



# COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS—Los Angeles County

CoMO-LAC

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APRIL 2005

## MOBILEHOME OWNERS MAKE A STAND AT LA HOUSING DEPARTMENT PUBLIC HEARING

The recent public hearing sponsored by the LA Housing Department on March 15, 2005 in Van Nuys was attended by over 30 mobilehome owners, representing at least 5 parks. They made such an impression on the commissioners at the hearing that Mercedes Marquez, LAHD General Manager, proposed to have a meeting devoted just to mobilehome park issues, saying "I am also willing for those of you who are here to set a special meeting just for mobilehome park residents. And within 30 days we will come back out to the Valley to do a training with you to discuss what the law is.

May Sansone of Canoga Park asked about the difference between rent control for apartments and mobilehomes.

Jim Hildebrand, a LAHD representative issues was asked to speak to that question: "I'm with the rent stabilization division and it is a pretty risky business dealing with mobilehome parks because you are under two jurisdictions and your rent is controlled both by the cities law and by the State law so there are some strange little differences how they work. You are treated differently because in most instances you own your mobilehome coach.

Carol Mabus of Northridge MHP asked how RAC determines what is considered a capital improvement for the purpose of passing on the cost to the park residents. And whether RAC comes out to the park to inspect the improvement.

Josie Walsh of Canoga Mobile Estates got a big laugh when she quipped "I came here under false pretenses. I was told Tom Seleck was going to be here".

Others spoke of abuse & retaliation against residents, lack of LAHD involvement in health and safety issues, and unequal enforcement of park rules. One mobilehome resident volunteered to serve on the Mobile Home Park Task Force (RAC).

Contact Eriq Guerrero @ 213-808-8820 (eguerrero@lahd.lacity.org) to get on the LAHD mailing list.

CoMO-LAC will hold a meeting of all who want to participate on the Mobile Home Park Task Force for the LAHD. This meeting will be held at the Metro-Link train station in Chatsworth on April 16th.

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## KNOW YOUR MOBILEHOME RESIDENCY LAW

The Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) defines the rights of mobilehome residents, and is part of the Ca. Civil Code (Sections 798 and 799). To protect your rights, you should be familiar with the MRL and understand how it can be used.

*Per the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), Section 798.39, a homeowner in a mobile home park is entitled to receive a refund on*

*the security deposit paid at the time of purchase of the home. The request must be in writing to park management. If you purchased your mobilehome after January 1, 1989, park management has 30 days to remit the deposit, interest-free, to you. If you purchased your mobilehome before January 1, 1989, park management has 60 days to remit the deposit.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MARCH 26, 2005

The Board of Directors of CoMO-LAC met on March 26, 2005 in Chatsworth. Below is a synopsis of the meeting:

1. Ralph Weber, long time GSMOL Regional Manager and Legacy Award winner was elected to the Board of Directors in the position of Vice President.
2. Carol Mabus, past President of the GSMOL chapter in Northridge MHP, was elected treasurer.
3. The Board will now finalize CoMO-LAC's Bylaws and continue to work on Procedures and Policies. The Board is also working to obtain tax exempt status for CoMO-LAC.
4. Membership is just over 200 members, representing about 35 parks. #1 priority continues to be recruitment of new members.
5. All members will get their newsletters by U.S. Mail.
6. The Charter Membership (\$12.00/year for 3 years) was extended to June 30, 2005.
7. Katy Harris was made temporary chair for "Promotion" and is actively researching grants which would give CoMO-LAC much needed funds for legal issues.

## NORTHRIDGE MHP PASS-THROUGH APPROVED WITHOUT HEARING

The LAHD has approved the pass-through in Northridge MHP without a public hearing. The costs for installation of new water and gas systems, as well as asphalt paving were approved which means that 50% of the costs of these "capital improvements" will be passed onto the 168 residents of Northridge MHP, costing them approximately \$294,000 plus a surcharge of \$59,000 for a total of \$352,236.

In December, 2004, Northridge residents sent a 200 page document opposing the pass-through on various grounds, one being they felt the work should be considered "neglected maintenance" and not a capital improvement. Now LAHD has shocked these same residents by claiming LAHD never received any documents objecting to the pass-through and consequently did not schedule a hearing. An emergency meeting was held at the home of Carol Mabus to consider resident's options. They have only a few days to protest this LAHD decision and must pay \$35.00 for each letter of protest.

In addition to the \$293,530., residents will pay a full year for "administrative costs", amounting to an additional \$58,706! Let's all support Northridge MHP residents in their efforts to stop this unjust pass-through.

## MEET COMMISSIONER LETICIA MUNIZ GUEVARA

Leticia (Tish) is a commissioner with the Office of Consumer Affairs. She can be reached at 818-607-6572 (Voice Mail) or [comisioner-Tish@aol.com](mailto:comisioner-Tish@aol.com).

It was our good fortune to meet Leticia at the Northridge MHP on February 27th. Leticia has now spoken at three CoMO-LAC meetings and everyone can see her fire to make some positive changes for residents of mobilehome parks.

Some of the programs she can tell you about are:

1. Handiman program—up to \$5000 for repairs to your home.
2. Free smoke detectors.

See Next Issue for more programs.

## SMALL CLAIMS COURT AND YOU

Most of us know that we cannot go into Small Claims Court with an attorney. Many of us, however, do not know that we CAN take a Paralegal with us, and that we can take witnesses and exhibits with us in order to prove our case.

If one has never been in court, it can be somewhat intimidating. The judge in his judicial robes looks unapproachable, and the bailiff in his law uniform and gun holster looks formidable. All in all, for the first-timer it can be rather scary to say the least.

If you are the Plaintiff (the one who is doing the suing) you will be the first to present your side of the story. You cannot sue for more than \$5,000.00 in this court. The

Defendant will then present his defense to your charges, and if the judge is somewhat lenient, you may be able to offer a rebuttal if you disagree with whatever the Defendant has to say. Many people think that one way to get a park owner's attention is to take him to Small Claims Court. If the park has deliberately broken the law, you can ask the judge to add up to \$2,000.00 for a willful violation of the MRL.

You may obtain advice for Small Claims as follows:

L.A. County Department of Consumer Affairs' Small Claims Court Advisor Program: case preparation, collection, 213-974-9759. Advisors available 8:30am-4:30pm.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**SUGGESTIONS AND TIPS**

**SECOND SAN FERNANDO VALLEY MEETING  
MARCH 12, 2005 IN SYLMAR**

Our second San Fernando Valley meeting was again held at Sylmar Mobile Manor with Cliff Kenny hosting. The meeting was attended by about 25 mobilehome owners, representing 6 parks.

Cliff spoke about the Preamble and Bill of Rights he is writing to present to the neighborhood counsel in Sylmar. (We have learned that both were adopted by the Sylmar Neighborhood Council). See the insert for the full document.

Commissioner Leticia Muniz spoke about the Office of Consumer Affairs and the programs they offer to mobilehome owners.

CoMO-LAC has started gathering information on utility bills—we have information on four parks, but we need many more. Send us a copy of your January 2005 park rent statement and we will publish our findings about the uniformity of utility charges.

Our next meeting will be held April 16 in Chatsworth from 11am-1pm at the Metrolink Train Station—Chamber of Commerce. 10038 Old Depot Road.

1. Put everything in writing to management.
2. Do not sign long term rental agreements or leases. Anything over 12 months voids rent control.
3. Know the Mobilehome Residency Law. It has taken years to legislate these laws and they were written to protect you.
4. When you receive a 7 day notice, be sure that management is enforcing the rules and regulations fairly, i.e. if others are violating the same R&R, they too must be given a 7 day notice.
5. Maintain your property. This helps keep the value of your mobilehome, and motivates your neighbors to also maintain their properties.
6. Know that you rent is late after the 5th day it is due. If you have not paid during this grace period, the park can give you a 3 day notice to pay or quit. If you do not pay in this 3 day period, the park can take action to evict you. You have no defense!
7. When the park introduces new Rules and Regulations, the park must hold a meeting with all park residents invited. If there are rules or regulations you are not happy with, you must make the park aware.
8. Tell your friends and neighbors about CoMO-LAC. Our success will be accelerated with your active participation.
9. Believe there is hope to combat some of the injustices we see daily in our parks. Support CoMO-LAC

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CoMO-LAC**

**Can I get legal assistance?** If you ever receive an eviction notice, are harassed, or had your Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) rights violated—you need help NOW. Our goal is to provide assistance to those in need quickly. We hope to have an attorney on call (as we get members and funds), and we are working to get some volunteer help with legal matters. We hope to latter offer legal assistance on a case by case basis.

**What else can CoMO-LAC do for me?** We will keep you informed about your rights as mobilehome owners. We will hold meetings in different parks, some in your area. You will receive a monthly **newsletter** and an email address where you can send your questions. We have a **message board** and a **website** for those with computers.

**Who can join CoMO-LAC?** Any mobilehome owner in Southern California\* (\*See Bylaws for exceptions).

**What is the cost?** Just \$15.00/year. (Save \$3.00 if you join before 6/30/05. i.e. join for just \$12.00).

**What can I do?** First of all join our group. Next make us aware of the problems that exist in your park. Communication is key. We will publish in the newsletter problems in parks around LA County. You can tell your friends and neighbors about CoMO-LAC. Write our editor and suggest topics for future articles.

**PROTECT YOURSELF. TOGETHER WE HAVE A VOICE. DON'T GO IT ALONE!**

## CoMO-LAC

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**We're on the Web**

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### LINKS

[Servingmobilehomeowners.org](http://Servingmobilehomeowners.org)  
[Scmoa.org](http://Scmoa.org)  
[Mfghomeowners.net](http://Mfghomeowners.net)  
[Cityofla.org/lahd](http://Cityofla.org/lahd)  
[Cesinaction.org](http://Cesinaction.org)  
[Seniors.org](http://Seniors.org)

### MESSAGE BOARD

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/comolac/>

## COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS

### - LOS ANGELES COUNTY

#### Membership/Renewal Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Park Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Space # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Join: Dues are \$12.00/Year (\$15.00 after 6/30/05)**

Please mail to:

**CoMO-LAC, P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth,**

**California. 91313-4821**

## APRIL MEETING SCHEDULE

**April 2nd:** Recruitment Meeting. 11:00 am-1:00 pm  
20652 Lassen St. Chatsworth Imperial MHP Clubhouse

**April 16:** 3rd SFV CoMO-LAC MEETING  
11:00 am- 1:00 pm. Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room (metrolink)  
10038 Old Depot Plaza Rd Chatsworth. W-Canoga, S-Devonshire  
**CoMO-LAC members—LAHD Task Force** to meet after 1pm—

**April 23:** Leisure Lake Clubhouse, Lancaster 1:00pm-3:00pm  
48303 20th Street West, Lancaster 93534

**April 24th:** CoMO-LAC BOARD MEETING, 11am- 1pm.  
110 South Rosemead Blvd., #H, Pasadena, CA, 91107. Off 210  
freeway. Enter on Mohawk , two blocks South of Colorado Blvd.

#### Look for CoMO-LAC in the following parks:

Oakridge, Sylmar  
Santiago, Sylmar  
Kona Kai / Riveria, Canoga Park  
Leisure Lake, Lancaster

**Let Us Know If You Want Us To Come To Your Park**

## SPECIAL APRIL NEWSLETTER INSERT

This month we include this special insert for several reasons. You can see that “we” are growing and already working on important issues. By “we” I mean not only your Board of Directors, but also our members. CoMO-LAC is now over 200 members, representing about 35 different parks across Los Angeles County. We have made good progress in a short two months and thank all those people who have supported us in our efforts to gain membership. In April we already have 3 park recruitment meetings scheduled for parks with spaces totaling more than 1000 spaces. And we plan to get our literature into many more parks in the upcoming months.

If you live in the City of Los Angeles, please plan to attend the special LAHD session on mobile-home issues in Van Nuys in April. We will try to contact all CoMO-LAC members in the City of Los Angeles as soon as the time and place are announced by the LAHD. For those of you who are not familiar with the LAHD, they enforce rent control and approve “pass-throughs” (rent increases as a consequence of park capital improvements). CoMO-LAC is very active in these issues today – Northridge MHP faces a \$360,000. pass-through which will cost their residents about \$2100.00 in additional rent over the next 6 years. In fact several residents will be forced to move from Northridge as a consequence of this rent increase. Of course Northridge residents and CoMO-LAC are actively working to stop this pass-through.

Finally please know CoMO-LAC is an organization “For The Members, By The Members”. Our arms are always open to those of you who want to help. You are our best resource. So don’t be shy about calling to volunteer. We need help putting together this newsletter, and stuffing envelopes. Also we need help to gain membership around L.A. County – we have written a general letter to park management asking approval to distribute our literature in their park. This technique has worked in several parks and helps prevent misunderstandings. We would be grateful for any assistance you might give us to get these letters into parks in your area. We will supply the letters and literature. Just call Frank @ 818-886-6479.

## Our Members Working For All of Us

**Special Thanks To Our Members:** Ben Perlin (Kona Kai), Marjorie Fjelstad (Riviera), Anthony Sansone (Canoga Mobile Estates), Herb Jensen (Oakridge), June & Cliff Kenny (Sylmar Mobile Manor), Richard Ramirez (Chatsworth Imperial), Jim Rowe (Indian Hills), Carol Mabus, Kathy Mattes, and Elaine Hostetter. And of course Tom. Thanks to you all. You’ve made a difference.

And the CoMO-LAC Board of Directors would like to commend **Cliff Kenny** of Sylmar Mobile Manor for his continuing work on the Sylmar Neighbor Council. He presented the enclosed Preamble and Bill of Rights to the SNC on Mar. 24th and it was adopted by the SNC. We would like to suggest all CoMO-LAC members get involved with their local government as has Mr. Kenny.

As per Mr. Kenny: “The purpose of the following statement of rights is based on the conviction that when rights statements are defined in written form, and affirmed by such entities as Neighborhood Councils, law enforcement officials, and citizen organizations, that such a statement can be a reference point for the protection of rights. If and when such stated rights have been violated, such vio-

lations can be documented and may warrant corrective actions such as, civil suits, media publicity, or public demonstrations.”

### PREAMBLE

The following document is a declaration of the basic rights of the mobile park homeowner/tenant. This declaration is necessary because, in general, mobilehome park rules and regulations do not properly address the rights and protections to which homeowners/tenants are entitled under the Constitution of the United States of America and the California Civil Code Provisions, Mobilehome Residency Law.

The position of the park mobile homeowner is unique, for though he/she is the owner and occupier of his/her private dwelling, he/she is also a tenant, renting land space, and by virtue of that, he/she is dependent on the good faith and the goodwill of the park owners and managers and is directly dependent on the park owner to provide the necessary services and park maintenance. Therefore it is essential for the wellbeing and protection of park residents that their rights should be defined, recognized, and respected.

It is particularly imperative that the rights of senior residents in mobile home parks be respected. Senior park residents may be especially vulnerable to improper, abusive language, intimidation or coercion and often are reluctant to protest against such intimidation or infringements of their rights. Therefore it is the responsibility of all citizens to be aware of actions which may verge on, or possibly constitute elder abuse. The following are declared to be the entitled rights of all mobile homeowners **and particularly the rights of senior residents**.

### BILL OF RIGHTS

1. Park homeowners/residents shall be recognized as having the right to file complaints with the park owners/management and to report any violations of the homeowners/residents rights.
2. Homeowners/residents shall not be subjected to intimidation or threats of retaliation in any form, or suggestion of eviction because of filing a complaint.
3. Homeowners/residents shall be recognized as having the right and/or the responsibility to file complaints on behalf of another park resident, if so delegated to convey such complaint.
4. The homeowner/resident has the right to expect the park owner/management to refrain from entering the homeowners' premises without due cause. **(California Civil Code 798.26.) The ownership or management shall have the right of entry- when the resident or homeowner fails to so maintain the premises-, but not in a manner or at a time which would interfere with the resident's quiet enjoyment.**
5. **California Civil Code 798.51 (d). A homeowner or resident may not be charged a cleaning deposit in order to use the park recreation hall.**
6. Homeowners/residents have the right to be notified of a call to meeting and to assemble within park facilities, and without interference, for the purpose of discussing their grievances and having their grievances addressed. **(California Civil Code, 798.50 and 798.51 (a).**
7. Homeowners/residents, upon request, have the right to the **name[s], business address[s], and business telephone number[s] of the mobile park owner[s] upon the request of the homeowner. (California Civil Code, 798. 28).**
8. Homeowners/tenants have the right to request the mobilehome park owners/managers to abide by the stated current Park Rules and Regulations.

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