

MH *Life*

A Magazine for Mobilehome Owners

CALIFORNIA

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From the Staff of MH Life



Welcome back to MH Life Magazine. It seems as if we have been gone forever! Much is happening and let's get right to it.

In February, we suggested we'd be publishing every other month through the end of 2015. Of course, finances play a big part in that decision. Well, we've changed our mind. We will make every effort to continue publishing monthly and with your support we will. Publishing monthly benefits all.

In January, COMO-CAL offered to "police" other organizations. Although the offer was genuine and honorable, we now realize only you can be responsible - we can't. We are sorry if it ruffled a few feathers but that was not our intention. Our intent was to help bring ethics and unity to advocacy. Read the whole article on pages 4-5.

We are happy to announce we have added a position to our Staff - a Ph.D. Psychologist, Dr. Elizabeth Mattke. Dr. Mattke will help us understand the psychological aspects of living in a mobilehome park, her first article is on page 9. We welcome Dr. Mattke and look forward to future articles.

The Coalition of Mobilehome Owners - California (COMO-CAL) is alive and well today. It was a very successful advocate for MH owners from 2004 through 2011. Read about some of its' accomplishments on page 10. It received kudos from many around the state (page 11). Today, the Coalition's goals remain the same: Education, Communication and Unity. Plus, COMO-CAL is bringing back the FILLS Program - Free Individual Limited Legal Service, as soon as there are 2,000 members. So the faster you join, the sooner you will be covered by the FILLS Program.

Working together is critical to our success. Working together means sharing. We reach you via the magazine. Please share with us. If your park has its own magazine or newsletter, please send us a copy. If your park is facing an issue, please let us know, perhaps we can help. Communication is a two-way street. It doesn't work with only one of us sharing.

Of course we continue to promote ethics and unity. The article on pages 4-5 provide you some tools. You have the power- please use it.

Unfortunately, sometimes our intent can be misconstrued when one reads just one article or page. To derive the most benefit, please read the whole magazine. You have 30 days, so that's just a few minute a day. If you have any suggestions how we might do a better job, just let us know. Finally, remember our advertisers are the life blood of our magazine. Please use them - everyone needs insurance, and other services.

Until May, be happy, healthy and wise. *The Staff of MH Life Magazine*

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Taking Stock - Modifying The Unity Plan

From time to time we feel it important to “take stock” and this is such a time.

SUGGESTIONS ABOUT ORGANIZING

Over the past few months, MH Life Magazine has made suggestions about organizing and bringing ethics back to advocacy, so that you are represented while maintaining your power. So let's quickly review:

In November 2014, pages 12-13, we suggested a way for you to take back your power, to have a voice, and a way to get advocates working together. We suggested the formation of Regional Groups whose purpose would be to assist all groups in their region to work together. This idea also meant that every MH owner would be represented.

In December 2014, page 9 and 11, we discussed the importance of ethics in advocacy, suggesting an advocate should be open and transparent, willing to work with others, accountable and responsive to its' membership. We believe the majority of MH owners agree.

In January 2015, we discussed The Unity Plan and the Pledge. We also suggested that you have the power to make it happen.

Basically, what we are saying is:

- a. We believe all advocates should work together. That only makes good sense: Strength in Numbers.
- b. We believe an advocate that accepts money from MH owners should be open and transparent, i.e. provide financial reports. And contributors deserve a voice regarding how money is spent.
- c. We believe all advocates, whether they accept money or not, need to be accountable. There needs to be a way to replace them if they are not doing a good job.
- d. Advocates should be responsive to emails, phone calls and letters.

One last suggestion. Let's not build a network wherein only one organization has all the power, or gets all the money. That has led to our situation today and we don't want to make the same mistake a second time.

We all know a house is only as good as the foundation upon which it is built. The same applies to those organizations that advocate for mobile/manufactured home owners. We strongly believe the above four points provide a strong foundation.

WORKING TOGETHER MAKES SENSE

Have you ever seen a group be successful without organization and teamwork? Have you ever seen a football team, baseball, or any team for that matter, that is successful without organization, i.e. a coach and players who know their responsibilities. That's why they call them TEAMS - everyone is working together for

the success of the team. Everyone knows his job and does it to the best of his or her ability. We believe this applies to advocacy.

We will not apologize for supporting what the manufactured/mobile home community wants and deserves, i.e. advocate ethics and unity. The state of advocacy in California is dismal. Few are working together and there is little or no organization. Many groups are only looking out for themselves and their own needs. They not focused on working with others.

COMO-CAL'S SUGGESTION

In January, we published COMO-CAL's (the Coalition of Mobilehome Owners - California) offer to be a “policeman,” i.e. COMO-CAL would fund other advocates when and if they took the pledge to be ethical: *And we ask one more thing. From this time on, Do Not send money to any other advocate. Not to GSMOL, not to your local group, nor to your park group. This is key. Here is our reasoning. Money equals power. Without funding, there is no power. We intend to give power to those who are open, transparent, working together with other advocates. Those who are ethical.*

Some of our detractors have suggested this suggestion was a power/money grab by COMO-CAL. Quite the contrary, the great majority of money sent to COMO-CAL would have been used to fund other advocates, i.e. COMO-CAL would have used less than 10%. Reading further (page 9 last paragraph):

Unlike the state group of today, COMO-CAL is not an end in itself. Your membership dues will not stay with COMO-CAL. COMO-CAL is simply a means to get all advocates working together, networking, brainstorming, sharing with each other, operating ethically, being open and transparent, publishing financial and membership reports, etc. COMO-CAL provides checks and balances to see your advocates are working hard for you! You deserve no less.

IN HINDSIGHT

COMO-CAL's offer to help was honorable. Ultimately, COMO-CAL only wants what is best for mobilehome owners. No one should question our intent. However, in hindsight, COMO-CAL realizes it can only provide suggestions and ideas. We can't make it happen. We can't be the policeman. We can't take responsibility for you. We realize it is up to you to embrace an idea and make it happen. It is your responsibility.

As a consequence, **COMO-CAL's mission has been modified. We will not accept money for other advocates, nor will we fund other advocates or police them; however COMO-CAL will support those that take The Pledge.** Mobilehome owners deserve no less than ethics in advocacy and everyone working together. Please refer to Dr. Elizabeth Mattke's article “The Psychology of Mobilehome Living” on page 9. It demonstrates the importance of UNITY.

ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE WHO TO SUPPORT

Only you know what you want. If you want those advocating for you to be open, transparent, accountable, responsive and working with others, then it is your responsibility to fund and support only those who are.

Only you can decide who is working for you, in your best interest, in an ethical way. Over the years we've suggested you be more active in the organization(s) you support. Today it is even more important you use your power (funding and support) to make positive change. You will reap the benefits!

(Agent). By clicking on the name, you can also read the full address of the agent.

We have made searches of many advocates claiming to be incorporated with the State of California. Many were either not incorporated or their status was either suspended or inactive.

We have asked questions of many groups. Few are forthcoming about their policies, yet we feel every organization should be open. It should be a red flag when an organization will not answer important questions regarding money, members, etc.

THE PLEDGE (SLIGHTLY MODIFIED)

All our surveys show MH owners want advocates working ethically. We will continue to promote the following Pledge for all advocates. Our hope is organizations, large and small, will come forth and join our effort to bring ethics back to advocacy. Email, call or write us. Let us know you support the Pledge. We as advocates for MH owners in California:

1. Pledge to publish financial and membership reports twice a year.
2. Pledge to publish results of board meetings.
3. Pledge to work, share, network, brainstorm and communicate with other advocates and individual MH owners in our state-wide community.
4. Pledge to be responsive, i.e. respond within 24 hours to emails, or phone calls, and letters within 7 days.
5. Pledge to be accountable for our actions. Further, we pledge our group's bylaws provide a means to vote out the bad apples, i.e. those not serving our members to the best of their ability.



TOOLS TO USE

Articles in the January MH Life Magazine ruffled some feathers among a couple HOAs. However it is good that the issue of ethics and unity is being discussed. You may ask, how will I know if the organization I support is ethical? Here are some suggestions: You must question, question, question. Do they publish financial statements? Do they report on membership numbers? Do they publish what was discussed at board meetings? Are they responsive, i.e. do they respond in a timely manner when you email, write or call them? And are they accountable? Is there a way to replace them if they are not serving you well? If you have other criteria, terrific. Just make advocates aware what you want from them, and support them when they deliver.

If a group claims it is incorporated as a nonprofit, you can easily verify the facts. Simply go to <http://kepler.sos.ca.gov/>. Click on "Corporation Name" in Search Type, and type the full name of the corporation. In the case of COMO-CAL, you'll find the following results: C2682586 (corporation #), 10/13/2004 (Date filed), Active (Status) and Frank Wodley

WHAT'S NEXT FOR MH LIFE AND COMO-CAL?

COMO-CAL is alive and well and continues accepting memberships. The nonprofit, state-wide group Coalition of Mobilehome Owners - California (COMO-CAL) and Manufactured-Home Life Magazine (MH Life) will continue to promote the Unity Plan, the Pledge and equal representation for all mobilehome owners. And we will continue to promote transparency, openness, accountability in advocacy. Above all, we will continue to promote everyone working together against a common adversary - unscrupulous park owners. We hope you support our efforts.

Finally, remember that the magazine is the "peoples' magazine" for everyone to use. Send us your articles, send us your suggestions, and please keep in touch because we are a community.

Two Way Communication is Critical

We've often talked about the importance of having an advocacy group in your park. These groups are called Home Owner Associations (HOAs). Often they are incorporated with the State of California and have a bank account and collect a small annual fee. We feel all parks should have an HOA. How else will problems be solved?

Keeping with our suggestions of the last few months, we feel all HOAs should be open, transparent, have meetings, be responsive to park residents, etc. Further we feel all park residents should be included in communication (a monthly newsletter), not just those joining the HOA.

HOA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Often a park HOA works hard to serve their residents. They have a newsletter, meetings and accomplish much. We congratulate them. However, if California MH owners are to be successful, we feel there is a next, critical step. That step is communication outside of your park, either with COMO-CAL or MH Life magazine.

WHY REINVENT THE WHEEL?

Ten years ago, MH Life Publisher Frank Wodley, then a GSMOL Associate Manager, submitted an article to Golden State Manufactured-Home Owner League's (GSMOL's) Californian titled "One Step Back." Here is an excerpt: *Don't mobilehome owners know there is a definite "strength in numbers". We (GSMOL) have a wealth of talent among our membership. The more our members are involved, the healthier our organization will be. Let's ask for their opinions, their observations, and their assistance. Let's all be more open to them. Let's set aside our egosand let's listen to them and value their participation! Chapter Presidents should poll their members. Vice Presidents should poll their managers. And we all should write and email.*

The intent of the article was to find ways to strengthen GSMOL and to motivate MH owners to share their expertise. Alas, the article was never published.

We know many around the state have spent lots of time, effort and money solving problems they have experienced in their own parks. We encourage them to share their knowledge. Share, share, share! Why? Because, somewhere in another park in California someone is struggling with a similar issue. Without sharing, they will be forced to "reinvent the wheel" and that would be sad.

SHARING ULTIMATELY HELPS YOU

Remember, park owners share via their state-wide group Western Manufactured Communities Association (WMA). Remember, too, that money and profit is the motivation. We would guess when one park owner crosses the legal line, gets away with it and makes money, then this is shared with other park owners.

Some park groups are successful stopping these questionable park owner ventures. By sharing their successes, they help others protect themselves. So how do they benefit when they share? First of all, they know they are helping their friends and neighbors. Secondly, the more MH owners are able to protect themselves, the less park owners will venture into illegal territory. Knowledge is Power.

WE WILL SHARE

You've probably read "send us your newsletter" many times in the magazine. Why do we make this request? Because we want to know what's happening in your park and will share your successes with other MH owners. After all we reach more MH owners than any other advocate in California. We not only welcome information, but we encourage everyone to share with us.

SEND US YOUR NEWSLETTERS & MAGAZINES!

Please send us your park newsletter, or park magazine, even if it only contains information provided by management. We'll pay postage if you request it. Often your park newsletter is written by a resident in the park, on a computer. It would be easy for them to email us a copy. And we would be so grateful.

Remember, communication is a two way street. We communicate with you via the magazine. Please communicate with us. Please mail or email us your park newsletter, magazine, etc.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COMO-CAL is forming an advisory committee. If you have experience with mobilehome issues and would like to get involved, please let us know. This will not require much of your time, but it is a critical part of COMO-CAL's new legal assistance program (read more about it on page 12). Just think, if you have a legal issue, you have someone who will help you. We feel this is HUGE!



Why Support MH Life Magazine?

We understand MH Life Magazine is a real opportunity for the mobilehome community to come together and protect itself. We understand the value of the magazine, do you? We'd like to take this time to demonstrate we are not just another pretty face, we are making a difference. Of course, our goal is getting you to support us. When you support us, that means that we can do so much more for you.

1. Networking MH owners and bringing them together.

a) Why reinvent the wheel? We help bring residents with similar problems together, to brainstorm and come up with solutions that work for all.

b) We bring residents together in a local area. It is important to know what's happening in neighboring parks and in your community. This information can be invaluable. For example, residents in parks owned by the same owner can now coordinate their efforts.

2. Support for a lobbyist in Sacramento. We all know a lobbyist is only as good as the strength of his/her support group. Why is that? A lobbyist requires YOU to contact your representative by phone, or email to provide your opinion on some prospective legislation. MH Life can quickly get the word out to tens of thousands of MH owners.

3. Enforcement. Enforcement is critical. Often times those crossing the legal line can be exposed to do the right thing. Let's use the magazine for that purpose.

4. Help Organizing. MH Life Magazine can help you organize in your park. This is so important.

5. Education. Knowledge is Power. Without a basic knowledge of the laws here in California, how can you possibly know when your park owner or manager are breaking the law.

6. We Are a Terrific Resource. The magazine provides a resource for you when you'd like to know more about a subject.

7. Experience & Expertise. We've been around the block. Together with COMO-CAL, we are a one-two punch. We have 12 years experience in advocacy.

8. Far Reaching. We reach more mobilehome owners than any other advocate in California, at essentially no cost to you!

9. MH Life is Your Magazine. Throughout our history, we have said the magazine is your magazine to use. This applies today.

10. The Tradition. We carry on the tradition of COMO-CAL's The Voice. Nothing is off limits. We are honest and accurate in our articles. If and when we goof up, we print a retraction. (This has happened only once in our history).

11. Partners with COMO-CAL. We are a one-two punch now that COMO-CAL is reactivated.

12. Thinking Outside the Box: We identify problems and find solutions. Sometimes, that requires thinking outside the box. We don't just report the news.

13. Business Directory. As we grow, we will provide you information on local businesses, to help you decide where to go for goods and services.

14. We May Help with your park newsletter. One day we hope to be able to offer you assistance with Your Park Newsletter. We have a wealth of knowledge when it comes to newsletters, so why not take advantage of our offer? Let's work together.

15. Now You Belong. No MH owner need feel they are alone. The magazine wants to reach all MH owners and we serve the entire Community. Last year we delivered 220,000 magazines! All for \$6,125. That's a bargain.

Finally, MH Life Magazine is a critical part of the MH Community in California. We ask you support us with your subscriptions and donations. We'd like to see the MH community contribute at least 10-15 cents per magazine, is that asking too much?

Now you can receive the magazine even though your park doesn't receive it. All you have to do is subscribe. When you subscribe, you also receive a FREE copy of COMO-CAL's Frequently Asked Questions Handbook, a 38 page reference with 58 questions and answers to help you understand your rights in a MH park. How can you go wrong?

OUR STAFF

We have added two important positions to our staff:

a) A PhD. Psychologist, Elizabeth Mattke. Dr. Mattke will be helping us explore the psychological aspects of living in a mobilehome park.

b) An experienced account manager, Maria Spear, to bring us more advertising.

We welcome both. MH Life Magazine now has over 100 folks working to provide you with the best possible service. Thank you all.

THE FUTURE

Our future, and your future, can be bright, but it takes both of us working toward that goal. We need your contribution which you can make in many ways.

a) Volunteer to help us in your community.

b) Either join COMO-CAL or subscribe to MH Life magazine. If you want legal assistance, a lobbyist and the magazine, join COMO-CAL. Remember, we have made it easy for everyone to join. Volunteer 10 hours a year to join for free, if you are living on a fixed income and can only afford \$10/year, please join. Otherwise, the regular membership is \$25/year. Help us help you, join today.

c) Now you can join and donate using a credit card on our website: www.comocal.org.

Two Recent Calls - Inheritance & More

FIRST CALL

I (Frank Wodley) recently answered a call from a reader of MH Life Magazine in San Jose. Such a nice lady, let's call her Mary. Mary was very concerned about the issue of inheritance. I explained to her that we are too. She explained how her manager interferes with the transfer of a home to a relative when someone dies. Often times this results in the relative giving up and essentially handing the home over to the park.

SECOND CALL

A second call was from an executor of a MH owner in Huntington Beach. Her question: *Can I just give my friends' home to the park and walk away without further obligation? I have it up for sale for \$29,000, but know it won't sell for that.*

The decision to walk away sounds like a poor decision, but she is faced with paying \$1200/month rent as long as the home is not sold. That adds up real fast, so it is understandable that this lady is between a rock and hard place.

As we were talking, she mentioned another instance of park abuse when her mom passed away 20 years ago and the park had her move her home because it was too old to remain. Then the park moved the lot line 4 feet to accommodate a new, larger, manufactured home! Of course the lady didn't challenge the park's actions because she didn't know the law and didn't know what to do besides hiring an attorney.

MY REACTION

Why do you think I've been an advocate for 12 years? Such behavior by a park disturbs me. And it should disturb you! And don't believe for one second that you are immune. This cancer is rampant across California.

In the first case, I told Mary that this is not right! So Mary asked: *Is someone doing something about it?* I said *probably not*. Mary suggested we need more communication between parks, I agreed and indicated that communication and networking is one goal of the magazine. I also said MH Life Magazine and COMO-CAL have lots of ideas, but it has been a struggle just to keep the magazine going. We really need donations to the magazine and MH owners joining COMO-CAL.

In the second case, I suggested that she go to the manager and see if the park would purchase the home. At least she would get some money and would walk away without further obligations.

Next, we talked about the 20 year old situation. I don't know about the law in 1994, but today it is against the law to ask a home be moved, upon sale, simply because of age. And it is illegal to move lot lines without the permission of all parties involved and without HCD knowledge.

SO WHAT WOULD WE DO?

We would approach the problem via various avenues: a) We would promote effective legislation that prevents this type of abuse. However, keep in mind, we wouldn't recommend any legislation until there is some form of enforcement. Laws without enforcement are useless. b) We would use the magazine to educate and inform our readers about this type of abuse. We would also suggest all readers inform their heirs about the magazine, so heirs will be informed also. c) In some cases, we would recommend an attorney write a letter to management. Often times, a manager will do the right thing facing a letter from an attorney. d) We would use the magazine to expose those managers, owners and parks that cross the legal line.

FIGHTING A WAR WITHOUT RESOURCES

I recently watched a terrific HBO Series called "The Pacific" by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. It demonstrated the harsh, hellish-like conditions our troops experienced during the Pacific campaign against Japan.

Ok, you may not feel we are not a war. But I want to make a point. Any battle, any fight, and effort for change requires significant resources. A real war, such as the one the US fought in the Pacific, requires an Army, a Navy and an Airforce. It required coordination and teamwork. It required a huge effort to deliver food, medicine, armaments, and other supplies to the troops. Just think the actual amount of effort it takes to keep just one person in the fight.

The requirements for advocacy are not unlike those to fight a war. We require individuals and organizations to support us. We require information. And we need you to trust that we will do the right thing for you.

USE US - WE HAVE ANSWERS

We have answers. We have solutions to issues. All you have to do is read the hundred of issues of The Voice or the Magazine. COMO-CAL and MH Life Magazine working together have the best potential to turn around advocacy. Both are ethical. Both will work with others. MH Life Magazine reaches far more homes than any other advocate and it provides a line of communication that is so important.

OUR HANDS ARE TIED

Last year we published almost 250,000 magazines. MH owners contributed \$6,125. That's a lot of bang for the buck. No one comes close! But donations amount to less than 10% of our expenses. Come on, join COMO-CAL or subscribe to MH Life Magazine. You won't be sorry!

The Psychology of Mobilehome Living

Let me first of all introduce myself. My name is Dr. Elizabeth Mattke, and I am happy to join the staff of Manufactured-Home Life Magazine. Although I'm not a mobilehome owner, I am an experienced psychologist and I'm interested in learning and writing about the psychology of life in a mobilehome park. In recent weeks, I have come to understand many mobilehome owners live in fear. Some are so afraid of management that they hide in their homes. And what about the stress? I also understand the difficulties of dealing with those who only care only about the money, rather the person or family who are trying to survive.

So much that happens in a mobilehome park is rooted in psychology. So it is important to understand mobilehome life from a psychological point-of-view. I hope I can provide some clarity regarding how one might better handle this unique situation and I look forward to contributing to MH Life Magazine in future months.

So what initial suggestion can I make to protect you from many of the issues you might encounter in a mobilehome park?

I'd say, first of all, belong to a support group. I'm sure you know about strength in numbers? Without numbers, you have no strength, literally. It is extremely difficult to stand up to an out-of-control manager, or any other issue for that matter when you're alone. Sure, you can hire an attorney and have him fight for you; however the outcome is never guaranteed and it requires so much of your time and money. When all residents in a mobilehome park encounter a similar issue, the best way to deal with it is by way of a group.

I understand MH Life Magazine is promoting ethics and unity. I'm sure you would agree that it is important that the support group be open, transparent, accountable and responsive. After all, if you give that group money, you want to be sure it is being used to protect you. And if you need help, you want that group to be responsive to your needs. Further, if they are not, then you need a way to replace the leadership so the group will better serve you.

A park group provides your first line-of-protection. Often times many, if not all residents, face a similar issue. Such a

group can collect a "defense fund," they can publish a resident newsletter, and they can come up with solutions to problems many face. Also they can liaison with a state-wide group.

A state-wide group is critical to the success of everyone. It provides the glue between smaller groups. It can network and unify groups and can provide legal services and resources available nowhere else.

My one last word is about UNITY. As Dr. M.G. Robertson said: *Great creativity occurs where there is unity, agreement and harmony.* To achieve the best for those we serve, leaders of groups, whether park groups, local groups, regional groups or state-wide groups should work together to solve problems

and make improvements instead of engaging in competition that results in winners and losers. Leaders must establish and maintain a culture of unity, agreement, and harmony to achieve their desired outcomes. Leaders have the responsibility to work with others to create a culture of unity for those they serve – mobile/manufactured home owners. Establishing such a culture begins and ends with effective communications between group leaders around California.

Creating a sense of unity within a park involves having each resident feel wanted, supported and valued. Leaders must maintain a culture that is unifying and not divisive. Any behaviors, actions or communications that divide residents

or groups will undermine the sense of community and result in a negative effect.

Next Month: More on Groups & Communication

Biography- Dr. Elizabeth Mattke has earned her Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the University of Granton as of this February (2014), Master of Liberal Studies in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Human Resource Management from Fort Hays State University (2009), B.S. Ministry and Leadership (2008) from Manhattan Christian College, B.A. in Psychology (2007) from Wichita State University, and an Associate of Arts in Psychology (2006) from Butler Community College. She is also a 10x published author with 6 articles and 4 books and happily married. You can contact Dr. Mattke through MH Life Magazine.



COMO-CAL's History

Formed late in 2004 as a county wide group, COMO-LAC (Coalition of Mobilehome Owners - Los Angeles County), it morphed into a state-wide group a year later (COMO-CAL). COMO-CAL is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

The first two issues of Mobilehome Magazine were published by COMO-CAL (Sept/Oct; Nov/Dec 2011). The Board of Directors of COMO-CAL made a conscious decision to temporarily close COMO-CAL as of December 31, 2011. The reason: Mobilehome Magazine could reach many more MH owners and it would be difficult to effectively run both COMO-CAL and the magazine at the same time. All current COMO-CAL members were notified and given the option of getting a prorated share of their membership back. All that wanted a refund were given one.

COMO-CAL's THE VOICE

COMO-CAL was very responsive to its membership. During its' 7 years, it was the only state-wide group besides GSMOL. Its' newsletter, The Voice, was second to none. Clay Butler, of the website Sham Conversions (<http://shamconversions.com/>), posted the following on his front page:

Hands down the absolute best mobile home newsletter out there. Worth the price of membership just for that alone. Started by Frank Wodley and run by people who actually live in a mobile home park like yourselves. I urge you to become a COMO-CAL member.

COMO-CAL printed and mailed over 1.3 million pages of The Voice, providing a wealth of information to its' members. Remember, Knowledge is Power and COMO-CAL did a great job in that area.

COMO-CAL's FAQ HANDBOOK

Over the years, several thousand residents have received a copy of COMO-CAL's Frequently Asked Questions Handbook. Today you can receive a copy free for subscribing to MH Life magazine. The Handbook provides answers to 58 commonly-asked questions about living in California mobilehome parks and was compiled by the Senate Select Committee. The type font is large for easy reading. It is a "must have" for all MH owners and should be your first line-of-defense.

\$500,000+ SAVED

In 2008, several park owners in the San Fernando Valley issued notices that rent increases would be 4%. COMO-CAL stepped in and had the increases reduced 1%. COMO-CAL also discovered park owners were not following the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance, i.e. they were able to give illegal increases.

So what was the consequence of COMO-CAL's action? In

fact, COMO-CAL saved about 1000 residents 1% of their monthly rent, from 2008 onward. Today, that amounts to over \$500/resident or \$500,000 total and growing! We would say, if nothing else, that amounts to a huge success, wouldn't you, especially when all the membership dues over the seven years amounted to less than \$150,000 total?

FREE/LOW COST ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE

This program was introduced the beginning of 2011; however it was discontinued when the lead attorney "dropped off the face of the earth." COMO-CAL hired two replacements, yet both just took the money without providing any assistance. The attorney assistance program was eventually terminated.

PROPOSITIONS 90, 98 & 99

Some of you may remember Proposition 90 in 2006. It was a Trojan Horse under the guise of eminent domain. If passed it would have eliminated all rent stabilization in California. COMO-CAL was the first to alert the MH Community about this threat. COMO-CAL spent considerable time and money fighting the proposition, which was barely defeated.

Two years later in June, 2008, two more propositions, 98 and 99, surfaced. Proposition 98 would have again eliminated rent control and was primarily supported by park owners. COMO-CAL again mounted a strong campaign, along with other groups and 98 was soundly defeated.

Had either 90 or 98 passed, MH owners would have lost billions of dollars! You can read more about these propositions at <http://ballotpedia.org/>. Also on the site, you can see who supported the propositions - 98 was supported by hundreds of mobilehome park owners contributing over \$6.7 million. But their reward would have been huge had Proposition 98 passed. Certainly COMO-CAL earned a pat on the back for its' role in this terrific victory.

EXPOSED IN OCTOBER 2008

We are proud of the fact that we exposed a serious conflict of interest having to do with Maurice Priest, lobbyist and corporate attorney for GSMOL. Reprints of the article in The Voice, October 2008 are available free upon request. During the period of 2002 through 2008, Priest owned several mobilehome parks, i.e. he was a park owner, yet he essentially ran GSMOL. Priest left GSMOL in November 2008, a month after the article published by COMO-CAL.

Many mobilehome owners applauded the fact that COMO-CAL stepped up. As a result, GSMOL hired Brian Augusta and Christine Minnehan as lobbyists. We have always said Christine helped unite advocates. It is sad she isn't with GSMOL today.

The list goes on and on!

Testimonials - COMO-CAL

Editor's Note: These 2011 testimonials are taken from the FAQ Handbook published by COMO-CAL. They were submitted by COMO-CAL members. The reactivated COMO-CAL will carry on its original mission: Communication, Education and Unity. It will also promote ethics and equal representation for all MH owners in California.

Butte County Mobilehome Owners Association (BCMOA) SAYS: *"COMO-CAL.....Best potential for helping mobilehome residents in parks...Has the best newsletter- THE VOICE...becoming increasingly effective in Sacramento... certainly deserves the support of mobilehome residents."*

The Modesto Advocacy says: *"COMO-CAL instantly became a vital resource for material and data we didn't even know existed. The organization is for park residents throughout California who are striving for survival. COMO-CAL's newsletter, THE VOICE, provides information on current and future challenges we confront, and help is a phone call away. A bonus is the ability to become involved in State legislation that affects all of us. Become an active member of COMO-CAL and join "the force" fighting for YOUR rights."*

The Park Home Residents Action Alliance (PHRAA) in the United Kingdom says: *"The one great weapon mobile homeowners in California have to your advantage is that you have CoMO-CAL administered by a team headed by Frank, Sally and others all equally committed to the cause. These are the people who have voluntarily pushed up their heads into the firing line to win the extremely difficult, and at times very dangerous, battle for your rights, freedom from persecution to enjoy your chosen lifestyle in the peace and quiet you have earned and rightly deserve. PHRAA is proud and privileged to be associated with CoMO-CAL and looks forward to enjoying a long and fruitful relationship with its terrific team."*

Mel Robinson, Lakefront Mobile Home Community Lakeside, Ca: *I would like to first congratulate you for the Professionalism of THE VOICE. The publication is filled with very important and informative information for those*

of us that live in Mobile Home Community in the state of California. I am the past President of COMPAC, INC (County Mobilehome Political Action Committee) in San Diego County, and have watched the growth of the Coalition of Mobilehome Owners in the state. Congratulations. A great job with the issues of legislation at the state level. We sure have to work hard for our rights don't we?

Joan A. Malone President/Cal Hawaiian HOA California Hawaiian Mobile Estates San Jose, CA (spearheaded their recent \$111M win): *Join another organization? Why? What can they do for me? I was pleasantly surprised to find out exactly what they could do for me. I am so impressed with the dedication COMO-CAL puts into helping people who live in Manufactured/Mobile Home Communities. I can't believe these people are volunteers with the amount of work they put in. Frank Wodley, President of COMO-CAL, has ALWAYS answered my e-mails and phone calls. He is always there to answer questions and point you in the right direction to assist you with problems in your park. I have learned so much from their newsletters, THE VOICE. The writers are informative and knowledgeable. Basically, WHY WOULDN'T YOU JOIN AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS WILLING TO FIGHT FOR "YOUR" RIGHTS? The cost of membership pays for itself over and over again, by keeping you informed and helping you to understand when your rights are being violated. Thank you Frank and other volunteers for being there for us and doing such a phenomenal job!!!!*

Roger Svensson, Rancho Santa Barbara MHP: *CoMO-CAL is a group that calls an ACE an ACE and a SPADE a SPADE! If you want answers, example and direct help, this is the organization to be a part of. I have been involved in mobile home park politics for over 5 yrs. and can say this organization is outstanding. They pull no punches when it comes to greedy and dishonest park owners who are numerous in Ca. We are vulnerable to them if not well informed. I suggest if you want secrecy or timid actions in dealing with your landlords go see an expensive lawyer. A better choice is to let CoMO-CAL help you with all of their experience and share the info. with the rest of us so we can all learn.*

Our Websites

Don't forget, we have two terrific websites:

www.comocal.org & www.mobilehomemagazine.org

At comocal.org, you can select articles to view by searching key words such as rent control, managers, etc. You can also leave a comment, simply by clicking the logo at the bottom right of each article. Also, you can view and download any and all magazines by clicking on the Magazines tab directly above the first photo. We're happy to see many are visiting the website, now over 1500 hits.

Please note that you can join or donate to COMO-CAL via the PayPal buttons on the home page and membership page. You do not have to have a PayPal account, you can simply use a credit card for any transaction.

If there is a subject you'd like us to address, please let us know. You can call us at 818-886-6479, email us at fawodley@yahoo.com or write us at MH Life Magazine, P.O. Box 3774, Chatsworth, CA. 91313. Remember, we're here to serve you. Help us help you be saying hello from time to time!

COMO-CAL Today

WHEN YOU JOIN

COMO-CAL will send you a welcome letter with your membership number and other information related to your membership. You will receive, if you checked the box, a FREE, 36 page Frequently Asked Questions Handbook (a \$6 value - see page 14 for more info). Also you will receive a subscription to MH Life Magazine (a \$15 value). Your membership will help support MH Life Magazine and its' network of 100 volunteers.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We are working to form an advisory committee of perhaps 5 individuals. Please volunteer if you'd like to be involved. This committee would review a member's legal issues and make a recommendation, in writing, to the member.

FILLS - LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR ALL MEMBERS

We are happy to announce we will bring back the Fills Program (Free Individual Limited Legal Services) as soon as we reach a goal of 2,000 members. The details of the program are being worked out; however if you have a legal issue, we will soon be there to help. Your issue would be reviewed by an advisory committee which would make a recommendation. This would include whether or not to get an attorney involved. If approved, an attorney could write a letter on behalf of the member to their park manager or owner or take other appropriate action.

LEGISLATION

We feel it extremely important to push for legislation that would help enforce the current laws that were designed to protect us. We strongly believe laws are worthless unless there is enforcement. Your membership will help us achieve this goal.

CORPORATE STATUS / BOD

Our corporate status is "active, i.e. we are a bona-fide 501(c)3 nonprofit. COMO-CAL is currently run by a three member board of directors: Frank Wodley, President, Rose Rosales, Treasurer and Ella Clark, Secretary.

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

The current board intends to have a democratic election for board members within one year. All COMO-CAL members will have one vote. Ballots will be sealed and only opened by an independent panel. Nominees bios and experience will be published 3 months prior to an election.

Candidates are encouraged to step up, and begin helping out now. Candidates can participate in board meetings; however, they have no voting rights. They will be required to sign The Pledge and COMO-CAL's mission statement.

It is not our goal to have one person running things, take over anything, or to be a dynasty. Our goal is to have responsible, hard working folks run COMO-CAL. We have been burned twice in the past, so this transition may take some time.

MISSION STATEMENT

COMO-CAL's Articles of Incorporation state our mission is "to promote the general welfare of mobilehome owners in California." We have always had a philosophy of Strength in Numbers, and Knowledge is Power. We believe Together we Stand, Divided We Fall.

THE PLEDGE

We are the only group that has taken the pledge. And we have a history of openness and transparency. We have always been responsive to our members.

WORKING WITH OTHER ADVOCATES

COMO-CAL has always embraced working with other advocates and our history shows it. Our logo is: Communication, Unity and Education." We worked with Mobile Home Owners Coalition (Merle Pitman, Ojai) to sponsor two workshops (Carpinteria and Marin) to brainstorm solutions to problem. We also attended three summits with other advocates including GSMOL, supported legislation to help MH owners and made significant suggestions to bring advocates together.

ORGANIZATION

We continue to believe there is a better way to organize advocates in California. The formation of Regional Groups would help unite all groups in a particular region. If you support this idea and/or want more information please give us a call at 818-886-6479.

STEP UP NOW

If you would be interested in running COMO-CAL some day, step up now and prove yourself. We need your expertise and ideas. Prove you are ethical and your interest is helping mobile/manufactured home owners. Prove you are not interested in a title, but want to serve. And please know it can be very rewarding. We receive a lot of cards and letters thanking us for our service.

THE MORE THE MERRIER

We are anxious to grow COMO-CAL into a strong advocacy group. Only you can make it happen. We believe we are the best hope for mh owners in California. We have the experience and we are ethical and want UNITY. Help us help you!

How Do Our Laws Compare With Other States?

Recently we were doing some research and stumbled upon the MANUFACTURED HOME TENANTS' RIGHT published by the Office of the Attorney General for New York State. Over the years we have been told we had more and better laws in California to protect us. Well, look again. Here are a few examples from New York:

LATE CHARGES

A park owner may not impose a charge for the late payment of rent unless there is a specific provision in a tenant's lease or in the park rules and regulations allowing for this charge.

Even if there is such a provision, no late charge can be collected on any rent payment made within **ten days** of the due date. Also, the late charge cannot be **more than 5 percent** of the delinquent payment. (Real Property Law § 233(r))

Tenants' Organizations may seek to purchase a park and form a Manufactured Home Cooperative. The New York State Housing Finance agency has a special manufactured home cooperative fund program that can **loan a tenants' organization up to 95 percent of the cost of purchasing the park** and converting it to a cooperative ownership. For more information about this program, call (518)434-2118.

SUBLETTING

Subletting is one method of transferring the tenant's legal interest in a manufactured home park to another person. A sublet transfers less than the tenant's entire interest. Tenants with leases who live in a park with four or more manufactured homes **have the right to sublet with the park owner's advance consent**, even if the lease says otherwise.

It is unreasonable for a park owner to have a blanket rule

against subletting, to require unduly detailed financial information from the proposed subtenant, or to deny a sublet because there is a waiting list to get into the park.

SHARING A MANUFACTURED/MOBILE HOME

Even when the lease names only one tenant, that tenant may share the manufactured home or lot with immediate family, one additional occupant and the occupant's dependent children. A park owner cannot restrict occupancy of a manufactured home or lot to only the named tenant in the lease or to that tenant and immediate family.

When the lease names more than one tenant, these tenants may share their manufactured home with immediate family. If one of the named tenants moves out, that tenant may be replaced with another person and his or her dependent children. At least one of the tenants named in the lease, or that tenant's spouse, must occupy the shared home as a primary residence.

ENFORCEMENT

The State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) is authorized to protect the rights of manufactured home tenants under Real Property Law § 233. In addition, **the Attorney General has enforcement authority when a park owner repeatedly or constantly violates the law.** To seek the assistance of DHCR, tenants may call a toll-free number: 1-800-432-4210

The regional offices of the Attorney General will continue to mediate tenants' complaints and, when appropriate, bring legal actions against park owners. For additional assistance, a tenant may consider consulting a private attorney or legal services for the poor or the elderly, and in cases of discrimination, HUD.

Advertising In MH Life Magazine

If you have a business and want to advertise in MH Life Magazine, please contact us at 818-886-6479 / fawodley@yahoo.com. We will be happy to send you a rate card and a hard copy of the magazine.

If you need help with an ad, we offer FREE ad design - we have a Graphic Artist that provides that service for us. And remember, any display ad also gets a FREE listing in our Business Directory.

If you're only interested in advertising in a few parks in your local area, we can help you with that also. We provide a flyer service whereby your advertising flyer, which we print, is inserted in only those magazines going to specific parks. This is a terrific way to maximise your advertising dollars. The cost to flyer a 200 space park is about \$30! Compare that to the cost

(\$100) to print and mail a post card! A savings of 70%.

If you are a reader, let us know your favorite business. Call us, email or write us. Give us the business name and person to contact. If they advertise, you will get a finders fee.

Every business you use is a potential advertiser for the magazine. We will pay you a finders fee for a lead. So help us help you, contact us with the names and contact info of businesses you frequent. You may make a few dollars in the process and help us continue to bring the magazine to you.

If you are one of our many readers, remember, ADVERTISERS are our life blood. Please use them. If nothing else, give them a call and tell them you appreciate their support of MH Life Magazine.

A Final Word

We continue to be the #1 source of information for the MH community. Although we are temporarily changing to publish every other month, we continue to work full-time to help protect your lifestyle and investment.

We pledge to keep those of you with internet up to date via COMO-CAL's website. Yes, MH Life works hand-in-hand with COMO-CAL. And all magazines will be continue to be displayed at www.mobilehomemagazine.org.

Why haven't we changed the cost to subscribe, now that we publish every other month? Simply because we continue to distribute 20,000 free magazines and advertising just doesn't pay the bills. Last year we received \$6,125 in donations; however this covers less than 10% of our expenses. Your \$15 helps us help others, and we thank you for that.

Please volunteer to help out. Be a distributor, even if there is already someone distributing in your park. It only takes a couple hours and you will know you are helping others. Knowledge is Power!

Finally, we want to thank those readers who support the magazine. The distributors, those businesses that advertise, and those who have donated and subscribed. It will be a new day in California if we all work together.

Remember, if you want change, do not support organizations unless they Pledge to be ethical and work with others. This is the only way to get everyone back on the same page.

Find The Pot of Gold

Starting with this issue of MH Life Magazine, we are hiding a pot of gold somewhere in the magazine. If you find it, you could win a \$25 gift card from Restaurant.com.

If you find the "pot of gold" in the magazine, just tell us where and include your contact information (name, address, phone number and email address). Send to P.O. Box 3774, Chatsworth, CA. 91313. Good Luck!

All entries must be received by May 10, 2015. At that time we will have a drawing to pick the winner. There will be an announcement in the June 2015 magazine and the winner will receive a \$25 gift card plus instructions on how to use it. It is basically a 2 for one offer. It really works, we've used it in a local restaurant that we frequent and we received \$25 off our bill no questions asked.

Our FAQ Handbook - Get It FREE

The "Handbook" was actually compiled by the Select Committee on Manufactured Homes and Communities. We thank Stephanie Reid, Senator Richard Roth and other committee members for the opportunity to publish it and offer it to our readers. It is an invaluable tool, a reference which should be consulted whenever an issue comes up.

Now you can receive it FREE by subscribing to MH Life Magazine or joining COMO-CAL. You will receive the 36 page Handbook FREE by first class mail. Such a bargain.

Use this form if you have not joined COMO-CAL, but want to receive MH Life Magazine, .

MH Life Magazine Subscription

NAME: _____ Date: _____

PHONE #: _____ PARK NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

SPACE # _____ CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

- Annual Subscription to MH Life Magazine - hard copy (\$15/year): \$ _____
- Annual Subscription to MH Life Magazine via email (\$9/year): \$ _____
- I will volunteer to help out, I will deliver magazines in my park
- Yes, I want to receive a FAQ Handbook (a \$6 value), FREE with my subscription

MH Life Checks Payable to "Mobilehome Magazine"

MAIL TO: Mobilehome Magazine, P.O. BOX 3774 , Chatsworth, CA. 91313

3-4/2015

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

COMO-CAL's Membership Fees

Recently we looked at two large tenant organizations: Tenants Together in San Francisco and the Coalition for Economic Survival in Los Angeles. Although focused on renters, both organizations have helped the MH Community. We wanted to know what their membership fees are.

WHAT DID WE FIND?

Membership to Tenants Together is a \$50 donation per year or \$25 donation for students, seniors, and low-income renters. You can also pledge to volunteer if you are unable to donate. Volunteers are asked to give at least 10 hours / year.

The Coalition for Economic Survival has five types of memberships: 1) \$15 regular membership, 2) \$25 supporting membership, 3) \$50 contributing membership, 4) \$100 donor, and 5) \$10 fixed income membership.

Remember, these two organizations primarily represent apartment renters, folks who don't own their home, pay high rents and probably have little left to join an advocacy organization.

COMO-CAL'S SUGGESTED FEES

Our **regular membership fee is \$25**; however we want every MH owner to be able to join us and be protected, regardless of financial situation. To that end, we are offering a **\$10 fixed income membership**. Pledge at least 10 hours per year to help COMO-CAL in **lieu of paying for a membership**, i.e.

membership is free. On the other hand, if you can afford more, then please join for **\$50 as a contributing member or \$100 as a donor**. Your kindness allows others to join for less.

FUNDING OTHER GROUPS

Our first priority must be COMO-CAL and MH Life Magazine. Our mission will not include funding other groups. Making sure you only support ethical groups, willing to work, with others is your responsibility.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES

Your COMO-CAL membership provides you:

- A one year subscription to MH Life Magazine.
- A **FREE** copy of our Frequently Asked Questions Handbook, normally \$6. Simply check the box in the form below if you would like your FREE copy.
- As a COMO-CAL member, you can call or email us when you have a problem. We will do our best to give you suggestions.
- We will promote the Unity Plan and we will be open and transparent.
- Remember, we have 7 years running a successful COMO-CAL and 12 years in advocacy. We have the experience and expertise to make a difference.

COMO-CAL Membership Application

NAME: _____ Date: _____

PHONE #: _____ PARK NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

SPACE # _____ CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

Annual Membership in COMO-CAL (see above): \$ _____

I support COMO-CAL & I want to donate: \$ _____

I'd like my free FAQ Handbook (a \$6 value) via first class mail.

Please make checks payable to "COMO-CAL"

MAIL TO: COMO-CAL, P.O. BOX 3774, Chatsworth, CA. 91313

3-4/2015

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