

FACT SHEET

LAURELHURST BEACH CLUB
(LBC)

The history of the discriminatory admission policy of the LBC is a long one. For nearly twenty years, Jewish residents and property owners in Laurelhurst have been denied membership in the Beach Club although all others who own property in the area seem to have been admitted.

1. The LBC is a non-profit social organization chartered March 21, 1923, with no capital stock. The LBC operates a beach property and club house. According to its by-laws, application for membership is open to all property owners in the area and the only constitutional restriction of membership concerns the number of families who can belong to the Club.

2. The right to membership in the LBC has been and still is being used as a selling point for homes in the area and most real estate ads in the daily papers include in their text "Beach Club Privileges" as one of the advantages.

3. Several Jewish families were original members of the LBC and remained members for many years. On June 17, 1939, a new, greatly improved physical structure was opened. Since that date, no Jewish person has been accepted for membership in the Club. One pre-1939 Jewish member still belongs to the LBC, although he is inactive.

4. A newspaper report of June 1939 states that two Jewish families were rejected for membership in the LBC by unanimous decision of the board. The story quotes officers and members of the board as affirming that Jews are barred from membership henceforth.

5. Since 1939, all Jewish residents and property owners in Laurelhurst who have applied for membership in the LBC have been rejected. Among those are the following:

- a) In July 1939, Mr. K. was denied membership. He protested in letters to the Seattle Post Intelligencer and to Merville McInnis, President of the LBC, as well as to other officers of the Club, without result. He asserted that he had been flatly told it was "the policy of the LBC to exclude any further Jewish members", and he was urged by LBC officers to move out of the neighborhood to avoid embarrassment.
- b) In 1959, a visiting professor at the University of Washington summer school, who rented in Laurelhurst, objected about the discriminatory practice at the LBC in a letter to the Seattle Times. When he refused to fill in "religion" in the LBC application form, he was denied membership.
- c) In July 1954, Mr. W., property owner in Laurelhurst and father of three young children, was denied admission to the Club.
- d) During that same summer, Mr. H's application also was rejected "with regret".
- e) On May 16, 1955, Mr. D., a Jewish property owner in Laurelhurst for the past 12 years, and father of two young boys, had his application for membership rejected. His application was made on September 21, 1954 and it took 8 months before he received his rejection.

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6. Over the years, efforts have been made by individuals and by community organizations to change this discriminatory policy of the Beach Club without results. In 1949, the Christian Friends for Racial Equality addressed a letter to the LBC urging them to reverse their undemocratic policy, and requesting that the discriminatory practice be called to the attention of the LBC members. No results followed from this letter.

Also, efforts have been made by dissatisfied members of the LBC to bring this matter up for discussion during the Annual Meetings of the Club, but without avail.

7. Over the years, complaints were received by the Anti-Defamation League particularly in regard to the harm done to the Jewish as well as to the non-Jewish children, both of whom were effected by the policy, as these children played together through the nine months of the school year, but during the summer were separated because of the discriminatory practices of the LBC.

In August 1955, Mr. Sam Tarshis, Chairman of the Regional Advisory Board of the Anti-Defamation League wrote a letter to Mr. Merville W. McInnis, President of the LBC, expressing ADL's concern over the discriminatory practice of the Club, and asking for a meeting with him and his Board. No response to this request was received from Mr. McInnis, and after some weeks, the director of the ADL office called him and was told that he had no intention of meeting with the ADL representatives, no intention to discuss the Club's policy with any one, and further, he indicated that the Club would continue its discriminatory policy.