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THE VOICE

COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS - CALIFORNIA
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Frequently Asked Questions & Answers "Handbook" A Huge Success

CoMO-CAL's newest project, the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Handbook is already a HUGE SUCCESS. The first Handbooks and promotional brochures were received from the printer on August 12th and we have mailed about 100 boxes of promotional brochures (over 7,000) and Handbooks. We have much more work ahead to get them distributed and into the hands of mobilehome owners across California.

You can help by volunteering to distribute the promotional brochures (3.5x8.5"). Simply email,

call or write us asking for enough brochures for your park. We will mail you a box of brochures and one Handbook - no charge. If you would like to coordinate the sale of the Handbook, simply have your friends and neighbors give you their orders - then send your combined order to CoMO-CAL, P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth, Ca. 91313. Remember, CoMO-CAL picks up the postage on orders over 10 Handbooks. Refer to page 6 of this issue of THE VOICE for more information. And thank you for your support!

Roadtrip Up North by Frank Wodley

Beginning September 10th, I will be leaving Chatsworth and heading up north on a 1,200 mile roadtrip to promote CoMO-CAL and our Handbook. My first stop is Fresno. Mr. Larry Barney of THE WILLOWS MHP has organized a city wide meeting. My itinerary is as follows:

- September 10th: Fresno
- September 11th: Fresno/Merced/Modesto
- September 12th: Livermore/Vallejo/Calistoga/Santa Rosa
- September 13th: Santa Rosa/surrounding areas
- September 14th: Novato/Petaluma/San Rafael/Daly City
- September 15th & 16th: San Jose/surrounding areas.
- September 17th: Santa Cruz/Aptos/Marina/surrounding areas
- September 18th: Morro Bay/Los Osos/Santa Maria/points south
- September 19th: Chatsworth SFV Meeting - Metrolink station.

The purpose of this roadtrip is to meet many of you for the first time, to promote CoMO-CAL and our new Handbook. I do hope to see you. If I am not scheduled to come to your park and you would like me to, please call me ASAP and let's make arrangements, time permitting.

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All persons living in a mobilehome are eligible for membership on an equal basis, except management, owners and employees of owners.

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Practical Enforcement Of Your Rights by Jon Heim, Attorney

As one of the attorneys available to CoMO-CAL members through the CoMO-Cal legal program, I have heard from many mobilehome residents who expect mobilehome park owners to follow mobilehome park laws without compulsion from residents. 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. In just the past few months of CoMO-CAL's legal program, residents have 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 already provides 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. Speaking for myself, I am quite willing to work with mobilehome residents who have strong claims and must litigate them, in order to make the litigation financially feasible.

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.

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Top 10 Truths Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing is an important affordable homeownership solution in the United States. It is, in fact, home to 17 million Americans already. Yet many myths persist about this form of housing. The following are 10 facts to dispel stereotypes and raise awareness of manufactured housing as a high-quality and affordable homeownership option. (#) refers to endnotes below.

1. Manufactured homes are not mobile

“Mobile home” is a misnomer. Less than 1% of manufactured homes are moved after being installed.(1) Moving them is expensive and impractical. The cost of relocating a manufactured home can run between \$6,000 and \$10,000, an amount equal to five to seven years’ worth of equity for many homeowners.(2) Not only can improperly moving and installing a manufactured home seriously damage a home and its contents, but many manufactured home communities do not allow the installation of older units.

2. Today’s manufactured homes are well designed and constructed

When properly constructed and sited, manufactured housing is of comparable quality to site-built housing. Since the implementation of the 1976 HUD Code, the quality of manufactured housing has improved dramatically. In fact, manufactured housing is constructed of the same materials as site-built housing and now has a comparable lifespan. It can be designed in a variety of architectural styles to blend into almost any site-built neighborhood. Furthermore, the manufacturing process allows not only for increased affordability, but also for the efficient use of resources. Construction of a manufactured home generates 30 to 45% less waste than comparable site-built construction.(3)

3. Manufactured housing is home to a significant number of Americans

Seventeen million Americans live in manufactured housing, and manufactured housing makes up 7% of the nation’s housing stock.(4) Manufactured housing represents nearly 11% of housing for families living at 150% or less of the poverty level(5) and is the largest source of unsubsidized affordable housing in the nation.

4. For many people, manufactured housing is their housing of choice

Today’s manufactured homes are safe, energy efficient and last as long as traditionally built-homes. A new manufactured home can be quickly installed and customized with numerous features. For millions of homebuyers, a manufactured home is the smart choice: an affordable investment with the potential to appreciate in value.

5. People who live in manufactured homes are stable residents

Contrary to popular belief, manufactured housing owners are not necessarily more transient than the general population. They also represent all income levels and all ages. According to the most recent American Housing Survey, owners of manufactured homes represented only 2% of all Americans who moved that year. The typical turnover rate in a manufactured housing community is only 2-4% per year.(6)

6. Manufactured housing is located in all regions of the United States

Manufactured homes can be found in urban and rural areas throughout the country. Although inroads into both urban and suburban communities have been made, the majority of

Top 10 Truths (Continued)

manufactured housing is still located in rural America. Rural areas contain less than one quarter of the nation's housing units, but more than six out of ten manufactured homes are located in rural areas.(7)

7. Most manufactured homes are located on individual lots, not in 'trailer parks'

Contrary to popular perception, most manufactured homes are placed on privately owned land, rather than in land-lease communities, or "parks," where homeowners rent their home site. In 2006, only 28 percent of new manufactured homes were placed in land-lease communities.(8)

8. Owning a home on rented land is a precarious situation

Approximately one-third of owners of manufactured homes do not own the land beneath their homes. Owning a "home on the land of another" leaves families at the mercy of landowners regarding potential rent increases, community rules, infrastructure investment and maintenance, and potential community closure for a "change of use." It means not having control over your home and biggest financial asset.

9. Residents of manufactured home parks can own and operate their own communities

Mounting evidence shows that homeowners want the security of community ownership and that they are capable of buying and managing it. Throughout the United States, there are more than 750 resident-owned manufactured home communities. A national nonprofit, ROC USATM(9), works with local and national organizations to provide technical assistance and financing to help homeowners become community owners.

10. Manufactured homes can appreciate in value

Properly installed on land with long-term security, manufactured housing can be an asset builder for homeowners. The most important factors affecting appreciation are land control, financing and titling. Under the right circumstances, there is no inherent reason why a home built in a factory cannot appreciate as a comparable stick built home would.(10).

Article may be found at: http://cfed.org/programs/manufactured_housing_initiative/manufactured_housing_advocacy_center/manufactured_housing_toolkit/

Endnotes

- 1 Genz, Richard. Why Advocates Need to Rethink Manufactured Housing. Housing Policy Debate, Volume 12, Issue 2. Fannie Mae Foundation, 2001.
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- 5 American Housing Survey, 2005.
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- 7 American Housing Survey, 2005.
- 8 Manufactured Housing Census, <http://www.census.gov/const/www/mhsindex.html>.
- 9 Please visit <http://www.rocusa.org/>.
- 10 Jewell, Kevin. Appreciation in Manufactured Housing: A Fresh Look at the Debate and the Data. Consumers Union, February 2002.

CoMO-CAL's Handbook

Now that parks will no longer be distributing the Mobilehome Residency Laws (MRL), CoMO-CAL's Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Handbook is a must for all mobilehome owners.

Ever have a pressing question about your rights in a mobilehome park and didn't have anywhere to get an answer? No longer do you have to trust an answer from a park manager, a friend or neighbor. Now there is a solution to that dilemma. The California Select Committee on Manufactured Housing and Communities has compiled answers to 58 of the most frequently asked questions in a simple, concise, understandable format.

To order the Handbook, simply mail a check or

money order in the amount of \$5.00 + \$1.50 shipping fee payable to CoMO-CAL to CoMO-CAL, P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth, Ca. 91313. No need to join. CoMO-CAL members do not have to fill out an order form as we already have your information.

To date we have distributed over 7,000 brochures explaining CoMO-CAL's Handbook. If you haven't seen them in your park, please be a distributor—call us and we will send you a packet containing brochures and one Handbook – no charge. Call us toll free at 1-800-929-6061.

Let's make sure all residents have answers to their questions! The Handbook helps!

AB 2120 & MRL Distribution in 2011

This bill was sponsored by Western Manufactured Housing Communities (WMA - the park owners group) and passed uncontested.

On July 15, 2010 Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB2120 into law, releasing parks from their obligation to deliver the Mobilehome Residency Law by February 1st every year, beginning 2011. The following is an analysis of the bill by the state assembly:

The MRL is California's landlord-tenant law for mobilehome parks. When a homeowner signs a rental agreement in a mobilehome park, a copy of the text of the MRL must be attached as an exhibit. Anytime the MRL is significantly changed, park management must provide a new copy of the MRL to every homeowner by February 1 of the next year. This requirement has been in statute since 1981. The MRL has been changed through legislation every year since then and is significantly longer than it was in 1981.

As of 1/1/2011, AB 2120 requires the management

of a mobilehome park to either provide a new copy of the MRL to all homeowners when the law changes or notify all homeowners that the law has changed and provide a free copy upon request.

AB2120 is a loss for all mobilehome owners and a wake up call for advocacy groups. CoMO-CAL is taking a giant step in filling the void left by the passage of AB2120. We are publishing the Handbook on Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

Now every mobilehome owner has a "reference guide" available to them that explains many of the more important laws from the MRL in simple, concise, easy to understand language. Remember the MRL distributed by the WMA? It was a booklet about 15 pages long with very small type difficult for many of us to read. All the laws were there, but it was a challenge to use. Now we have a nice looking reference in large type. So please, tell your friends and neighbors about CoMO-CAL's Handbook. Everyone should have a copy!!

California Mobile Home Code Eviction Procedures



By Tiffany Garden, eHow Contributor

Mobile home eviction in California is regulated. The legal definition of a mobile home eviction refers to a mobile home owner who is being evicted from a rented lot in a mobile home park. Someone renting the mobile home itself is considered a normal residential tenant, and is governed by a different set of laws. In California mobile home eviction is governed under the Mobilehome Residency Law. The eviction process for mobile home owners in California is identical to residential tenants, but the reasons for eviction are more stringent.

Written Notice

The eviction process for a mobile home owner starts off by the park landlord serving him with a written notice. This notice must be posted on the property and give the eviction reason and the date that the mobile home owner is to leave the lot. There are only a few specific reasons that a California landlord can evict a mobile home owner from the park, due to the difficulties and expenses in relocating a mobile home. The written notice is a termination of the tenancy agreement, and gives the tenant a 60-day time period to leave the park before the landlord can file for an eviction order in court.

The first and most common eviction reason is non-payment of lot rent or any lot fees. Tenants can also be evicted for causing a “substantial annoyance” in the park, not following park

rules and regulations, not following local mobile home ordinances, or illegal activity on the mobile home lot. Two eviction reasons that are out of the tenant’s control are condemnation of the mobile home park or change of land use.

Eviction Hearing

If the tenant does not leave the mobile home lot within the 60-day period, the park landlord fills out forms SUM-130, UD-100, and CM-010 with the court clerk at the California civil court governing the lot’s jurisdiction. The hearing date is set at this time, and is scheduled within 15 days of the court filing. The landlord hires a process server to serve the summons to the tenant, informing him of the impending court date. The landlord and tenant are expected to appear at the hearing. If the tenant does not show up, the California landlord is awarded default judgment and right of possession to the mobile home lot.

Eviction

The landlord files form EJ-130 and files it with the court clerk. A copy is provided to the sheriff’s office. This form gives the sheriff a Writ of Execution to remove the mobile home owner and home from the lot. The landlord cannot restrict services such as utilities to the mobile home owner prior to receiving the Writ. Once the writ is filed and executed, however, the landlord can shut off the utilities and any other services associated with that lot. The sheriff removes the tenant from the home, and makes arrangements for the mobile home to be removed from the lot.

Read more: California Mobile Home Code Eviction Procedures | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/list_6643181_california-home-code-eviction-procedures.html#ixzz0xWZC3vrm

Editor’s Note: Refer to pages 10-12 of the Handbook for further information on evictions. Also MRL section 798.56. A knowledge of the law is critical to life in a mobilehome park!

A Park Gone Bad? by Judy Lawson

Our park is not unique. It is only one example of what has been happening in many small parks throughout the county for years. The horror stories vary, but the consequences and outcomes are the same.

We purchased our mobilehome at 4N in Oakdale in 1981. This 32-space family park was well maintained, well lighted, with a pool, clubhouse and storage area for boats and RVs. There were large shade trees throughout the park. It was a safe and pleasant place to live. Management was responsive to the residents. All of that is long gone. The pool was filled in, the dilapidated clubhouse is locked, the trees cut down and the other amenities no longer exist.

In 1989, the park was sold to the current owners. Along with ever-increasing space rents, the park began to deteriorate. The manager stated that the owner refused to pay for the normal maintenance expenses.

In 1995, under a new manager, the deterioration escalated. Some homeowners were experiencing septic problems.

In 1999, one resident pumped the septic material from his space into the street where it mingled with rain water and flowed into the surface fresh water drain. At that time, County Code Enforcement was contacted by residents. The well pump failed constantly and the water became contaminated.

For the next 8 years, County Code Enforcement responded to residents' complaints about the unresolved septic and water problems, writing copious amounts of violation notices, while trying to work with the owner to get the problems resolved. Sump pumps were illegally used to move untreated septic material directly into dry wells, continually contaminating the water table. Management referred to this as a secondary septic system. The well water was contaminated again. The owner tried to blame his problems with

the failing septic system on the County, Cal Trans and the homeowners. At that time, many long-time residents sold their homes or moved them out of the park. The stench of septic overflow could be smelled throughout the park continuously.

In 2000, the park lights failed and were not replaced for more than 2 years, in violation of State codes.

In 2002, the park owner hired an eviction service that harassed and intimidated the homeowners with threats of eviction. With the help of CRLA attorneys, we went to court and got that stopped. Three homeowners, who had septic effluence (lumps and all) backing up into their spaces and homes, were "compensated" by having their rent doubled. Through an affirmative action taken by CRLA, the rent raises were stopped until the violations were corrected. County Code Enforcement gave the case to the County D.A. for legal action.

In 2005, legal action was finally started by the County D.A. and the Stanislaus County Superior Court ordered mediation that took another year...to no avail.

In 2006, the well water was contaminated again. It took until May 2007, when the park being put into receivership by the County was imminent, that the owners agreed to replace the septic system. The septic work has, yet, to be completed. Yet, in 2007 space rent was raised \$50.00 and is now \$425.00 a month. At the completion of the septic work, homeowners fear astronomical space rent increases as often as current law allows, in order to pay for the long overdue septic system.

An investigation in July and August 2007 by Stanislaus County Weights and Measures found that the gas meters were not registered with, nor calibrated by, them, as required by law. Many of the meters were ordered replaced. Replacement still has not been completed. They also found that homeowners were overcharged

Around California

SANTA ROSA

Mobile home park residents prevail in conversion dispute

A plan by the owner of a Santa Rosa mobile home park to stop renting spaces and start selling them was panned by angry senior citizens Thursday and unanimously rejected by the Santa Rosa Planning Commission.

In a 6-0 vote, commission members cited the strong opposition by mostly low-income residents and the apparent motive of the owner to side-step rent control as reasons for blocking the plan.

"This is a slam dunk for me," said Commissioner Erin Carlstrom. "I don't intend to make an entire community of seniors essentially homeless."

The out-of-area investment group that owns the 178-unit Country Mobile Home Park off Fulton Road has been seeking the conversion for four years. A 2007 city ordinance aimed at protecting residents of the city's 14 mobile home parks from such conversions was repealed after the courts shot down a similar county law. That paved the way for the owner to again push the project this spring.

The residents' attorney, Will Constantine, told the commission it was the park owners' refusal to even discuss the prices residents would need to pay to buy their lots that brought such strong opposition.

Contrary to the park owners' contention, Casey said commissioners could consider a survey of residents when deciding whether to approve the conversion. That survey found that 138 households, or 77 percent, opposed conversion, while only nine, or 5 percent, wanted it.

THOUSAND OAKS

Proposed rent increase upsets seniors at T.O. mobile home park

The news arrived in the mailboxes at the Thunderbird Oaks Mobile Home Park for senior citizens early last week.

The park's owner is seeking approval for a \$322.52 monthly increase in each tenant's rent, the letter from the city of Thousand Oaks said. The increase would allow the owner "to obtain a 'just and reasonable' return on its property," according to a memo from the owner's attorney.

"If we keep going the way we are, it won't be long before the park is operating at a negative," said park attorney Boyd Hill of the firm Hart, King & Coldren.

In a memo to the city, Hill points to Thousand Oaks' Mobile Home Rent Stabilization ordinance, which essentially enacted rent control for mobile home parks in the city in 1980. The ordinance states that the Rent Adjustment Commission can adopt a discretionary rent increase if it finds that automatic increases fail to provide a just and reasonable rent.

A Park Gone Bad (Continued)

for propane and ordered the park owners to refund the overcharge to the homeowners.

If Mobilehome Residency Laws and code violations had been dealt with in a timely manner, consider the tax dollars that would have been saved. Add to that, the loss of low-income housing. In December 2009, Judy finally gave up and moved.

The park owned most of the mobilehomes

and had resold them multiple times, always in worse condition than the time before.

There were 2 RVs set up on one lot. The final straw was the arrival of a third RV, bringing a sex offender to live in the family park. The park had deteriorated beyond being a slum.

Submitted to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors on January 29, 2008 by Judy Lawson

Small Claims Suit For “Failure To Maintain”

Our 240-space park in Imperial County, then called “Imperial Hot Mineral Spa”, was taken over by new management in mid-2007. The new management promised us the moon- and we are still waiting.



Meanwhile they took away all the hot mineral spas and pools and the 4,000 square foot clubhouse, and announced to us all they wanted an Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV or ATV) park full of baby-boomers instead of the arthritic senior snowbirds they inherited! They raised the rent 29% and told us we should all move out! They renamed the park “Glamis North KOA” even though the region commonly called “Glamis” is some 40 miles southeast of us. Many of the residents moved out and the park is now mostly empty.

The English philosopher Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) has said, ‘The only thing necessary for the triumph [of evil] is for good men to do nothing.’

After three years of waiting for the promised improvements, and inspired by articles in “The Voice” from CoMO-CAL, on 10 November 2009 my wife and I filed suit in Imperial County Small Claims Court, following procedures given in the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) section 798.84 and using forms and guidance provided online at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/smallclaims/>.

The suit claimed four different “Failures to maintain”: (1) Loss of use of the clubhouse, (2) Loss of use of the hot mineral pools, (3) Failure to repair damaged streetlights, and (4) Turning off

the wireless Internet system during the summer months.

Management responded by announcing a \$5 Million lawsuit against us and threatening to sue anyone who helped us. Then they postponed our court date twice and subpoenaed any and all documents we might have relating to the park. In court I delivered a file box of over 1,000 documents.

Finally, seven months after we filed suit, seven volunteer witnesses and we presented our case (third time in court) in Brawley Small Claims Court on 18 May 2010. Because it was late in the day, the trial lasted only 15 minutes. The judge told us he was not familiar with the MRL and took the case “under submission”.

On 10 June 2010 we received the verdict: WE WON! The \$900 and \$135 court costs awarded us cannot bring back the pools and clubhouse, but the verdict does send a message.

On 9 July 2010 management’s attorney appealed the verdict. And so, on 26 July 2010 (fourth time in court) we again presented our case (Trial de Novo, or new trial) in Imperial County Superior Court. Four witnesses drove hundreds of miles and volunteered to stand with us. We represented ourselves. Management did not attend but was represented by their attorney and one employee as a witness. The trial lasted two hours. We presented numerous photographs and much testimony. The judge said there were several issues and several legal codes involved and therefore he took the case “under submission” and would make his ruling in a few days.

On 9 August 2010 the judge’s decision was filed: WE WON AGAIN! This time we were awarded “\$1,000 plus costs of suit”.

---Jim Kaness, Glamis North KOA Resident



The Little Engine That Could by Frank Wodley

The story of the little engine has been told and retold many times. The underlying theme however is the same - a stranded train is unable to find an engine willing to take it on over difficult terrain to its destination. Only the little blue engine is willing to try, and while repeating the mantra "I think I can, I think I can" overcomes a seemingly impossible task.

An early version goes like this:

A little railroad engine was employed about a station yard for such work as it was built for, pulling a few cars on and off the switches. One morning it was waiting for the next call when a long train of freight-cars asked a large engine in the roundhouse to take it over the hill "I can't; that is too much a pull for me," said the great engine built for hard work. Then the train asked another engine, and another, only to hear excuses and be refused. In desperation, the train asked the little switch engine to draw it up the grade and down on the other side. "I think I can," puffed the little locomotive, and put itself in front of the great heavy train. As it went on the little engine kept bravely puffing faster and faster, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

As it neared the top of the grade, which had so

discouraged the larger engines, it went more slowly. However, it still kept saying, "I--think--I--can, I--think--I--can." It reached the top by drawing on bravery!

Not unlike the little blue engine, CoMO-CAL has had its share of "difficult terrain." We started without members, without any foundation, and with little money. But we had an idea, some goals and lots of determination. We wanted to help our friends and neighbors where they live. We wanted to stop senior abuse, interference of sales, manager harassment and intimidation, etc. And we wanted enforcement of the laws!

Today, CoMO-CAL is climbing that mountain! We are grateful to have a loyal membership that believes in us and our mission. We couldn't do it without you! As a consequence we are the fastest growing advocacy in California, with members in over 600 parks state-wide. And we have new-founded successes - the FAQ Handbook, our new Blogs, the Window Sign, etc. We continue to think outside the box. We are already planning our next project! Thank you all for your continued support!

National Mobilehome Owners Convention

The national group, Manufactured Home Owners Association of America (MHOAA), is holding its annual convention in Salt Lake City on October 22-23. CoMO-CAL leaders Frank Wodley and Paul Masminster will be attending to represent CoMO-CAL and its membership. We understand CFED (a multi-faceted organization working at the local, state and federal levels to create economic opportunity that alleviates poverty) is supporting the MHOAA conference by providing 2 scholarships for each state association that is a member of MHOAA. We sincerely want to

thank CFED for this opportunity!

Other states included in the national group are Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Rhode Island, Delaware, New Jersey, & Maine.

CoMO-CAL has many ideas to improve the National Group. Let's start by sharing our ideas and our newsletters with other states. We will take THE VOICE for all to see.

The Life & Times of Home Owner Associations in Parks *by Paul Masminster, CoMO-CAL V.P.*

The first built mobilehome parks were populated primarily with seniors and veterans. Residents formed recreational clubs mainly to have fun. These organizations encouraged residents to get out of their homes by having community-wide functions - everyday activities like parties, special events, bingo, line dancing, pot lucks, bbq's, and other social events. It was a happy time and managers cared about their residents. There was a sense of community!

In the 1970's and 1980's, park ownership was changing, from "mom and pop" owners to next generation owners (sons and daughters) and big corporations. And the function of more and more park's went from "customer service", i.e. treating residents with respect and fairness to one of greed, i.e. trying to maximize their bottom line (greed). Park owners began taking advantage of residents through evictions, interference of sales, etc.. Consequently "recreational clubs" developed into a Home Owner Associations, whose primary goal was to protect resident's rights. This era was a time new laws had to be written to protect residents and counter the actions of park owners.

Today many mobilehome parks have changed 180 degrees and are not happy places to live. Now Parks don't want residents to organize or have meetings (keep the clubhouse closed). Parks work hard to stop any organization in parks. Their strategy is to keep residents in the dark and unorganized. We have observed that many clubhouses are closed, furniture is removed, other amenities have been taken away, such a pool tables, shuffleboard courts, etc.

Some park owners violate the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), Title 25 (Health and Safety Codes) and other protections in order to conduct their "monkey business" at will. They

hire managers who harass, intimidate, and create a "concentration camp" environment. They thwart attempts to organize and choose leaders to defend residents' rights. In fact, in a few cases, parks have taken advocates to court in an attempt to get a "restraining order" against them— a first step in getting the advocate evicted from the park. Park attorneys threaten HOA's that pose a threat.

Today when residents try to organize, management/ownership may disrupt meetings. No one likes the bickering and confrontation; thus the HOA often fails. The park may also infiltrate Home Owner Associations with pro-management residents. This effectively neutralizes any benefit the HOA might have to residents and allows Unfair Business Practices, Failure to Maintain, Senior Abuse, Favoritism, Double Standards, Harassment, Intimidation, Interference of sales, etc. This results in a management Dictatorship. Often HOA's that are ineffective are left alone and allowed to continue. We have observed such HOA's in many parks, led by boards only interested in their own egos, not the welfare of the residents they serve.

CoMO-CAL feels a pro-resident HOA, led by folks whose only goal is to help residents, not to help themselves or feel important, is a "must have" in every park. We strongly suggest the HOA align with CoMO-CAL because our six-year track record shows we support residents trying to help themselves.

If you want to start an HOA we can help. Call Paul at 310-686-6399. I'm happy to help get you on the right direction. Remember, CoMO-CAL can only help you if you help yourself. Do it today and you will begin seeing a difference.



CoMO-CAL Invites Your Community to Become a Chapter

A CoMO-CAL chapter is a group of members from the same park who join together to affirm and support CoMO-CAL's mission. Chapters are a way for your communities' concerns to be heard by the larger community. They provide your community an opportunity to be represented in CoMO-CAL. Chapters provide the leadership of the mobilejustice movement in your community, across the state and throughout the nation. Forming a chapter is easy. Just follow the steps detailed below.

The requirements to form a Chapter:

A chapter can be formed when 15 or more households are CoMO-CAL members with the following exceptions: (a) 0-30 households in a park require 3 member households, and (b) 31-99 households in a park require 10%. Remember only individual households can be members.

How to form a chapter	
Step 1	Identify Park concerns that CoMO-CAL's support could address
Step 2	Recruit households to become CoMO-CAL members
Step 3	Invite CoMO-CAL member households to a chapter meeting
Step 4	Submit your board and chapter details to CoMO-CAL

Remember, CoMO-CAL can not help you unless you help yourselves. And choose your leaders wisely. Their #1 priority should be you, not themselves or their egos!

Condo Conversion Appealed

On August 10, 2006, residents of Palisades Bowl in Los Angeles received a 60-day notice that owner Eddie Biggs would start the process to convert the ocean-view park to resident ownership. Later the Palisades Bowl Residents Association released a statement saying in part: "If Biggs is successful, the homeowners will no longer be protected by L.A. City rent control and the residents, who will likely not be able to afford to purchase their lots, will have to abandon their homes and their life savings."

The condo conversion of Palisades Bowl was later approved; however it has been reversed by the Court of Appeals as of August 31, 2010.

Copies of the court decision (B216515 -(Los Angeles County Super. Ct. No. BS112956) are available online or through CoMO-CAL for a modest fee.

Gary Gibson

Gary Gibson is a resident of Mountain View Mobile Estates in Canoga Park (San Fernando Valley). Mr. Gibson has considerable experience and expertise with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Gary has led a group in his park to sue his park owner and management company. In fact residents today have five on-going lawsuits against the park and/or management.

CoMO-CAL has asked Gary to be available to answer members questions about the HCD and he has consented. Gary's contact information is displayed in our Directory on page 2.

So if you have any questions about the HCD, Mr. Gibson is our "go to guy." And thanks Gary for your service to mobilehome owners!

San Fernando Valley This and That

1. **San Fernando Valley Meetings:**

The meetings continue: CoMO-CAL will continue regular monthly meetings of the "San Fernando Valley Homeowners Alliance." Meeting dates are: September 19, October 17, November 21 and December 12. Meetings will be held at the Metrolink train station in the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce meeting room (10038 Old Depot Plaza Rd) from 1:00pm to 3:00pm - next to KinderCare. All owners of mobilehomes are welcome, you need not be a member of CoMO-CAL. Just be interested in improving the quality of your life in your park. Call Frank at 818-886-6479 for details.

2. **Sing Along at Bermuda MHP in Mission Hills.** Now that Jon Heim got involved, Bobbie Gore's "Song Circles" are back on schedule.

Everyone is welcome - the 2nd Saturday of the month from 7-11pm. Refreshments served. Call Bobbie Gore at 818-365-6418 for information.

3. Frank is happy to come to your park and speak. All you have to do is make sure he is available, then reserve your clubhouse and distribute meeting flyers. It is that simple! Residents need to know about CoMO-CAL and the services we provide. Do it today!

4. There is only one HOA in the San Fernando Valley. Isn't it time you had one in your park. Call Frank and he will help you organize. Remember, we can't help you unless you help yourself. Get leaders who have you as their #1 priority - then you all win!

Help Requested by Sally Studer, CoMO-CAL V.P.

As CoMO-CAL grows and expands services and resources, so grows the work load. which is now beyond the ability of one person to manage. Volunteers are desperately needed to keep the following services current:

Blog / Website Updated

Membership Data Base

Email List / Constant Contact mass email

Accounting/bookkeeper

Long distance phoning

CoMO-CAL liaison in your park

Fundraising/ Advertising

CoMO-CAL's rapid growth has happened because no other state-wide organization provides the "in the trenches" help that is needed. I think we all can agree every one of us has relied on CoMO-CAL's resources in the past, present, or will need them at sometime in the future.

Your talents are needed now. Please volunteer by contacting Frank Wodley or myself, asap, to offer your help.

Sincerest thanks and appreciation,





THE VOICE Sept/Oct 2010

Bulletin Boards

Ever think what legislation would really help mobilehome owners in parks? Well here is a suggestion.

Many parks do not have bulletin boards for resident use, i.e. a place where someone could advertise their home for sale, or an advocacy group could display literature without the manager taking the information. Resident bulletin boards would allow us to communicate and share information.

Tell your advocates you need legislation like bulletin boards. Get behind their efforts in Sacramento, and tomorrow it might just be a reality!

Park Meetings / Email Network

Please choose a date to have a general park meeting, then call Frank (818-886-6479) and let's talk about violations in your park and what to do about them. We are already scheduling meetings in the general San Jose area - so those members in San Jose - call Frank - let's do a meeting in your park in late September.

Email Alert Network:

Many members do not receive ALERTS because they have not notified us of email address changes. Please help us help you, keep your email address up to date. This saves us a lot of time. Because it is important, you might be receiving a phone call from Donna Helwig, our VP to correct our files.

CoMO-CAL (COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS-CALIFORNIA) NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (do not use for RENEWAL) (Print Please)

NAME: _____ Date: _____

PARK NAME: _____ Mngt/Owner _____ SPACE #: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ CITY _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ ZIP _____

APPLICANTS PHONE NUMBER (____) - _____ - _____

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT _____ SPONSOR (if any) _____

- MEMBERSHIP (\$20.00/12 Months, \$38/24 Months, \$54/36 Months) Includes our newsletter
 - REDUCED FEE LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM* (add \$25/12 Months - must be a member to join)
- * \$100/letter, \$75/30 minute consultation, \$35/answer to simple question.

Check/M.O. # _____ Amount: \$ _____ Donation() Amount: \$ _____

INCLUDE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO "CoMO-CAL"
MAIL TO: CoMO-CAL, P.O. BOX 4821, CHATSWORTH, CA. 91313-4821

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800-929-6061 / 818-886-6479



CoMO-CAL: a non-profit corporation dedicated to serve mobilehome owners here in California. Our purpose is **education**, **communication** and to **unite** mobilehome owners. Don't "go it" alone. We serve all 700,000 residents living in the 5,300 mobilehome parks across California. We must "stick together." We are the "real deal."

SERVICES WE PROVIDE OUR MEMBERS

1. At least 6 issues of THE VOICE. Usually 16-20 pages long, filled with information no mobilehome owner should be without. Articles from attorneys on important issues. Tips and Suggestions. Important laws explained. What you need to do to protect yourself and your investment.
2. We offer "reduced rate" legal services with an attorney versed in the MRL and other mobilehome laws. See inside this issue for info.
3. Website: comocal.org. Members have access to all issues of THE VOICE, attorneys who know the MRL, important links to government, advocacy groups, etc.
4. Small Claims Court Assistance: We will pay your fees up to \$30.00 and help with your paperwork. (Some restrictions apply.)
5. Questions / Problems: Join our "reduced fee legal services program" and contact attorney Jon Heim.
6. We have several attorneys we refer members for help with litigation or advice. Unfortunately your dime.
7. Above all, a way to **UNITE** and have a **VOICE**.
8. Ultimately, we give home owners hope that someone is working for their interest.

JOIN CoMO-CAL. DO IT FOR YOUR PEACE OF MIND