

Orange County Regional Educational Conference

September 30, 2023
Orange, California

“Just say ‘MARSHMALLOW’ and I will shut up”, Matt Weise told us. At least that is what his wife does when he starts ‘squirreling’ off topic and goes on and on. And Matt did go on and on, but he was too entertaining and funny for us to end his stories with a marshmallow blow! Matt is the Field Operations Manager for the Division of Codes and Standards in HCD. He somehow makes the inherently dry, legal minutiae of Title 25, (mobilehome health and safety laws) almost fun - serious stuff, but fun.



MORE, Manufactured Housing Opportunity & Revitalization program, formerly called MPRROP, is a funding program that can be used for rehabilitation of mobilehome parks that have the most severe health and safety concerns. The intent is to ensure that mobilehome parks can continue to provide a significant source of affordable homeownership for California residents. Criteria for an award of funds is receipt of a notice of violation from HCD.

When the inevitable question came up about sheds, Matt visibly winced and confessed that (for HCD) shed is the same as a more common four-letter word that also begins with “s”! Sheds are a big headache during park inspections. Problems with sheds are often problems relating to its set-back or intrusion on lot lines. Tree is another four-letter headache word. If the tree affects safety, such as it rests on someone’s roof, HCD (Title 25) steps in because that is a safety issue. If it is a question of who is responsible for maintaining the tree, the MRL prevails since that is a civil question.

HCD is responsible for inspecting 5% of MHPs annually. The top resident citation is for trash and combustibles around the home. Currently, the top park owner citations are for unsupported gas meters and electric equipment. HCD has the power to write citations only: it does not evict. A resident can

call and request an inspection if the park has not been inspected within the last three years and they have a verifiable complaint, such as sewage in the streets.

Carol Brinkman, GSMOL Secretary, shared that GSMOL has been protecting mobilehome residents since 1962 and today we stand on the shoulders of prior homeowners who have been fighting for our rights for over 60 years. GSMOL's single biggest accomplishment was building the MRL, one law at a time until the MRL now numbers over 100 protections. In 2018 GSMOL passed a law to provide a mechanism for residents to file a complaint if there are violations of those laws - the MRLPP, MRL Protection Program. Additionally, GSMOL provides resources and a network of trained leaders to guide residents on local issues in their local parks – another example of membership fees at work.

Despite not being physically present, Attorney David Loop, GSMOL VP of ROP, Resident Owned Parks, engaged in a dialogue with conference participants via audio (thanks to GSMOL member, Don Hart) on the value of buying your park. He spoke from personal experience purchasing his own park and 25 years helping others do the same. Purchasing a park is a complicated, big-ticket, real estate transaction and Dave offered guidance on how to decide which form of purchase makes the best sense, the different types of financing available, how to secure that financing, and the need to manage your park once you own it. Attendees almost forgot he wasn't in the room as he fielded their many questions.

As always, it was with great anticipation that conference attendees waited to hear words of wisdom from the last speaker, Bruce Stanton, GSMOL's Corporate Attorney. Bruce brought with him a 5-page handout, "The Nuts and Bolts of Park Rules and Regulations" and he covered topics such as: what makes a rule legal and reasonable; how is it enforced; how to write a letter of complaint to management? Q&A followed. For many, the chance to ask Bruce their personal question was a prime reason they attended. They were not disappointed and for over an hour Bruce gave them what they came for.





Thanks to Mary Jo Baretich, VP Zone C (pictured at left), Bobbie Magnusson, Manager Region 5, and the many unnamed people who worked tirelessly to coordinate the Orange County Conference.