he says of the program, adding that as recently as two weeks ago, none of the four prisons reported any condom-related infractions.

This is partly because safeguards are built-in. Condom dispensers are made from the same bulletproof material as prison guards' riot shields (250 times stronger than glass), so tampering won't yield much. And since inmates are allowed three free condoms at a time, supply and demand isn't an issue. Disposal is a concern, albeit a minor one since prison sewage systems have accommodated flushed condoms without needing an upgrade.

"Uneventful" as it may be, the program is certainly busy: In the first six weeks, approximately 13,000 prisoners

accessed more than 21,000 condoms. It's also cheap. The CDCR spent about \$128,000 to launch the program — or \$1.17 per inmate. Compare that to the estimated \$1,000 per day to treat an inmate with Hepatitis C, the \$84,000 cost of a 12-week Hep C treatment course, or the \$24,000 to \$60,000 annual cost of HIV regimens.

"CDCR is covering all expenses itself and will continue to do so," Orlando notes.

Condoms for inmates may be a

novel — and controversial — idea in California, but the San Francisco County jail has had a similar program since 1989 (L.A. County has offered condoms since 2001). Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi says the new statewide initiative

"stops way short in not mandating this

See No Evil

The city's police union wants cops to review body camera footage before writing reports.

Radio is an unlikely front in the battle to win public opinion, but for the city's police union, an old-school PSA is still the preferred medium for rhetorical grandstanding.

As *SF Weekly* reported last week, the Police Officers Association recently took to local airwaves to let listeners know that racial profiling doesn't exist in San Francisco policing. "Politicians and the media need to stop vilifying our officers," declared the 44-second radio spot. (Arrest data, which reveals African-Americans comprise less than six percent of the city's population but more than 40 percent of those arrested, suggests otherwise.)

In their latest ad, the POA defends officers' right to review body camera footage prior to writing police reports.

Reviewing footage will sharpen officers' recall of tense situations, POA president Martin Halloran proclaims, and will also "show the professionalism, courage, and restraint [police] display when faced with inappropriate behavior and the lack of respect [they] often endure."

This practice is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Justice but opposed by the ACLU and police watchdog groups. In San Francisco, where Mayor Ed Lee has earmarked \$6.6 million to pay for police body cameras, debate over who gets to review footage, and when, is stalled. A working group of city agencies has yet to approve a draft body camera policy proposal.

Attorney Rebecca Young from the Public Defender's office proposed a compromise: let officers review footage only after they've filed reports.

As the draft policy enters its public comment phase, the POA's ads ring out like a clarion call: cameras don't lie, but truth is in the eye of the beholder. **JL**

practice for municipal jails," adding, "Almost all county jail systems in the state haven't opted in."

Condom-related violations at the jail have been "minimal," Mirkarimi says, and the health benefits far outweigh the vigilance required.

California doesn't track all STDs among inmates, but according to the CDCR, 987 inmates currently have HIV, while 9,329 inmates tested positive for Hepatitis C (which isn't always sexually transmitted) in the most recent fiscal year.

"HIV is far more likely to be spread by dirty needles in prison, where drug use is common," the prison guards complain. "Will we be passing out clean needles next?"

Not a bad idea. **Jeremy Lybarger**