



COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS

WHY ARE RESIDENTS OFTEN AT ODDS WITH THEIR PARK OWNERS?

Volume 1, Issue 10
**NOVEMBER
2005**

Why do we often find ourselves at odds with our park owner and management? And where do “management companies” fit into the equation? Just like any business, a management company often promises the park owner more cash flow and higher profits. The big question is how do they deliver on their promise?

It would seem as if their business plan would be simple. Keep the park residents happy, promote a community atmosphere and maintain the park. Of course this would insure that residents would stay and any vacancies would quickly be filled. What else could a business do to insure continued rents and low vacancy rates?

Unfortunately for us this simple plan does not take into account other ways to maximize income to the park. Why do park owners not want rent control? Because it takes away their absolute control of rent increases. But there are ways to get around rent control. And park owners often take advantage of these loopholes!

Here in Los Angeles, we have rent control if we have rental agreements of 12 months or less. So how do parks get around this? Simple! First of all, park attorneys tell us that prospective tenants (buyers of mobile homes) are not governed by the Mobilehome Residency Law. This means they are not protected by the MRL. The park is not required to offer a “prospective tenant” a 12 month or month-to-month rental agreement. Instead, the park can and often only offers a longer term rental agreement or lease. When signed, the prospective tenant signs away any rights under rent control. No Rent Control—Simple! (We need to tell CMRAA and GSMOL that they must work to change the law and bring “prospective tenants” under the umbrella of the MRL—this would help bring those new residents back under rent control.)

Another way to “get around” rent control is through “upgrading the park.” On the surface this seems like a good idea—get rid of the older mobilehomes and bring in new mobilehomes which will make the park look more attractive. Of course the big draw-back is if the older mobilehome is YOURS, you will lose considerable money when you can’t sell it (however there are buyers for the empty lot—in the SFV a lot will sell for perhaps as much as \$35,000+) and must move it out of the park, but to where? Of course here in California where can we possibly move our mobilehome? So how does this affect rent control? Simple! Rent control goes with the mobilehome. As long as the mobilehome stays on the space, the space is under rent control. As soon as it is moved off the space (other than if you yourself upgrade to a new mobilehome at your own free will), that space NO LONGER is under rent control and the park can raise the rent on the space as (Please see Page 5 RESIDENTS AT ODDS)

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SB 125—MORE AMMUNITION FOR PARK OWNERS

WMA supported SB 125 was just passed by both California houses and signed into law by the Governor. It allows park employees to come onto your property, remove everything you have “stored” outside your mobile home (does not include items in a storage shed however) and move the items to a storage area. In order to get your property back, you must pay the park all charges, including moving and storage charges. Of course what you CAN HAVE outside your mobile home is detailed in your Park Rules and Regulations; however all we have seen lately say you can HAVE NOTHING STORED OUTSIDE the mobile home! The consequence of not paying the park, you not only lose your possessions but the park can then evict you for non-payment.

Of course the legislature was duped into thinking park owners would only use it to “clean up” their mobile home parks of undesirable and unsightly **debris and refuse**. But let’s face it, our mobile home spaces are cramped and we should all be allowed to “store” non-hazardous” items outside in an area not seen from the street or neighbors. Today the law only allows a storage shed up to 110 sq. ft. on a space. Why not allow two, especially if there is room on the space and the neighbors are not affected? Or why not allow a resident to store items in a closed, fenced area.

Only time will tell, but our feeling is that now park owners will use this against park residents, especially those residents who are not “favored” in our parks. And especially those who will not fight back—seniors, widows, and low income people—the one’s who are the most vulnerable.

The following is included for your information. We know it is long and detailed. Unfortunately the law sometimes is long and detailed. It comes from a website and provides additional information about SB125.

COMMENTS : According to the **author (WMA)**, mobilehome park owners want to provide a desirable living environment for their residents; however, problems arise when a tenant fails to maintain their home-site by allowing personal items to be stored outdoors where they are often neglected and left to deteriorate and become an eyesore. Other residents may complain about the condition of another resident's space but the park management is not able to remove the debris or junk. Although management can send notices of noncompliance and verbally request a resident clean up the debris and trash from their space eviction is the only remedy available to the management to enforce the rules of the park. This bill would allow management to remove the debris from the resident or homeowners premises and store it until either the resident claims or abandons it and charge the resident the cost of removing and storing the debris.

Safeguards for residents: This bill would prevent management from evicting a resident or homeowner for the same rules that allowed the management to remove the resident's property. A resident could be evicted for nonpayment of the costs of the removal of the junk from their space; however, the notice of payment is required to be delivered in person. This provision would provide some protection in the event an individual is out of town when the items are removed from the space and is unaware of the need to reimburse the park management. The park management is also responsible for proving that cleanup was nondiscriminatory.

This Bill:

1)Requires the management to provide the homeowner or resident written notice 14 days prior to

removing the property. The notice must include the rule, regulation or code that has been violated and the estimated charges to be imposed by the management.

- 2) Provides the mobilehome and appurtenance or accessory structures cannot be removed under this rule.
- 3) Requires a homeowner or resident to pay the management the actual, reasonable cost of removing and storing the property if a notice of nonpayment is personally served on the homeowner.
- 4) Requires management of a park to provide a homeowner or resident written notice within seven days from the date the property is removed to a storage area, of the following:
 - a) An inventory of the property removed;
 - b) Where the property may be claimed; and,
 - c) Notice that the cost of removal shall be paid by the resident or homeowner.
- 5) Provides the homeowner 60 days to claim the property after which time it will be considered abandoned and may be disposed of by the management.
- 6) Provides if the homeowner or resident claims the property but does not reimburse the management for storage cost, management may bill the individual on a monthly basis.
- 7) Allows the management to dispose of the property prior to the end of the 60 day period if the homeowner or resident informs the management, in writing, of his/her intent to abandon the property.
- 8) Requires if the management auctions or sells the property and the funds exceed the amount owed to the management for storage, the management must refund the difference to the homeowner or resident within 15 days of receiving the funds.
- 9) Requires the refund to a homeowner to be sent first-class mail or personal delivery and include an accounting of the costs of removal and storage of the property and the proceeds from the sale of the property.
- 10) Requires if the sale or auction of the property is less than the cost of storage the homeowner or resident is responsible for the difference and the management may collect if a notice of nonpayment is personally served on the homeowner.
- 11) Prohibits the management of a park from evicting a resident or homeowner based on a violation of this section.
- 12) Places the burden of proof that enforcement of this provision has been executed in a nondiscriminatory and nonselective manner on the management.
- 13) Allows park management to recover the cost of a title search upon successful eviction of a resident.

Governor signs Senate Bill 237 (Migden) into law

Governor Schwarzenegger also signed Senate bill 237 (Migden) into law. The bill prohibits park rental agreements entered into beginning January 1, 2006 from including a provision giving the park management the right of first refusal to buy a homeowner's mobilehome offered for sale in the park to a third party. WMA worked with the author, Senator Carole Migden, and was successful in amending the bill to allow for a separate agreement between the management and the resident to purchase a right of first refusal on the home, if they mutually agree.

UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS ARTICLES

NORTHRIDGE MHP PASSTHROUGH. You will remember Carol Mabus reported in the August CoMO-LAC Newsletter about the passthrough which the L.A. Housing Department (LAHD) approved for Northridge MHP. About thirty Northridge MHP residents and a CoMO-LAC representative attended a hearing in downtown L.A. on June 2, 2005, along with the park owner. The hearing was held at the request of residents in order to dispute the LAHD's decision. A representative from the City Attorney's office moderated the meeting and allowed both sides, as well as the L.A. Housing Department, to state arguments for and against the decision to allow the passthrough.

As of this publishing, the City Attorney's office has not rendered their decision on the Northridge Passthrough, and residents have been paying the \$29.12 since July 2005. You will remember also that the residents submitted 200 pages arguing against the passthrough, sent it in a timely manner to the L.A. Housing Department; however the Department DID NOT even look at it before they made their decision to approve.

Recently a good friend and CoMO-LAC member made a request, in writing, to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) asking the following question:

Can the Mobilehome Park operator charge park residents for repair and update of facilities? Answer: The Commission Decision D.95-02-090. Recovery of costs of owning, operating and maintaining a sub metered utility system is included in the discount the park receives from the utility providing service to the park. The park may not pass onto tenants additional costs for repair and maintenance to the sub metered utility system within the park.

CoMO-LAC advises Northridge residents to send this Commission Decision to the L.A. Housing Department and City Attorney's office. Both groups should seriously study its message and determine if the passthrough should be disallowed because of it.

TRADEWINDS (ROSAMOND). Lucille Fried still hasn't sent us her kitchen sink yet, but she is doing a terrific job. Her neighbors should be proud of her and appreciative of her efforts. The park has stopped giving 7 day notices, and the park met with several residents and tore up paperwork to evict them. One resident had been threatened with eviction citing a violation regarding railings on steps when in fact the steps didn't even exist! Lucy has had a visit by another reporter, this time from Bakersfield. We are watching for the article and hope they will get it right this time. Also an official from Weights and Measures will be doing an inspection at Tradewinds to investigate park lighting connected to tenants electrical service (so it is being paid by the resident), the claim that the park took all residents off the CARE program without notice, and over billing of utilities by the park

LAS ENCINAS (VENTURA). Work on the flood control channel still has not started and winter rains are fast approaching. Residents continue to worry that some spaces will be eroded to the point that they will lose their mobilehomes. This is serious. Now there is a claim that cement blocks used to build the wall are not available. David Shackle is looking into that issue, all the while residents sit and wait. More news next month.

(RESIDENTS AT ODDS, Continued from Page 1). much as the market will bear.

Another way to “get around” rent control is through the eviction process. Here in Los Angeles, an eviction decontrols a rental space and the rent may be increased. This may be the reason some parks put pressure on tenants by giving them seven day notices. A seven day notice can ultimately result in eviction (remember after 3 in one year)

There is something you should know about selling your mobilehome after being evicted. The law prior to 2003 said if you are evicted from the park, you must take your mobilehome with you. You could not sell it, meaning you got zero, na-da, nichts, nothing! So usually the resident would move out of the park and lose his/her mobilehome!

As was printed in the March 2002 Californian: “Many park owners have considered eviction of a park resident to be the park owner’s opportunity to pick up ownership of the mobilehome for free, or for a nominal price. This practice is simply not fair, and must be stopped”. So once again the space was no longer under rent control. The park could increase the rent, and better yet they now had your lot (for cheap or free) and they could move on a new mobile home and rake in the profits.

Fortunately the law changed in January 2003 (AB682 by Ellen Corbett) and this loophole was “somewhat” corrected. Now the new law states that even if you are evicted, you have 60 days to sell your mobilehome. Sounds better, huh? However if it has not been sold at the end of the 60 days, it must STILL be moved off the space. Well, it doesn’t take too much effort by the park to “interfere” with the sale for a couple months—and behold, the park gets the space again free—at your expense—in spite of the “best” efforts of our representatives in Sacramento!

Interference of sales is quite a serious problem in many mobilehome parks across the state. Two situations come to mind. First, often times the park will not allow you to sell your mobilehome, suggesting that the park is going to upgrade and you must move your older mobilehome out of the park. The law states that even older mobilehomes do not have to be moved if they pass a health and safety inspection. CoMO-LAC is working to compile a list of reputable inspectors. After an inspection the inspector will give you a list of repairs/changes that you must fix to be in compliance with the codes. Items such as unsafe porch railings, porches, extension cords, refuse and debris, etc. are common items on such a list. Note that the inspection is limited to the exterior of your mobilehome. Once you are “in compliance” the park should allow you to sell. However if the park does not, you probably need to retain an attorney.

Another interference is the process where the park approves or disapproves of your buyer. There are only two criteria that can be considered. The verification of the buyers income to pay the space rent and verification that the buyer probably will obey the rules and regulations of the park. A credit report can not be used to disapprove your buyer. The park has 15 days to make a decision and if the buyer is disapproved, the park is required to put the reason(s) in writing. If they refuse, they are violating the law and you would be advised once again to consult with an attorney.

Owning a mobilehome should not be this complicated. Why should we be subjected to these kinds of situations? And usually we are so vulnerable—seniors, fixed incomes, often times not well. We have enough to worry about—why should we have to worry about losing our mobilehome? It is beyond reason.

We must unite and stand together against such treatment. When you see any of these situations happening in your park, to you or your neighbors, please let CoMO-LAC know. We just got a call from a resident in Chatsworth Imperial that the park was not going to allow her to sell her mobilehome because it was too old and it is not even a single wide! THIS PRACTICE MUST STOP. She had attended CoMO-LAC meetings, but had not joined because she was selling and moving to Hemet. Good thing she knew about CoMO-LAC. We advised her to retain an attorney, and have the attorney write management indicating that they are violating the MRL.

OAKRIDGE MHP CoMO-LAC MEETING TURNS UGLY

On Monday October 3rd CoMO-LAC held a quarterly meeting in Oakridge Mobile Home Park in Sylmar. Oakridge is a newer community of 600 spaces. The majority of residents are under a 20 year lease, while 86 residents are still under rent control. Residents are concerned that many have received 5% rent increases per year over the last two years. There is confusion whether or not a particular space is under rent control. And there is confusion about a one year lease versus the 20 year leases and whether or not residents were even offered a one year lease. We understand almost all residents signed the 20 year lease which calls for an annual rent increase of up to 5% (if the Consumer Price Index is less than 5%), and higher amounts should the Index be more than 5%. In addition, residents face additional increases up to 10% in years 6, 11 and 16 at the option of the park.

About 100 residents attended the meeting and the park manager, Ginny Harmon, spoke about the 5% rent increases and fielded resident's questions. Some residents did not believe they were offered a one year lease. Others questioned passthroughs in the park. Several were concerned that especially those on fixed incomes could not afford the ever higher rents. Oakridge does currently have a cap on rents of \$815.00; however this cap can be raised anytime the owner decides.

The second part of the meeting CoMO-LAC President Frank Wodley spoke briefly about CoMO-LAC, told residents that CoMO-LAC is responsive to their needs and mobilehome owners must stick together. Also that CoMO-LAC is primarily an educational tool whose goal is to educate members on their rights in mobilehome parks. All residents who were not members received an application and handout describing CoMO-LAC.

Frank briefly explained that there are about 59 parks with 6,600 spaces in the City of Los Angeles under the Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Annual rent increases are covered by the Ordinance and may vary from a low of 3% to a high of 8% depending on the Consumer Price Index. For instance in 2005 the Index is 3.3% and the allowable increase is 3.0% (rounded to the nearest whole number). 514 Oakridge residents are not covered by the RSO.

Unfortunately the meeting turned ugly. The assistant manager suggested Frank was calling the manager a liar. Another seemed to have researched Frank's background, where he lived, what was happening in his park, etc. He questioned whether CoMO-LAC was actually a member of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce (he said he was a board member of the Chamber). He insinuated that Frank was involved in litigation with Chatsworth Mobilehome Park and **implied Frank was using CoMO-LAC money for his personal use to pay his attorney's fees.** Of course the answer to these attacks are simple-NO WAY JOSE! CoMO-LAC is indeed a member of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce and uses the Chamber meeting room at least twice a month for meetings. CoMO-LAC is a member in good standing with the Chamber. Anyone questioning that can call the Chamber at 818-341-2428—talk with Ivy or Molly. Also Frank was involved in litigation with the park manager; however in 2003. And of course CoMO-LAC was non-existent at that time, so Frank could hardly have been using CoMO-LAC money for his defense.

After the meeting several residents approached Frank and apologized for the behavior of 2-3 residents. And really what do these attacks show us. That some are afraid of CoMO-LAC and want to bring it down by attacking its leader. This is not the first time that an organization or active residents have been attacked in order to lessen its impact in the community. We have heard of at least one GSMOL Chapter President leaving a park after neighbors filed restraining order actions against him. He essentially gave up and left. Being an "activist" is stressful and you are an obvious target. Just ask Lucille Fried in Tradewinds in Rosamond. Management just put out a flyer attacking her as a trouble maker when in fact she is doing a great job of identifying violations of the MRL in her park. Lucy, keep up the good work. We all benefit. (Watch for updates on this article next month)

**CALIFORNIA MOBILEHOME RESOURCE & ACTION ASSOCIATION
(CMRAA)**

CMRAA is an active mobile home owner advocate group located in San Jose California. We just received our first newsletter (The Mobilehome Report) and it gives us a look at this very important organization. CMRAA was founded 10 years ago by Dave Hennessy, ex-president of GSMOL and is similar to GSMOL. They lobby in Sacramento and often both GSMOL and CMRAA oppose or support the same bill. If you are interested in joining, just fill out a CoMO-LAC application, cross off CoMO-LAC and put CMRAA, and send it to CMRAA, P.O. Box 7468, San Jose, Ca. 95150-7468 with a check for \$12.00. We understand they have about 3,000-4,000 members.

The "Mobilehome Report" is published every other month. The September issue is eight pages long and is 80% about legislation or litigation. They have one page on SB125, the bill sponsored by the WMA (we are not copying them — information on SB125 was already provided in this edition of our newsletter on page 2 & 3— obviously we both feel this legislation is important to our members). Further, there is one page updating current legislation pending in Sacramento, a page on Cacho v. Boudreau, the "water service charge" case, a page detailing a challenge to rent control in San Jose by MHC, and another two pages by Dave Hennessy regarding his recent serious medical problems, and the need for volunteers, especially those who can assume leadership roles.

We write about CMRAA because we feel you need to know what's happening in the state of California. CMRAA is helping us all. In fact there are links to CMRAA in the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Guide. CMRAA does have a representative here in Southern California. Her name is Mary Ann Stein, she lives in Temecula and is a CMRAA vice-president. We've talked with Mary Ann and she is quite knowledgeable about mobilehome issues. She has been with Dave Hennessy since he was GSMOL President.

Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League (GSMOL)

There will probably be a change of leadership in GSMOL (Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League) after their January 2006 Convention in Costa Mesa. Mr. Tim Sheahan, current Vice President of Zone D (San Diego County), has decided to run for President, unchallenged. We believe Zone B Vice President and ROP Vice President are also up for reelection. If Tim vacates Zone D Vice President position, we are not sure if this position will be voted on or he will choose his successor.

We pledge our support to Tim. We need effective legislation in Sacramento to protect us. But GSMOL needs to begin working with local groups such as CoMO-LAC. Early this year we wrote GSMOL we are not in competition with them, but can compliment them—CoMO-LAC at the local level, GSMOL in Sacramento at the state level. We are identifying MRL changes that are important to protect us. Our hope is that with new leadership in Garden Grove GSMOL will show mobilehome owners that they are up to the challenge, and will focus more on members direct needs and will work with us to close the many loopholes in the MRL.

For your information, CoMO-LAC does not lobby for new legislation. We would not be tax exempt if we did. However, we can work with CMRAA and GSMOL to promote laws which help protect our rights.

by Samii Taylor, September 16, 2005 Metro Evening News @ metroeveningnews.com/category/cypress .

As the owner of a mobilehome, I assure you there's nothing funny about the hidden dangers of owning one – dangers never fully disclosed to consumers.

By the late 1940s, servicemen returning from World War II in search of cheap housing for their families discovered that mobile “trailer coaches” enabled them to pack up, and follow job opportunities across America. Pulling the long, long trailer to follow a dream or a job created the need for a place to park at the end of the day.

Landowners with a few spare acres, or land they hoped to develop in the future, began to provide “trailer parks” for this new breed of homeowner. Trailer parks frequently adjoined major highways, and offered travelers nothing more than a space to park for the night – no phone, no pool, no pets. As the demand for mobilehome spaces increased, landowners realized the potential for income from renting space long term. The landowner's invitation of “Space For Rent,” enabled coach owners to park their tag-along home, and become members of the community, if only temporarily.

Fast forward to 1980 –

the product known as a “trailer” had evolved into a spacious double or triple-wide “manufactured home” filled with the latest amenities. Today's homes may feature a master suite, multiple baths, a formal dining room, den, energy efficient appliances, dual pane windows, vaulted ceilings, a fireplace, and garage. The only limits to a manufactured home's size and appearance are imagination and budget. Attractive and affordable, manufactured housing now boasts nearly 10 percent of the U.S. housing stock. Regardless of whether they are attached to a permanent foundation on the lot of your choice or installed on pylons in a leased community space, these homes no longer qualify as “mobile!”

Mobilehome parks across the nation have also evolved. Manufactured housing communities now offer residents pools, playgrounds, clubhouses, and open spaces. In newly developed areas with land to spare, there are elegantly landscaped, gated communities featuring half-acre lots, and country club-like amenities. Formerly a haven for retirees and Florida Snow Birds, the majority of manufactured home communities are a blend of seniors, families and singles all seeking home ownership, and a lifestyle that is “within their means.”

Clearly, the lure for buyers to purchase a manufactured home is very attractive. Sales of manufactured units have sky rocketed as the pool of available housing in desirable metropolitan areas has diminished. In Orange County, California, manufactured housing dealers advised potential buyers that the cost of these homes was escalating weekly due to increased demand. The country's politicians, and mobilehome manufacturers continue to tout the manufactured home as America's new “affordable housing” – the Holy Grail of Housing in real estate markets like Southern California.

When my husband and I decided to consolidate our lifestyle in order to spend more time together as a family, we opted not to purchase a conventional home in today's overly inflated real estate market. My in-laws had already downsized to a luxurious manufactured home in the Inland Empire, and we were very impressed with everything about living in a manufactured home. Like millions of consumers each year, we made the decision to purchase a manufactured home based on all of the “perceived advantages” previously outlined. Two factors that sealed the deal for us were finding an affordable space rent, and a safe community where we could raise our son. Ultimately, we selected Lincoln Center Mobile Home Park, a four star community in Cypress, California.

Unlike buying a conventional house, you cannot move into a manufactured home community simply because you qualify to purchase the real estate. Our purchase of a home was contingent upon our being approved to live in the community. Our financial statement and backgrounds were (Please see **RISKY VENTURE** on Page 9)

thoroughly checked by park management. Once we were “approved” by management, the lease was signed. All systems were go! Our dream of owning a more affordable home in Southern California had been achieved! Then, without warning, our “American Dream” became an unbelievable nightmare.

In less than a year after we purchased our manufactured home, the land lease for Lincoln Center was sold to Sierra Corporate Management, a property management division of Kort and Scott Financial Group. The space rent for residents was immediately raised 20 percent, except for the few owners who still had long-term leases. The cost to new buyers of homes in the park jumped overnight from \$650 per month to \$975. “Amenities” such as park monitors, who helped oversee the safety of our community, were eliminated. The residents of Lincoln Center were immediately up in arms over the excessive increase in their cost of living, and the dramatic decrease in the resale value of their homes. Of even greater concern was the very real potential for the park to be closed so that the land could be sold to developers to build condos or townhouses. Our “affordable” lifestyle was in serious jeopardy.

When I began searching the Internet about our plight, I was stunned to learn that since 1979 an ever increasing number of mobilehome parks across the nation have been closed. The reason for the mass closures is simple – redevelopment. The land beneath mobilehome parks is worth millions to landowners and developers. The tax revenue advantage to cities is a tempting reason to grant a Change of Use Permit for the land. Politicians have been convinced by developers that the only solution to the “housing crunch” is to change land use stipulations to allow for more homes to be built. On the surface this type of redevelopment scheme appears to be great for business and great for the economy. The truth is that thousands of people have been displaced through no fault of their own; many of them have actually been made homeless by this “sound business decision.”

Ask yourself what you would do if you received the bill for a 20 percent increase in your property taxes? What if your mortgage company sold your loan to a new lender, who then sent you a notice demanding 20 percent more per month for the privilege of living in your home? What if the law gave these companies the right to raise your costs every ninety days by any amount they felt the “market” would bear? Where are retired seniors living on pensions and Social Security going to get their hands on 20 percent more money each month? How can anyone survive this scenario for very long when the average income in Southern California last year increased a mere 12 percent?

Across the United States, residents trying to make ends meet on limited incomes are now forced to divert money previously used to buy food, and life saving medication, to pay their excessively high space rent. Many manufactured home owners have been forced to sell far below market value because new owners are unable to pay a mortgage, and the inflated space rents. Owners of older coaches must simply pack up and walk away because their home is too old to be sold or moved to another location. Others have simply abandoned their homes in despair. These homes have been snatched up by park owners and rented or resold. Where there are no rent relief ordinances in place to protect owners of manufactured homes, there is no deterrent against this type of abuse.

It’s easy to see that park owners, and the management companies who hold the leases on the land are in the power position. If residents pay the increasingly higher rent, the owner wins. If the residents default and abandon their homes, the park owner can buy their home in foreclosure, then sell it or rent it out – he wins again. Ultimately, if the mobile park can be proven to no longer be viable as a business for the landowner, he can petition local authorities for the property to be rezoned, and sell the land to developers. He wins big time!

The Internet is filled with information regarding the billions of dollars real estate investment companies like Kort and Scott Financial Group and Sam Zell’s company, Equity Lifestyle Properties, have earned at the expense of manufactured home owners. This new breed of mobile park investor freely admits it does not care about the hardship an excessive increase in rent may place on people. If residents don’t like the way the park is being managed or can no longer afford the rent, the corporate giants say that (Please see RISKY VENTURE on Page 10)

(RISKY VENTURE continued from Page 9) homeowners are free to sell their home and move.

Park owners and management companies declare that homeowners knew what they were getting into when they purchased their homes. This is only partially true. Living on leased land has always meant that the land owner or lease holder will increase the rent. This is an assumed risk the homeowner agrees to take by living in a park where they do not own the dirt beneath their home. What no one counted on, especially owners who purchase their homes 30 years ago, was a rent increase that leaves them with little or not options for saving the investment in their homes. Sadly, this important bit of information is never fully disclosed as condition of sale.

According to the philosopher Balzac, "Behind every great fortune there is a crime." The crime being committed in manufactured home communities across America today is a crime against humanity. Innocent people are being priced out of their homes by calculated corporate greed. Consumers everywhere are protected from excessive cost increases for utilities, property taxes, and apartment rents. Lemon Laws allow buyers to get a full refund on a defective vehicle. The State of California and the County of Orange have refused to enact any legislation to protect the manufactured homeowner from repeated, unregulated increases in space rent. This creative form of extortion faces residents living in almost every manufactured housing community in the nation. The heartbreaking reality – this crime is rarely illegal, but it is always immoral.

Editors Note: This paper is local to Cypress, Seal Beach, and other Orange County communities.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES FOR MOBILEHOME OWNERS

Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) state enforcement agency re: mobilehome registration and titling, dealer licensing, mobilehome and mobilehome park inspections, Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership loan fund, etc. Mike Herald, Director for Legislation, P.O. Box 952053, Sacramento, CA 95252-2053. Phone: (916) 445-4775. Or, Judy Nevis, Deputy Director of Administration and Management, phone (916) 327-2625. The website is: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov>

Coalition of Mobilehome Owners—Los Angeles County (CoMO-LAC). Advocate for mobilehome owners rights. P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth, Ca. 91313. Phone: (818) 886-6479. E-mail address: fawodley@yahoo.com

Western Manufactured Housing Communities Association (WMA) represents the largest association of mobilehome park owners in California and several other western states. Sheila Dey, Executive Director, 1007 7th Street, 3rd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: (916) 448-7002. The website is: <http://www.wma.org>

California Mobilehome Park Owners Alliance (MPA) represents a park group organized by Los Angeles park owner, Jeff Kaplan. Edelstein & Gildbert, legislative advocates. 1127 11th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: (916) 443-6400

Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League (GSMOL) has represented mobilehome owners in parks in California since 1962. Maurice Priest, 980 9th Street, 16th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: (916) 446-0000. The website is: <http://www.gsmol.org/>

California Mobilehome Resource & Action Association (CMRAA) represents mobilehome owners residing in parks, primarily in Santa Clara, Bay Area and Northern California counties. Founded 1996. Dave Hennessy, President 3381 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 210, San Jose, CA 95117. Phone: (408) 244-8134. <http://www.cmraa.org>

California Manufactured Housing Institute (CMHI) represents manufactured home and mobilehome manufacturers and dealers. Nielsen Merksamer, legislative advocates, 770 L St., Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: (916) 442-4584. The website is: <http://www.CMHI.org>

Mobile/Manufactured Home Network A web site relating to mobilehome owner resources. John Sisker, founder, 80 Huntington St., # 266, Huntington Beach, CA 92668-5343. Phone: (714) 536-3850. The web site address is: <http://maxpages.com/mobilehomes>

FRANK'S POLITICALLY INCORRECT PAGE

Forgive me, but after one year working hard to make CoMO-LAC a reality I think I'm entitled to one page that is not politically correct. One gentleman (a leader of another group) comes to mind wants his audience to think his organization is healthy, growing, and under control. He wants everyone to think all is well and he is doing a terrific job. Well, it might be "politically correct", but certainly not an accurate statement.

A friend of mine, a learned person with years of experience in this struggle, said to me over a year ago "Don't start another group, it will take at least three years to establish itself." Well today I think he was correct—he is a member of CoMO-LAC and perhaps he remembers these words to me. Another friend and mentor tells would be members: "You don't have to attend meetings, you don't have to form Chapters." And many tell me they are "too busy" with their own lives to get involved. Yes, this "business" is quite dry, all the laws and such. I'm sure we all would rather read something uplifting and happy—maybe I should really just write about Kathy's vacation.

Don't get me wrong, CoMO-LAC **IS** growing—perhaps over 600 members this month. And we **DO** have money in the bank, and we **ARE** making a difference. There are a few members who have come forward with donations—this month about \$200.00 (THANKS!). There are a few members who have given their time. And there are a few members who write or email with words of praise. And I am so very grateful! You can't know how my day brightens when I go to the post office and find 2 or 3 or 4 new memberships. I always look to see where they're from to see if our flyers are doing any good.

Then I think about Sharon—I grew up with her and she was like a sister. I've "adopted" her parents as my own as mine have passed on. She was just diagnosed with bone cancer and it has spread. And I think about Kathy John, the lady in Sacramento who will be homeless as well as the lady who Gail Mertz tried to help - both evicted. Maryland who was told she had to move her double-wide and can't sell. And Sam Zell, raising rents \$4000.00 / month. And Knoll's Lodge. And 75 year old Lucille Fried in Tradewinds. And my friend Herb Jensen with his wife who needs constant care in Oakridge. And the list goes on and on.

Being mobilehome owners, we have bought into this "family." Some of us are strong. However many in our family are not—they don't know the laws or even the fact that they are threatened. Many are on fixed incomes and have nothing else other than their mobilehome. We are all involved whether or not we like it. And the longer we sit on the sidelines, the worse it will become. Thank park owner organizations for that! We shouldn't think someone else is working hard to protect us and help us. Because they're not.

I ask those CoMO-LAC members in the San Fernando Valley. Please call me or write me. Volunteer an hour or so of your time. Be involved. Be part of a membership committee, or ways and means, or if you know about the laws—a legal committee. I truly need help with printing the newsletter and flyers. If you are good at letter writing, we need to write letters to government officials, and others. They need to know we are a viable group. And our many members in the Antelope Valley, please offer to help Lucy, Ralph, Ben, Floyd Billie and the others. CoMO-LAC can really make a difference and be a powerful organization, but only when you realize "CoMO-LAC is your organization, an organization by the members, for the members." We can also use more donations. We can begin building a legal fund. And we still need donations for mailing of flyers. I'm open to your suggestions!

Life is too short. Our family is being threatened. We can make a difference. CoMO-LAC will only be mediocre unless more get involved. We can make a big difference, but only with your participation. And I do truly appreciate you becoming members, thank you, thank you. I hope to hear from you soon. **Thanks for listening.**

YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER & ANNUAL DUES**Explain the annual CoMO-LAC membership—do I get a full 12 months benefits?**

Our membership dues are to be paid once a year, on or before a members anniversary month. So for example if you join in December 2005, your membership does not stop on January 2006. It continues for a full 12 months. **SO DO NOT THINK YOU ARE SHORT-CHANGED IF YOU JOIN AT THE END OF THE CALENDAR YEAR!**

How do I know when I need to pay my membership?

Actually you can tell much from your **membership number**. For example, lets say your number is 5062003. The (5) represents the year you joined, the (6) represents the month (June), the (2) represents your area—(2) meaning the San Fernando Valley, and the 003 represents your unique number in that area for that month and year. So in this case you need to get your dues in before January 2006. Remember we print the newsletter almost a month prior to the time you receive it, so I'd say get your dues in one month prior to the due date to be sure you continue to get the newsletter.

I didn't get a membership card or membership number

Not to worry. we will be sending the December and January Newsletter with larger mailing labels that will include your membership number. Please write it down or save the label for future reference.

How much are the annual dues?

Anyone who joined before June 30, 2005 got a special rate—\$12.00/year for three years. The actual membership dues are \$15.00/year. Although we will gladly accept \$12.00 from those who joined prior to June 30, 2005, we ask all members to begin paying \$15.00. This will allow us to begin saving money to help pay for future litigation of our members. And thank you for your donation of \$3.00.

NOVEMBER CoMO-LAC MEETING SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 12nd. Board of Directors Meeting. . Chatsworth Metrolink Train Station. 10:00am. Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room, 10038 Old Depot Plaza Rd, Chatsworth (West of Canoga Ave, South of Devonshire Ave).

NOVEMBER 13TH. 1:30PM Support CoMO-LAC. Help put the newsletter together. Bring your friends. Socialize with other mobilehome owners, ask Frank some questions, help staple, fold and collate. It will be fun. Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room Chatsworth Metrolink Train Station

NOVEMBER 19th: San Fernando Valley CoMO-LAC Meeting 10 am. Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room. Chatsworth Metrolink Train Station

NOVEMBER 20TH. 1:30 PM Help put flyers together. Bring your friends. Socialize with other mobilehome owners, ask Frank some questions, and help staple, fold and collate. It will be fun. Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room. Chatsworth Metrolink Train Station

CoMO-LAC THIS AND THAT

1. Our goal is to get the word out that our way of life is being threatened by those with money and power. But we do have the numbers on our side, perhaps 150-200 mobilehome owners to every one park owner. And we do have RIGHT on our side. Help your friends and neighbors. Let's educate as many as we can. They need to know there is someone to call when they need help. They need to know we need them as much as they need us. **SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?** Send us their names and addresses, and we will provide them **FREE OF CHARGE** a current newsletter. We all win and it's easy! If they join, so much the better.
2. Kathy Mattes is back from her deserved two week vacation. Among her stops were Rome, the French Riviera, and Croatia. Welcome back Kathy. We understand Kathy took lots of photographs and we may try to post some on the internet.
3. We have noticed some members and non-members using excerpts from our newsletter. We actually have no problem with this as we want all mobilehome owners to know about their rights. We do object however when we are not given credit or referenced for the excerpt. So please, we ask everyone that uses content from our newsletter to indicate that it came from a CoMO-LAC newsletter on such a date.
4. Thanks to several members for their cash donations: Gladys Jackson (Sylmar Mobile Manor), Kathy Goodman and Jay Wehrle (Indian Hills), Michelle Muntz (Indian Hills), Carole Dionne (Sherwood) and Dan Francis (Northridge). Your donations have gone for mailing costs. We have now mailed over 1000 5-page flyers to residents in about 30 parks in L.A. County. We have already gotten some new members—in Harbor City, Sylmar, Pacific Palisades and Reseda! Thanks very much for your kind donations and for your confidence in CoMO-LAC
5. The task of printing takes considerable time. If you live close to Chatsworth MHP and would like to help for a few hours, please give Frank a call. The newsletter and flyers all require time assembling sheets, folding and stapling. We would especially like to thank Ruby Kline for her giving so much of her time. Also Carol Mason, Harry O'Grady, Carol MacEwan, and others in Canoga Mobile Estates for their help. Without your help our members and others would not receive the newsletter and flyers.
6. A member recently asked: "If I have flyers printed for distribution in my park or my area, will I be reimbursed?" Yes, CoMO-LAC does not expect any member to when helping recruit other members. We would ask that you let us know what you want to do, and have our okay first. Then keep all receipts. We have also mailed several members with flyers for their park. Just call us and you will have as many flyers as you need, in about two days time. We can mail about 120 by "priority mail" at a cost of \$3.85.
7. Now about the **RUMORS**. First we had one in Oakridge Mobile Home Park on October 3rd, then another in Lancaster. (Remember we reported on shenanigans after the meeting in Northridge Mobilehome Park.) Over 100 residents heard that Frank is using CoMO-LAC money for his personal use. Another heard Frank took all the CoMO-LAC money and left town. Also they are saying that CoMO-LAC goes into parks making promises to residents to get new members. OF COURSE THE OTHER SIDE WANTS TO DISCREDIT US BECAUSE WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE. **For your information, Frank is still here in Chatsworth, not in Mexico, your CoMO-LAC money is safe in Wells Fargo, and NO, we do not make promises we can't keep.**

We intend to KEEP ON TRUCKING, MAKING A DIFFERENCE. THANKS FOR COMING ALONG!

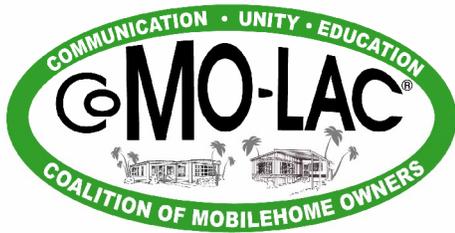
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CoMO-LAC is a non-profit California corporation dedicated to serve mobile-home owners in Southern California. Our purpose is to educate, communicate and unite mobilehome owners.

COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS

- LOS ANGELES COUNTY®

Membership/Renewal Application

Name: _____ Date: _____

Park Name: _____ Space # _____

Address: _____

City, Zip: _____

Phone No: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Signature: _____

Dues are \$15.00/Year.

Make checks out to CoMO-LAC®

Mail to: CoMO-LAC, P.O. Box 4821,

Chatsworth, California. 91313-4821

Note: Dues are non-refundable. It may take 30 days to receive your first newsletter.

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