

Mobilehome Magazine

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In this issue:

Oceanside Vacancy Control

The Mobilehome Park Business

Park Condition Survey

Test Your Knowledge

Trailer Tales

Choosing a Contractor

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FROM THE EDITOR



In This Issue

Much is happening around the state as you receive this issue - new legislation in Sacramento, rent control, vacancy decontrol, failure to maintain, condo conversions, managers harassing and intimidating residents, etc.

I'd like to dedicate this issue to our friends and neighbors in Oceanside who are literally fighting for their lives. Come June 5th, Oceanside voters will decide on Proposition E: Vacancy Decontrol. If E passes, it will have devastating consequences, not only on 2,500 families in Oceanside, but on 6,600 families in Los Angeles and another 60,000 families state-wide. Read more on pages 6-8.

In any conflict it is important to know your adversary. In our case, as owners of mobilehomes in rental parks, the adversary may be your park owner. (Not all park owners are greedy, care nothing about their residents, and will do almost anything to increase their bottom line. But many exhibit these qualities.) If you have a computer it doesn't take much time searching the internet to find information on park owners, investors of mobilehome parks and their representatives. Read pages 10-11, the articles may open your eyes to the real business of rental mobile/manufactured home parks - both from a tenant prospective and from a business prospective.

Have you been reading every issue of MHMag . Now you can test your knowledge. See page 12.

The attorney group in San Diego (Endemen, Lincoln, Turek, and Heater) are famous as the "go to" group when residents have park maintenance issues. If your park has problems with utilities (gas, water, electric or sewer), or common areas (the pool, clubhouse, streets, lighting...), you can do something about it. You need our "Park Condition Survey." See page 14. Just give us a call or send us an e-mail, and we are happy to send it along and help you compile the results. Then you can use it to put your park owner on notice.

Getting MHMag for the first time? Read about Mobilehome Magazine and why it is so important on page 14 (bottom). "This and That" on page 15 includes info on the website, an update on COMO-CAL, other suggestions, and much more.

We are happy to re-print three pages from Upwardly Mobile Magazine (Thank you Tony Gump) - Episode's 2 and 3 of Trailer Tales and How to Find a Contractor. Pages 16-17 & page 19.

Our friend and long time mobilehome owner advocate Donna Matthews presents her views on HCD, Title 25 and enforcement - see page 21. Donna feels if HCD were doing their job, failure to maintain issues would no longer exist.

Finally, meet me and my family on page 23.

ENJOY! And thanks for reading and supporting MHMag.

Frank A. Wodley,
Editor & Publisher

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CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA 91313

(818) 886-6479 (OFFICE)

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Frank Wodley

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COMMUNITY FORUM - Oceanside Vacancy Control



Editors Note: This article was written and submitted to the North County Times, a local Oceanside newspaper, in support my friends and neighbors in Oceanside in their battle to retain rent and vacancy control. To date it has not been published.

Do the owners of mobilehomes have the same rights as other Americans? My friend Milt Burdick, long time mobilehome owner and advocate, recites the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag "and justice for some." Often owners of mobilehomes do not get justice.

For years mobilehome park owners have been fighting hard at the state level to rid California of rent control, namely Proposition 199 (1999), Proposition 90 (1996), and Proposition 98 (2008). If you recall, their Proposition 98 was very deceptive. Although on the surface it was about Eminent Domain, it was really about eliminating rent control, i.e. it was a Trojan horse. Pretty sneaky, huh! Fortunately many organizations (not just mobilehome advocates) united under the NO on 98 Coalition to educate the voters. Ultimately all propositions were soundly defeated.

If you recall park owners pledged to "return to the fight" after Proposition 98 lost. Today their strategy: lobby city councils and voters with misinformation. The park owners continue their deceptive ways in Oceanside. They want everyone to believe:

a) Mobile/manufactured home owners live

in trailers or coaches that can be easily picked up and moved. And the owners of trailers or coaches are simply low income "trailer trash" not worth any notice.

b) The Oceanside referendum does not affect anyone living in a mobilehome park today. Only those who will purchase homes in the future, i.e. they are not harming anyone.

c) Many park residents are rich and are "taking advantage" of park owners.

d) Parks under rent control are close to "closing their doors" because profits are so low

The verifiable truth:

a) Mobile/manufactured homes are not mobile; however they can be relocated at considerable expense – perhaps \$15,000 to \$25,000. Often times they are as nice as a "stick built" home. They are not "recreational vehicles."

b) Here in Los Angeles, park owners want to raise rents to \$1700 (see March/April Mobilehome Magazine page 8 (mobilehomemagazine.org)). In my case (I pay \$800/month), I'd lose approximately \$90,000 in equity. Park owners please tell me you are not hurting me! What a joke. A bad joke.

c) This is simply false. Most are seniors on fixed incomes or low income folks.

d) Any rent over approximately \$200/month is PROFIT. In reality, mobile / manufactured home parks are cash cows. They are among the most profitable businesses in America. How many businesses return a 60% profit?

So what is the ultimate solution? In my opinion, it is simple. All "rental" parks should be outlawed. Cities and counties should help residents PURCHASE these rental parks and eliminate this power struggle. Only attorneys are getting rich. Sure, pay the park owner fair compensation. But come on, mobilehome owners live in AMERICA. We are property owners too. Allow us the same rights as other AMERICANS!

Frank Wodley,

Founder and ex-President of the COMO-CAL:
Coalition of Mobilehome Owners – California
Publisher /Editor of Mobilehome Magazine.

Vacancy Decontrol according to park owners

This information was taken from the YES on E website, i.e. those who do not want vacancy control in Oceanside. It is full of half truths and lies: [Editor's comments in BLUE](#).

Recently, the Oceanside City Council approved Vacancy Decontrol, an amendment to our city's Mobile Home Rent Control Ordinance, which maintains and protects rent control for all residents for as long as they live in the parks, and allows rents to increase to market levels only when current residents move.

Current residents will still receive the same protections and benefits of rent control they have always received. Vacancy decontrol has absolutely NO impact on current residents for as long as they choose to continue living in their space.

The forgoing is essentially true, as far as it goes. The lie comes when 1) an owner goes to sell his home or 2) when an owner dies and tries to leave the home to his heirs.

In 1), Vacancy Decontrol essentially [takes all equity in the home](#). Residents who have put their life savings into the home and improvements are left with NOTHING. I'd say this has a HUGE impact!

In 2), heirs can not inherit the owners property unless they LIVE with the owner prior to his death, essentially meaning property CAN NOT be inherited!

The council took this action for several reasons, including:

1. to reduce the costs of rent control bureaucracy and litigation to taxpayers ([This is not true. In fact residents have paid most of the costs](#)).

2. to balance the interests of both park residents and park owners ([park owners are the only winners](#)) by ensuring that park residents continue to receive rent control benefits for as long as they live in the park, while allowing property owners to receive market rents on mobile home spaces as they are vacated over the next 25 years, and,

3. to provide stability and prevent additional mobilehome park closures, which could continue to occur as property owners seek better returns on their investments. ([Rent control guarantees a fair return for part owners. If park owners are so concerned about the viability of their park, I'm sure residents would be happy to purchase the park at a fair price.](#))

Vacancy decontrol is needed because Oceanside's ability to maintain mobile home parks as an affordable housing option is threatened ([really? You mean if E passes, the rents at \\$1500/month would be more affordable than \\$500 of today?](#)). Mobile home park owners currently do not receive a reasonable return on their investment ([this is not true because rent control guarantees them a fair rate of return](#)).

Does vacancy decontrol will prevent current residents from selling their mobilehome coaches?

YES ON E SAYS: No. An independent study conducted by the City of Chula Vista found that our county's highest coach resale prices are found in Escondido, a city which implemented full vacancy decontrol over 20 years ago. In fact, the study found that sales prices for coaches were 25% more in Escondido than in Oceanside. Vacancy decontrol will also prevent new residents in Oceanside's mobile-home parks from being forced to pay unfairly inflated prices for coaches simply to gain access to a park with rent control."

YES ON E SAYS: In actuality, park residents will be able to sell their coaches for their actual market value. One unintended (and arguable) consequence of Oceanside's strict mobile home rent control laws is that it has artificially driven up the purchase price of coaches in rent controlled parks.

Effectively, the property owners' land value has been transferred to the coach owner upon sale of the coach simply by virtue of its location in a rent-controlled park. This inflated value for the coach is not part of the assessed value used to determine the annual tax paid by coach owners.

Vacancy decontrol eliminates this unintended quirk, allowing the landowner to retain their property value, existing coach owners to sell their coaches for fair market value, and new mobile home park residents to avoid inflated costs.

THE TRUTH: The value of a home decreases \$1000 for every \$10 of rent increase. That's a fact. If E passes, park owners can legally raise rents for buyers to any amount. For example, a \$500/month rent increase would mean a home's value would decrease by \$50,000.

Residents have lived with vacancy control for 30 years. Now park owners want to take that away. Don't let that happen, VOTE NO ON E.

What the Loss of Vacancy Control Meant to Escondido MHO

I saw the disgusting "Community Forum" article in the Times Advocate last week, written by some woman park owner. It seems her family has several parks in Oceanside. I wonder how many they bought while rent control was already there. I don't see anyone using Escondido as an example.

Since our incompetent City Attorney lost the Thompson lawsuit, we don't have Vacancy Control either. Rents DOUBLE upon resale. Even if residents sell, they lose about 40% equity, due entirely to Vacancy Decontrol. Mr. Thompson bought his first park in Escondido while rent control was in force & has bought 2 more here since. Of course he doesn't live here, as no park owner does in our 23 parks.

Personally, I live in an ROP (resident owned park) park & have since '91. In 1994, I started putting out an ROP report & have updated it every 2 yrs. When I moved here, the HOA Fee (space rent) was \$85 & that INCLUDED sewer, water & trash. We also have a contract with COX & pay \$34/mo. for TV cable in every space. Today, we pay \$147/mo. HOA & it never goes up unless WE vote it. So, we're averaging \$3.50 MO increase, per year. Throughout the '90'S I brought this to the attention of politicians in Escondido, Oceanside & tens of resident associations around the state. Today, we pay \$147/mo., including sewer, water, trash, mgr, landscape etc. If you allow \$70/mo. for the sewer, water & trash, landscape, management, etc, it's easy to see that the average TOTAL cost to maintain an ROP is the \$70/month.

ALL rent over that is PROFIT PER SPACE. Now you can easily see/prove the park owner

profit is unconscionable & a total rip-off. Several years ago, the WMA (Western Manufactured Housing Association - the park owners group) monthly newsletter reported my information was being passed around the state, BUT, they never challenged it. It might behoove your group to contact the ELTH (Attorney group Endemen, Lincoln, Turek and Heater) law firm in San Diego. I'm sure for a reasonable fee, they can PROVE all I'm saying and they can provide a plethora of more damaging info proving park owner profits. Also, as further proof, my park has over \$300,000 in our Reserves. I don't know a single rental park the even has a Reserve Fund.

ELTH makes over \$30,000,000 a year & only sues park owners. To my knowledge they've yet to lose their first case. Very soon, the park owners will fill every mailbox in Oceanside with their baloney. I think the Times Advocate policy is to NOT PRINT political info, including "Letters to the Editor" two weeks BEFORE an election.

Resident groups should be flooding newspapers NOW & be passing out flyers at every super-market, shopping store, etc., the last two weeks. What works GREAT is a FULL PAGE AD in the most popular paper in town, the SUNDAY before election. Works like a charm. It should list the TRUE profits parks are making & other supporting info for your cause.

Papers will print anything you pay for. Just speaking from experience at BEATING park owners and politicians and their attorneys throughout the 90's, including a 9-0 U.S. Supreme Court decision. I know that Oceanside has been to court numerous times in the past & always on the winning side per my knowledge. Resident groups MUST be on the offense & NOT the defense. Educating the public WILL win for residents.

Why won't park owners sell to residents (or anyone) if the profits are so low? Residents CAN PROVE "Park Profits ARE Astronomical". Time to get going as the parks will soon start spending. Good Luck & I'm available to donate or help in any way.

Jerry Lenhard, Escondido.

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What Park Owners Think of Their Residents (Part 1)

Editor's Note: The following is taken from a park owner memo sent to residents who were interested in purchasing his park. Part 2 will be presented in the July/August 2012 issue of Mobilehome Magazine.

Here are some facts about investing in Manufactured Home Communities (MH Communities or "Parks") that set them apart from an investment in commercial office, retail, industrial, garden apartment, and other types of "core" real estate assets:

- Definable rent upside: Key question when looking at a potential MH acquisition is

- Do the homes in the park sell for more than they would if they were NOT in the park and were in a dealer's lot? If the answer is "YES," then you know the rents are too low. In effect, the premium placed on the home as a result of it being in a good park is equity that has shifted to the homeowner away from the landowner. One of the keys to Our Company's strategy is to find parks where this situation exists and to gradually (or not so gradually) shift the excess equity that sits in the house back to the land (park) owner by increasing the lot rental rates.

By way of example: When Our Company purchased (park name) in (city), homes sold for about a 50% premium to where they would sell if not in the park but in a dealer's lot - about \$45,000 - \$65,000. Since acquisition, rents have been increased 50% within 3 years. The homes now sell for about where they would if they were in a dealer's lot (about \$25,000 - \$30,000) and the value of the park is up from the \$4.80MM purchase price to approximately \$7.0MM. Equity invested was \$950K, which has been increased to about \$2.85MM within 3 years of ownership simply by increasing rents and "taking back" the equity that was "held captive" in the residents' homes by virtue of the low rents being charged by the prior owner.

- Leverage over tenants in terms of rent collection - If a MH resident does not pay rent the land owner's recourse is to lien their home and ultimately take it to a sheriff's sale to recoup past due rent. This leverage is far superior to garden apartment investments because if an apartment tenant can't pay rent they may lose a security deposit but they can simply move out (often in the middle of the night) and find a new home (apartment). With mobile home delinquency, if a resident does not pay rent he/she not only loses a security deposit but they literally lose their home and likely their equity investment with it.

- Diversification of tenant risk - Unlike retail, office, or industrial property where a tenant that "goes dark" can substantially impair your cash flow and perhaps your ability to meet debt service payments, you do not have this risk in MH Community investment. MH Communities have many residents each representing a small part of the revenue stream so even if 10% leave due to rent level the rent increase covers the increase in vacancy loss.

- Lack of new development/more stable supply - There has rarely been a situation where an overbuilding of mobile home parks has saturated a particular sub-market. It is generally very difficult to get approvals for new parks (the "Not In My Back Yard" NIMBY factor comes into play politically), especially in good locations where land is valuable.

- Increasing demand in the face of decreasing supply/"Baby boomer" demographics effect - Many MH communities, especially in growth markets, have been closed for higher and better uses. This dynamic is occurring at the same time that building new parks is very difficult and the baby boomers are selling their homes and downsizing or buying inexpensive factory built homes as second "snow bird" homes in winter destination MH Communities. Therefore, over time the supply of well-located parks relative to demand will fall, creating additional upward pressure on rents.

- Land play potential: Many possible exit strategies - Office tower or other real estate types require significant funds to develop the improvements. Therefore, the practicality of razing the structure(s) to develop a "higher and better use" is questionable and a very expensive proposition. MH Communities, on the other hand, can be vacated in relative short order and the common area improvements are generally not that substantial. As well, you can close a Mobilehome community at will for the most part for a higher and better use, you cannot do so with office or retail as you must deal with the existing long term lease rights of the tenants as they have non-disturbance agreements. Finally, as Our Company has proven several times, the ability to sell the community to the residents at a premium via condo or cooperative conversion is an alternative exit strategy. Of course a sale to another owner/operator is also an option.

Read Part 2 in the next issue of MHMag.

How to Handle the Tenants in a Mobile Home Park

Editor's Note: The following article may be seen at: http://www.mobilehomeparkstore.com/articles/mhp_articles.htm. It's author, Frank Rolfe, runs a university for mobile/manufactured home park investors: <http://www.mobilehomeuniversity.com/mobile-home-bootcamp.php>.

"The #1 GOAL that we have for our mobile home park boot camp attendees is to make sure they

come away with all the tools to take it to the next step... FINDING A DEAL and MANAGING THAT DEAL PROFITABLY!"

Both websites are a wealth of information - most mobilehome owners would be interested in how the park business is run. This will open your eyes.

We hope you enjoy and learn from the article.

In Kung Fu, the concept is to combat aggression with the least amount of human effort and movement. Evidently the oriental masters' theories can be applied to mobile home parks. The best way to handle mobile home park tenants is to use very little effort to pretty much ignore 99% of what they say and do.

COMPLAINTS

There is no point to listening to tenant complaints that you have no intention of acting on. If you have recently converted your park's curb side service to dumpster and all the tenants hate it, and you have no interest in changing it back to curbside, then why would you waste your time listening to them complain? A better plan is to let them phone in their complaints to voice mail, and then erasing them all at the end of each day, without even listening to them other than to verify it is a complaint on trash. This is why it is a good idea to have a regular phone line with voice mail as the tenants key contact and then always let it go to voice mail. Never give out your cell number to a tenant.

COLLECTIONS

Nothing your tenant can say can make up for not paying the rent. Either they have paid or not. If they have, then you have nothing to talk about. If they haven't then they need to pay their rent. You need cash not conversation. Don't waste your time discussing why the rent's not there. If they don't pay, evict them. If they do then don't. But there is absolutely no point in discussing the situation. Often, the tenant will want to talk to you to make a payment plan. You never want to accept payment plans. So there really is nothing the tenant can say to stave off eviction. So don't waste your time.

RULES

Adopt some basic, simple rules that are obvious and you feel enthusiastically must be kept. The best of these are no non-running vehicles, no big trash in yards, and no ridiculously tall grass. Once you have derived these basic essentials, then when you cite tenants for abusing the rules, or tow their non-running cars, you should feel free to ignore their calls. If they call to scream and vent their anger, there is little point to listening to it. So let it go to the voice mail, and then erase it without listening to it unless you want a good laugh.

EVERYTHING ELSE

When driving through your park, and a tenant approaches your car to tell you something, pretend you don't see them and drive off. There is nothing they can say that has any importance to you or your property. If you have lots of time on your hands, and don't mind chit-chatting with the tenant, then feel free to learn about the movies, and the weather, and how cool a hemi engine would be. As for me, I'd rather reserve my free time for my family.

CONCLUSION

It sounds cruel, but ignoring your tenants is often the best business move in a mobile home park. They can drive you nuts if you listen to them or, even worse, try to please them. There is no solution to their problems certainly none that you would want to participate in, like letting them live free for a few months. So, rather than put yourself in a lose/lose position, just avoid it altogether. I have never had a situation that could be improved through one-on-one conversation with a tenant, either by phone or in person.

So put a karate chop to your tenant's time wasting, and just avoid contact altogether.

By Frank Rolfe

Test Your Knowledge (Answers on page 15 bottom right)

1. If you live in Los Angeles, are you covered by rent control?
a) True b) False
2. What is Vacancy Decontrol?
a) Cap on buyers rent b) No cap on buyers rent
3. Your park can evict you for non-payment of rent
a) True b) False c) Not that simple
4. Name two sets of laws that define our rights as owners of mobilehomes.
a) HCD & LAMHPTF
b) WMA & GSMOL
c) MRL & Title 25
d) None of the above
5. If your rent is due on the 1st of the month, when is it late?
a) 5th b) 6th c) 7th d) none of these
6. You must get pre-approval from management when you distribute literature in your park.
a) True b) False c) Not that simple.
7. Management must give you a copy of the MRL (Mobilehome Residency Law) by February 1st if significant changes in the law were made the previous year.
a) True b) False
8. A seven day notice is not a legal document, it is just a warning.
a) True b) False
9. Rent control does not guarantee a fair return on a park owner's investment. After all MH Parks are a business.
a) True b) False
10. Rent control is a law. Once in effect it can not be changed or eliminated.
a) True b) False
11. The law allows a non-resident to distribute literature in a park.
a) True b) False
12. If Proposition E passes in Oceanside this June 5th, it will not affect current residents.
a) True b) False

HANDBOOK

MOBILEHOME RESIDENCY
LAW (MRL)

58 FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS
& ANSWERS

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Committee on Manufactured Homes
and Communities

Distributed by MHMag

Now that parks will not automatically distribute the MRL, this HANDBOOK is a must for all homeowners. The 36 page Frequently Asked Questions and Answers HANDBOOK is designed to answer 58 of the most pressing questions homeowners have about the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL). This informative HANDBOOK is published by COMO-CAL, a name known for its grass roots advocacy in California (now closed).

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another Zone / per Zone -
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Park Condition Survey

All MH park residents in California deserve to live in a well maintained park. The park owned infrastructure (electric, gas, water, sewer, roads, common areas, etc) must be maintained to satisfactory standards. These systems should be repaired promptly and correctly when there is a problem. Many of these standards are part of the law (the California Health & Safety Code - Title 25).

Unfortunately, park owners, especially those in rent controlled areas, often don't maintain their parks properly. That's because doing so cuts into their profits.

Conditions can be improved by approaching your park owner as an organized group, and asking him to properly maintain the park where you live. The best tool for this job is a resident "park condition" survey.

Are you a leader in your park? Are you concerned enough to take action? If you are, distribute a survey to each home in the park. In this process, you will meet your neighbors and start to get organized.

Once the survey results are compiled, you'll need to do two things:

(1) Share the results of the survey with the owner by sending him a letter. List the problems and ask him to fix them immediately.

(2) If things aren't fixed within a reasonable time, your resident group has various options to force the park owner to comply.

Don't be intimidated by your park owner or his representatives. Stand up for your rights as a group. Get the respect you deserve. There is strength in numbers. This will take some leadership, time and effort. However, a park condition survey is an excellent way to start improving things where you live.

If you don't speak up as a group, it's likely things will never change.

MHMag can provide you with the survey form and a sample letter to the owner. Simply contact Frank at 818-886-6479 or fawodley@yahoo.com

What is Mobilehome Magazine & Why is It So Important?

Many of you may be receiving this magazine for the first time. MHMag is a free magazine. It is published every other month exclusively for owners of mobile/manufactured homes in California. First published September 2011, 6,000- 7,000 copies per issue have been distributed primarily in the Los Angeles area; however we are hoping to expand into all of Southern California soon. This time we are printing 6,500 copies.

MHMag is the dream project of Frank Wodley, the founder of COMO-CAL. There are other "magazines" in California; however they are often the voice of park owners and managers. Because residents in rental parks are often vulnerable to unscrupulous park owners, they need more. Residents need honest, accurate information. They need to know they are not alone, and they need to know someone cares about them. MHMag is a source of important information to assist residents in protecting their lifestyle and investment.

This time the magazine will be distributed in the Antelope, San Fernando, and Santa Clarita Valleys. Delivery is by US Mail, and by hand. Anyone can request magazines for their park, just give us a call or

send us an e-mail. Contact info is found below.

MHMag continues the tradition of COMO-CAL's THE VOICE, rated as the best, most informative newsletter in California. In our latest website poll (www.mobilehomemagazine.org), 83% rated MHMag as terrific.

Publishing MHMag is a huge undertaking. In addition to the blood, sweat and tears, it takes MONEY - thousands of dollars to publish each issue.

To date about 4% or 250 have subscribed. That's a start, but we will not survive unless more residents get involved. A subscription (p.21) is just \$6/year - the price of a hamburger! A price everyone can afford.

The only way you can guarantee getting MHMag is to subscribe. Don't go it alone. Be informed. Team up with us and together we will make a difference.

Remember, supporting us not only helps yourself but your friends and neighbors. And supporting MHMag helps us expand into other areas of California. Soon we may cover the whole state. That would be TERRIFIC! WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Mobilehome Magazine This & That

MHMAG WEBSITE

Please visit our website at www.mobilehome-magazine.org. The home page displays previous issues, you can flip through the pages, read the articles, and even print anything of interest. We are working to get an archive of THE VOICE, so you can refer back to articles in that publication also.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Why not have bulletin board in your park, for the exclusive use by residents? Where residents can post something for sale, make an announcement, display MHMag, etc. Of course it would require someone to watch over it, and perhaps a simple list of do's and don'ts. But what a terrific way to communicate with your neighbors.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beginning next issue (August 1st) of MHMag we will publish letters to the editor. So make your voice heard. If you have a comment, please send it to us.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EXPANSION

Soon we will offer the magazine in Orange, Riverside, and the area between San Luis Obispo and Ventura. Our intention is to distribute 10,000 magazines per area. That's a lot of work - please step up and volunteer to lend a hand.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR PARK

Let us know and we will put it into the Magazine. Call Frank @ 818-886-6479.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Have something to sell? Next issue we will have a "Classified Advertising Section." The rate for one issue is \$6.00/line, 4 line minimum.

DONATIONS

Yes, please donate if you believe in MHMag.

DELIVERY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE

The next issue should reach you about August 1, 2012, but only if we get enough subscriptions... remember our goal is for 1,000 - get your subscription in, don't think the other guy will do it. If you value MHMag, please support it.

COMO-CAL UPDATE

This issue of MHMag is being delivered to all current COMO-CAL members. You recently received a BALLOT which will determine whether or not COMO-CAL will officially be closed. The Board of Directors recommends closure because COMO-CAL has no assets or money.

Many have been concerned and sad; however please know that Mobilehome Magazine has come forth from the ashes of COMO-CAL. Now for considerably less money (\$6 vs \$25), you will have a VOICE that will reach far and wide. MHMag has already published over 30,000 copies and hopes soon reach all of Southern California.

And a big thank you to the Board of Directors who have met countless times since November 2011. Without their support there wouldn't have been a COMO-CAL or MHMag.

As a COMO-CAL member, you can lead your friends and neighbors by supporting MHMag. Volunteer to be a representative in your park - help distribute MHMag to your neighbors. What better way to help us help you!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We try to keep a positive attitude, but it is disappointing to see how few have subscribed to date (about 4%). The only cities with more than 5 subscriptions are Canoga Park (27), Chatsworth (28), Pacific Palisades (13), Sylmar (8), Carson (8) and Mission Hills (6). If you haven't subscribed, you will not continue to get MHMag! Now you can subscribe online at www.mobilehomemagazine.org by using PayPal and a credit card. PLEASE SUBSCRIBE! IT'S JUST \$6.00/YR. When you subscribe, everyone benefits!

FAQ HANDBOOK

Mobilehome Magazine will continue selling the COMO-CAL FAQ Handbook, a must have for all mobilehome owners. It gives simple explanations of laws that protect you. Now only \$4.00 - it is the best investment you'll ever make.

ANSWERS TO TEST YOUR KNOWLEGE

1a, 2b, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6b, 7b, 8b, 9b, 10b, 11b, 12b

Upwardly Mobile Magazine - Trailer Tales #2

TRAILER TALES



Mobilehome Magazine would again like to thank Toni Gump and Upwardly Mobile Magazine for the right to reproduce this series of Trailer Tales & For Your Files. For more information about Upwardly Mobile Magazine please go to:
<http://umhmag.com/main/>

The screen door shudders to a close as Doris returns from the kitchen with a box of Nabiscos.

“Cookies?” she offers the ladies.

“No, thanks,” answers Marge. “Just a little more coffee.”

Doris flushes. “I swear, I’m surprised I can still remember my own name sometimes!” She disappears back into the house and returns with the coffee pot. She gives Marge a refill. “So, what were we talking about?” she says. “Oh, yeah. The lovebirds.”

“Dish!” says Pearl.

“Well, you know Donna, who lives next to where Zippy moved in?” Pearl and Marge nod with anticipation.

“She was over yesterday. I colored her hair. She’s going to Las Vegas for her grandson’s graduation. He’s a cute kid! And she really has beautiful hair. Marge, you should do your hair that color.”

“And...,” urges Pearl.

“Oh, okay. So the manager was over at Zippy’s the other night and Donna heard them giggling and playing loud music and saw them drinking on the porch. She said the manager didn’t leave ‘til after midnight! Donna saw her leave. She was up again on account of her bursitis. Poor thing hardly sleeps anymore.”

“That doesn’t mean anything, just cause they were whooping it up a bit! Maybe they were just celebrating another eviction,” Marge says. “I wouldn’t be surprised though. They both always have their grouchy pants on. Maybe the two grouches will balance each other out and they’ll leave us all alone.”

“All I know is, you didn’t behave that way back in my day,” adds Pearl. “Not unless you were serious—or seriously looking for trouble!”

“Yeah, well, we’re not in Kansas anymore,” Doris teases. Pearl moved to the West Coast in 1970 from Kansas with her husband, Frank. Frank was a city planner who worked until the age of 62 with no vacations. He died of a sudden stroke while he was watching the New Year’s Day Rose Parade on television. Pearl had been a devoted housewife and mother, soft-spoken, a sufferer (she believed it was her job as a woman). Still suffering from various aches and pains (including her children, who take over the mobile home when they’re broke), she finds solace in romance novels and the Lifetime Television network.

“Before I forget,” says Marge, helping herself to a cookie, “thank your daughter for that plant she brought me after my surgery.”

“It was her pleasure. She was just so worried about you.”

“It’s really doing well in the backyard. The flowers on it are so beautiful! I think it’s the only thing I’ve planted that’s lived since I moved here.”

“It’s where?” asks Doris with a perplexed tilt of her head.

“In the backyard. Next to the shed.”

“Why?”

“We needed some color there. That shed is so ugly I wanted something else to look at.”

Doris starts laughing hysterically, smoke from her cigarette shooting out her nostrils.

“What?” asks Pearl. “What is so funny? Are you okay?”

“It’s just...,” and Doris tries to quiet her laugh with a gulp of coffee. “It’s just...,” she laughs some more, “didn’t you know that plant isn’t real?”

“What?” Marge turns the color of the rose pattern on the tablecloth as the three try to catch their breath from laughing. “But Stan planted it. He never said anything. I’ve been watering it every day. I thought I had finally grown a green thumb! Oh, God! I need new glasses!”

“I’ll say!” squeaks Pearl between laughs. “I’ve gotta run before I run all over the chair here. You’re too much, Marge.”

“Okay, Sweetie! Come back tomorrow,” calls Doris. “I didn’t get the chance to tell you the rest of the dirt on Space 50.”

ONNAH ROLL is a graduate of California Institute of the Arts. Her poetry has been published in *Sentential*.

Illustration by Rene Colan

Episode Two

BY ONNAH ROLL

TRAILER TALES



The ladies sit on Doris's porch in the late afternoon sipping coffee and eating Entenmann's doughnuts.

"Anyway..." Doris breaks the afternoon silence. "I was going to tell you about Space 50. I'm starting to wonder if it has a curse or something."

"Why's that?" asks Pearl.

"Well, the strangest things happen there and nobody stays there long. And here it is for sale again. Remember that single mother with the little baby used to live there? Well, I heard the father of the baby was some

Episode Three

BY ONNAH ROLL

kind of drug dealer!"

"I'm not surprised," interrupts Marge. "There were always people coming and going day and night there. And that young mother rarely left the house! I thought she was nuts or something."

"Well, anyway," continues Doris, "one day I saw about four police cars pull up down the street. Eight armed

copswith bullet-proof vests poured into her house. They must have been in there near forty-five minutes. They left with nothing. Supposedly all they found was a fridge full of breast milk."

The ladies laugh and light their cigarettes.

"That's our tax dollars hard at work!" laughs Pearl. "Thank God they found that

breast milk! The whole neighborhood might have gone to hell."

"The young mother moved after that, poor thing," Doris expounded. "The next person who lived there got robbed—twice! Wonder what's gonna happen to the next occupant."

Doris's gate opens suddenly and Betty, a disabled woman from the end of the street, starts up the path, carrying a grocery bag.

"Hi girls!" exclaims Betty with her thick Southern accent. "What's cookin'?" Betty loves to cook, coming by once in a blue moon to give the ladies' taste buds a workout.

"Same old, same old," answers Marge. "What's in the bag?"

"Oh, I've just been to the Harvest Bag to get my weekly free groceries. My, I just don't know what I'd do without those angels! They gave me about six grapefruits this time and I'll never eat 'em. Y'all want a few?"

"Sure," they answer in unison. The ladies are always kind to Betty. A few years earlier she suffered head injuries and many broken bones when she and her husband were hit in their car by a train while crossing the tracks. Betty's husband had been intoxicated. He wasn't injured at all. Betty is slow now, moving delicately and having trouble getting her words out when she talks. She has terrible migraines and the pain in her legs frequently makes it impossible to walk.

"So what wonderful gourmet dishes have you been coming up with from your Harvest Bag goodies, Betty?" asks Doris.

"Well, I made a potato-crust quiche the other day. I guess it was good because Bob ate the whole thing. I didn't get one bite."

"Sounds delish!" comments Doris. "Bring me some next time."

"I sure will, honey," says Betty as she starts back down the path.

"That Betty," states Marge. "She sure is creative, and with so little!"

"I don't know how she does it," says Doris. "And with a husband like Bob!"

POTATO-CRUSTED QUICHE

3-4 thinly sliced potatoes
6 eggs beaten with 3 tablespoons milk
4 pieces of crumbled bacon
A few pats of butter or margarine
1 thinly sliced green onion
1 cup of grated cheese – divided
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
salt, pepper & paprika to taste

Preheat the oven to 375F. Cut the bacon into small pieces and cook thoroughly. Set aside. Wash and slice the potatoes into potato-chip-thin slices. Heat the oil and add the potatoes in a thin, even layer. Season with salt, pepper, and paprika. Flip the potatoes over after approximately four minutes or after lightly browned, and cook another four minutes until both sides are browned.

Meanwhile, slice the onions, beat the eggs and milk, and grate the cheese.

Lightly grease a pie pan and press the cooked potatoes evenly on the bottom.

Top the potatoes with the onions, bacon, and one-half cup of cheese. Dab it with the butter or margarine.

Pour the egg mixture on top and then add the remaining half-cup of cheese.

Bake in preheated oven for twenty to twenty-five minutes or until bubbling and lightly browned.

ONNAH ROLL is a graduate of California Institute of the Arts. Her poetry has been published in *Sentential*.

Julie Andrews - at the Radio City Music Hall

To commemorate her 69th birthday on October 1st, actress/vocalist Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP. One of the musical numbers she performed was "My Favourite Things" from the legendary movie "Sound Of Music." However, the lyrics of the song were deliberately changed for the entertainment of her "blue hair" audience....

Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string, These are a few of my favourite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts and hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings, These are a few of my favourite things.

When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad, I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets, and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heat pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Back pains, confused brains, and no fear of sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, when the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim, Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Ms. Andrews received a standing ovation from the crowd that lasted over four minutes and repeated encores.

Analysis: This parody of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things" from the Broadway

musical and screen adaption of The Sound of Music was never sung by Julie Andrews -- indeed, it is quite possible she is not even aware of its existence. The actress/singer turned 69 on October 1, 2004, but she did not perform at Radio City Music Hall that year, nor at any publicized benefit for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Composed anonymously, the parody itself dates back to 2001 (at least), when variants popped up on the Internet (example #1, example #2) prefaced with statements like "Imagine hearing Julie Andrews singing this."

It appeared in a Dear Abby column dated March 10, 2002 accompanied by the claim that Andrews had altered the lyrics herself and sang them at a concert for AARP, though the column predated the alleged 69th birthday performance by two years. "The rewritten lyrics are a hoot," replied Abby, "but I doubt that Julie Andrews ever warbled them."

More to the point, Andrews lost her singing voice after undergoing throat surgery in 1997 and has rarely sung live in public since.

Editor's Note: Actually I came across this in an e-mail from our friend in England. We have a sister group called Park Home Residents Action Alliance (PHRAA) there and secretary Ron Joyce often sends me information. If you have a computer, take a look - <http://www.phraa.co.uk/>. Some of the things happening in England will blow your mind.

Next issue I will have a fairly comprehensive listing of links to various resources in California. There are many organizations helping in our cause, including Tenants Together and the Coalition for Economic Survival - which have been mentioned already in MHMag previous issues.

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FOR YOUR FILES

Bubba or Fautleroy?

How to Choose a Contractor!

BY MEREDITH DAY



You've picked out a wonderful new manufactured home. Your dealer has given you a list of contractors who can install your home. Your neighbor has a friend whom he highly recommends. How do you choose? How can you tell who is a reliable, trustworthy workman and who might just empty your pocketbook—leaving you with a home that looks like something out of “Trailer Park Of Terror.” (Yes, an actual movie!)

It's not the contractor's appearance you need to be concerned with. Here are the critical items to consider:

WHAT HAS THE CONTRACTOR DONE?

Get a list of the contractor's most recent jobs. Make sure that he is setting the heavier, new manufactured homes. Check with the homeowners ask them what went right and what was frustrating. Attire alone cannot tell you what kind of a job the contractor will do. Look at the work. Is the home nicely detailed, a credit to its surroundings?

STATE CONTRACTOR'S BOARD

All contractors have to be licensed with the State of California. They have to have current liability and workmen's comp insurance. This, as well as any complaints against the contractor, will be listed with the State. For California, go to: http://www2.cslb.ca.gov/CSLB_LIBRARY/License+Request.asp

No matter how warm and fuzzy the contractor is, play it safe and look

up his or her license. If their liability insurance and workmen's comp is not current, and there is an accident, you could be held responsible.

THE CONTRACT

A contractor has the right to ask for a 10% deposit upon signing the contract. After that, a contractor is entitled to be paid upon the completion of construction.

The contract should list the items to be completed and the cost of each item. With the installation of a manufactured home, you need to get itemized prices from the contractor for a number of items. A very good list is provided at: <http://silvercrest.com/SoCal/ds/ds-cost2.html>

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR DEALER

When shopping at a manufactured home dealer for a new Manufactured home, the dealer usually doesn't mention other expenses, over and above the Home, Delivery and Set.

“Home Base Price” is the price for the factory to build the home. The base price does not include upgrades. The base price will include all dealer costs plus the Dealer's standard profit.

“Delivery” means the transport of the home from the factory to your lot.

“Set” means setting the home on pillars and piers, leveling the home and bolting it together.

“Closeup” is sometimes included

in the set price but can be separate. It means doing all the cosmetic work inside and outside the home to cover up the areas where the sections meet. It usually includes the skirting around the base of the home. Prior to signing the contract, be sure that there is a detailed, clear description of exactly what is included.

COMMON FRUSTRATIONS

The most common frustration is the job timeline.

Not the contractor's fault:

- **Weather Delays**
- **Building and Safety Inspection schedule.** The contractor can call for an inspection. The actual day and time of the inspection is at the discretion of the inspector, not the contractor.

The contractor's responsibility:

- **Communication.** If there is going to be an unforeseen delay, it is the contractor's responsibility to keep the homeowner informed.
- **Contractor diligence.** The contractor must watch his timeline and make sure that the crews are scheduled so that there is a minimum of delay between phases.

In the installation of a manufactured home, you will not see crews on your lot every single day. You do not want to pay for a crew waiting around for a prior phase to be completed. Therefore, a good contractor usually schedules the phases a couple of days apart.

(continued on page 47)

Illustration by James Esker

HCD Should Enforce Title 25 (Health & Safety)

I was happy when Frank asked me to write an article for Mobilehome Magazine, as I have been a GSMOL volunteer for over twenty-five (25) years, working to help mobilehome owners enforce the laws that protect their home investments. I have owned and built income units in and out of California, so I would like to share the knowledge I have learned over these years.

One thing that is very important for mobilehome home owner to remember is; California has unique mobilehome laws concerning the park owners' contractual duty to provide the standards and conditions of construction. These standards and conditions of construction had to be approved and installed before a Permit to Operate a rental mobilehome park was issued. (Title 25). When homeowners contracted to place their home investments in the park these were the terms and conditions of park tenancy, (MRL 798.8). These standards and conditions of construction must be maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety code for the annual renewal of the park owner's Permit to Operate.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is the ultimate governmental enforcement agency for the Health and Safety Code provisions, and is agency that issues and each year renews the park owner's Permit to Operate. Therefore it is my belief, that had these standards and conditions of construction been enforced, before the park owner's annual Permit to Operate was renewed each year, that there would not have been any reason for any failure to maintain law suits. I know of no law that states it is the homeowner's responsibility to enforce the Health and Safety Code provisions.

The problem I had over the years was the lack of realization, of persons not owning a mobilehome, that mobilehome owners are not renting UNITS, but have substantial investments in their home investments and have agreed to pay rent for the use of the lot, and to improve and maintain the park owner's lot. That these unique mobilehome laws require that the homeowner's investments and tenancy in parks be protected.

I was a victim of lack of enforcement of the Health and Safety Code, so I am speaking out. I contracted to have my home investment installed by my park owner. I did not realize that the park owner's Conditional Use Permit called for the homes to be installed on a cement pad on relative flat upland area, and my contract called for a pit set instillation over a three foot block wall, with no drainage provided. I found out there was a health and safety code problem when the first rain came and water ponded in my back yard, ran through the garage, collected under my home, where there was no drainage provided.

So I would like to share a few facts in hopes that it may help others with problems, not to enforce the laws, but work to see those responsible are enforcing the laws.

1. Government agencies Administrators take an oath of office to do their statutory duty to enforce the laws.
2. It is the duty of the Attorney General to see that the laws of the state are uniformly and adequately enforced.
3. People have the right to instruct their Representatives, petition government for redress of grievances.
4. H & S Code #18015. This Act Applies to all parts of the state and supersedes any ordinances enacted by any city or county which conflict with its provisions.
5. March 1993, The California Court of Appeal upheld a Superior Court Case which again confirmed the fundamental concept that an illegal act cannot be enforced by a court of law.
6. No rental agreement shall contain a provision by which the homeowner waives his or her rights, MRL 798.19.
7. A contract is an agreement to do or not do a certain thing. A contract is the total legal obligation resulting for that agreement.
8. The basic policy in the field of contracts is protection of the justified expectations of the parties.

The laws are there, let's work to see that they are enforced.

Donna Matthews (Contact Donna thru MHMag)

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This is the 5th issue of MHMag. To date over 30,000 copies have been printed and distributed free to mobile/manufactured home owners, primarily in and around Los Angeles.

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As with COMO-CAL, the goal of MHMag is to provide information to assist you in protecting your rights and investment. Our goal is to network and demonstrate we can do this together. We are a team - this is really your magazine to use.

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Our goal is not to make money, but we must ask for your support. The only way to guarantee receiving MHMag is to SUBSCRIBE. Our goal is not to burden you either, that's why the subscription cost is only \$1.00 per issue. If we can keep MHMag alive by sharing the burden, there will be long range benefits. Not only will you, your neighbor, your friends, and your community benefit, but other communities across California will benefit. You are the "test area."

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MHMag

Meet The Editor/Publisher of MHMag and His Family

I usually don't like writing about myself, but there have been some requests and I'm happy to share my history as an advocate for mobilehome owners. Also I want to take this opportunity to introduce my family members who have played and continue to play a very big role in this endeavor!

THE EARLY YEARS

I've lived in Chatsworth MHP since 1998. Almost as soon as I moved in I was harassed, usually in the form of seven (7) day notices. As a new resident, I had no idea what was happening, nor did I expect such treatment!

In 2002 GSMOL was invited to come to my park to speak and soon residents re-established a GSMOL Chapter. The first leaders were all "pro-management." They held no meetings, gave incorrect contact information, and essentially did nothing. Of course, as someone new to all this, I had no idea what was happening (again).

Around the end of summer 2003 Chapter leadership positions were open, and residents "pushed" me into running for Chapter president (although I said I was more comfortable in a support role). I was a good Chapter president, held monthly meetings, passed informative flyers, and questioned some of the practices of management. Soon I found myself in court - the then manager wanted a "restraining order" because of my "bizarre" behavior. She lost.

Of course the seven day notices, the "pro-management" leadership, and the attempted restraining order were all part of the park's strategy to control residents, and stop any advocacy or organization.

COMO-CAL

In November 2004 I formed COMO-CAL and ran it for seven years. My dream was to publish a magazine that would reach thousands of owners of mobilehomes



Jason
Frank

Dylan
Rose

- so that they would know they were not alone!

Today, because the "door of COMO-CAL" is closing, and I'm able to open the door of Mobilehome Magazine.

NOT ALONE

Of course I haven't make this journey alone. My family has endured many hardships over the last 10 years. My wife Rose has "gone without" because advocacy costs money, as well as time, blood, sweat and tears. She complains "you're whole life" is advocacy, but she also understands the good we've done.

My son Jason has distributed literally thousands of flyers (including the VOICE and MHMag) folded and labeled countless newsletters, helped me carry containers to the Post Office, etc. He is a terrific son, I love him very much. Now 17, Jason has been helping me since he was 7 years old - more than half his life. He is truly tired of my advocacy! Today he plays football, and is on the swim team at Chatsworth High School where he is studying to be a pharmacist.

Rose's son Dylan is a pro-basketball player in the Philippines, and has traveled all over the world. He recently played in Wuhan China with the Philippine national team (pre-Olympic), he played against Kobe Bryant (exhibition game) and played, on May 13th, in an "all star" basketball game, scoring the most points of any player and setting a new record. Congratulations Dylan!! Rose and I are very proud of our kids.

THE FUTURE

As Rose often tells me "no one can force you to do what you don't want to do." Although advocacy is a "roller coaster ride," the hope of a better future for mobilehome owners has inspired me to continue. I have high expectations for Mobilehome Magazine and with your support it will bring MH owners across California together - for a brighter future for all.



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Rates are examples for newer homes in park with senior and claims free credit. Shown with a \$500 deductible, may not be available in all parks.

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