MH Life

A Magazine for Mobilehome Owners

San Diego
June 2015
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The #1 Source of Information for Manufactured/Mobilehome Owners in California

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Our advertising works! One Realtor paid for two full page ads in our San Fernando Valley magazine, which was delivered to perhaps 15 parks in the SFV. Did he get results? His results were outstanding (and this was his first and only time advertising). In just two parks, we have seen his signs go up on at least 8 homes and sold signs on perhaps 4. We would say that is a success. Want to advertise? Call Frank @ 818-886-6479 or email him at fawodley@yahoo.

From the Staff of MH Life

Our Salute to San Diego (Front Cover: Spreckles Pavilion, Balboa Park)

Recently we participated in a conference call with a relatively new, national group called MH Action (see page 10). The call was attended by mobile/manufactured homeowners from around the country and they were using the same language we've been using the last 12 years: UNITY, reinventing the wheel, working together, and sharing ideas and expertise. Why? Because unity, working together and sharing ideas and expertise work! Why reinvent the wheel when someone, somewhere probably has a solution. One thing we liked about MH Action was that the leadership have no titles, they just want to get something done (see Reinventing Organizations on page 7).

So if we know what works, why then are we NO CLOSER our goals? Actually we feel everyone is guilty. Advocates and homeowners alike.

The clock is ticking. In the 12 years that we're been advocating for folks, not much has changed. Our advice has remained essentially the same: a) Organize your park, b) Be active in your organization, c) If your leaders are not doing what you need them to do, replace them with leaders that will, d) Reach out and know what's happening in your community, in your state and in your country, e) Support the Washington State Dispute Resolution Program for California, f) Support a state-wide organization that embraces the basic concepts of openness, transparency, responsiveness, accountability and willingness to work together, g) Question, question, question and h) Communicate, communicate, communicate.

There comes a time when you must take a position. Either you a) will continue to be apathetic (and don't expect things to get better on their own) or b) you will embrace our advice and join us. Remember, you are not alone, we can and will help! We are in this together and we believe positive change is around the corner if you just do your part. Be assured, we will continue doing ours!

If you're unwilling to get involved for yourself, then think about the future generations - your children, your heirs. Shouldn't you act today and do what you can for the sake of generations to come? If we don't begin to resolve problems now, they will continue unsolved for years to come, that is if there are any mobile/manufactured home parks remaining. The ball is in your court (Sally Studer's Article, May 2015, page 8).

And yes, we feel COMO-CAL is your best option. It has a productive, successful seven years (2005-2011). Today COMO-CAL is more ready and able to help you help yourself.

MH Life Magazine supports COMO-CAL because it has taken the pledge. It is willing to work with others and has significant resources. COMO-CAL also guarantees your satisfaction or your money back! How can you lose! No one else can make such an offer. Just fill out the application on page 14 and mail with a check for $25. You won't be sorry you did!

The Staff of Manufactured-Life Magazine

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What Would You Do?

What would you do if you received the following letter from park management?

Date: April 15, 2015

Re: Your Park - July 1, 2015, Automatic Rubbish Adjustment

You are hereby notified, in accordance with the California Civil Code that on July 1, 2015 your tenancy of the above designated premises will be changes as follows:

Current Monthly Rubbish Fee: $5.00

Rubbish Increase Adjustment: $10.00

New Monthly Rubbish Fee Effective July 1, 2015: $ 15.00

Beginning July 1, 2015 the adjusted rubbish fee is due in full, payable in advance on or before the first day of each month.

Except as herein provided, all other terms of your tenancy shall remain in full force and effect.

If you have any questions regarding the above adjustment in rubbish fee, please call me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Signed: Your Park Manager

Please continue below for our suggestions.

COMO-CAL Helps You Solve Your Problems

COMO-CAL doesn't just take your $25 and you never hear from us again. When a member has an issue, we are here to make suggestions and help them solve their problems.

We know most of you have an issue or two. Let us help you.

What We Need

First we need all the information you have on the issue. A 3 or 7 day notice, some documented facts, evidence of what the manager has said or done, etc. The best way to reach us with this information is via email or a letter. Phone calls just don't work. Please provide your email address, if you have one, and your phone number.

The Above Rubbish Issue

Let us provide you some facts about the above notice.

This park has 183 total spaces and all residents received the notice. It is one of about 60 parks (6600 residents) covered by the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance, which means the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) is responsible to handle questions and complaints.

Unfortunately, few residents know they can call the LAHD when they question a notice by management. Why don't they? Because there is NO communication from LAHD to residents, yet LAHD staff make hundreds of thousands of dollars to serve L.A. mobilehome park residents!

$22,000 Additional Revenue

The notice adds $10/month to everyone's rent bill. That is $22,000/year, a considerable amount, and it will continue indefinitely. No wonder the park owner wants it!

Residents' Reactions

We would guess, other than the couple residents that called us, no one did anything. Either they didn't question the notice or they didn't care enough to get involved. We, however, feel $120/year is worth researching to determine if it is legal. If found illegal, it is worth fighting. The notice could have been examined by a HOA; however the park has no organization.

What Did We Do?

We first asked for a copy of the notice (we need written documentation if we are to do anything). Then we called the L.A.H.D. to ask for information and their response was residents must file a complaint.

We also observed this notice does not comply with the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), as the number of days between April 15th and July 1st total only 76. The MRL requires 90 days notice.

Finally, we suggested a resident reserve the park clubhouse for a general meeting of all residents so we could offer our suggestions to everyone willing to come and participate.

What's Happening Now?

COMO-CAL received calls, one on April 16th and another on April 18th, from two park residents. After chatting with us, they have indicated they will call the LAHD and file complaints. One resident went to the manager about reserving the clubhouse; however when he asked the manager, she told him there would be a requirement of a $300 deposit. Another roadblock! Of course, the MRL states that the park can not charge a deposit when all residents are invited to a meeting.

Bottom line, there is value in at least knowing who to call when a problem arises. We have taken hundreds of calls over the years to assist MH owners. MH Life and COMO-CAL do provide an important service to MH owners in California!

We will update you in July. Watch for it.

Transferring Title of a Mobilehome From a Seller to a Buyer

Many mobilehome owners living in mobilehome parks in California do not have clear title to their homes. It may be a good idea to check on your status if you are not sure. When it comes time to sell your mobilehome or you should give it to an heir, the lack of a clear title will complicate matters.

How to Check on the Title

It is easy to find out whether you hold clear title to your mobilehome.

If you have a tan-colored 8½ x 11 paper from HCD called the "Certificate of Title" and it is in your name, then you have the title to your home.

If you do not have in your possession the Certificate of Title, then you can call one of the HCD's Registration and Title offices in California to find out your status, whether you have clear title. Be prepared to provide them your name, the location of your mobilehome, and other information. They can look it up in a few minutes on their computers and tell you the status.

Registered Owner versus Legal Owner

When you check on your status as titleholder, you should be aware that there is a difference between the legal owner and the registered owner. In most cases this will be the same person.

The registered owner and the legal owner may be different for a variety of reasons, but a common one is that one person bought the home for another to live in it. This can occur when say a parent buys a home for a son or daughter, or a son or daughter buys the home for a parent. When the buyer, working with the seller, transferred title to the buyer, the buyer specified the occupant (to be) as the registered owner but themselves as the legal owner. The registered owner then will appear on the HCD paperwork as the owner and will be sent the annual registration notice (or tax notice) and to the park manager will be the owner. The legal owner, however, owns the asset. The advantage of this arrangement is that the person living in the home is not viewed as one subletting the home, allowing the buyer and the occupant to get around the state laws against subletting a mobilehome (MRL 798.23.5)

To have clear title, you need to be both the registered and the legal owner.

How To Transfer the Title of a Mobilehome

The following is the typical process for a seller to transfer the title of a mobilehome to the buyer. This assumes the seller has clear title.

o (Need) Title. Fill out the back of this.

The Certificate of Title is tan in color, is an 8½ x 12 sheet of paper, and is from the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) of California.

If the title is lost or simply a duplicate title is needed, use Form 480.4 to get a new copy – there will be a fee to get a duplicate.

o (Need) Form 476.6g, the multi-purpose transfer form. This must be filled out. It asks such things as "is the water heater strapped down with earthquake straps?" and "does the smoke detector work?"

o (Need) Form 476.4, declaring the Sales Price. Bring this form but do not fill it out. HCD will fill it out. They put down the lesser of the sale price of the home and the NADA price of the home. The National Automobile Dealers Association Appraisal Guide has prices for mobilehomes (just like the Blue Book for automobiles). For older mobilehomes, the NADA price is usually significantly less than the selling price.

Then one of these two items are needed, either the Registration Card or a Tax Clearance Certificate. To tell which are needed, get the alpha-number off the decal on the outside of the mobilehome. Does the decal alpha-number starts with the letter 'L'? If YES, then the seller needs to obtain a Tax Clearance Certificate from HCD to transfer title to someone else. It shows that all the taxes have been paid on the home. If the decal alpha-number starts with an 'A', then a the seller must provide a copy of the Registration Card to show that registration has been paid.

o (Conditionally Needed) Registration Card. This is not really a card, it is the 8½ x 11 sheet of paper the mobilehome owner gets from HCD as proof they have paid their registration fees.

o (Conditionally needed) Tax Clearance Certificate. This is only needed for some mobilehomes and manufactured homes. One can tell if it is needed by the decal on the home.

The most efficient way to transfer title, is for the buyer and the seller to get copies of all the appropriate documents, fill them out with pencil answering all questions (on their own, or together) and then take the papers to an HCD office (that handles Registration and Titles). The HCD officials can record the documents and ensure all papers are complete and filled out correctly.

Source of the above:

Scott Hoaby talked with representatives of HCD on multiple occasions in 2015 to get a clear understanding of what needs to take place to properly transfer the title. The above pieces of information are what HCD has told him. The people listed below are the people Scott has talked with at one time or another.

HCD Contacts for Titles and Registration

o Riverside (951) 782-4431

o Santa Ana (714) 558-4974

o Sacramento (916) 255-2532

o San Luis Obispo (805) 549-3373

Go to www.hcd.ca.gov. In the search box, type "Forms" and hit enter. On the ensuing page, click on the link "HCD Forms," probably the top entry. The page that comes up are all the forms that HCD has.(or try http://www.hcd.ca.gov/forms.html)

Rent Control Changes in Sonoma

Sonoma Index-Tribune BY JASON WALSH, INDEX-TRIBUNE EDITOR April 27, 2015

Should mobile-home-park rental rates have a bit more mobility themselves? That's what the city officials will deliberate this week, as the Sonoma City Council convenes Wednesday at a public "study session" of the city's Mobile Rent Control Ordinance.

Among the revisions being proposed by the homeowners is the disbanding of the Rental Review Board and, instead, having the city manager decide the merits of a petition to increase rents.

Additionally, homeowners are asking for the ability to make a counter-offer to a proposed rent increase – and also be allowed to petition for rent reductions in situations where a park has reduced services or amenities.

The park owners, on the other hand, are looking for more flexibility in their ability to raise rents.

To begin with, they're proposing to raise the automatic increase from 80 percent of the rate of inflation up to 100 percent – and eliminate the 5 percent cap altogether.

• Eliminate vacancy control, which would permit them to charge market rents to new owners of in-place mobile homes.

• Clarify the expenses that do not fall within the definition of "capital improvements" (meaning homeowners would be responsible for funding).

• Amend the maintained net operating income formula to allow for higher rent increases

http://www.sonomanews.com/home/3858511-181/rent-control-changes-in-store#PVF2Ovs7MlmWflHz.97

No accord on mobile home rent control

BY WILLIAM ROHRS, INDEX-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER, May 1, 2015

There weren't enough chairs to go around.

Sonoma mobile home-park residents crowded the conference room in the Sonoma Valley Veterans Memorial Building this week to weigh in during an April 29 City Council "study session" to discuss possible changes to the city's mobile home park rent-control policy.

Since 1992, the city has had a Mobile Rent Control Ordinance in place, which strictly limits the way park landlords can raise space-rental rates. Under the current ordinance, park owners have been limited to annual rent increases of no more than 80 percent of the rate of inflation. In addition to the automatic inflationary increase, park owners are also permitted to apply for rent hikes to pay for capital improvements to their mobile home parks, as well as apply for rent increases in order to maintain the net operating income enjoyed by the park as of 1992.

That 1992 income, according to a city staff report, would reflect the year before the rent control was established and presume "a fair and reasonable rate of return" on park operations. Any rent-increase petitions from park owners are currently decided by a Rental Review Board appointed by the City Council.

But park owners say the two-decade-old ordinance is outdated and limits rents at too-far-below their market value.

Both park residents and park owners were invited to present their sides at the meeting in the hopes of finding common ground.

William Constantine, an attorney representing the tenants, proposed disbanding the city's rental review board as the deciding party on rent increase applications and instead turn the responsibility to the city manager, who would hire third-party experts to help with those decisions. "The residents proposed a $5 annual fee in order to retain experts, to be collected but not paid by the park owners," he said. "This way, the residents feel they can eliminate any possible bias from the board."

Representing the park owners, Brad Yusim, of Chicago-based Jenner & Block Law, argued that most mobile home communities in California do not offer rent control. He argued that by keeping rent determinately low, mobile home owners can sell their lots at a premium, causing new owners to pay more early in order to reap a cheaper-than-market rent over time – a suggestion that elicited guffaws from mobile home owners at the meeting.

Yusim added that park owners wanted to change the amortization period for sewage and water distribution systems from 50 years to 15; eliminate the mobile home owners' right to protest a rent increase for necessary capital improvements; increase the automatic rent increase from 80 to 100 percent of the rate of inflation (and eliminate the 5 percent cap on that); and eliminate vacancy control, a process that protects new tenants from paying more than 110 percent of the last tenant's rent.

http://www.sonomanews.com/news/3872759-181/no-accord-on-mobile-home#page=0

Editorial: Mobile-home owners tied to the tracks over rent-control policy

The mobile-home-park rent-control issue in a nutshell.

BY JASON WALSH, May 4, 2015,

"Dear Landlord, please don't put a price on my soul…"

– Bob Dylan, "Dear Landlord"

Well, it seems some things never change. And this is exactly the point owners of mobile home parks in Sonoma are decrying this month, as they say the city's 23-year-old rent control policy is about as dated and unwelcome these days as a kitsch reference to Urkel.

Hence last week's rent control "study session," an April public forum at the Veterans Memorial Hall in which council members heard from representatives of both mobile home owners and the park owners who rent them space, in the hopes the two factions could come to some sort of compromise on revisions to the city's long-standing rent-control policy.

Both the park owners and the tenants have had a chance to propose revisions to council members, who will consider the suggestions and direct staff toward a revised rent control ordinance over the course of another couple of meetings. Truth is, no one would blame the council if they kept the ordinance just as it is. The three mobile home parks in the city limits – De Anza Moon Valley, Pueblo Serena and Rancho de Sonoma – essentially act as affordable senior housing stock for Sonoma, allowing some of the Valley's longtime Sonomans living on fixed incomes to stay in their hometown, where rising rents and housing prices have made that increasingly difficult to do so.

Among the arguments for weakening the rent control restrictions presented by Brad Yusim, the attorney representing mobile home park corporation Equity LifeStyle Properties, was that mobile-home owners can use the city-mandated low rents as a selling point toward cashing in their homes for premium profits – a suggestion that drew guffaws at the study session last Wednesday.

Of course, the idea that the mobile-home residents are actually closet real-estate magnates – sitting on their investments until the timing's right to "sell high" and strike it rich – is as ludicrous as it sounds. But it's also a telling insight into the mind-set of the park owners.

Equity LifeStyle last year lost a 14-year legal fight with Contempo Marin, a mobile home park in San Rafael whose rents are also determined by a city rent control policy. The case ultimately validated the city's rent control policy for the mobile home park. Equity also presented the same argument in San Rafael that it seems to be making in Sonoma – the rent control drives up prices at point-of-mobile home sale, making the parks anything but "affordable."

http://www.sonomanews.com/opinion/editorials/3889667-181/editorial-mobile-home-owners-tied-to#page=0

Editor's Note: News articles are often times quite long. For that reason, we have decided not to publish full articles in the magazine, but rather a few paragraphs. We will publish full articles at www.comocal.org. We will mail those of you without computers articles of interest - $1.00 per article to cover postage and printing.

Reinventing Organizations - A Book by Frederic Laloux

The way we manage organizations seems increasingly out of date. Survey after survey shows people feel disengaged. The epidemic of organizational disillusionment goes way beyond Corporate America-teachers, doctors, and nurses are leaving their professions in record numbers because the way we run schools and hospitals kills their vocation. Government agencies and nonprofits have a noble purpose, but working for these entities often feels soulless and lifeless just the same. **All these organizations suffer from power games played at the top and powerlessness at lower levels, from infighting and bureaucracy, from endless meetings and a seemingly never-ending succession of change** and cost-cutting programs.

Deep inside, we long for soulful workplaces, for authenticity, community, passion, and purpose. The solution, according to many progressive scholars, lies with more enlightened management. But reality shows that this is not enough. In most cases, the system beats the individual-when managers or leaders go through an inner transformation, they end up leaving their organizations because they no longer feel like putting up with a place that is inhospitable to the deeper longings of their soul.

We need more enlightened leaders, but we need something more: enlightened organizational structures and practices. But is there even such a thing? Can we conceive of enlightened organizations?

In this groundbreaking book, the author shows that every time humanity has shifted to a new stage of consciousness in the past, it has invented a whole new way to structure and run organizations, each time bringing extraordinary breakthroughs in collaboration. A new shift in consciousness is currently underway. Could it help us invent a radically more soulful and purposeful way to run our businesses and nonprofits, schools and hospitals?

The pioneering organizations researched for this book have already "cracked the code." Their founders have fundamentally questioned every aspect of management and have come up with entirely new organizational methods. Even though they operate in very different industries and geographies and did not know of each other's experiments, the structures and practices they have developed are remarkably similar. It's hard not to get excited about this finding: a new organizational model seems to be emerging, and it promises a soulful revolution in the workplace.

"Reinventing Organizations" describes in practical detail how organizations large and small can operate in this new paradigm. Leaders, founders, coaches, and consultants will find this work a joyful handbook, full of insights, examples, and inspiring stories.

Editor's Note: We are always looking for ways to serve you better. "Games played at the top and powerlessness at lower levels, from infighting and bureaucracy, from endless meetings and seemingly never-ending succession of change" actually has severly reduced the effectiveness of advocacy in California. Perhaps it is time to consider other options for running our advocacy organizations. We offer this as an option worth investigating and learning more about.

WHO TAKES CARE OF TREES? by Jon Stanley Heim

Many of the legal rights of mobilehome residents are established in the Mobilehome Residency Law ("MRL"), California Civil Code sections 798 through 799.11. These statutes must be attached to residents' rental agreements. (Cal. Civ. Code, sec. 798.15, subd. (c).) The MRL recognizes the unique investment which mobilehome residents make in their dwellings, an investment that distinguishes mobilehome residency from ordinary tenancies such as apartment rentals. The MRL protects mobilehome residents against certain abuses, sharp practices and add-on fees by owners and managers of mobilehome parks.

Every mobilehome resident should have a copy of the MRL and at least a general understanding of mobilehome owners' rights under it. In this article and future ones, I shall endeavor to explain key provisions of and rights under the MRL and other laws affecting mobilehome residents. Of necessity my explanations and opinions in this space can only be general. Mobilehome residents who are aggrieved by actions of park management or who find themselves in significant disputes with management should seek advice on their particular situations from counsel familiar with the MRL and other relevant laws.

One common legal issue in mobilehome residency concerns trees. Who is supposed to take care of trees, and when? The MRL addresses this issue directly. California Civil Code section 798.37.5, subdivision (a), which is part of the MRL, provides that, "[w]ith respect to trees on rental spaces in a mobilehome park, park management shall be solely responsible for the trimming, pruning, or removal of any tree, and the costs thereof, upon written notice by a homeowner or a determination by park management that the tree poses a specific hazard or health and safety violation." If the homeowner and management disagree whether a tree poses such a hazard or violation, either party may request an inspection of the site and a resolution of the issue by Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD") or a local agency that enforces mobilehome laws. Under California Civil Code section 798.37.5, subdivision (b), also part of the MRL, park management is responsible too for "the trimming, pruning, or removal of any tree [in a common area of the park], and the costs thereof[,]" whether or not the common area tree poses a hazard or health and safety violation. Management must also repair "root damage to driveways and foundation systems…." (Cal. Civ. Code, sec. 798.37.5, subd. (c).) Mobilehome residents are forbidden from planting trees in the park "without first obtaining written permission from the management." (Cal. Code Civ. Proc., sec. 798.37.5, subd. (d). All current rules and regulations of mobilehome parks must comply with the foregoing statutes (Cal. Code Civ. Proc., sec. 798.37.5, subd. (g)), so they cannot be waived or diluted by any rental agreement or park rule.

Thus under the MRL any mobilehome resident who believes that a tree on his or her rental space is hazardous or presents a health and safety violation must give notice of the hazard or violation to park management, in writing. If management disagrees or does not respond, the mobilehome resident should request an inspection and determination by either DHCD or a responsible local agency. Very few tree maintenance disputes will not be resolved by these processes. However if the state or local agency agrees that the tree is hazardous and management still refuses to trim, prune or remove the tree, the mobilehome resident can file suit under the MRL for injunction, compensatory and punitive damages, attorney fees, and an additional $2,000 for each willful violation of the MRL by management. (Cal. Civ. Code, secs. 798.84-798.87.)

So now you know: trees in mobilehome parks are the responsibility of park management, and government agencies and courts will make sure that management fulfills its responsibilities for trees. Under this law no mobilehome resident should suffer a hazardous tree or any expense for making it safe.

Editor's Note: This article was first published in THE VOICE March/April 2009. It was written by our attorney Jon Stanley Heim. Mr. Heim is no longer with COMO-CAL; however his advice remains timely.

COMO-CAL's Website

We are happy to report we should have 5,000 hits on our new website in the not too distant future. That means folks are checking it out, making comments, and perhaps downloading information. That's all good.

This month we will begin uploading timely articles from COMO-CAL's THE VOICE. They deal with a huge array of topics, all of importance to the MH Community.

So if you haven't checked out www.comocal.org recently, now is the time to take a minute and see what we're doing to provide you more information.

Websites Of Interest

The magazine website can be found at mobilehomemagazine.org. All published magazines are there to be downloaded, in full or a page at a time. We will soon be transferring to mmhlife.org. So watch for the change.

Other websites that may be of interest of interest: http://mobilehomes.senate.ca.gov & savegsmol.org & http://www.mhaction.org/

To find out the corporate status of an organization, go to http://kepler.sos.ca.gov/

Low-Cost Housing Demand

Three public manufactured housing REITs generate 44% total return.

By Laura Kusisto April 21, 2015

Strong demand for low-cost housing is proving a boon for one of the real-estate industry's least glamorous sectors: companies that operate mobile-home parks.

Although few new mobile-home communities are being built, the larger companies in the sector are actively buying up the smaller players, reducing competition. At the same time, rising demand from families seeking space in the parks has allowed mobile-home landlords to raise rents, producing strong growth.

"I've been at this for about 10 years and I would say the demand right now for manufactured housing communities is at an all-time high," said Jonathon McClellan, senior director of the national manufactured home communities group at Marcus & Millichap. Mobile homes are also called manufactured homes because they are built in a factory and shipped to a community.

The three real-estate investment trusts in the sector—**Sun Communities Inc.,Equity LifeStyle Properties Inc. and UMH Properties Inc.**—all are seeing strong gains in the number of properties owned and in revenue.

Sun Communities, based in Southfield, Mich., for example, has nearly doubled its holdings since 2011 and now operates 249 communities with about 90,000 individual home sites compared with 136 communities with about 45,000 home sites.

John McLaren, Sun's president and chief operating officer, said the company was prompted to expand in part by low interest rates and the desire by many smaller owners to get out of the business. Average monthly rent at Sun Communities grew 2.5% to $456 in 2014 from $445 a month in 2013. The company reported net operating income for the same properties in the fourth quarter rose 6.2% compared with the same period a year earlier.

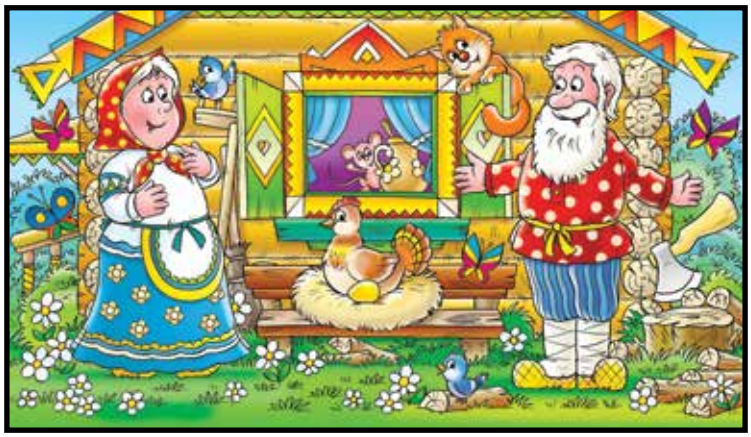
The three companies primarily own lots in communities and collect rent from homeowners for those sites.

http://www.wsj.com/articles/low-cost-housing-demand-boosts-mobile-home-park-operators-1429637304

A mouse story

The following was published in 2007 in THE VOICE. It is from Bob Lupo, then the GSMOL 571 President, Huntington Shorecliffs MHP, Huntington Beach http://gsmol571.com/

A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. "What food might this contain?" The mouse wondered - he was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap. Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning. "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!"



The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it." The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The pig sympathized, but said, "I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers." The mouse turned to the cow and said, "There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!" The cow said, "Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose."

So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap-- alone. That very night a sound was heard throughout the house -- like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital and she returned home with a fever. Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient. But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well; she died. So many people came for her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them. The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.

So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember -- when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

Story from MH Action

As we mentioned last month, Manufactured Housing Action (MHAction) is a special project of the Center for Community Change (CCC). MHAction is a growing national movement of manufactured home owners who engage in public policy issues that address their interests and concerns as homeowners on the local and state levels, as well as larger issues of retirement and economic security on the national level. This movement relies on the power of well-trained, committed grass roots leaders.

The work of MHAction is based on a set of core values, central to which are compassion for our neighbors and love of our communities. The focus of our campaign work is to balance short-term victories with long-term, structural change. Specifically, MHAction seeks to:

Win corporate accountability campaigns that protect the interests of manufactured homeowners,Activate homeowners to work on policy campaigns on the local, state and national levels designed to provide economic and retirement security protections,Recruit and develop leaders who can educate their communities and their peers on a wide variety of social and economic justice issues.

Here is another mobilehome owner's story:

I've reflected on why I took a trip to Chicago with the MHAction leadership team, and wanted to share those reflections and my personal story with everyone.

I was born and raised in Hartley, Iowa. My father was a truck drive and we moved around quite a bit, but I've always felt a deep personal connection to California. Now that I'm 63, I plan on living out my years in the Golden State.

I worked a variety of jobs my entire life, mostly in retail. For the last ten years, I've been working as a caregiver. I feel that care giving for the elderly, especially those with significant health issues, is a vitally important and rewarding profession. Care giving also seems to be a "calling" for my family. My mother and sister are also caregivers.

Given that we've all made modest wages as caregivers, we really needed to make sure that all of us could live in an affordable setting. We felt that moving into a manufactured home community provided us with the best option to do so. We could own our own home, live in a community with others and still put food on the table and pay for our basic necessities. That's when I decided to purchase a home in Royal Holiday, a community owned and operated by Equity Lifestyle Properties, Inc. (ELS), located in Hemet, CA.

However, if I had known as much about ELS as I do today, I would have never moved into one of their housing communities. They have raised the rent so high that many people have been forced to move out. Right now, there are over 60 vacancies in our community alone. To make matters worse, ELS has put virtually zero money into maintenance. ELS's infrastructure strategy seems to be to charge homeowners ground rent and put nothing back into the community. Our roads, sidewalks and waterlines are crumbling apart and breaking. It's really a disgrace.

Some days I want to hand in my keys and walk away, but given that I am now drawing my income from what I can pull together from care giving and a meager monthly Social Security check, I've decided to stay and fight for my right to live out my retirement affordably. And I want to get others involved.

This is exactly why I took a recent trip to Chicago with other manufactured home owners across the country. Our main goal was to build relationships with homeowners from a number of states and sharpen our skills to make large corporations like ELS more accountable to the needs of our community. Our time in Chicago focused on skill-building sessions that ranged from telling our stories effectively to social media training. We then put our training into immediate actions by attending an ELS shareholder meeting to share our concerns, and heading to Wells Fargo, a major ELS investor, to hold a protest (pictured above). We need investors like Wells to understand how their investment decisions are impacting our community and our way of life.

I returned from Chicago with renewed hope and vigor. I plan to put to use what I learned in Chicago to make sure that I and my community members, especially the seniors, can live out our lives in an affordable and safe manner. I truly believe that our country's strength is grounded in our ability to work together and care for each other. We are stronger when we recognize we rise or fall united, and are weaker when greed insists we be left to fend for ourselves.

I am asking you today to reach out to other manufactured home owners that are affected by these issues to get involved in the campaign. A very simple task you could ask your friends to do to get updates on the campaign is by 'liking' MHAction's Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/MHaction

by Debbie Boernsen, Hemet, California

Letters To The Editor

Hi Frank: As you can see I am awake early this Sunday morning mainly because this has been on my mind and I need to tell you about it. I am sending a check for $30.00 and this will be the last check as I have decided to discontinue receiving the MH Magazine for the group. There is very little interest and abounding apathy, in spite of my best efforts, and so I am stepping away from it. This is a personal as well as practical decision. It makes no sense to me to be the one to do the work of keeping a home owners organization running when other people are expecting "someone else" to do the work.

I have many things to do with my personal time, fixing my cars, fixing my home, tending my garden, which is the frame of mind I have these days, tending to my own garden, taking care of my own situation, not wasting my time trying to help other people to do what they should be doing for themselves.

Our park has transitioned over the past few years. Many home owners that once were the mainstays of the group have moved or passed on, replaced by people who don't care to join or don't speak English, both of which present a huge communication problem. Neither group can understand what we are trying to say. Actually, the only reason I have been President these many past years is because no one else wants the job.

I want you to know that I appreciate your efforts to organize mobile home owners and wish you continued good luck in your efforts. I will hang on as long as I can but I feel that my days are numbered. There are many things that I need to take time for and this home owner thing is getting to be too distracting. Yeah, people bitch because we can't keep the owner from raising the rent every year and they don't understand that there is nothing legally we can do to prevent that.

Most of the people here do not appreciate things like I do. Just as an example, we have a Christmas dinner, good food and all you can eat, yet many complained because they "should have had this" or "should have had that". It disgusted me to know that much about them personally, yet these are the people who I am supposed to band together with to form a cohesive front when fighting REAL problems of major significance? At that point I lost my heart for them, found myself not caring about helping people like that.

I grew up with family members who survived WW2 and the Depression, suffering through REAL heartache and deprivation. I myself grew up poor, but willing to work hard for what I get out of this world. It's hard for me to listen to people complain about not getting all that they want handed to them on a silver platter. These complainers are people who I do not wish to be associated with let alone represent.

OK, enough of this. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I know you have gone through a lot more than I have dealing with people of this sort so I'll shut up. Just wanted to let you know a little behind my reasons for my actions. Joe Hughes, Livermore, CA

Make Some $$?

We know everyone could use a little spending money. There are several ways you can earn (one resident already made $2200!) and help us help you at the same time:

1. Be a sponsor. Tell your friends and neighbors about COMO-CAL. When the sign up, have them enter your name in "Sponsored By." We can provide you with application forms, i.e. you can be our representative for your park or area.

   For every new membership you sponsor, we will pay you $5! Just fill out the enclosed "Sponsor" form and return to COMO-CAL, P.O. Box 3774, Chatsworth, CA. 91313. You both win when you split the $5. This way your friend gets a 10% discount and you get $2.50 as our way of saying Thank You!

2. Tell us about a business you'd like to see advertise in MH Life Magazine. Provide us with the business name, phone number and person to contact. Include your name and contact information. If your lead results in the business advertising in MH Life Magazine, you will get a finders fee based on a percentage of the display advertising cost. It could be as much as $70 per business referral! And all you have to do is call or email us!

3. If you know a business that wants to advertise, and you secure an ad, we will pay you a commission. For further information, please call Frank at 1-800-929-6061 or 818-886-6479. (One resident got us two full page ads and earned over $2200!)

4. Be a COMO-CAL / MH Life Magazine Representative for your area. Get a COMO-CAL membership FREE and a commission for any new COMO-CAL members you sign up or subscriptions.

Communication is Critical

Talk To Us

In order to provide the best possible service to you, we are now asking EVERY READER contact us, either by phone (800-929-6061 / 818-886-6479) or by email (fawodley@yahoo.com). This is our reasoning: a) We want to make sure you are actually receiving a magazine each month. b) We want to know if you read the magazine and it has value to you. If we do not hear from you, we can only assume either a) you don't get the magazine, i.e. can't read our request or b) you don't read the magazine and/or it has no value to you.

California is a big state and we reach only about 5% of MH owners. We work on a shoestring budget, often having to use our own money to keep the magazine going. If you don't want the magazine, then we won't continue to send it to you. This means the magazine is available to someone who will appreciate our efforts.

So we ask, take a couple minutes out of your busy day. Give us a call or send us an email. We always love hearing from you. Or if you prefer, fill out the questionnaire on page 15 and mail to MH Life Magazine, P.O. Box 3774, Chatsworth, CA. 91313.

Be an Observer

We can't help you unless you ask for help. To that end, we ask you to step up and provide us updates on what's happening in your park (on a monthly basis). Email is a must. Remember, volunteers live longer. Now you can help us help you. Plus we will give you a FREE membership in COMO-CAL.

Be A Distributor

It takes a dedicated group of volunteers to distribute 20,000 magazines every month. Some have been helping out for over two years - a big THANK YOU to all.

If you value receipt of the magazine and want to stay informed, please step up and help out with distribution in your park. This way, if your park distributor gets tired or simply can't deliver anymore, someone is available to help out and take his place. This is the only way we can guarantee an uninterrupted distribution. Today, several parks no longer receive the magazine because the volunteer couldn't deliver. Don't let this happen in your park.

Meet Frank Wodley, Publisher, MH Life Magazine

As I'm now busy publishing the magazine and running COMO-CAL (it is a full time job) and am 71, it is just not possible to travel California to chat with you in person; however I am available to video chat about MH Life Magazine, it's philosophy, its history and its future at a time convenient to both of us. Skype or ooVoo are two good options for online video calls. Both are easy and free to download if you have a computer and the an internet connection.

I'm happy to chat with individuals, groups at one location, or a limited number of individuals at different locations (conference call). This is a terrific way to include me in your HOA or resident meetings. Just meet in a location with wireless access.

Just send me an email at fawodley@yahoo.com or call me at 818-886-6479. We can set up a time and date to chat.

Our June 2015 Survey

From time to time we publish a survey or opinion poll in the magazine. Why? Because we publish the magazine for YOU and your opinion is very important to us. The Survey on page 15 is just the first of three Surveys. The others will be published in the July and August 2015 issues of MH Life Magazine.

Rest assure, if you send us a completed Survey, we will take note! And remember, anything you provide us will be kept confidential. We share with no one. The cumulative results of the Surveys will be published in MH Life Magazine.

We thank you in advance for your participation. You will begin to see changes in the magazine almost immediately. Our hope is more and more MH owners will embrace the magazine and even begin providing content. After all, it is your magazine.

Practical Enforcement Of Your Rights

Editor's Note: This is an article written by an attorney who was employed by COMO-CAL several years ago. Although no longer with COMO-CAL, he does have some good advice, advice which is relevant today. We believe much can be done without an attorney, especially if folks unite. We can do much via MH Life Magazine. We expect, once the FILLS Program (Free Individual Limited Legal Services) is activated, to have an attorney available to write letters and consult with us about member issues.

As an attorney practicing mobilehome law, I have heard from many mobilehome residents who expect mobilehome park owners to follow mobilehome park laws. These expectations are completely fair. Everyone should recognize and follow the law applicable to his or her business, right? Right, but in the real world it doesn't work that way.

Few, if any, laws are genuinely self-executing. Even where a public agency is authorized or required to enforce a law, the agency may be lax in doing so or unable to do so timely and consistently, especially in these days of unprecedented state budget restraints. Although many employees of state and local are genuinely conscientious in their work, some may not be and many are simply overburdened.

It's often said but less often done: "If you want anything done right, do it yourself." Certainly that lesson is apt for mobilehome residents. Some, but not all mobilehome park owners and managers, believe that residents are too intimidated, unsophisticated or financially constrained to challenge park positions and actions that are or may be unlawful. Too many park residents conclude that "I know it's wrong, but what can I do? I don't want to be evicted!"

Never shy away from asserting your rights under applicable law. The Mobilehome Residency Law ("MRL"), California Civil Code sections 798 through 798.11, provides for compensatory damages, punitive damages and $2,000 per MRL violation in appropriate cases. That $2,000 "kicker" is available even in small claims cases. (Civ. Code, §798.86.) Anyone prevailing in an MRL suit may be awarded their attorney fees and court costs. (Civ. Code, §798.85 .)

Moreover, despite the understandable fears of some mobilehome residents, many park owners and managers will heed the word of residents' counsel if well taken and timely asserted. Residents have recently been successful, with the assistance of counsel, in defeating illegal rent increases, halting management harassment, protecting quiet enjoyment of leased spaces, enforcing mobilehome improvement and tree maintenance rights, confirming common area open hours and use rights, and challenging unlawful evictions, to cite a few of many examples. While the MRL is not perfect and does not address every vulnerability of mobilehome residents, it is one of several useful tools for maintaining and improving the quality of life of mobilehome residents. All of these accomplishments have been achieved by correspondence and conversation only – no lawsuits and no long delays.

In many of these instances only two elements were required: a mobilehome resident willing to stand up for his or her rights and an attorney willing to listen to and help him or her. COMO-CAL soon will provide the second element.

For a modest fee any California mobilehome resident can join COMO-CAL's program. Once the resident joins, he or she has access to expert legal advice and basic legal services such as correspondence and telephone calls, all at very affordable rates. Many of the common complaints of mobilehome residents can be resolved with these simple steps. If further action is required, including lawsuits, residents are informed of the costs and prospects up front.

But protection of mobilehome residents' rights necessarily begins with the residents. I don't know, but I suppose that many meritorious claims are foregone merely because the aggrieved resident feels too intimidated or powerless to take even the first steps. Please don't fall into that abyss. If you feel wronged and want to know what you can do to set things right, join COMO-CAL's legal program and gain access to one of the experienced attorneys participating in it. You'll receive sound advice and sensitive, dedicated representation. Remember that laws don't enforce themselves – people enforce them. And no one will do anything unless you take action first.

Aricle by JON STANLEY HEIM, Attorney at Law

Join Our Growing Family

Remember you receive many benefits when you join COMO-CAL. We pledge to be open, transparent, and will work with other advocates willing to work with us. We are the only state-wide advocate that can make such a claim. And remember, we have a seven year history successfully helping members. In fact, we saved our members more money than all membership fees combined! That's a real accomplishment.

We don't just take your $25 and disappear. We send all members a welcome letter with their join date and membership number. You are guaranteed a one year subscription to MH Life Magazine, and a FREE 38 page Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Handbook. And we are available to consult with you when you need us. Isn't that alone worth the membership fee? Plus we have the FILLS Program.

Free Legal Assistance

We are the only advocacy group offering legal assistance. (See details of our FILLS Program in the May issue.) How does it work? Essentially, if you have an issue and it requires the help of an attorney, you will receive attorney assistance FREE when you are a paid COMO-CAL member.

There are two conditions: a) COMO-CAL must have at least 1,000 members to activate the program (that means we have a legal fund of $5,000), and b) You must be a member for at least 45 days before it is available to you.

Discount Memberships

Now, until further notice, we are offering a 10% discount plus a thank you check of $2.50 for each new member you sponsor. See details on page 11 Everyone wins!

The Ball is in Your Court

We have presented our case. We have a history of helping the MH Community and are proud of our many accomplishments. Others believe in us also. Just read some of their testimonials on page 11 of the March/April issue of MH Life.

As you can see from the scenario on page 4, COMO-CAL can guide you through the maze of obstacles. And we can help you organize so that you are empowered yourself.

Thank You

Finally we would like to thank all our supporters, those who have joined COMO-CAL, subscribed to MH Life Magazine, distributed magazines, and/or helped us secure advertising. We want to especially thank the HOA of Indian Springs Park in Palm Desert for their kind, continuing donations! Their donations help make the magazine available to so many.

MH Life Subscription & COMO-CAL Membership Application

NAME:_____Date:_____

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MAILING ADDRESS:_____SPONSORED BY:_____

E-MAIL:_____

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- ☐ Annual Membership in COMO-CAL ($25): $_____
- ☐ I support COMO-CAL & MH Life Magazine. I want to donate $_____
- ☐ Annual Subscription to MH Life Magazine - hard copy ($15/year): $_____
- ☐ I will volunteer to help out, I will deliver magazines in my park
- ☐ I will be a sponsor & promote COMO-CAL membership in my park
- ☐ I subscribed or joined. Yes, I want to receive a FREE FAQ Handbook (a $6 value)

Make Checks for MH Life Sub. Payable to "MH Life" or COMO-CAL Membership to "COMO-CAL"

MAIL TO: Mobilehome Magazine, P.O. BOX 3774 , Chatsworth, CA. 91313 6/2015

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Survey - Tell Us What You Prefer

From time to time we like to get your feedback. In this Survey you can use an X in the More or an X in Less column. For example, if you like jokes, put an X in the More column for "jokes." If you don't like "jokes," put an X in the Less column for "jokes."

Note: You can also indicate your priorities using #1 thru #10 (1=low, 10=high) instead of a X. For example, if you really, really like to read newspaper articles, you can put a #10 in the **More** column for newspapers. If you never want to see something, use a #0 (zero) in the **More** column.

Send survey to MH Life Magazine, P.O. Box 3774, Chatsworth, CA. 91313. All information will be kept confidential.

More	Less	Type of Content
		Fluff (filler material)
		Jokes
		Crossword Puzzles
		Recipes
		Other**
		Advocacy / Laws / Advice
		Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL)
		MRL simplified & explained
		Suggestions & Tips
		Specific examples of issues in parks
		Management
		Interference of Sales
		Enforcement of the law
		Legislation
		Rent Control
		Real life stories from park residents
		Information on other advocates
		GSMOL
		Regional advocates
		Park owner groups (WMA)
		Other MH related content*
		Other types of content
		Mobilehome Improvement
		Health
		Finances / money
		Technology
		Advertising
		Business Directory
		Other**

Yes	No	Source of Content
		Newspaper
		Park Manager*
		Park Owner*
		Owner's Representative*
		Legislator*
		Park Resident
		Attorney*
		Psychologist
		MH Life Staff
		Frank Wodley
		Donna Matthews
		HOA Leader
		City Leader*
		Other (use another sheet)

More	Less	As Is	Magazine Details
			Font size (Type size)
			Number of pages
			Graphics (Photos)
			Frequency / # issues

More	Less	MH Life & COMO-CAL
		Information about MH Life
		Information about COMO-CAL
		MH Life Magazine - subscribe
		MH Life Magazine - donate to
		COMO-CAL - join
		COMO-CAL - donate to

*Difficult to obtain articles from these sources.

** Use another sheet please

We Thank You For Your Participation

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