

Mobile Home Owners Magazine

North S.D. County Edition 2020



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Mobile Home Owners Magazine

Published by Mobilehome Magazine

Serving Mobilehome Owners in California

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www.mobilehomemagazine.org

Let Me Set The Record Straight by Frank Wodley, Publisher

In my 16 years as an advocate for owners of mobile/manufactured homes, much has happened. And a recent communication with a leader in Oceanside has led me to believe there is some confusion about where I stand on advocacy. So let me take a moment to clarify my position. I will try to be short.

GSMOL. I spent two years researching and writing a book about GSMOL called *The Great Deception*. In it I present 30 years of documentation, from board meetings, conventions, personal communications, etc. I loved GSMOL and met many good friends through the organization. It was my first opportunity to help homeowners in my own park, namely Chatsworth Mobilehome Park. I trusted GSMOL's leaders (Steve Gullage, Maurice Priest, Tim Sheahan, Milt Burdick). It didn't take long, however, before I started questioning their decisions:

- a) Why didn't they have a plan to turn around GSMOL's loss of membership and revenue? From a high of almost 1,000,000 members and a revenue of \$1,500,000 per year to, in 2004, about 22,000.
- b) Why didn't they promote GSMOL more? Such as mailing fliers into parks without GSMOL members.
- c) Why didn't they help managers, boots on the ground, to help homeowners, especially financially?

I won't dwell on this; however, myself and other managers had a hard time understanding the reasoning of the Board of Directors. As you can read in my book, I worked hard to change GSMOL over the years, without

success. GSMOL's membership and income continued to drop, year after year, at a time when homeowners really needed a strong statewide organization.

2016 Convention. Prior to the 2016 GSMOL Convention, I had an idea to provide delegates more information on GSMOL's losses and ways to improve. I organized a small group and started "savegsmol.org" online. Our goal was to turn GSMOL around, i.e. to make it strong again. Unfortunately few listened.

The Great Deception. I started writing *The Great Deception* to document my experiences as a mobile-home owner and my history in advocacy, starting as an associate manager with GSMOL. By the time I had presented the 30 years of documentation, a lightbulb came on! There was only one plausible explanation for 30 years of history, GSMOL had been infiltrated by pro-park owners in the late 1980's. It's been a year since that time, and I'm now convinced more than ever.

My position. I love GSMOL, the organization. I have fought hard, to make it stronger, against those who wanted to destroy it. They have prevailed. I am convinced GSMOL was infiltrated over 30 years ago by park owners, and continues corrupted today. I now know GSMOL can't be saved and shouldn't be saved. In my opinion, the board should close its doors.

So, is this the end of advocacy for homeowners? Hardly! It is the beginning. Homeowners have NEVER been protected. Read my next article "Smoke and Mirrors."

Smoke & Mirrors by Frank Wodley, Publisher

I've been an advocate since 2004, formed a state-wide organization (Coalition of Mobile Home Owners - California) and published over 2,000,000 copies of a magazine like the Vallejo magazine your reading now. I've also written a book about our go-to state organization GSMOL, called "The Great Deception" and continue to try to help you today.

Those who know me know I'm 100% for you, the owners of mobile/manufactured homes. I know you've been "hood-winked" by the establishment. Many praise GSMOL for all its hard work and accomplishments over the years. Many praise Senator Connie Leyva and the Senate Select Committee. And many believe Housing and Community Development does a good job looking out for us.

Let me be "frank." It's all smoke and mirrors. It's all a deception designed to keep you thinking you are protected, when actually you are not! Just take a minute to reflect on a few things:

THE MOBILEHOME RESIDENCY LAW (MRL)

Ever since I became a mobilehome owner, I've been told by GSMOL and the Senate Select Committee to get a copy of the Mobilehome Residency Law, study it and learn my rights. That is exactly what I did. And sure, it gave me a warm feeling knowing I had rights; however, I know now it's all "smoke and mirrors." Why? Because laws are not worth the paper they're written on if there is NO ENFORCEMENT. Don't believe me? Read on.....

Let's go back to 1987 when The Senate Select Committee held a hearing titled "Mobilehome Residency Law Enforcement Problems (Mar. 1987). Go to page 10 of the transcript (it's under the heading "Hearings" on the Senate Select Committee's website (<https://mobilehomes.senate.ca.gov/hearings>):

The reason for this hearing is to delve into the question of enforcing the Residency Law. The Mobilehome Residency Law provisions, being Civil, not Criminal in nature, are basically self-enforcing. That is, when you have a violation or dispute that cannot be resolved between the park owner and the resident, their ultimate recourse is through the legal system. Some, however, feel, because of the costs of hiring an attorney and the delays in already

clogged court calendars, that court solutions are very inadequate method of enforcing the law.

This Committee, as well as a number of legislator's offices from whom we have hears, have many complaints concerning the (lack) of enforcement of the Mobilehome Residency Law. I understand the Golden State Mobilehome Owners League has made enforcement of existing provisions of law one of its priorities in terms of problems that need to be addressed.

So what happened to GSMOL's priority? NOTHING! In fact there isn't a viable means of enforcing the MRL today, some 35 years later! You might ask why didn't GSMOL do anything. After all, they were very strong at that time (about 100,000 members and an income of \$1,500,000 per year). I spent two years writing "The Great Deception," a book about the last 30 years of GSMOL. You'll find many answers in the book. Want a copy? Simply email me and I'll send you a copy. \$20 including postage and handling (it's \$30 on Amazon).

THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE

What about the Senate Select Committee? In fact, I have no faith that they are in our corner. They were very active in the years after they were formed (1983). They held 19 hearings in the 1980's, 15 in the 1990s, 9 between 2000 and 2010 and only one since that time (2016).

Last year, I attended a town hall meeting in Pomona held by Senator Leyva. She brought several boxes of the Mobilehome Residency Law. (Smoke and mirrors - all is fine in the mobilehome community). Never once did she mention the lack of enforcement because that's like "letting the cat out of the bag."

Senator Leyva also proudly mentioned the Committee was going to introduce legislation in 2020 to curb the problem of manager abuse in mobilehome parks. That's a good thing, right? I absolutely agree. The plan was to train and certify park managers, the same approach they have preached for many years. In fact, Senator Leyva held a hearing on "Manager Abuse" in 2016 where she and park owner representatives touted this approach.

THE WRONG APPROACH ONLY PROTECTS PARK OWNERS - MORE SMOKE AND MIRRORS

The issue of manager abuse is near and dear to my heart. Managers in my park were very abusive, for many years. In fact, that's why I became an advocate. I've studied the problem and know managers are not the problem. Sure, it will help if they have training. But that's not the solution to the problem.

My good friend Donna Matthews once testified in a hearing:

The California Supreme Court ruled that property owners are responsible for the activities (managers) in their park.

Gus Colgain, ex-president of CMRAA:

*We have some of the most brilliant lawyers in the country in Sacramento and they can find out. If you can pass laws against businesses, industrial organizations and tell them, "These are the laws that you have to be following or we're going to fine you tens of thousands of dollars," then you can find a way to hold park owners responsible for their managers. **Make the person who owns that property, who gets the profit from our pockets, responsible.***

SB-915. The Senate Select Committee and GSMOL are protecting park owners. The solution to manager abuse is not to train and certify managers, it is to sanction or fine park owners. Then the abuse would immediately stop.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (HCD)

Oh, I didn't forget. AB 3066 was passed and signed into law a couple years ago to provide the community with enforcement. \$10/year/resident. Have you been assessed?

It's terrific that a pot of money is available to enforce the Mobilehome Residency Law; however, I believe HCD is absolutely the wrong organization to help us.

Let me provide just one example. Several years ago in my park my friend had his home up for sale. In fact several homes were up for sale.

Our manager called a HCD inspector to come into the park and pressure these folks, by writing them up for various infractions. Their efforts targeted only these folks who were selling their homes. Why? Because my park wanted to pressure them to sell to the park

for pennies on the dollar. And HCD was part of that scheme!

Recently, in the North, HCD was part of a scheme to evict some 35 residents from their homes. I say HCD is not our friend.

July 2020 is the month when HCD will start taking complaints from people. Mobilehome Magazine would like to keep track - send us a copy of your complaint and we'll track how well HCD does its job. We are skeptical.

THE GREAT DECEPTION

Carol Brinkman, a newbie board member, wrote a one-star review in an attempt to dissuade folks from reading the book:

This is obviously a homemade and amateurish self-published diatribe, sent to press with no editorial oversight to give it structure or even fix its many grammatical errors. It is a patchwork of disconnected and repetitive "suspicions" with little substantiation - from a disgruntled former member of a non-profit, who is trying to plant a seed of doubt about the "mothership" in an attempt to revive his floundering splinter group.

Carol is misguided. Sure, I formed and ran COMO-CAL for twelve years, but I also shut it down when I realized a statewide group is not the answer.

The fact is, I have NO designs of running another group. The book was never about me, it was about protecting and informing mobilehome owners.

By the way, not one person has challenged any of my findings in "*The Great Deception*," although I've sent the book to several, including David Loop (attorney) and Bob Markley (President of OMHA).

TIME TO CIRCLE THE WAGONS

I suggest homeowners wise up. Neither GSMOL, HCD or the Senate Select Committee are in your corner. Do not support them.

Unfortunately, you're your only hope. Of course, I'll help but I can't and won't do it for you. Form regional groups with leaders who are open and honest. I'll help fund them with the magazine and will continue to provide important, honest information so everyone can protect themselves. **Thanks for reading!**

There is a Solution

Do homeowners need an advocacy to deal with unscrupulous park owners and to protect their rights? ABSOLUTELY! We are all in the same boat. You are not exempt. Bad things are happening all the time. Bad things can happen to anyone. You can't simply say they won't happen to you.

We hope you're convinced NO ONE is looking out for you or your rights because that's reality. It's all been smoke and mirrors, orchestrated by park owners.

It's time to face reality and go forward. Only you can make it happen. But how? We suggest "circling the wagons" and organizing. Remember, Strength in Numbers! All homeowners should make organizing their #1 priority.

a. You can get the ball rolling. Step up, and have a meeting with your neighbors and friends in your home. Share this magazine (as you are one of a few receiving it). Contact us (fawodley@yahoo.com) and let us know you want to organize and protect yourselves. We want to help.

b. It takes time to organize; however, we want you protected in the interim. We've gotten a head start with Mobilehome Owners Network (MHONET), i.e. we already have a growing list of homeowners that want to join and be protected. As soon as we have 300 homeowners pledging to join (sending no money yet), we will activate MHONET. It will provide members low cost/no cost legal help to enforce their rights under the

Mobilehome Residency Law.

c. How do you JOIN MHONET? Simply send an email to fawodley@yahoo.com with JOIN MHONET in the subject line.

d. Ultimately, we'd like to see you organize a regional group in your area. We'll help you set up a meeting where you can invite homeowners from parks in your general area to attend. How do you get the word around? Use this magazine. We'll promote your meeting. But you need leaders that have no ego, are open minded and willing to do the work necessary. Don't worry about bylaws, dues, etc. At least not yet.

e. The goal of the organization is to help protect homeowners. What does "help" look like? The very first step is to have legal representation to enforce the Mobilehome Residency Law. Without enforcement, you have no rights.

f. We suggest your Regional Group work with others around the state (of course they must also be formed). Together you will be strong.

g. Eventually there will be dues. Keep them "in region," i.e. don't send them to some other organization like GSMOL.

h. Use a portion of dues to fund legal help.

i. Support this magazine and as soon as it is profitable, we will share profits with your group. Remember, the magazine is free. You never have to pay us to use it.

This Just In

We just received an email about a group in Southern California. The group, including attorneys, and advocates, agrees with the conclusions of *The Great Deception* and will promote it to homeowners in their area. They have known that GSMOL is corrupt (perhaps before the book was written) and are aware GSMOL is acting against those it's supposed to serve.

Of course this is good news. Perhaps now homeowners will realize we're not just tooting our horn. We are genuinely concerned about the mobile/manufactured home owner community.

Mobilehome Magazine Has Moved

As of February, 2020 I'm officially moved to Tulare. I was able to sell my single wide mobilehome in Chatsworth for a profit. This allowed me to afford a nice, stick-built home in the Central Valley, one of the very few places in California that are still affordable.

Correspondence should be directed to my new address: 1799 Brightside Street, Tulare CA 93274. My email address has not changed: fawodley@yahoo.com.

Perhaps soon I will write an article how I saved \$8,000 in commissions when I sold my mobilehome.

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