



THE VOICE

COALITION OF MOBILEHOME OWNERS

JULY 2007 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 7

Organization - The Key to Our Success

CoMO-CAL is now 30 months old. We have been providing you with information about the Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL), the WMA, proposed new laws, condo conversions, rent control, management problems, the new Proposition 90, and a myriad of other issues. In fact we could write more than 40 pages a month and still not cover all that is happening around the state. We have also provided members and non-members advice, made attorney referrals, helped with evictions, and much, much more.

But now it's time to focus on **organization**, so we may provide you better service, and begin solving some of these problems that have been around forever!

Our way of life is being threatened in many ways today. Just pick up a recent issue of THE VOICE. There are issues that do affect you today, all of you. If you have rent control, you could lose it or there might be vacancy decontrol which would cost you thousands of dollars of equity. Just ask residents in Modesto who are having to walk away from their homes. Management and park owners often interfere with sales, costing residents tens of thousands of dollars—it is YOUR MONEY!

Someone just told me “You must like your situation or you'd be doing something about it!” You notice - the situation is YOURS, the solution is YOU. CoMO-CAL can help, but we can't do it for you. You must communicate with us, and you must help yourself.

Form A Home Owners Association

With this issue of THE VOICE, we are calling on all members and others to ORGANIZE. TODAY! We simply can not protect ourselves and wage a fight without an organization. You've taken the first step – **joining CoMO-CAL**. The next step: form a **Home Owners Association** in your park. And the last step: form a **coalition** of HOA's in your local area.

How can you start a HOA in your park? Simple! A group of three or four residents is enough. You can meet in a residents home, away from management's interference. You don't need bylaws to start. Designate one resident, with a computer and email, as your liaison to CoMO-CAL. We would like to see your liaison communicate with us on a weekly basis. Your group should have monthly meetings, with an agenda. Stick to the agenda, as it is so easy to go off on a tangent and get nothing accomplished. Take notes and keep minutes. Eventually you can distribute a flyer calling for an organizational meeting, asking for volunteers/nominations for a HOA board. If you don't feel secure having the meeting at your clubhouse, you can meet at an outside location or in a residents home. Make every effort that those who want to participate ARE NOT pro-management. Your group should focus on problems in your park and work on solutions. CoMO-CAL can and will help you every step of the way. Let's do this together.

Report your success to us. We want all to know there are solutions to problems!

ETHICS AND ADVOCACY

by Frank Wodley, CoMO-CAL President

Perhaps I'm naïve. But it seems to me the bottom line, the ultimate goal of advocacy groups should be "helping mobilehome owners." That means **YOUR WELFARE is their GOAL, not their organization or leadership!** Perhaps there are different ways to help, right? Of course. This could and should be a team effort. One group does one thing well, another something else.

CoMO-CAL is the only group that shares information with all groups. Our membership includes GSMOL members, GSMOL chapter presidents and GSMOL managers. Merle Pitman, the leader of Mobile Home Owner's Coalition (MHOC) in Ojai, and Glen Bell, President of Neighborhood Friends, have been members for more than a year. CMRAA, their president and other leaders, have received THE VOICE and other information about us. We have met and given literature to Hank Hoysak, Chairman of the Central Coast Mobile/Manufactured Home Owners Alliance, and his board in Santa Maria.

I think you would agree THE VOICE is the most informative newsletter in the state, something that would benefit every mobilehome owner. Why then are the leaders of these organizations the only ones who subscribe? Don't they want their membership to be informed also? Shouldn't they be writing about CoMO-CAL's THE VOICE in their newsletter or at their meetings? Or are these groups simply about ego, money and power?

Our philosophy is be informed. Today CMRAA and GSMOL put out quarterly newsletters, perhaps 8-12 pages. MHOF and Neighborhood Friends do not have a newsletter. Our philosophy is go ahead and belong to another advocacy group, but know about the group before you join. If you do not join CoMO-CAL, at least subscribe to THE VOICE. We will work out some kind of deal with you. We have provided a copy of THE VOICE to a large GSMOL chapter here in Los Angeles, and they printed it for their members. Cost: \$5/member/year. Certainly a bargain to be informed.

Almost to a person, leaders of other advocacy groups **do not communicate** with CoMO-CAL. This includes the leadership of CMRAA, GSMOL, Neighborhood Friends, the Central Coast Alliance, MHOC and others. **Continued on PAGE 14:Ethics & Advocacy...**

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CoMO-CAL, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to protecting the rights of mobilehome owners in the state of California.

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

THE VOICE is published monthly by the Coalition of Mobilehome Owners—California for the use of its members. THE VOICE welcomes articles of interest to mobilehome owners.

THE NEW PROPOSITION 90**Ballot Measure That Wipes Out Rent Control Takes Step Towards Circulation***

The fourth and possibly final version of the Jarvis Tax Committee eminent domain initiative will be ready for signature collection at the end of the month (June 2007). The Committee appears ready to start gathering the needed signatures. Reportedly, they are putting out bids at 50 cents per signature (at the low end of the scale), indicating that they might be short of funds. They are undoubtedly aiming for the June 2008 ballot, likely to be one with very low turnout. The initiative would wipe out rent control and exclusionary requirements, in addition

to severely curtailing redevelopment housing activities.

*This email was sent to us on June 15th by Larry Gross, the Executive Director for the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES). *Contact CES at 514 Shatto Place, Suite 270, Los Angeles, CA 90020 Tel: 213-252-4411 ext. 201 * Fax: 213-252-4422 Email: contactces@earthlink.net, Web site: www.CESinAction.org

BACKGROUND ON THE NEW PROPOSITION 90

We first reported on the California Property Owners Protection Act in the April 2006 THE VOICE, yes, early in 2006! It was on the front page “WILL RENT CONTROL BE ABOLISHED IN CALIFORNIA? So what happened to it? As a consequence of a lack of funding it was replaced by the Anderson Initiative, which later became Proposition 90. We all know now that Proposition 90 was barely defeated, although the NO ON 90 coalition was joined by hundreds of groups and raised over \$11 million.

A short two weeks after Proposition 90 was defeated in November 2006, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association again submitted the California Property Owners Protection Act to the State Attorney General for a title and summary. Today, it is in its fourth revision. The fact that it will abolish rent control is hidden in its text - 3(iii) “regulation of the ownership, occupancy or use of privately owned real property or associated prop-

erty rights in order to *transfer an economic benefit* to one or more private persons at the expense of the property owner.” This initiative is now called “California Property Owners and Farmland Protection Act.”

Please remember this all came about because of the Kelo V City of New London decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, where the court held that the government may use eminent domain to take property from its owner for the purpose of transferring it to a private developer.

There is an alternative to the California Property Owners Protection Act called Homeowners and Private Property Protection Act. It is a more “pure” eminent domain initiative which we feel will not abolish rent control. We are currently looking at it and will decide at a later date whether or not to support it.

Getting Organized for a Resident Park Purchase by David Loop

In my most recent article for *The Voice* (April 2007), I wrote about “homeowner due diligence” for groups trying to buy the mobilehome park where they live. But before doing “due diligence,” there must also be some basic organization in the park.

Often, “getting organized” starts with two or three neighbors sitting around a kitchen table and asking each other, “Could our homeowners’ group *really* buy this park?” In many cases, the answer is *yes*. Resident groups in big parks, small parks, “rich” ones and “poor” ones have done it. For you folks chatting around the table, here is some good news: *you don’t have to organize the whole park at the beginning of the project*. You *do* need a few “resident leaders” who are willing to do some preliminary work and investigation.

Is it “worth it” to buy the park where you live, assuming a fair deal can be worked out between the homeowners and the park owner? To find out, go visit a park in your area that is owned by its residents. Talk to people in the park. Ask them about the security of not having their homes on “rented” land. Compare their home values with values in local “space rent” parks. Look around the park. Do homeowners tend to improve their homes when they have ownership interest in the park? Ask them if they like having control over the community where they live, and having stable monthly rents without relying on rent control. I’ll bet that you will hear the effort to buy the park was certainly “worth it.”

But how does your group get organized to “buy your park?” As I’ve suggested, start with a small group of interested people. Don’t try to organize the whole park at the beginning. And when you gather your small group, *don’t* make assumptions that might be wrong. Some common assumptions are:

“The residents could never afford to buy the park.”

“The park owner wants too much money for the park.”

“We could never find financing to buy the park.”

“Buying the park would take too much work.”

“If we bought the park, we could never run it.”

“We have rent control – why bother buying the park?”

“The park infrastructure is worn out – who’d want this place, anyhow?”

“The housing market is not strong these days.”

Some resident groups give up immediately after making such a list, before they know the answers to these questions. *Every group that ever bought its park took time to investigate and understand the answers to these questions*. The groups that never bothered to investigate or understand may have missed the opportunity to secure their economic futures. They “quit before they started.”

Resident Leadership is the common theme in all resident park purchases. Every park that is resident owned today had a small group of leaders back when the park was purchased. These were homeowners who:

Learned about resident park purchases in general;

Found trustworthy sources of information and guidance;

Determined the best purchase approach for the park (co-op, subdivision, etc.);

Found sources of financing for the purchase;

Approached the park owner with the “resident purchase plan” and offer to buy the park;

**VOLUNTEER TO BE YOUR
PARK LIAISON (to CoMO-CAL)**

This is our number one priority this month. We now have members in over 350 parks around the state of California. CoMO-CAL is always looking for a way to serve you better. We can reach many mobilehome owners if we have one contact (a liaison) in each park (with email).

We MUST ORGANIZE. If you want to do your share and you have email, send us a message that you want to be your park's liaison to CoMO-CAL. It won't take much of your time. Then form a HOA, keep up communication with us, and you will start seeing changes.

**Email us at comocal@yahoo.com or
fawodley@yahoo.com**

It won't happen by itself. Get on your computer and email us NOW. We would like to list in THE VOICE, the "liaison" in each park, including the city. Then others know who to call for information. Of course CoMO-CAL will support you 100%.

BLOCK CAPTAINS

After you have a HOA of at least 3-4 residents of your park, next you can work to get "block captains." One block captain for ever 10-20 residents. This way the work is spread out among residents. Block captains are the "conduit" between your HOA leadership and the park residents. And the "CoMO-CAL liaison" is the conduit between the park and CoMO-CAL. This organization is important and will work. Let's all get started TODAY!

DONATIONS NEEDED

The Modesto Group is still fighting for rent control and literally for their lives. Send donations marked—Modesto Group, to CoMO-CAL, P.O. Box 4821, Chatsworth, Ca. 91313—make checks payable to CoMO-CAL. We will make sure the donations get to these terrific ladies who are working so hard!

Mission Valley Village in San Diego has been sold and residents have been notified they must move. Please send donations to Mission Valley Village Home Owners Association, 6549 Mission Gorge Road, P.O. Box 173, San Diego, Ca. 92120. Make checks payable to MVVHOA - Legal Fund. Contact Mary Morris @ 619-287-3229 or Homer Barrs @ 619-546-7636 for additional information.

Getting Organized, continued from Page 4

Explained the plan to all park residents, and sought their participation;

Followed through with the details of the park purchase process.

Potential leaders in mobilehome parks should understand... *unless* you get organized (first with a

small group, and then with a larger one), the homeowners will *never* own the park. Now... would you know a leader if you saw one? Might you be one yourself?

David Loop is a real estate attorney and past homeowners' association president at resident-owned Aptos Knoll Park, near Santa Cruz. You can ask him questions by sending an e-mail to deloop1@sbcglobal.net, or calling 831-688-1293.

RECEIVE THE VOICE INSTANTLY - SIGN UP BY EMAIL

How can we reach thousands of mobilehome owners, while keeping costs and labor down? The internet is the perfect answer. If CoMO-CAL is to be really successful, we MUST take advantage of this means of communication.

When CoMO-CAL was started, we asked you to give us your email address, if you had one. In fact about 40% of our members have email. Are there advantages when you receive THE VOICE and other information by email? ABSOLUTELY!

First of all, information is more timely, i.e. you would receive news articles that had been published just recently, instead of a month or two ago. This is important. Secondly, the cost of sending an email is zero. It doesn't cost CoMO-CAL anything. Each newsletter costs us about 60 cents to print and 17 cents to mail. Then there is the labor required to send you a hard copy newsletter. This requires printing, folding, stapling, labeling, sorting by zip code number, a trip to the post office, and mailing costs. This doesn't sound like a lot of work, but when it is multiplied by 1000 or more, it takes literally days to complete. Joining this program benefits you and allows us more time to solve problems and help you.

We ask each of you, who have a computer and internet, to agree to have all future communication with CoMO-CAL by email. Please save us the time and money. You will receive information instantly and this will enable us to give you more information, more often.

What do you need? All you need is a computer and the internet, plus a program called Adobe Acrobat Reader. It is really simple, just download THE VOICE, and open it with Adobe. You can print one page or the entire VOICE. You have it on your computer for quick reference. You no longer have to hunt around for the hard copy, you have access on your computer.

What do you need to do? Simply send CoMO-CAL an email indicating you would like to receive THE VOICE and other communication by email. You can email us at:

**comocal@yahoo.com or
fawodley@yahoo.com**

Please do it today!

Get instant communication

THE WHISPER DISTRIBUTION FOR AUGUST

The OReO Program, Operation Out Reach, will become a permanent addition to our services. The new flyer will be titled "THE WHISPER" and it is our goal to have as many mobilehome owners receive it as possible. The first edition will be sent out August 1, 2007.

Several CoMO-CAL members have volunteered to distribute this one page flyer in their park. THERE WILL BE NO "THE VOICE" FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST. Instead we will be mailing THE WHISPER to as many parks as we have volunteers to distribute it

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

CoMO-CAL is now 30 months old. I've personally published every newsletter, created the web-site, and run the organization, essentially on my own. I consider each of you my family. But it is time to take a month off from THE VOICE. There will be no THE VOICE in August 2007. However THE WHISPER will be mailed to any park with a distribution system in place. Get your order in now!

Some of you know that I have been a resident of Chatsworth Mobile Home Park in Chatsworth for about 10 years. I became an advocate, working hard for GSMOL, after about 5 years of harassment and intimidation. Many of us endure almost daily abuse. Many hide in their homes, afraid to be seen by management, fearing a rent increase or seven day notice. You and I can not stand by and allow this to continue! There is much work ahead of us.

This summer I turn 64 and will continue to work hard for you, as well for all mobilehome owners

here in California. My son is now 12 (I also have a daughter 40 who lives in Berkeley). Jason and I plan to go camping in Morro Bay and will visit Bob Hites in Yuba county later in the summer. Even my son has been the target for abuse in my park. This is NOT America. We deserve to be treated with respect!

Please know I appreciate the efforts of the many members who support CoMO-CAL—from those who distribute THE VOICE, to those who have made donations, to those who communicate—sending news articles, comments, advice or thanks. And of course YOUR RENEWALS! Your support makes it all worth while.

One person CAN make a difference. But this is not my organization, it is your organization. Please take an active role and our voice will be heard through out California!

Thank You,

Frank Wodley, President, CoMO-CAL

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Have a good attorney? Send us their contact information & we will add them to our growing list.

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 Don Hunter (Costa Mesa): 949-650-2815
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Purchase your Park

David Loop (Aptos): 831-688-1293
 Deane Sargent (Hillsborough): 650-375-8043

2007 Mid-Year Manufactured Housing/ Mobilehome & Related Bill Summary

SENATE BILLS

SB 541 (Alquist) – Application for Residency.

Income Requirements: prohibits park management from denying residency to a buyer of a mobilehome in a mobilehome park solely on the basis that the buyer does not satisfy a minimum park income requirement, such as a 3:1 income-to-rent standard, without taking into consideration the buyer's other financial assets.

Sponsor: CMRAA

Support: GSMOL, CRLA, Western Center on Law & Poverty, CA Alliance for Retired Americans

Opposition: WMA, CA Mobilehome Park Owners Alliance

Status: Passed Senate 24-12, pending in Assembly
2007 Mid-Year Mobilehome & Related Bill List

SB 586 (Dutton) – MPROP Funding: designates allocation of \$100 million from Proposition 1C's Housing Innovation Fund, approved by the voters in November, 2006, to various housing programs, including \$10 million to the Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership Program (MPROP) for loans to help mobilehome owners purchase their parks or spaces.

Sponsor: Author

Support & Opposition: Unknown

Status: Pending on Senate floor.

SB 589 (Correa) – Park Sewage Clean-up: provides HCD with the authority to require mobilehome parks to remove debris from major sewage spills from mobilehomes, park sewage systems, and permanent buildings within a mobilehome park, not simply require sanitation of such spills, as is the practice under current law.

Sponsor: Senate Select Committee on Mobile/Manufactured Homes

Supporters: GSMOL, CMRAA, CRLA, Western Center on Law & Poverty.

Opposition: Unknown.

Status: Passed Senate 39-0, pending in Assembly.

SB 900 (Corbett) - Condo Conversion: repeals a provision of the Subdivision Map Act that exempts mobile home parks converted to condominium resident ownership from most local subdivision map and local mobilehome rent control requirements.

Sponsor: GSMOL

Support: CMRAA, CRLA, Western Center Law & Poverty, others.

Opposition: WMA, CA Mobilehome Park Owners Alliance, Californians for Resident Ownership, others.

Status: Passed Senate 22-16, pending in Assembly

SB 926 (Perata) – a “spot bill”* expressing legislative intent to examine the Mobilehome Residency Law to determine whether it adequately protects the rights, health, safety and welfare of mobilehome park residents.

Sponsor: Author

Support and Opposition: Unknown

Status: Pending Senate Rules Committee, 2-year bill.

SB 981 (Padilla) – Pass Through Fees: provides that park management may only provide for the maintenance of park common area improvements on residents through with funds acquired by rents, not “pass-through” fees in addition to the rent. The bill also only applies to rental agreements entered into, extended or renewed on or after January 1, 2008.

Sponsor: GSMOL

Support: AARP, California Alliance Retired Americans, Gray Panthers, Neighborhood Friends.

Opposition: WMA, California Association Realtors, California Mobilehome Parkowners Alliance

Status: Passed Senate 21-15, pending in Assembly

ASSEMBLY BILLS

(NOT YET FULLY UPDATED TO REFLECT MID-YEAR STATUS)

AB 285 (Garcia) - deletes a current Mobilehome Residency Law requirement that a park owner must show that a mobilehome owner in the park has another prin-

cipal place of residence, other than a mobilehome in the park, in order to exempt the homeowner’s mobilehome space from a local rent control ordinance. Sponsor: WMA 2 year bill

AB 382 (Saldana) – Omnibus Housing Bill that, among other technical corrections to the codes relating to housing, deletes the Manufactured Housing Communities Act and makes Manufactured Housing Communities subject instead to the Mobilehome Parks Act. Sponsor: Assembly Housing & Community Development Committee

AB 410 (Adams) – Increases the maximum value of unclaimed property, left by the tenant on the premises after an eviction, which the landlord may retain and dispose of in any manner from \$300 to \$500. This provision may apply to some tenancies in mobilehome parks. Sponsor: Conference of Delegates of the California Bar Association

AB 446 (Soto) – provides that a park management’s notice to a homeowner, to make certain repairs or improvements to the home or otherwise remove it from the park on resale, is void and unenforceable if the repair or improvement required by management does not comply with specified provisions of the Mobilehome Residency Law. Sponsor: GSMOL
Passed Assembly Floor

AB 460 (Cook) – requires that, as a condition of resale in place in the park, 1975 and older (pre-HUD) mobilehomes be inspected inside and outside by a private home inspector and that any violations be brought up to code in accordance with HUD regulations. Sponsor: WMA
2 year bill

AB 1111 (DeSauliner) – requires mobilehome park management to obtain the consent of 51% of the park residents before changing an existing park rule limiting residency in the park to seniors. Sponsor: GSMOL
Status: Pending Assembly Housing Committee, 2-year bill

AB 1309 (Calderon) – a “spot bill”* for pre-empting local mobilehome vacancy control rent ordinances, stating legislative intent that a local rent control ordinance or initiative shall not be administered to jeopardize the financial viability of mobilehome parks. Sponsor: WMA

AB 1542 (Evans) – provides that a fast track provision of the Subdivision Map Act that exempts mobile home parks converted to condominiums or subdivisions from most local subdivision map and local mobilehome rent control requirements does not apply in local jurisdictions with mobilehome park rent control ordinances.
Sponsor: City of Santa Rosa
Support: GSMOL, CMRAA, CRLA, Western Center on Law & Poverty, League of Cities

Opposition: WMA, California Mobilehome Park Owners Alliance, Californians for Resident Ownership, others.
Amendment by author now being made.

The list represents most bills pending as of June 8, 2007 in the Legislature that may directly affect mobilehomes, manufactured homes, mobilehome parks and issues related thereto. The list does not reflect bills on other issues that somehow may indirectly affect mobilehomes or parks or subsequent amendments to other bills that may impact them.

*A “spot bill” is a place holder awaiting amendments to further detail or expand the issue referenced in the bill or another issue.

Legend of Organizations:

- CMHI = California Manufactured Housing Industry
- CMRAA = California Mobilehome Resource & Action Association
- CRLA = California Rural Legal Assistance
- GSMOL = Golden State Manufactured-home Owners League
- HCD = CA Department of Housing and Community Development

NEWS ARTICLES FROM AROUND THE STATE, THE COUNTRY, THE WORLD

Editors Note: In the past, we have tried to publish full articles; however this limited the number of articles we could publish in any one THE VOICE. This month we are publishing many more articles; however just short segments of each. **If you see an article of interest, we are happy to email you the full article.**

Goleta City Council Demands Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Thursday, June 7, 2007 By Martha Sadler

The City of Goleta stood fast against an attempted end-run around its mobile home rent control ordinances —namely Daniel Guggenheim's bid to subdivide his Rancho Mobile Home Park and sell its 150 parcels for about \$250,000 each. It is a strategy that has been used successfully by park owners throughout California, led by activist Sam Zell. Several park residents said they were pleasantly surprised to see their City Council circle the wagons around a Goleta city staff report that could spell doom for the proposed condo conversion.

Sonoma—County defends rules on mobiles Court challenge of (conversion) moratorium, restrictions

By Claudia Reed INDEX-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER June 12, 2007

“ The City of Sonoma has passed a moratorium on turning mobile-home parks into subdivisions - but some people wonder if it will stand. A legal challenge to a similar moratorium was on its way to superior court when Sonoma County replaced the moratorium, first enacted in October of last year, with a regulatory ordinance.

Windsor (Near Santa Rosa) - ROP, Inc. PURCHASES ANOTHER PARK

Windsor park residents 'in a tizzy' over sale By CLARK MASON THE PRESS DEMO June 13, 2007

The pending sale of Windsor's largest mobile home park is causing anxiety among its senior residents who fear they can't afford the rent increases planned by the buyer. The purchase of the Windsor Mobile Country Club by a nonprofit housing corporation is billed as a way to keep rents affordable. But rents in the 336-space park could jump significantly at first -- 50 to 65 percent in some cases -- in order for the buyer, Resident Owned Parks of Sacramento, to swing the deal.

Ireland (Yes Ireland) - MOBILE HOME OWNERS EXPLOITED

MONDAY 04/06/2007 15:50:37

Mobile home owners are being exploited by unscrupulous site landlords charging exorbitant tariffs, the Assembly heard today. Jim Shannon (DUP, Strangford) said site developers were riding rough-shod over tenants` rights and charging thousands of pounds for mandatory repairs and upgrades with little legal restraint.

"It`s a story that most of us have heard and that should not be repeated in the province, that of the average

person being taken advantage of and having no protection against those who seek to gain for themselves at the cost to others," he said. He was speaking after residents received letters from the Groomsport park owners last April telling them to either upgrade to a park home costing £90,000 or remove their mobile home. "You have to sympathize with the plight of mobile home owners and there clearly is a deficiency in the Northern Ireland legislation which leaves mobile home owners unprotected and disadvantaged in comparison with their counterparts elsewhere in the UK," she said.

MOBILE HOME MOGUL MUZZLED

Illinois—ZELL'S FIRM KEY IN RENT HIKE FIGHTS

A dispute with Equity Lifestyle -- king of the mobile home world -- helps bring legislation protecting tenants

The head of Illinois' mobile home owners association, Terry Nelson, is elated. The General Assembly is poised as soon as this week to pass what Nelson says is the most significant boost for her constituents' rights in 30 years. And she has real estate magnate Sam Zell partly to thank for it.

Still, the Willow Lake Estates residents' fight has been a key catalyst for the proposed legislation, which won't stop rent hikes but will beef up consumer protections for mobile home owners. Their fight is also emblematic of a larger battle: Equity, the country's largest mobile home park operator, has been in the middle of several controversies over rent increases.

In the past few years it has fought with Delaware mobile home owners in court, and won, over the right to increase rents. In Florida, some tenants of Equity's parks have vowed to withhold portions of rent increases. And in California, Equity has been involved in several court battles to overturn municipal rent-control ordinances.

Sacramento—Mobile home bill making headway

Evans' measure (AB 1542) would protect renters from facing conversions

By JOHN WATERS Jr. or the Register Friday, June 15, 2007

The state Assembly has passed a measure protecting mobile home residents from the growing trend of mobile home park conversions, a measure sponsored by Assemblywoman Noreen Evans, D- Santa Rosa. AB1542 passed along party lines and now moves to the state Senate. "This is a historic victory in the fight to protect affordable housing," Evans said in a prepared statement. "It gives communities the tools they need when a conversion threatens to drive seniors and working families from their homes."

Washington State—Mobile home park's owner could double investment by selling each lot under tenant homes for \$200,000

By David Chircop Herald Writer Published: Monday, June 18, 2007

EVERETT, Washington - Investors who bought a seniors-only mobile home park for \$15 million last year are now trying to flip the land to residents - and taxpayers - for as much as \$33 million. Asking for \$200,000 for each mobile home space is too much for seniors living on fixed incomes. "Personally, I think they're asking a lot for a postage stamp-sized lot," said Charles Brown, 71, who bought a mobile home at the park in November. He said he was told that the new owners had no plans of converting the park when he paid \$45,000 for his home. Buying the land, which he rents for \$650 per month, is out of reach, he

HCD's Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership Program (MPROP)

Background

The Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership Program (MPROP), enacted in 1984 (SB 2240, Seymour), is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). MPROP offers loans to homeowner organizations and low-income park residents to help finance conversion of mobilehome parks to resident ownership.

Detailed information is available at www.hcd.ca.gov/fa/mprop/ or at (916) 445-0110.

Purpose: There are 4,822 mobilehome parks in California providing housing to approximately 800,000 or more residents, many of whom are low and moderate income families and seniors. Over the years, rents have increased in many parks to the point where some low-income residents fear economic eviction. Other parks have closed to make way for new development, such as hotels or shopping centers, resulting in the loss of affordable housing and physical displacement of some residents. Many of these residents cannot afford to move their homes to another park, vacancies in most parks are rare, and many parks will not accept older mobilehomes even if there are vacant spaces available. Hence, where resident or non-profit purchase of the park is an option, MPROP funds, where available, help to preserve affordable “at-risk” housing.

How MPROP Works: MPROP does not fund the full cost of a conversion to resident ownership. MPROP basically provides homeowners’ associations 3% simple interest loans and shorter-term

“bridge” loans for costs of park conversions, and long-term loans up to 30 years for individual low-income residents (defined as households with up to 80% of median income for the area). Two-thirds of the park residents must support resident ownership of the park in order for a conversion to be eligible for MPROP funding. Payments for some low-income individuals may be deferred. Individual homeowners who do not qualify for MPROP must secure their own private financing. But MPROP indirectly benefits them as well. By providing conversion and “bridge” loans and individual low-income loans, MPROP often provides the needed margin of financial support necessary to assure that a combined financing package will work to maintain a successful conversion. In 1999, the Legislature also broadened the scope of MPROP to allow qualified non-profit housing and local government sponsors to be eligible for funding if at least 30% of the spaces in a proposed mobilehome park are occupied by low-income households.

How MPROP is Funded: MPROP is funded by an annual \$5 surcharge on mobilehome owners, who are subject to state vehicle license fees (VLF), and revenues from MPROP loan repayments, which totals about \$3 million in funding a year.

MPROP Parks: As of December 2006, MPROP has helped to fund 74 mobilehome park conversions over 21 years – parks with approximate total of 12,000 lots. Over 3,000 of those spaces are occupied by “low-income” residents.

Editors Note: Please note that **SB 586 (Dutton)** – MPROP Funding will increase MPROP funds by \$10 million. Today if you ask someone in the “know” about MPROP they will say there are a lot of “strings” to qualify and receive funds from MPROP. The \$2 million limit per park also means that it can only be used to fund a small number of spaces - if a space were selling for \$100,000, then the \$2 million would only allow 20 spaces to be funded. If they sit in a large park, what about the others? In other words, MPROP is very limited.

ASK OUR MEMBERSHIP A QUESTION

CoMO-CAL asked: if you could ask our members a question, what would it be. Here are their answers. We thank Jerry Lenhard, Sandy Cissell, Will Juncosa, Milt Burdick and Bob Hites for their input. If you would like to respond to any of their questions, please do so. If you would like to submit a question, write us at the address below or email us. Thank You.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many people do you know that are threatened by a park owners' desire for profits at residents' expense? 2. How many people do you know that are doing anything about it? 3. Which is a greater problem, owners' greed, which can't be changed, or resident apathy, which can be changed? 4. Is there justification for complaining about conditions in our parks and the security of our investments if we are not actively doing something about it? 5. Why doesn't your park have an active homeowners' association? 6. Why haven't you written letters to Sacramento concerning current legislation? 7. Do you think other people will defend your rights for you effectively? 8. How about asking CoMO-CAL members if they would support the Jarvis initiative IF it DID NOT include elimination of rent control in mobilehome parks? 9. What will you do if your rent doubles next year? 10. Will you schedule a meeting in your park for a guest speaker who can help you. 11. Will you send us a letter describing the worst thing your park mgr/owner has done or threatened to do? We can print the story & won't use your name. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Will you deliver flyers/newsletters in your park? 13. If we help you, will you write a "letter to the editor"? 14. Will you go to a city council/county supervisor meeting to protest? 15. Would you like an attorney to come & speak at your park? 16. Will you help YOUR cause by volunteering for a "phone tree"? 17. Is it proper to belong to an organization that is not portraying the truth about its own ideology? 18. Should residents be aware of Megan's Law? 19. Is there ever going to be a time that people will stand up for their rights? 20. Is it legal to take pictures, video or still in a park? <p>Please take a moment from your busy day and reflect on these questions. Send us a letter or an email. Communication is important, not just from CoMO-CAL to you, but from you to us.</p> <p>Remember, knowledge is POWER! Through communication be become powerful. There is hope, but we all must do our share.</p> |
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Continued from Page 2: Ethics and Advocacy

We have reached out to other groups numerous times to brainstorm how we can work together, yet we are ignored. Alas, politics seems to be the rule among advocacy groups. Their goal: shield their members from information at any cost. Why? To maintain their little kingdoms and to keep their members for themselves. But at what cost? The cost of members being informed!

CoMO-CAL is the only advocacy group that writes about other groups. We ask mobilehome owners to take an active role in the organization they support, and not be blinded by the rhetoric or what the organization says it is doing. Do your homework!

I happen to have a lot of information about GSMOL because I did my homework over several years. I attended GSMOL board meetings, was a Convention Delegate in 2004 and 2006, a chapter president and Associate Manager.

I feel it imperative that GSMOL members take a hard look at their organization and question their leaders. **Why is ROP, Inc.**, led by GSMOL lobbyist and corporate counsel Maurice Priest, once again buying a park against the wishes of the residents and without their knowledge? (See article on page 10) Why, after almost six years, has the Enforcement Legal Fund not had one positive result? Why won't GSMOL leaders explain their support of ROP? After all, there are techniques for residents to purchase their park that are much more beneficial—why wouldn't GSMOL share that information with their membership? Is this about "helping mobilehome owners" or about helping one person or a small group of people? Please think about it! And don't just take my word on this, call others around the state like Rosemary Tomai, Jerry Lenhard, Don Hunter, the Clearlake people, Donald DeVore, and scores of others.

And remember, CoMO-CAL isn't only about THE VOICE. Now THE WHISPER will reach thousands of mobilehome owners. They too will be informed about important issues and know they can join our growing family. Also we receive many calls from members and non-members alike asking for advice, attorney referrals, or other information. We turn NO ONE away. (We can thank you, our membership, for that.)

CoMO-CAL is also about brainstorming, thinking outside the box. We are about NEW IDEAS. Recently we published a letter to the editor by Ray Newman suggesting that cities might use their power of eminent domain to "take" mobilehome parks for affordable housing. The city has several options at that point—help residents purchase their park, or be a "moral" landlord.

"Helping mobilehome owners" is more than new legislation. We have more laws on the books to protect us here in California, but in my estimation these laws DO NOT protect us! Many park owners and managers BREAK THE LAW on a daily basis. Why? Because they know they can get away with it. The Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) does not protect us, simple as that. And park owners like it that way. We owners are forced to retain an attorney and endure a lawsuit in order to **try** to protect our rights. Often the outcome does not reflect justice, but who has the most power and money.

Finally, it is about respect. Our goal is to give you factual, truthful information about ALL ISSUES that affect your lives today. We are family, and we fight for each other. Your dues allow us to help others who are out there alone, without anyone else to turn to. We have a growing list of good attorneys that are available. Please fill out the following survey—we want your input! Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY -
TIME OUT TO REASSESS OUR ORGANIZATION

THE VOICE

Rate the content of THE VOICE:

- Poor
- Average
- Better than Average
- Excellent

How important, do you feel, is it to be informed about issues that may affect you?

- Extremely important
- Important
- Not Important

What do you prefer? (check as many as apply)

- Continue THE VOICE monthly
- Change & publish every other month
- Less Pages More Pages
- Content too technical—make it less technical
- Don't Change anything about number of pages or content

About the issues described in THE VOICE?

- Most issues DO NOT affect me
- Most issues DO affect me
- No opinion

Do you receive THE VOICE each month?

- Yes, in good condition
- No, I am missed once in a while

THE WHISPER

What is THE WHISPER?

- It is a one page, two sided "mini-VOICE"
 - It will be published by CoMO-CAL monthly
 - It is intended for ALL Mobilehome Owners, not just CoMO-CAL members
 - CoMO-CAL will print THE WHISPER at NO CHARGE
 - CoMO-CAL will send you as many copies of THE WHISPER to you as you need for your whole park
 - If you copy THE WHISPER, CoMO-CAL will reimburse you at the rate of \$.03/page
 - All of the above
 - None of the above
- (Actually the correct answer is "all of the above.")

Do you think THE WHISPER is a good idea for residents in your park and/or your area?

- Yes, everyone should be informed
- No, they would not be interested
- No opinion

We want to distribute this one page flyer.

- I will volunteer to distribute it in my park
- I will volunteer to distribute in other parks also
- No I will not volunteer to help distribute the flyer
- I will recommend a neighbor who will volunteer
- I will ask my friends—one of them might volunteer to distribute THE WHISPER

YOUR PARTICIPATION**How do you feel about being a volunteer?**

- CoMO-CAL staff should do everything
- I have no expertise that would be helpful
- I live too far away from Chatsworth to help.
- I am just not interested in volunteering to help
- My health and/or age prevents me from helping.
- I will help in my park only
- I will help in my park and local parks also
- I will volunteer to be the CoMO-CAL "liasion" person in my park. I have a computer and internet.

About making a donation of money?

- My membership dues should be enough
- I live on a fixed income and can't donate
- I would donate if I knew how CoMO-CAL used it
- I will donate \$_____ soon

CoMO-CAL needs at least one member in every park to volunteer as "liasion" to CoMO-CAL

- I understand this requires a computer and internet access
- I have neither a computer or internet access
- I have a computer
- I have internet access
- I will volunteer to be "liasion" for my park.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PARK**Do you live in a "rent control area?"**

- Yes, we have a rent stabilization ordinance
- No, we have no rent control
- I really don't know if there is rent control here.

Tell us about your rent and the last two increases

- My rent now is \$_____ per month
- My last rent increase was \$_____ per month
- The previous rent increase was \$_____ per month

Are you on a month to month rental agreement?

- Yes
- No

Are you on a long term lease? If yes, how long?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- Longer than 20 years

What problems exist in your park?

- Rent increases too high
- Management Problems
- Park not maintained
- Rules enforced unequally
- Office not open on weekends
- Clubhouse locked or must ask manager to use

- Harassment, intimidation of residents
- Other, please note: _____
- No problems exist in my park today

What have you done to get your neighbors informed?

- I've shown them THE VOICE
- I've talked with them about CoMO-CAL
- Frankly, I haven't talked to my neighbors

Tell us about your neighbors and friends living in your park: (check all that apply)

- They don't want to discuss any issues
- They already belong to an organization
- They don't feel any immediate threats
- They do not want to get involved
- They feel someone else is working for them
- They want to get involved and will join CoMO-CAL
- They feel any group is a waste of time and money
- They don't get involved because they feel the park will find out and retaliate against them.
- They hide and are afraid

Do you have a HOA in your park?

- Yes, but it is only a recreational group
- Yes, and it addresses issues in our park
- No, we have no organized resident group here
- If you answered no, would you like us to call you to help you form a HOA? YES NO

- If you answered no, would you like us to call you to help you form a HOA? YES NO

Do you have a pet name for your manager? If so, what is it?

How many spaces total are in your park? _____

Is your park owner a member of WMA?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

(You can tell—get out the Civil Code your park gives you in January/February each year. Does it say Civil Code and just under that “Western Manufactured Communities Association”? If it does, you are in a WMA park.)

NOTE:

Your survey will be kept strictly **CONFIDENTIAL**. We will share results of all questionnaires returned, never an individual survey.

Feel free to add any information to this survey—include on a separate sheet please. We always want to know what's happening!

Your contact information is already on the label on the last page—no need to write it here again.

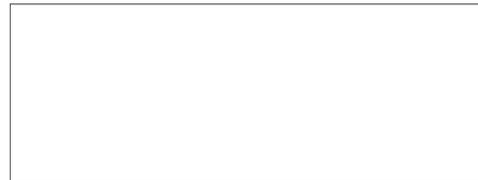
We truly appreciate your input.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

The results of this survey will appear in the September issue of THE VOICE.

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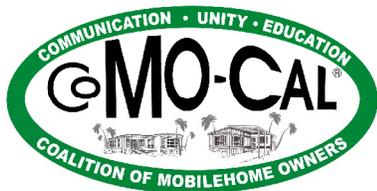


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CoMO-CAL is a non-profit California corporation dedicated to serve mobilehome owners in California.

**Our purpose is education,
communication and to unite
mobilehome owners.**

SERVICES WE PROVIDE OUR MEMBERS

1. Our newsletter, THE VOICE, filled with important information every mobilehome owner needs. Articles from around the state of California. Tips and Suggestions. Important laws explained so you can understand how you are protected. And the WHISPER, an informational flyer, sent without charge.
2. Website: **comocal.org**. Members have access to all issues of THE VOICE, attorneys who know the MRL, important links to government, advocacy groups, etc.
3. Small Claims Court Assistance: We will pay your fees up to \$30.00 and help with your paperwork. (Some restrictions apply.)
4. Questions / Problems: Our staff is ready to take your call to advise you regarding questions and problems you might have.
5. We have several attorneys to help with litigation or give advice.
6. Above all, a way to UNITE and have a VOICE.

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