

MHOAA Across America

www.mhoaa.us

September 2011 Edition

603/520-0955

Letter from MHOAA President Lois Parris September 4, 2011

Greetings to you all and I hope you all had a great spring and summer. I had a great visit to Minnesota in July and just wanted to talk about a very special event that took place; an evening hosted by Kate Wolford, President of the McKnight Foundation and George McCarthy, Director of The Ford Foundation. There were many great speakers; Andrea Levere, CFED President, Mary Tinbgerhal, Commissioner for Minnesota Housing, Paul Bradley, President ROC USA, LLC and Warren Kramer, Executive Director of the Northcountry Cooperative Foundation. The focus highlighted the "Cooperative Movement" - - -ownership of our communities by the homeowners who want to keep their homes "affordable." Just as important, they desire to keep their communities from being sold for other land use. This causes many to lose their homes which are their investments into their future. In other words, they are losing their piece of the good old American Dream!

There were two different speakers from cooperatives who gave us their heart-filled experience of what it took for them to become a cooperative, how it has changed their lives, etc. They were great and they stole the show. It is nice to know that CFED, ROC USA, The Ford Foundation, Neighborworks America, MHOAA, our State Associations and the many people behind the scenes are all partnering together to help in the movement of Fair and Affordable Housing; whether it be as a cooperative or to help pass legislation for the protection of all of us living in our manufactured housing communities. Other special events taking place: I'M HOME RETREAT, OCTOBER 5TH & 6TH in Knoxville, Tennessee and MHOAA Convention and ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 20TH thru 22ND in Silver Spring, Maryland. We hope to see you there. For more information and registration, please go to our website www.mhoaa.us.

From Where I Sit – MHOAA Executive Director Ishbel Dickens

As the days begin to shorten and as warm sweaters begin to replace summer tops, I wonder what we are all doing to make sure our homes are as energy efficient as possible. Admittedly, there are some newer homes being built that provide a very high degree of energy efficiency; thus allowing manufactured home owners the opportunity to keep their utility costs low. We thank *Next Step* and others like them for the entire advocacy they have done to ensure the availability of energy star homes for new purchasers.

Currently, the Department of Energy (D. of E.) regulates and oversees energy efficiency standards for all housing types. This is a good thing since it means that new manufactured homes, in particular, are required to be as energy efficient as other types of housing. However, apparently the manufactured home industry and especially the Manufactured Housing Institute (MHI) are working hard to try to move the regulation for energy efficiency standards from the D. of E. to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In my opinion, this would not be a good move from the consumers' point of view. It would result in two different federal agencies regulating energy efficiency standards, and could result in manufactured home owners being offered fewer or less appealing energy efficient products than people who are purchasing site-built homes.

I believe a proposed rule relating to energy efficiency standards will be published in the Federal Register in the near future. If you would like to comment on the proposed rule or want more information about this important issue, please contact me either via e-mail at: ishbel@mhoaa.us or call me at 206-851-6385.

For those of you who do not own homes that are very energy efficient, I encourage you to contact your local utility companies or your state's weatherization program. Oftentimes local utility companies will offer

one-time deals to help home owners purchase energy efficient products (sometimes these products may be offered free of charge). Additionally, many states have weatherization programs whereby low income households may qualify to have their windows, doors, and even roofs replaced with energy efficient alternatives.

Whatever you do to stay warm, please make sure it is safe and also remember to keep your smoke detectors in good working order. Remember to replace batteries regularly.

MHOAA Annual Convention

The MHOAA Convention Committee is working hard on this year's Annual Convention to be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Silver Spring, MD from October 20-22. The theme of this year's Convention: "MHOAA – Advocating for a Secure Future" will be reflected in the workshops, presentations, and meetings we are lining up for you!

The Convention will begin with an evening reception (5- 8 p.m.) on Thursday October 20th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. This will be an opportunity to meet up with old friends and meet new ones as we set the stage for a busy and productive 2 days. On Friday morning we will take the Red Line to the offices of CFED in downtown D.C. where Carolyn Carter from the National Consumer Law Center will discuss state policy initiatives with us. Carol Wayman of CFED will be next and has arranged a "playful" way for us to learn all we need to know about how best to conduct meetings with elected officials. There are definitely right and wrong ways to do this so we want to make sure we do it right!

After lunch we will head to the "hill" where we will all have opportunities to meet with our elected representatives or their staff. This is a wonderful way to build a strong relationship with your federal elected officials and will be well worth the visit. Friday evening you are on your own to enjoy the sights of the capital or to return to Silver Spring for an early night.

On Saturday morning there will be presentations about how to enact an Alternative Dispute Resolution bill in your state; how to run effective and efficient board meetings with strong board members to assist you; and how to write a grant proposal that funders will seriously consider. After lunch with keynote speaker Andrea Levere, CEO of CFED, we will break into our regional groups for update meetings and then the Convention will end with MHOAA's annual meeting and election of board members.

I hope this very full but compelling agenda will whet your appetite so that you will go to the MHOAA webpage: www.mhoaa.us and register for the Convention. Registration is \$50 for manufactured home owners and \$100 for everyone else. Registration includes Friday and Saturday lunches as well as all Convention materials. The first 30 people to register will be given a book by Adam Rust, entitled, "*This Is My Home: the Challenge and Opportunities of Manufactured Housing*" and Adam will be at the Thursday evening reception to sign copies of his book which will also be available for sale for anyone unlucky enough not to be one of the first 30 to register.

Breaking news – MHOAA is pleased to announce that if two of you come from your state and are willing to share a room, then MHOAA will cover the cost of 1 night's accommodation. We will also cover 1 night's accommodation if you are willing to share a room with someone from another state, so let Ishbel know (ishbel@mhoaa.us) if you would like a roommate and she'll match you appropriately.

Please make your own hotel arrangements - call the Crowne Plaza at 1-866-829-4126, give them the 3 letter code - MHO – and you'll be able to reserve rooms at the discounted rate of \$105/night + tax.

If you have any questions about the Convention, please contact Ishbel at 206-851-6385 or via e-mail at: ishbel@mhoaa.us. The MHOAA Board looks forward to seeing you in Silver Spring in October.

When you are through reading this newsletter, please pass it on to someone else who lives in your community. They need to know about MHOAA.

MHOAA Welcomes 2 State Association as Members

We encourage you to visit their web site and to contact each one to welcome them to MHOAA.

MH/OSTA History in brief

www.MH-OSTA.org

1977 - OSTA begins as a grassroots group of mobile home park homeowners. OSTA develops member base, becoming Manufactured Home Owners of Oregon, MHOO/OSTA. MHOO/OSTA and park owners group; told by legislature to work together or not be heard in Salem. Period.

1997 - Working for win-win legislation breaks stalemate and ORS Chapter 90 pours forth. Oregon Landlord Tenant Statutes shifted the focus of MHOO/OSTA to strengthening statutes and helping homeowners understand/benefit from the law. Membership dues alone ultimately cannot finance roles of homeowner educator and legislative watch dog.

2008 - Members vote to end MHOO/OSTA and form Manufactured Housing/Oregon State Tenants Association, MH/OSTA, as 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit, opening up funding options and growth.

2009 - MH/OSTA acknowledges that as an organization it can do **anything** but it cannot do **everything**. Strategic focus aligns to coordinate with community agencies to extend maximum network of support to park home owners statewide. **Terry Smith, President**

Pennsylvania Coalition of MH Residents Association

www.gha610.com

Protect Your Rights!

WORKING FOR FAIRNESS IN HARRISBURG!

**PURPOSED FOR 3/4 MILLION CITIZENS IN 2000 COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH
THE LARGEST BLOCK OF UNSUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

Wrong and Egregious

No matter the interpretation under law – supporting a precept where responsible home owners leasing land to site their conventional or “mobile” homes (not trailers), that allows the landowner to increase lot fees without cause or justification and to intimidate by the use of leases removing constitutional rights, AND in addition, intentionally place the home owner’s property at risk, making ownership unaffordable and the home unmarketable, also leading to circumstances causing default so that the land owner can take possession, is simply WRONG. The promotion of these conditions by the courts or the legislature by neglect or failure to represent/act on behalf of the citizen is egregious.

Residents of land-lease communities (LLC) are proud Americans! We are retirees, the elderly, persons with disabilities, retired vets, and working families...We pay our own way, and only ask we are treated fairly, with respect, and have an equal opportunity to defend and protect our rights and property... and to be justly recognized for our achievements by PA law!

As working families we are employed as police officers, firefighters, nurses, store clerks, bakers, carpenters, landscapers, school and county employees, postal workers, maintenance engineers, hairdressers, small business operators, truck drivers, retired and disabled vets, ...folks who are the backbone of America and its economy...and as retirees and the elderly... we are grandparents and great grandparents...and many of us are infirm and seriously ill, all struggling to retain the dignity of home ownership, working for the American dream. **Roger J Hall, Pres**

National Bill of Rights

As a member of the MHOAA we’re working on a Manufactured Home Bill of Rights. There are people all over the country that are too afraid to form a home owner association. Residents can be evicted for almost anything. With MHOAA’s support I have requested our Congressman David Cicillini to sponsor this Bill. With a Federal Law to protect those who start an association, more things will happen for all manufactured home residents across America. What is happening in some states across America you cannot imagine. If all 50

states had a statewide association then we would have 18 million voices standing up for their rights. Collectively we would make a BIG difference. ***Dot Sliney, Rhode Island***

Oregon: Small Claims Court: Bringing Justice to Home Owners?

In Oregon, home owners have not used the small claims court to seek redress to violations of the law. But we are now moving to do so because hiring an attorney is expensive and legal aid attorneys are currently unavailable in our state for anything except evictions. We need to educate and encourage home owners about a strategy that often effectively pits local citizens against corporate and out-of-state owners.

Recently, a home owner in a Fitterer park in Roseburg filed a claim over an 80-year old tree blown down during a storm that damaged her fence. She was awarded \$1,300 in repairs and fines due to lack of maintenance and “an act of God” that occurred on the landlord’s property. The fact that the 80-year old home owner was dying of cancer at the time, made an impression on the judge, especially when she and her daughter spoke up in court.

Here are some of my thoughts about a claim I’m filing in my own community over a violation by park managers who collected a number of my flyers before home owners had a chance to pick them up. (We have no way of distributing such flyers except by placing them at the doorstep.) Under Oregon law (see 90.750) any one renting a space can canvass “...other persons in the facility ...on any matter, including but not limited to any matter related ...to manufactured home dwelling or floating home living.”

See the attached flyer I circulated on August 22nd. It gave the park managers motive to remove them as my comments were critical of them. Yet it wasn’t until two home owners told me that one of the managers took a flyer from a home, that I decided we might be able to take it to court. I interviewed and drafted an affidavit (see attached) that they edited and signed. We are in the process of getting it notarized.

I then sent an e-mail to the managers, telling them that unless they gave me a list of those homes they removed the flyers from within 48 hours, I would bring it to the attention of the park administrator. I said nothing about the affidavit nor about the specific statutes, just that what they did was a violation of statute. One manager told me that there was no solicitation in the park.

They didn’t comply, and I mailed a letter to the park administrator that unless he ordered them to do so, I would file a small claim in Lincoln County against Sterling Properties. Stay tuned. ***Peter Ferris, Oregon***

Rhode Island – FMHO is putting together a Legislation Committee. Their purpose: 1) Monitor legislation. 2) Ensure that their legislation is treated fairly. 3) Educate legislators that manufactured/mobile housing is a very important part in providing housing for Rhode Island residents.

FMHO requested an act that would allow park operators who sell their park to their residents that would promote low-moderate income housing, be exempt from Excise Tax that is normally imposed by the state. Next year we will request this bill be submitted earlier and join with another housing group to spearhead its passage.

Association of Manufactured Home Owner’s Letter to Residents:

A community in Snohomish County, Washington was threatened with closure and nearly every resident in that community faced certain loss of what was their greatest investment of value; their home. The short story is that they were able to save their community from developers and preserved their park as an affordable lifestyle for the community’s senior residents. Realizing that their experience could help others to the same end, AMHO was born.

So what has AMHO accomplished in its first four years?

- AMHO membership currently consists of home owners from more than 65 communities in Washington State. We have assisted more than 25 of these communities in organizing Home Owners Associations.

- We have aided residents in filing grievances with owners and managers through the Attorney General's Dispute Resolution Program.
- Our members have volunteered countless hours talking to legislators and testifying at city and county council meetings around the state about the rights and needs of manufactured home owners.
- We have been the leader in the rezoning efforts in Tumwater, Lacey, Snohomish County, Lynnwood and Marysville, and aggressive efforts have begun in Spokane, King and Pierce Counties.
- AMHO has organized the Manufactured Housing Lobby Day in Olympia since 2008 with attendance of about 150+ residents each year.
- AMHO co-hosted the national Manufactured Home Owners Association of America (MHOAA) annual convention in Seattle in 2009.
- A state leadership development effort was conducted this past year with four 1-day sessions. The successful results of this effort may lead to the hosting of a State Convention for manufactured home owners in the near future.
- AMHO has been strictly a volunteer organization - until now! Thanks to the generosity of grant giving organizations we now have funding that allows us to employ professional assistance. But volunteer assistance is still needed. Volunteers have three things they can donate: Time, Talent and Treasury.
- If you have Time to attend a county, or city council meeting to demonstrate your support, please give it!
- If you have Time to distribute fliers in your community, please donate it!
- If you have Time to call your neighbors and ask for their support, donate it!
- If you have Talent as a leader, please donate it to your community and become a member of your Homeowners Association Team or form one!
- If you have computer skills, accounting experience, writing abilities, please donate your Talents!
- Every effort requires Treasury. If you have a couple extra bucks to spare, please donate it or pay a membership fee for a neighbor who may not be able to join AMHO for \$15.00 per year.

Not everyone can donate all three. But please donate what you can. All three are important to the livelihood and success of AMHO. What will you get from donating any of those "T's": Time, Talent and Treasury? I can't answer that for you. Everyone's satisfaction comes from within. For me, it has meant finding friends I will probably have for my lifetime. ***Dan Barrett, AMHO***

Illinois SB 1996 was signed into law on August 23 to take effect immediately. SB 1996 allows the Department of Public Health to facilitate development of a plan to address relocation needs of manufactured home owners who are forced to relocate due to the closing of their community. The resulting plan and any proposed legislation will be sent to legislative leaders for review no later than October 1, 2011. The Manufactured Homeowners Association of Illinois has had many meetings with all interested parties preparing a plan allowing relocation money, counseling, and other issues that come when a community is closed.

The weekend of June 25th not only brought with it nice summer days, but it also was the time when Illinois hosted the Midwest Regional Meeting. Leadership from Ohio and Wisconsin attended. Discussion/Workshops included Media, Membership, and Legislation that each state was in the process of passing. The Chicago Tribune sent a reporter to video and report on a portion of the meeting. A video on their website and front page article was reported regarding home owner issues, with the focus on community closures and resident owned communities.

The Manufactured Homeowners of Illinois held their 5th annual statewide fundraiser on June 25th. The golf outing brought forth 125 golfers with 4 tee times and meals with each tee time. The evening dinner brought with it 80 homeowners and 65 sponsors allowing their state organization to raise \$11,000 to continue with the shared goals of manufactured homeowners state wide. ***Terry Nelson, Illinois***

"The only thing needed for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Sir Edmund Burke

MHOAA

Manufactured Home Owners Association of America
United We stand Strength In Numbers

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Paul Bradley, Honorary Director

ROC USAtm

Dave Anderson, Honorary Director

All Parks Alliance for Change

4395 S. Vagabond Drive, Murray, Utah 84107
Phone 801/203-8362 membership@mhoaa.us www.mhoaa.us

MHOAA Membership Form

New Membership **Renewal**

Company/Organization _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Cell Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Web site <http://> _____

Membership (check one):

\$150 for State Membership

\$75 for first-time State Membership

Annual Subscription (check one):

\$15 for Individual/Family Membership

\$100 for an Associate Membership

\$35 for Local Home Owners Association

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Check Number _____

Make Checks Payable to MHOAA. Mail to Above Address.

**PLEASE NOTE: MHOAA is a 501(c)(3) organization
Your membership and donations are tax deductible**

Involvement:

I/We want to become involved with MHOAA by:

Putting a link to MHOAA on our web site.

Becoming involved in a MHOAA Committee.

Promoting MHOAA in my state.

Receiving alerts on issues that affect home owners.

Making an additional contribution.

Application Approved /Accepted Date: _____ Initials: _____

Revised 6/30/11

