

GSMOL's Failure to Enforce the MRL

By Lloyd Rochambeau

Mobilehome owners have many problems due to the nature of their existence. They are routinely discriminated against, deprived of their rights, economically cheated and demeaned. Thought of by many as "trailer trash", not entitled to enjoy freedom of speech, and unworthy of any breaks by Park Owners and investors who commit elder abuse and a plethora of other abuses on these "low lifes". I need to qualify that by stating that not all Park Owners are guilty of such treatment, but unfortunately, far too many are guilty as charged. Serving as the President of my park's Homeowner Association for over two years and as President of the San Marcos Mobilehome Residents Association (SMMRA) since late last year has exposed me to these situations. The term "Trailer" hails from early years of the last century when some of the population lived in little more than travel trailers.

Some even survive to this day. Later, mobile homes came into the picture with many of them being single-wide homes (one section, for you who might not be familiar with the terms). In 1976, the terms for single-wides and double-wides and even triple-wides were classified as manufactured homes by the State.

Some called them "coaches" and others called them what they were, factory built homes. They became less and less "mobile", seldom being moved due to the cost and then even less mobile as there were very few places to which they could be moved. So this mode of living has undergone changes but still suffers from a bad image by the populace. This has led to an attitude wherein many are not sympathetic to the problems suffered by mobilehome dwellers. This is the basis for the current problems incurred by mobile or manufactured homeowners and the lack of understanding the disadvantageous position of this segment of our population by municipalities, courts and especially our legislators. Maybe we need to stop referring to ourselves as mobilehome owners or manufactured homeowners, and just simply call ourselves HOMEOWNERS. We deserve respect and recognition, whether we live on owned land or leased land.

Our legislators have given us the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), supposedly to give us protections against unscrupulous Park Owners and Investors. I say supposedly, because while with good intentions, the MRL is a paper tiger or worse. Whenever a Park Owner or Manager violates the protections intended for us homeowners, HCD claims to have no authority to enforce the laws. We are told that violations are a civil matter and that we need to engage an attorney.

It's true that some of us do just that and sometimes some of us are successful. Take the recent court case where 60 homeowners took one of the largest Park Owners, (ELS) Equity Lifestyle Properties (operating 379 properties in 32 states consisting of over 140,000 spaces) to court and were awarded compensatory damages of \$15.3 million and \$95.8 million in punitive damages. (Please refer to the May issue of Mobilehome Magazine for more information). It seems that the jury in this case was sympathetic

to the damaged homeowners. The victorious legal firm could reap over \$40 million from this verdict. Of course, we don't know how long this legal action has taken, nor how long it will be before anyone collects a dime.

The fact of the matter is, that many of us cannot afford an attorney. Others are intimidated and afraid to endure the wrath of the Park Manager or the Park Owner with his bank of attorneys. I believe that the single largest problem encountered by homeowners, is the lack of enforcement of the MRL.

This is not a new problem. While GSMOL has had some successes with laws or additions to the MRL, they should have spent the last 25 years fighting tooth and nail to get enforcement of the laws. More laws, without an enforcement provision, are essentially worthless. GSMOL has dropped in membership from about 100,000 members to about 12,000 members and it would be logical to assume that lack of enforcement is largely responsible.

A reformed GSMOL should make the enforcement issue their number one priority. What better way to swell the ranks of dues paying members? What is the solution to this problem? I don't profess to know, but it may lay with the CPU (Conditional Use Permits) under which Parks are granted the permission to operate. With over 25 years in executive positions for non-profit retirement communities I knew we monitored and subjected to fines and even the possibility of having our licenses pulled. There was enforcement. I read a statement recently by someone that I can't identify at the moment, that said If something is not impossible, then there must be a way to do it. I think that should be hallmark of our efforts to achieve the goal of enforcement. I am not proposing the abolishment of GSMOL, I believe GSMOL is essential and very important in the lives of homeowners and I think we need to advocate for a much more effective association.

The MRL has certain specific requirements, but then allows the Park Owner to remove or override those requirements in their rental agreements, leases, and even in their Rules and Regulations. Do you call that protection?

Why has there been so little effort by GSMOL to establish some effective way of enforcing the MRL? Could it be that the attorneys who reap millions of dollars of fees when going to court and winning for the homeowner, and like it just the way it is? We know that our legislators have their hands out when the Park Owners are contributing to their campaign budgets, and therefore do not want to rock their (gravy) boats.

No doubt there are many reasons why this non-enforcement has existed for so long, but it is now time to insist upon a solution. GSMOL and the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee (Senator Richard Roth) should be the place to start.

Lloyd Rochambeau is President of Lakeview Mobile Estates Homeowners Association and of the San Marcos Mobilehome Residents Association

Have GSMOL Leaders Failed Mobilehome Owners?

Has Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League (GSMOL), our state-wide advocate for over 50 years, failed mobilehome owners? You be the judge. Let us give you some information (it is documented and can all be verified). If we don't share this with you, we would be part of the cover-up. This is an indictment of GSMOL leadership, not of the organization or volunteer network.

NOW AND THEN

Over the last 25 years GSMOL has gone from a strong advocate for mobilehome owners to an ineffective, mismanaged, closed organization. It's membership has decreased from about 100,000 members in 1990 to perhaps 10,000 today. And GSMOL's strength is in it's membership. It takes supportive members to get new laws and to keep the organization going. Ultimately, in 25 years, GSMOL has spent over \$15,000,000 of members dues, not including millions in donations. In August 2012, GSMOL sold it's only real asset, the building in Garden Grove and has spent most of the \$700,000 already. That was your money!

WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN FOR YOUR SUPPORT?

One would hope protection for your investment and lifestyle. Unfortunately we believe this is not the case. Your money has produced an ineffective Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) with loopholes and watered-down laws. And then there is the critical matter of enforcement. Today, everyone will tell you (we feel there is another option) that you are the enforcer. You must run out and retain an attorney and go to court. But there are no guarantees and who has the money and time? And where do you find an attorney with the expertise that can be trusted. Even GSMOL would admit the MRL is just so many pages of paper without enforcement (see Lloyd Rochambeau's Article on the previous page).

CRITICAL DECISIONS

What has led to this decline of GSMOL? We believe egos, greed and power. Also inexperience and mismanagement. Ultimately, money corrupts. In the early 1990's when GSMOL had revenue of almost \$1.5 M per year, there was a power struggle and Board leadership changed several times. GSMOL leaders, over the years, have made decisions that are responsible for this situation today:

a) The first decision was GSMOL must be the only state-wide advocate at any cost. The mantra of many GSMOL leaders and members is "*It's GSMOL or nothing.*" This has led to a culture of divisiveness (defined as causing or tending to cause disagreement or dissension, arguments or hostility among people). Both COMO-CAL and MHMag have been on the receiving end of much of this divisiveness; although we have worked with them, made numerous suggestions to improve GSMOL and have successfully helped thousands of MHOS at relatively low cost.

Rather than using common sense as their guide, the GSMOL BOD focused on preserving their power. They even "rigged" the voting process, and censored information in the Californian.

We ask you: *How reasonable is it to censor information and to bad-mouth those who help mobilehome owners, just because they are not affiliated with GSMOL? How reasonable is it to refuse help from other advocates, even though the greater majority of mobilehome owners want it? How reasonable is it to conspire to keep important information (financial reports, membership information) from members to get new members at any cost?*

b) GSMOL's priority is legislation, i.e. new laws will protect us,

Laws without enforcement are ineffective. Often you can't simply legislate away problems residents face. So why does GSMOL continue to focus on getting more, ineffective laws? It makes no sense. What MHOS need is ENFORCEMENT!

c) The decision to rely on an attorney to help run the organization.

The common thread running through the last 25 years of GSMOL is their use of corporate attorneys. Bruce Stanton was the attorney between approximately 1995 and 1998 and between 2009 through today. Maurice Priest served between 1998 and 2008 and another 15 years in the 1970's and 1980's. Both have been a significant influence on the GSMOL BOD.

Maurice Priest became a park owner (ROP, Inc) in 2002 with the purchase of Niles East in Bakersfield. In the years leading up to November 2008, he acquired five more mobilehome parks, yet GSMOL hired him as corporate council and lobbyist in Sacramento. This serious conflict of interest was exposed by COMO-CAL's THE VOICE in October 2008. A month later Mr. Priest was gone.

We question why an organization needs a corporate attorney? Of course they need a lobbyist, but why spend tens of thousands of dollars each year on a corporate attorney. It would make sense if the attorneys were writing letters to park owners on behalf of mobilehome owners, but we seldom see that happening.

d) The decision to "sell" memberships and not provide good "customer service."

GSMOL is a service organization. It's success requires providing good customer service and being responsive to members needs. Our good friend Steve Molski, a long time GSMOL manager in Chula Vista once said, Garden Grove is a black hole, anything that goes in never comes out. Steve was referring to the many letters he wrote to GSMOL leadership and never got a reply. Is this how to run a successful organization?

We always hear the word "apathy" as being one reason why GSMOL isn't getting members. But we believe bad (or no) customer service plays a huge role.

e) The decision to hide financial and membership information from members so they will not be aware of the rapid decline of the organization and so they will continue to renew and new members

will join.

Over the years we have asked GSMOL members and leaders about finances and membership. They answer: *“We don’t know anything about finances and membership.”* Of course that is not surprising, given the fact that the BOD hides the truth about the rapid membership and revenue loss. And don’t think folks didn’t ask for that information, because they did.

f) The use of paid office staff rather than volunteers.

GSMOL members have lots of expertise. Why hasn’t GSMOL used them more than they have? This would have reduced the huge cost associated with a paid office staff. Get members involved, we feel that’s a key to success.

DANGEROUS OMISSIONS

GSMOL has kept all financial and member information hidden. A comprehensive financial report was made available to some delegates of the last Convention in April 2014; however no member information. Dr. Phil says:

“When you look at the research, you got to look at what people define as a lie. The most dangerous lie and the most difficult to spot is the lie by omission. When you leave out a material fact, that’s a lie just as big as anything you could say that’s wrong.”

We remember in 2008 when the GSMOL Treasurer asked for a no vote from delegates on a bylaw that would have finally given delegates the financial information they had wanted for years. His reasoning was such a report would be too costly and too long. The recent report was less than 10 pages and many received it via email. We feel the board’s action in 2008 was part of a deliberate cover-up.

WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

We have no idea about previous years, but we feel almost half of GSMOL’s expenses last year were unnecessary. A huge chunk of money went to office staff. What do they do? Primarily keep track of the members and money. Perhaps paid staff were necessary when GSMOL had 100,000 members, but today with 10,000 members, any money spent on staff is unnecessary. COMO-CAL ran for 7 years with very little office expense (perhaps a few hundred dollars). When office work is necessary, it can be done with volunteers.

CURRENT BOD PART OF THE PROBLEM

Of course, current BOD members claim this is history, that someone else created this situation and that they are not responsible. We beg to differ. It is well known that they are not team players, they take credit for the work of others, and they continue to support the bad policies of the past administrations. None of the “critical decisions” have been changed.

MANY CHANCES TO CHANGE

Over the years, GSMOL has had many chances to reform

making the organization transparent, provide good customer service, manage members money well, and help those they serve. Here are just a few examples (anyone wanting documentation of any can contact Mobilehome Magazine and we will supply you with the documentation:

- *George Smith Lawsuit (1999)*
- *Patrick Guzman CPA Report & Recomm. Report (2004)*
- *The removal of Maurice Priest and replacement by Christine Minnehan (2009)*
- *The 2014 Convention Renew, Rebuild, Restore*
- *The several MHMag surveys about “working together.”*
- *Every time there was a new BOD, including 1998, and every other year following*

REPORT CARD ON GSMOL

The numbers don’t lie. This is our assessment of the effectiveness of the GSMOL Board of Directors (BOD) over the last 25 years, including the present board.

<i>Management of the Organization</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Use of members fees and donations</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>Use of corporate attorney</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Ability to accept suggestions & make positive change</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Transparency</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Customer Serv (the volunteer network provides it)</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>Working with others, i.e. teamwork</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Giving credit where credit is due</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Promoting the general welfare of mh owners</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Having open meetings with mho’s about GSMOL</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Ability to do everything for mh owners</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Use of volunteers</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>Use of legislation to resolve MHOS problems</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>Providing legal help to mobilehome owners</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Providing ENFORCEMENT for existing laws</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Management of Enforcement Legal Fund</i>	<i>F</i>

CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ASSUMPTIONS

As a consequence of board members policies and decisions, tens of thousands of GSMOL members and leaders have left the organization. In fact, we calculate approximately 125,000 have left over the last 25 years. That’s a potential \$3,125,000 loss of income per year! Some leaders have gone off to form their own organizations. Many simply have quit out of frustration.

You, the mobilehome owner who supported GSMOL and counted on them to protect you, are the ultimate hero. After all of your support, after all the money (about \$20,000,000) you have sent GSMOL trusting that it would do the right thing. After all that, you have gotten very little. Laws without enforcement, no legal help, no information about the organization, and now

GSMOL is a skeleton of it's former self. All a consequence of poor BOD decisions. Unfortunately had members been more active, this could have been prevented!

TWO BRIGHT SPOTS

The GSMOL volunteer network has been the real hero in all this. Many have volunteered hundreds of hours and spent their own money giving their friends and neighbors help and information. By the way, GSMOL has never really supported the volunteer network. Last year they sent \$1231 to chapters, while receiving over \$100,000 from them.

A second bright spot was when GSMOL hired Christine Minnehan as co-lobbyist in Sacramento. Christine was the only person over the years wanting GSMOL to respect and work with other advocates. In fact, we believe the three summits in 2009 were held at her request to get everyone on the same page. COMO-CAL participated in all three. Thanks Christine!

PUBLIC ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

Ultimately GSMOL leaders have hidden the facts from their membership, but did you know much information about the organizations, including finances and membership, are available to the public. For example, every non-profit must submit 990 Tax Returns to the IRS. These are available to anyone who wants them, including park owners and managers. Figures on total membership are available in the Californian if you know where to find them. These figures can usually be found in the November issue of the Californian in a report for the United States Postal Service (USPS).

So we at MHMag have not violated any confidentiality. We have researched to find the information we provide in this article, information that is available to and used by park owners and their representatives.

TODAY'S GSMOL

We understand there is grid-lock on the Board of Directors, much like we see in our Federal Government. There are now 10 board members versus the original 6.

We congratulated, via email, the new President, Jean Crowder, and invited her to chat with us about our offer to help GSMOL. That was over a month ago. We received no reply. We also sent a similar email to Miss Terri, the new Zone A-1 VP and never heard from her either.

There may be a change of the delegate system of voting. The BOD said there would be a review and results in six months.

BOTTOM LINE

We have made suggestions over the years to improve GSMOL, as have others. We have asked you, the MHO, what you wanted. You said you wanted MHMag and GSMOL working together. We agree 100%. We have reached out to GSMOL and offered to share our distribution network. We were at the hotel where the GSMOL Convention was held to give Board members an opportunity to sit down with us and discuss working together.

Ultimately GSMOL has rebuffed any and all attempts to work with MHMag. So where do we go from here? Our hope is that you, MHOS across California, armed with facts and truth, will bring enough pressure so that GSMOL leaders will want to institute major reforms. We feel this is GSMOL's only hope.

We hope to see GSMOL once again an organization for the people, by the people, open, transparent, responsive to MHOS, and working hard to protect them.

Anyone wanting to view supporting documents for this article, please contact us at Mobilehome Magazine.

GSMOL's Incorporation Status with State of California Suspended

We have just learned that the State of California has suspended GSMOL's corporation status. It no longer is "active", but instead "suspended." Corporations with an "active" status may legally carry out their business activities.

CAUSES FOR SUSPENSION

We understand certain requirements must be met every year for an organizations corporate status to remain active. According to the Secretary of State:

The business entity's powers, rights and privileges were suspended or forfeited in California 1) by the Franchise Tax

Board for failure to file a return and/or failure to pay taxes, penalties, or interest; and/or 2) by the Secretary of State for failure to file the required Statement of Information and, if applicable, the required Statement by Common Interest Development Association. The State of California gives a 60 day notice before a suspension takes place.

WE ARE CONCERNED

Of course we are concerned that GSMOL has lost it's active status as a state Corporation. All MHOS should be concerned. If you are a GSMOL member, we suggest you call the home office and ask what's going on. Only they know.

The Future of Mobilehome Magazine

100% COMMITMENT TO YOU

First of all, know that MHMag only wants the best for Mobilehome Owners (MHOS) around the state. We thought long and hard about publishing the GSMOL article on the previous pages. Ultimately, we would be remiss if we didn't publish it. We would be part of the cover-up and how could we resolve that being an advocate for mhos?

Remember, the article is NOT about GSMOL, the organization, nor is it about the GSMOL hard working volunteer network. It is about a few at the top, a few GSMOL Board Members. It is about their continued lack of transparency, it is about their destructive policies, and it is about their mismanagement. We have played no part in this decline, to say otherwise is absurd. Our goal is to stop this madness. We are convinced these leaders will never change on their own. They blame us, and they blame you for the decline, when it is they who are responsible. We believe the only way these leaders will change is if you know the facts, speak up, and become active. Tell them *"We're mad as hell and won't take it anymore! We will fight to take GSMOL back and return it to its once strong, proud organization. For mobilehome owners, by mobilehome owners."*

BACKLASH

There are always consequences of any action, even when the action is correct. We expect repercussions about the GMSOL article. Certainly some on the BOD will not like it one bit. And some GSMOL supporters won't either. Some will refuse to deliver the magazine. Others will say we are trying to destroy GSMOL. Nothing could be further from the truth.

All we ask is let reason prevail. Look at what has happened to GSMOL over the years. These are facts. No one in their right mind can be happy about GSMOL's decline. No one can be happy that GSMOL is no longer an organization by the members. As an advocate for MHOS, we are very unhappy. If you dispute anything in our article, please let us know and we will respond.

We believe the first step to change is admitting there is a problem. Now that the cards are on the table, our hope is all MHOS will pressure their GSMOL leaders to make some much need changes. We at MHMag will help promote and support the new, reformed GSMOL.

THE FUTURE OF MOBILEHOME MAGAZINE

Number one, we are finished writing about GSMOL. It is up to you now. We've done our part.

Our direction will continue to focus on providing you important, accurate, honest information as well as a means of enforcement. We also want to unite all groups in California. This is a huge undertaking, but we can succeed with your help.

In spite of some challenges, our future is bright. One goal is to expand MHMag and its distribution. We will also use MHMag as a tool for enforcement more than we have in the past- the carrot and stick approach. We will expose managers and owners who violate the law and praise those who are law abiding and respectful of residents. We hope more and more park owners and managers will learn it's preferable to follow the law and respect their residents than to take advantage of them.

Finally, it is imperative that all MHOS and groups supporting them unite. Mobilehome Magazine started as a magazine for the people, by the people. We want this policy to continue. Mobilehome Magazine is your magazine. Please feel free to submit your articles, tell us about your park, tell us about your community.

To that end, we suggest a leader in each area (North Bay, San Jose, Orange Co., North San Diego County and San Diego) step up and help us publish MHMag for your area.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF A NEW NAME?

What would you think of a new name: Manufactured-Home Life? We realize the use of "mobile" home only plays into the hands of the park owners. We all know our homes are not mobile. The cost to move is prohibitive and the availability of spaces in other parks is almost non-existent.

The title "Life" will be more indicative of our goal to provide you more than information on laws. We want to branch out. And perhaps this is a chance for you to get involved. Perhaps you have tips and suggestions to make lives easier and better.

Let us know your thoughts. We would also have another website: www.manufacturedhomelife.org

NEW STATE-WIDE NON-PROFIT

We understand a group in Southern California is forming a new state-wide non-profit 501(c)3 dedicated to the enforcement of the laws. They already have a name: California Manufactured-Home Owners Alliance (CAMOA). Their website at www.camoa.org should be up and running by July 1st and they will be asking for donations.

Mobilehome Magazine and CAMOA will be working hand in hand with each other. CAMOA will be using Mobilehome Magazine to get their message out to you and others and they can offer you services we can't. We ask you to support them with your donations.

They will provide assistance to MHOS needing suggestions with issues. This will not initially include help from an attorney. One goal is to pressure Housing and Community Development (HCD) to do their job, i.e. enforcement of the Mobilehome Parks Act (MPA). See Donna Matthew's article on Page H.

Psychological Abuse In Mobile/Manufactured-Home Parks

Editor's Note: Many of us have experienced it. The notices for inconsequential infractions of the Rules and Regulations, the threats, the yelling by the manager, the attitude "if you don't like it here, then move!" Why do you think the turn-over rate in some parks is so high? Residents just wanting to get out at any cost! And what about the suicides? Yes residents have committed suicide because of the abuse.

Now a psychologist in Nevada, Gary Solomon, has put a label on it - "HOA SYNDROME." Dr Solomon doesn't live in a mobilehome park, he lives in a stick built community with a Home Owners Association. Just read the article below and draw your own conclusions. In our opinion, HOA SYNDROME is alive and flourishing in mobilehome parks.

Now those affected to this abuse are fighting back, in court. Dr. Robin Huhn has hired legal counsel and is suing her HOA.

It's about time these illegal practices stopped. California mobilehome owners have a terrific option to draw that line in the sand. Updates to follow.

Gone are the days when pets, walking their obedient owners, strolled through neighborhoods and waved to fellow neighbors, taking a few moments to stop and chat and get caught up on the latest family news. Void are the invitations from a neighbor to gather and celebrate their child's high school graduation, retirement party, acquisition of a shiny, stealth new car, or a forthcoming marriage. Why? Homeowner's Associations (HOAs) and property management predators have infected entire communities—cities—inducing a pandemic of emotional and physical problems onto bewildered property owners. Welcome my fellow Americans to a new diagnosable psychiatric disorder:

My name is Gary Solomon, A.A., B.A., MPH., M.S.W., Ph.D., Ph.D.(abd). I am a published author, tenured psychology professor at the College of Southern Nevada, psychotherapist, researcher, expert witness, and human rights advocate.

Shortly after I moved to Calico Ridge (a community in Las Vegas with an HOA) I began noticing something odd. People appeared to be abnormally anxious, nervous, hypervigilant, worried, irritated, paradoxically unsettled in a well seasoned community. Being a psychotherapist and researcher, I would not let my own narcissism get in the way of comprehending what was taking place around me, concluding that I was the cause of the problem. "Certainly it was not me. I just got here," I thought to myself. "Yes, I am at the entrance to the subdivision." "Yes, the place could use a little tidying up," I self-acknowledged. "But, I'm a nice, friendly, approachable man. What's going on here?"

It would take me slightly over a year to understand what was happening around me. Ultimately, my awareness would become a spinoff of my current research. I learned that residents, primarily principal homeowners, were living in a war zone, not

identifiable by bombs, guns and burning buildings. Rather, a war zone masterfully orchestrated by a few fellow homeowners attempting to control their companion neighbors while making a few bucks on the side and gaining sadistic pleasure from watching their neighbors live in pain.

HOA SYNDROME

HOA Syndrome falls into the psychiatric category of Anxiety Disorders. The Syndrome is characterized by a cluster of signs and symptoms—psychophysiological indicators—such as:

- feeling angry much of the time
- tired and fatigued
- anxious
- on-edge or irritable
- unhappy in one's own home
- depressed and sad
- worried
- nihilistic (hopeless)
- over or under eating
- sleeping disorders and/or nightmares
- fear of going to one's own mailbox,
- paranoia
- loss of identity
- fear of allowing one's children to play in their own neighborhood
- fear of having one's car ticketed or towed
- stressed out
- body aches and pains
- intestinal problems and/or acid reflux
- memory loss
- obsessive rumination
- temporal mandibular joint problems (TMJ) and/or grinding of teeth
- hypervigilance
- restlessness
- fear of losing one's pet
- sexual dysfunction

WHAT CAUSES HOA SYNDROME?

At the root of HOA Syndrome is intentional, longitudinal and methodical harassment. Shortly after the individual takes possession of their property, the HOA strategically begins to focus on the homeowner's minor, if not non-existent infractions.

The purpose for these attacks is to create an income stream. This income stream makes its way into the pockets of the management companies, collection agencies and attorneys, none of whom live within the community that they are harassing. Like ravenous parasites, these organizations feed off of fear-based harassment. The homeowner, now locked into a mortgage, feels powerless over the HOA's relentless hounding for more and more money. In short: the evolution of schoolyard bullying and lunch money stealing has turned into adult comportment known in the legal world as, racketeering, financial exploitation and extortion, and neighborhood money pilfering.

THE PREDATOR

The predators, those in a position of authority (Capos) volunteer to be on the board of the HOA. The Capos gain power and an inflated sense of self. Remarkably, they hire outside agencies at enormous cost to themselves and their neighbors to oversee their infliction of fines and penalties. Once in power, they impose more and more punishment on their fellow neighbors. The threat of fines, liens and foreclosure on their neighbors cause these people to lose all touch with reality. Almost as if in a psychotic state or delusion, their actions continue, all the while knowing what they are doing to others. As time passes they become sadists who stand in judgment and control of their fellow human beings. They turn their backs on those in need, especially the elderly who are not in a position to defend or protect themselves, easy prey for the HOA. While this is taking place, private for-profit companies reap the bounty of their free HOA laborers, becoming tantamount to Nazi concentration camp Capos.



THE VICTIM

Having signed "The Document (the CC&Rs)" these people, the homeowners, unwittingly subordinate their constitutional rights to "The Community." The legal statutes (laws that feed the CC&Rs) is literally the hammer that repeatedly raises and pounds the entire neighborhood into submission: both psychological and physiological ruination. Like something out of Rod Sterlings' "Twilight Zone," individuals roam the neighborhoods pointing their fingers at each other searching for the transgressions of their neighbors. "They have a weed!" "Look at the color of their door!"

"There, see? They have a brown spot in the lawn!" And on and on and on. As time passes, the individuals residing in communities become stricken, individually and collectively, with HOA Syndrome. After a while they begin to go after those neighbors whom they do not like. Each home functions like an island in the middle of a separate country, no longer functioning as a community. Desperate and despondent, the homeowners have acquired so much pathology that the collective hopelessness is visually apparent.

 Editors Note: This is not the entire article written by Dr. Solomon. Dr. Solomon has also written an article on "senior abuse." Both articles are terrific and mobilehome residents need to be aware what is happening to them is not their imagination, but very, very real. Now is the time to fight back, Dr. Solomon and his group is. We are happy to send you both articles written by Dr. Solomon (free by email, \$5 by first class mail). Keep in mind, he isn't referring to life in a mobilehome park, but life in a community run by an HOA. In essence, the HOA is like a park manager.

Mobilehome Magazine This & That

Business Directory: Beginning soon we will publish a Directory of local businesses. All listings will be free! So if you have a business or know of a business that you would recommend, please let them know to contact us. There is no obligation. We just want MHOS to have some options when they look for a business.

Advertising with Mobilehome Magazine: Our advertising rates are very reasonable. Currently a full page is \$500/magazine/month, half-page \$300, quarter-page \$200, eighth-page \$100, and business card \$70.

Just think an advertiser using post cards pays about \$.40 for

printing and mailing. A similar size ad in MHMag costs only \$.06! We indeed are a bargain.

Donations: Just a reminder. Advertising is down as are donations. As a consequence, only two magazines were printed last month; although all 4 were displayed at www.mobilehome-magazine.org. This month it is a struggle to print all four magazines, but we felt it was important. We are facing considerable out of pocket expense.

Please support our efforts to continue to bring you honest, accurate, important information. Please DONATE! Use the form on Insert H. Thank you!

Living in a Mobilehome Park

Twenty-nine years ago my husband and I contracted to have our home investment installed in a mobilehome park. We thought it would be a wonderful way to spend our retirement years. We would have a home of our own, we would have the use of the park facilities, as much social life as we liked, and meet and make good friends who helped each other in time of need. Sounded like a wonderful way of life.

We had never lived in a mobilehome park before, so after looking over the models we picked out the one that suited our needs and choose a lot. We contracted with the park owner to install our home investment and to build an attached two-car garage. We were presented with a ten year lease and as we both had been in business for many years and familiar with leases we agreed with the provisions and signed the lease. With the lease we were presented with a copy of the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL).

I soon learned that Mobilehome Residency Law provisions are unique as to the terms and conditions of park tenancy. MRL Provisions such as the homeowners right to the use of the lot, the lot installations, and the park facilities and services. The park owner is required to give a written Rental Agreements, and that a lease is a rental agreement. A provision whereby the Legislature protects our home investments and there are only five reasons a tenancy can be terminated, only after the homeowner has been given the proper notices, and there is a court hearing where it is up to the management to prove that a rule or regulation has in fact been violated. The MRL also contains many more unique provisions that the homeowner should consider.

Over the years I also learned of the unique provisions in the Mobilehome Parks Act (MPA) (the Health and Safety Code and Title 25). These are all the standards and requirements in the park owner's permit to construct a mobilehome park. These standards and requirements are to be provided before a Permit to Operate is issued, and maintained for the yearly permit renewal. Under the MRL these standards and requirements of the Permit to Operate are the terms and conditions of park tenancy, and no rental agreement shall contain a provision by which the homeowner waives his or her rights. Any such waiver shall be deemed contrary to public policy and void.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is the Governmental Agency responsible for enforcing the provisions of the MPA. When all the standards and requirements of construction are completed HCD issues the Permit to Operate, and if the standards and requirements are maintained HCD issues the yearly renewal. Any change to an existing park requires an application for an alternate permit and HCD approval. MPA provision stated it is a felony to alter an existing park without the proper HCD permit.

I had to learn about these unique mobilehome laws the hard way, and feel there should be better enforcement to protect the homeowner's home investment. That is why I am thankful of the opportunity to share my knowledge in this Mobilehome Magazine.

Donna Matthews, Long time Mobilehome Owner. Contact Donna through Mobilehome Magazine

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