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### Future (Re) Takes

by Russell Wooten

[Russell.Wooten@dhs.gov](mailto:Russell.Wooten@dhs.gov)

202-997-4328



The May-June 2003 issue of *The Futurist* featured an article by Annemarie Skjold titled, “Tomorrow’s Floating Homes: Part House, Part Offshore Rig.” Here is a short review of that article and an update.

#### Summary of Original Article

Europe faced enormous flooding the last few years. Its coastlines are diminishing as rivers rise. *Global Warming is – well that could certainly be another article in Future Takes! Here in the U.S. we face similar problems.*

Perhaps the answer is obvious. Family homes, student flats, offices, or an entire suburb floating and prepared for the advent of a drowning landscape. Imagine a three-story house that follows the sun during the day and gently rocks you to sleep as you float through the night.

The Netherlands has begun to rethink the traditional houseboat. Herman Hertzberger has designed an intelligent flotation system that is more house and less boat. Using the principal of offshore flotation rigging, he has mounted a steel-frame house onto a hexagon of industrial flotation pipes. The floating house can withstand the heaviest seas or flood and is almost unsinkable. It is positioned far enough from the shore to rise uninhibited with any dramatic change in water level, yet it is secured because it is moored. It utilizes solar energy and can rotate 90 degrees to follow the sun. Naturally the floating house is water-cooled.

The house itself is surprisingly spacious with 156 square meters or 1,679 square feet of floor space. The design offers a very livable combination of retreat and openness. Bedrooms on the entrance level are a quiet sanctuary of privacy. The middle floor is an airy and light living space with ceiling to floor windows. The top floor hosts a terrace and one large room that can be used as an additional bedroom or an office.

#### Update

The Netherlands' government is conscious of the rapidly changing climate and the constant need to look for new housing opportunities. New laws in The Netherlands encourage home ownership for

everyone on land or at sea. It is now possible to mortgage a floating home. In theory one purchases the land under the water, or leases that land for 99-years. Connections to town services such parking and refuse collection come with either purchase or lease.