

# THE CALIFORNIAN

GOLDEN STATE MANUFACTURED-HOME  
OWNERS LEAGUE

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1st Quarter - 2024



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**GSMOL 2024 ELECTION  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**(DETAILS ON PG. 17)**



*Official quarterly publication of the Golden State Manufactured-Home Owners League, Inc.*

GSMOL enhances the quality of life for all manufactured home owners and for residents of mobilehome park communities throughout California. We champion the property rights of homeowners and deliver value through advocacy, information and service. GSMOL lobbies for just and fair protection under the law for manufactured home owners so they may experience the quiet, peaceful enjoyment of their community. GSMOL, Inc. reserves the right to exercise such discretion as it may deem appropriate in the selection of advertising material to be published in *THE CALIFORNIAN*. Advertising published in *THE CALIFORNIAN* does not constitute endorsement by GSMOL, Inc. of the products or services offered. *THE CALIFORNIAN* welcomes articles relating to mobilehome lifestyles, but they are subject to editing based on space availability, style, good taste and importance and at the discretion of the Editor. Content in this publication may not be reprinted or used in any way without the written consent of GSMOL, Inc. GSMOL is a nonprofit corporation with an IRS 501(c)(4) charitable tax exempt status.

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During GSMOL's monthly meeting of the Board of Directors, Linda Nye, GSMOL President, resigned, effective April 1st citing health reasons. In accordance with GSMOL's bylaws, and by an unanimous vote of the directors present at the meeting, the GSMOL Board of Directors voted Anne Anderson to be the GSMOL Interim Presiding (acting) Officer. Under the direction of the interim presiding officer, GSMOL will be able to seamlessly continue our work to protect mobilehome residents while we search for a new president. GSMOL's Board of Directors and Corporate Counsel, Bruce Stanton, will be meeting on April 3rd in an effort to select a new president to complete the final two years of Linda's 4-year term. If you wish to nominate a candidate, please contact your local GSMOL leader, a list of which can be found on page 13 of this issue.

The entire Board of Directors wishes Linda all the best and thanks her whole-heartedly for her leadership these past few years.

In other Board of Directors news, GSMOL is very pleased to announce that Region 7 Manager, JoAnne Ventre, was voted in by the Board to fill the Vice President-at-Large position vacated when Henry Cleveland resigned to pursue other interests. JoAnne is a member of the Legislative Action Team (LAT) committee and a contributing editor to *The Californian*. In her role as VP at Large, JoAnne will be assisting the new president of GSMOL and has oversight of the LAT. JoAnne will serve out the remaining two-years of Mr. Cleveland's 4-year term.

## GSMOL HAS VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

We are always on the lookout for energetic, passionate, organized individuals to fill volunteer leadership roles, for committee work, office help, social media assistance, and a host of other exciting volunteer opportunities.

To find out about volunteer opportunities available with GSMOL, please email us at [GSMOLgoldenstate@gmail.com](mailto:GSMOLgoldenstate@gmail.com) and include "Volunteer Inquiry" in the subject line. We are in a very exciting period in the organization and now is a great time to reach out and get involved.

# David is Fighting Goliath in Petaluma!

*By Carol Brinkman, GSMOL Secretary*

**Mobilehome residents want to keep their homes affordable!** So, Petaluma mobilehome residents asked their City Council to strengthen the protections of their rent control ordinance. The Council agreed and on July 17, 2023, adopted amendments that lowered annual rent increases to either 70% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), or 4% (the cap) whichever is less.

**But park owners want to make more money!** And they were mad! The owners of Youngstown MHP initially raised the rent \$923 before admitting it was a “premature charge.” The owners of Little Woods Villa Park hit residents with a proposed rent hike of over 300%!

The interest of the homeowner to protect the affordability of their home is often at odds with the interest of the park owner to make a profit off their land! A Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) is designed to protect residents from excessive rent increases that would make their home unaffordable. Most RSOs tie rent increases to a percentage of the CPI, which is the annual change to the cost of living calculated by the Department of Labor Statistics and updated every other month. An RSO must also provide a park owner a “due process” that allows them to apply for a greater increase if they can justify it.

The massive rent hikes proposed at each park triggered an automatic arbitration. Arbitration is a government hearing held before a judge to determine whether the rent increase the park owner wants is justified to give him a “reasonable and fair rate of return.” What is a fair return? Opinions differ. The hearing is largely driven by expert witnesses who submit reports about a variety of factors such as maintenance and operating expenses, park rehabilitation, costs from a natural disaster, rent history and other financial information which the owner is willing to provide, along with

responses or rebuttals. “It is a battle of experts,” according to Bruce Stanton, the resident’s attorney.

The park owners’ experts are claiming a fair return falls somewhere in the ballpark of 11% to 20%, while residents’ experts say it should be closer to the 3% to 5% range. It is the park owners who have the burden of proof to prove to the arbitrators that they need the rent increases.

Youngstown’s hearing began in January and a decision is due at the time of this publication. Little Woods Villa Park is scheduled to begin their arbitration proceedings in late April or early May.

In the wake of Petaluma moving to tighten rent control in its mobile home parks, two park owners signaled they may shut down and completely close their parks, potentially upending the lives of hundreds - although state and local laws strictly regulate the lengthy process.

Angry about changes to the RSO, park owners at Youngstown tried to convert the park from a senior park to an all-age one. The residents responded and the city passed a Senior Overlay that officially classified the park as a senior park for residents 55 and older. Angered by the Senior Overlay, the owners of Youngstown MHP hit Petaluma with a second lawsuit, claiming a Senior Overlay district prevented them from renting to younger people and thus forces them to discriminate against potential renters in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act and its amendments. They claim that “restricting Youngstown’s handful of available non-rent-controlled lots to senior citizens (who form only a small segment of the market, and who may be more price sensitive than consumers who are of working age) means, by definition, that Youngstown will be prevented from achieving the maximum potential rents for those lots.”

*(continued on page 6)*



Over the years, GSMOL's engagement with California lawmakers has produced significant legislation in support of improving conditions for manufactured-home owners. Working in concert with GSMOL's lobbyist and corporate counsel, the Legislative Action Team (LAT) committee members identify issues negatively impacting mobilehome owners' quality of life, and then draft and sponsor bills designed to protect and promote those home owner's rights. Equally as important as new legislation is our work to defeat proposed legislation that may harm manufactured home owners. GSMOL's positions on bills for the 2024 legislative cycle are below.

### **GSMOL is Sponsoring:**

#### **AB 2022 (Addis) Mobilehome Parks: Emergency Preparedness**

This bill would require a mobilehome park to adopt an emergency preparedness plan before renewal of a permit to operate for an existing park, and before the issuance and renewal of a permit to operate for a park constructed after July 1, 2025. The bill would require an enforcement agency to ascertain compliance with those provisions and to refuse to issue or renew a permit to operate if a violation is not corrected within 60 days of notice of the violation and impose formal penalties. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

#### **AB 2778 (Muratsuchi) Mobilehome Parks: Rent Caps**

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact the Mobilehome Affordability Act to limit rent increases for mobilehome spaces. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

#### **SB 1408 (Roth) Mobilehome Parks: Vehicle Removal**

This bill would prohibit management from removing a vehicle used or required by the homeowner for work or employment, or which advertises any trade or services on the vehicle, from a homeowner's or resident's driveway or designated parking space. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

### **GSMOL is Supporting:**

**AB 2539 (Connolly) Mobilehome Parks Sale: Right of First Refusal** - This bill would require the owner to provide the sell or listing notice to all residents of the mobilehome park. The bill would grant the resident organization a right of first refusal to the mobilehome park. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

**SB 1190 (Laird) Mobilehomes: Solar Energy Systems** - This bill would make any condition contained in any rental agreement in a mobilehome park, that effectively prohibits or restricts the installation or use of a solar energy system, as defined, void and unenforceable. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

**AB 2373 (Rendon) Mobilehomes: Tenancies/Valid PTO for Evictions** - This bill would prohibit a tenancy from being terminated and a notice of termination from being issued during the period of any suspension or expiration of the permit to operate the park. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

### **GSMOL is supporting, if amended:**

**AB 2387 (Pellerin) Mobilehome Parks: Additional Lots** - This bill would authorize an owner of an existing mobilehome park to add additional lots, not to exceed 10%. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

### **GSMOL is Opposing:**

**AB 3200 (Hoover) Transfer of Water Systems** - This bill establishes a pilot program for certain water corporations to take over the ownership and operation of water systems in mobilehome parks and manufactured housing communities. [Read bill text/status here.](#)

### **GSMOL is Opposing unless amended:**

**AB 661 (Patterson) Utility services: electronic communication** - This bill would authorize management, upon consent of the homeowner or resident, to provide notice of an interruption in utility service through electronic communication, as defined. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

**SB 1108 (Ochoa Bogh) Mobilehome Parks: Notice of Violation** - This bill proposes to include the owner or operator of the mobilehome park in the notification of violations during an inspection process to the owner. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

### **GSMOL is Monitoring:**

**SB 1095 (Becker) Cozy Homes Cleanup Act: Building Standards** - This bill would specify that the definitions of "manufactured home" and "mobilehome" also include the plumbing, heating, air-conditioning, and electrical systems contained outside the structure. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

## **GSMOL is Monitoring: (cont.)**

### **SB 1212 (Skinner) Investment entities: purchasing, acquiring, or leasing interests in housing—**

The bill would increase opportunities for homeownership by barring hedge funds and other corporate investment entities from buying single-family homes in California. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

**AB 2584 (Lee) Single-family Residential Real Property: Corporate Entity: Ownership—**This bill would prohibit a business entity that has an interest in

more than 1,000 single-family residential properties from purchasing, acquiring, or otherwise obtaining an interest in another single-family residential property and subsequently leasing the property. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

### **AB 2247 (Wallis) Mobilehomes—**

Fuel, gas, water, electricity, or sewage connections and installations for mobilehomes must conform to regulations of the Department of Housing and Community Development. [Read bill text and status here.](#)

These are GSMOL's positions effective 3/15/2024 and are subject to change as bills change. For the most timely updates and details, visit [GSMOL.org](https://www.gsmol.org) and sign up for the weekly bulletin, "This Week at the Capitol."

## **GSMOL Victory for Homeowners!**

On March 19th, 2024, the Senate Housing Committee heard SB 1052 (Seyarto), a bill supported by the Western Manufactured Housing Communities Association (WMA) whose members are largely mobilehome park owners. GSMOL's Legislative Action Team (LAT) determined that the bill's proposed changes to the Mobilehome Residency Law Protection Program (MRLPP) would be harmful to GSMOL members and all California mobilehome owners. After hearing testimony against the bill from GSMOL Members Roger Johnson, Michele Moenning, Linda Nye, and Bev Purcell, the committee voted against advancing the bill and it died in committee.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Zoom Townhall with Bruce Stanton, GSMOL Corporate Counsel **Saturday, June 1st, at 10:30 AM**

**Main Topics:** Pending legislation and Q&A on issues of interest to mobilehome owners.

*No RSVP required - Attendance Limited to first 200 Participants*

**Join Zoom Meeting:** [Click Here on Day/Time of Meeting to Join](#)

Meeting ID: 849 5003 0523 , Passcode: 411674

**OR Call in on any kind of telephone:** (669) 900-6833; use info above.  
To submit advance questions for Bruce email them to Anne Anderson at [a.bushnell.anderson@gmail.com](mailto:a.bushnell.anderson@gmail.com)

# ATTACKS ON MOBILEHOME RENT STABILIZATION

*By Deane Sargent*

Some of GSMOL's Board of Directors think California's mobilehome park rent stabilization ordinances (RSOs) are under attack. They are right.

Those board members have asked me to write a three-part article on the situation. I'm going to answer 3 questions: (1) What is going on? (2) What might happen (or is already happening) to **your** park? and (3) What can **you** do about it?

**[There is an IMPORTANT NOTE at the end of this article. Do Not miss it.]**

My name is Deane Sargent, and for the past 32 years I've specialized in helping resident groups purchase the mobilehome parks where they live. When called upon by attorneys representing residents in rent stabilization disputes, I've also served as an expert witness, testifying on behalf of the residents. I am not an attorney, so I can't give you legal advice. I am basically a "finance guy," having analyzed hundreds of MHP financial statements to arrange financing for resident park purchases, or to form an expert opinion for court or administrative hearings. I am also pretty blunt.

## **1. What Is Going On?**

- There are more than 100 different MHP RSOs in California. Many more jurisdictions (cities and counties) are considering RSOs at this time.
- Park Owners ("POs") hate RSOs.
- POs have money and are organized. So, they can hire "experts" to testify about how their attempts to thwart rent stabilization are perfectly fair and justified. In many cases, though, this is BS.

[I actually don't have a problem with the proposition that POs should be able to enjoy a reasonable profit, and to adjust park space rents to compensate for inflation and improvements to the park. Fair enough.]

However, every investor today thinks mobilehome parks are great business opportunities, and wants to own one (or at least, part of one). These investors have been sold on the idea that MHP ownership provides stable investment returns and high profits, like (to quote one notorious park owner) "a Waffle House where the customers are chained to the booths."

So, investors throw lots of money at syndicators who are looking to buy MHPs. Real estate syndicators (sometimes called general partners) strategize real estate investments and then secure financing from individual "passive" investors. The syndicators **must** find investments that justify their fees, so they throw piles of money at current park owners to get them to sell. As a result, investors often pay much more than market value to acquire a MHP.

Many syndicators and investors do not view MHP residents as real human beings. Rather, you folks are viewed like 'stock certificates' that pay dividends on a regular basis. And the syndicators have to figure out how to increase the return (dividend) on their investment. They also want to increase the value of the MH park where you live (that is, their "stock certificate portfolio").

They may have ways to try to do this:

# ATTACKS ON MOBILEHOME RENT STABILIZATION

(Cont.)

- Attack your RSO with ridiculous rent increase demands.
- Make it difficult for you to sell your home, so the park owner becomes the only buyer.
- Convince new residents to give the park 'right of first refusal' on their home when it's sold.
- Bring in new homes, ignore the RSO, and get new residents on leases.
- Try to convert 55+ communities into 'all-age' parks.
- Cut back on maintenance and other services, such as limiting clubhouse use.
- Cover available space with solar panels, to benefit the park owner (esthetics be damned).
- Submeter water and anything else the PO can imagine.
- Use other creative ways to increase the PO's income, or lower his expenses, or both.

We will discuss all these issues in the NEXT installment.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have a local mobilehome park RSO, get a copy of it and read it. Find out who in your local government administers the RSO. Get to know them. Think about what support you might be able to get from them.

If you don't have a local RSO, locate your Regional GSMOL representative (list on page 12 of this *Californian*). **Contact them and find out how you can work toward one in your area.**

We'll discuss all this next time.

Deane

*Deane Sargent is the Managing Principal at PMC Financial Services, Medford OR*

## David is Fighting Goliath (continued from page 3)

Park owners have already sold homes to young families after removing Senior Park signs at the entry, and advertising as an "All Age Park". The lawsuit is pending.

Residents at both parks have had to shoulder the costs of arbitration. It is said the cost to Youngstown is close to \$90,000 – although Petaluma People Services Center has offered to assist with fundraising to cover some of those costs. Legal Aid of Sonoma County and Sonoma County Tenants Union are also involved. GSMOL Corporate Counsel, Bruce Stanton, is representing the homeowners.

Youngstown is owned by unnamed owners, filing as "Youngstown MHP LLC, and operated by Three Pillar Communities, an investor-backed company based in Los Altos that has over 70 mobilehome communities in 14 states, according to its website. They are Goliath. Park residents are the boy with a stone and slingshot and they are praying for a biblical outcome.

***GSMOL Associate Manager Betty Hautzenrader has been working with the homeowners in Petaluma and was interviewed for this article.***



# GSMOL "IN ACTION"

## Rancho San Luis Rey MHP Earns \$750 in One Morning!

**How did they do it?** They set up 20 tables in their clubhouse, invited vendors to rent a table, charged them \$75.00, and promised them a large target audience! They agreed to allow only one vendor in each category and required the vendor to provide a service or product that would be of value to mobilehome residents.

*They got 20 vendors, at 20 tables, at \$75 a table. Ka-ching!*

A local plumber showed up with a brand-new garbage disposal which he raffled off - along with free installation. For the price of an InSinkErator, he won good will among a lot of seniors whose toilets would eventually overflow. One vendor was an actual park resident and handyman looking to do some work in the park. More than a few residents pocketed the business card of the pet sitter and dog walker. Seniors often need a document notarized, and the notary public was flooded with requests for her services. Other vendors included a golf-cart repair man, a mortuary service, a housekeeping service, an HVAC heater and air conditioner man, an insurance agent, a representative from an active seniors group to name a few! Vendors generated contacts for new business.

**How did they get a large target audience?** Simple! Offer money and people will come! So, they gave away \$150 in 3 raffles over 3 hours with the caveat that the winner must be present to collect - which guaranteed residents would have to stroll around visiting the vendors while waiting to see if they had the winning ticket. Offer food and they will come! But it must be good food, like Einstein bagels, shmeat, fruit, hot dogs, coffee. Offer a bunch of necessary service providers in one room, at one time, and they will come! Advertise inside the park and they will come! Advertise outside the park so all of Oceanside will come! They filled the room!

**Why do they do it?** Because when you have money, you can do the things you want to do, like support political candidates in Oceanside who support mobile home issues. You have money to give back to your community. You can pay for social events in your park. Oceanside GSMOL Chapter 708 recently put \$7,000 in a Certificate of Deposit in the bank, and they still had money to spare for the daily stuff. That's what a GSMOL chapter with money can do!

*GSMOL says, "Well done Rancho San Luis Rey MHP". Well done, Mr. Bob! You are an inspiration of the infinite possibilities when you have a creative vision, a leader, and a team willing to work together!*



Rancho San Luis Rey Chapter Board (from L to R) Linda Pettavino, David Hanson, Vice President - Jo Higgle, Secretary - Sandy Beal, President - Pam Hanson, Victor Roy, Treasurer - Sharman Harris, and Shelly Parker



# GSMOL "IN ACTION"

## Robert Markley, better known as "Mr. Bob," is retiring!

Mr. Bob is retiring some of the many hats he has worn to help mobilehome residents living in Oceanside over the past twenty years. In 2003, soon after he moved into Rancho Luis Rey MHP, Mr. Bob became President of local GSMOL Chapter 708. He has long been a member of his park's HOA board. And for a decade, he has been president of OMHA, Oceanside Manufactured Home Alliance, which is a coalition of all mobilehome parks in Oceanside.

Recognizing every organization needs members and money to survive, Mr. Bob wrote the manual on how to run an effective membership drive. He then led multiple membership drives for all three organizations. In Rancho San Luis Rey MHP, there are 433 spaces, and 184 of the residents are GSMOL members. In 6 days, volunteers working 2-hour shifts collected \$4100 in membership fees. Most residents renewed in all 3 organizations.

Mr. Bob is the visionary and driving force that created the unique, popular, and profitable "Senior Fair" at Rancho San Luis Rey MHP (see the article on page 7). In large measure he is responsible for the \$7,000 in his park's bank account! As a former manufacturing representative who travelled the world, Mr. Bob used his experience in marketing, sales, and people skills to visualize the concept, then handle the logistics to make it happen.



Mr. Bob receives a commendation from former Zone D Vice President, Tim Sheahan



Oceanside Mayor, Esther Sanchez recognizes Mr. Bob for service to the community

Mr. Bob is not just a leader in the board room. He has been a fearless leader on the battlefield! In 2011 he was a crusader to protect rent control in Oceanside after three city council members tried to abolish it. He helped organize volunteers to obtain enough signatures to place a referendum on the ballot. Oceanside citizens spoke up loud and clear to keep rent control.

Mr. Bob has given tirelessly for many years and has decided the time has come for him to step back from holding office (although he will keep his finger in the pie in the HOA and OMHA). He has earned this time to slow down and maybe go fishing or travel. But his contribution to the mobilehome arena is so widespread, he couldn't leave without a celebration. Bill Seaton, current GSMOL Zone D Vice President and Tim Sheahan, his predecessor in that position, came to the party. Oceanside Mayor, Esther Sanchez, came to the party. Mayor Sanchez bestowed upon Mr. Bob a plaque recognizing his contribution to GSMOL and the protection of mobilehome residents residing in Oceanside. Many of his friends came to the party.

It is rare when a leader stands as tall as Robert Markley and makes the significant difference he has. GSMOL joins the party to say thank you, Mr. Bob, for your many years of volunteer service to our organization and to help mobilehome residents!

# *The Californian*

## Mission Statement and Publishing Guidelines

**Mission Statement:** To reenforce the value that GSMOL provides its members through relevant, timely, purposeful, impactful, engaging, and enraging articles that illustrate how GSMOL works tirelessly to improve the lives of homeowners in mobilehome parks across California.

### **Publishing Guidelines:**

#### **1. Submissions to *The Californian***

- a. Any GSMOL member may submit articles, ideas, announcements, event notices, or other items of interest, that are in keeping with our Mission Statement, for publication in *The Californian*.
  - i. We will also consider articles from advertisers, outside entities, and other organizations, provided they are in keeping with our Mission Statement.
- b. Submissions should be in either .doc, .docx, or another editable document format, or simply typed into an email. For those without email access, type-written or legible, handwritten articles will also be accepted and transcribed.
- c. Submissions should be emailed to [TheCalifornian@GSMOL.org](mailto:TheCalifornian@GSMOL.org) with “For the Californian” in the subject line of the email. If email isn’t possible, then articles may be mailed to the GSMOL office at 14802 Beach Blvd., La Mirada, CA 90638 with “Attn. Editor, The Californian.”

#### **2. Submission policies and guidelines –**

- a. Articles may be submitted for GSMOL in Action, Letters to the Editor, and/or for any of the reasons mentioned in 1(a) above but must fall within the criteria outlined in *The Californian’s* Mission Statement.
- b. *The Californian* editorial board reserves the right to edit/alter all submissions for spelling, grammar, size, repetitive or irrelevant content, unverifiable “facts”, and/or language that is vulgar, disparaging, slanderous, or factually inaccurate.
  - i. Contributors may request (in writing and accompanying their submission) any edits by *The Californian* publishing committee be reviewed by them for approval prior to publication. The committee reserves the right to not publish a submission if consensus with the author cannot be reached. For submissions that do NOT contain an “edit-review request” it will be assumed that all edits are approved by the author.
- c. *The Californian* welcomes letters to the editor of 400 words or less. All letters must be signed. At the editor’s discretion, letters may be edited for relevance and readability, but not to change content. Editors reserve the right to decide to print a letter to the editor. Letters will be accompanied by a disclaimer: “Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the opinion of GSMOL leadership or *The Californian* editorial board and are the opinion of the author”.
- d. Submissions with photos (headshots of the author, photos from events or that are germane to the article being submitted) are encouraged and appreciated.
- e. Submissions should be no longer than two, single-spaced typed pages and can be as short as one paragraph, provided it tells a complete story.
- f. Assistance with writing an article or piece for *The Californian* is available. Send an email to [TheCalifornian@GSMOL.org](mailto:TheCalifornian@GSMOL.org) with “Help with Californian Article” in the subject line and someone from *The Californian* Editorial Team will contact you to write your story.



## **“Double My Donation” Campaign Raises \$8,000 for GSMOL**

Centered around “Giving Tuesday” (November 28, 2023), GSMOL’s “Double My Donation” fundraising drive brought in a total of \$8,000 to GSMOL, including \$4,000 in matched funds from GSMOEF, a.k.a. the Ed Fund. Donations made directly to GSMOL totaled \$2,375, including \$1,500 from the GSMOL Fund and \$875 from individual donors. Donations which were made through the Ed Fund totaled \$1,625, including \$705 from individual donors and \$920 from a park organization which donated to the event.

**To all those who donated...THANK YOU!!!!**

GSMOL is funded entirely through membership dues and donations, which are then used to fund grassroots advocacy efforts within member parks, Corporate Counsel consultations, chapter building, leadership training, legislative advocacy, and general office operations/office staffing.

**NO NEED TO WAIT FOR THE NEXT GIVING TUESDAY!! You can donate to GSMOL anytime by clicking on the DONATE button at <https://gsmol.org> or by sending a check to GSMOL, 14802 Beach Blvd., La Mirada, CA 90638. For tax-deductible donations, consider the Ed Fund [----HERE](#) or the GSMOL Fund [----HERE](#)**

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**Golden State Manufactured Home  
Owners Education Fund 501(c)3  
(the Ed Fund)**

The Ed Fund will spend the dollars they receive  
to help GSMOL protect your precarious rights when you live in a mobile home.

**Register your Ralphs Reward card in your local Ralphs store or online at: [www.Ralphs.com](http://www.Ralphs.com)  
and link your card to the Ed Fund code which is **LK854****

# Navigating the GSMOL Website <https://gsmol.org>

***GSMOL's website is a great place to find information related to mobilehome living and the laws that protect homeowners...all in one place!***

Along the top edge are ways to contact GSMOL. On the **Contact Us** page is information for how to find your GSMOL "go-to" person, a map where you can find your leaders by Zone and Region, and a contact form for sending an email to GSMOL.

Here is a summary of what you may find under the **main tabs**:

- \* **About:** Meet our **GSMOL Board of Directors**, find your **GSMOL "go-to" Leader**, read about our **Corporate Counsel Bruce Stanton**, learn about our leadership structure, our committees, and some of our major accomplishments over the years.
- \* **News:** Blogs about GSMOL News, Mobilehome News, Stories of GSMOL Events, and more!
- \* **Legislation:** Information about GSMOL's **Legislative Action Team** and the bills that we are sponsoring at the Capitol, this year and prior years.
- \* **Resources:** the current **Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL)**; a series called **Know Your MH Rights** with articles by experts; **GSMOL's forms and handouts** available for viewing and downloading; **resources for GSMOL Chapters and Super-Chapters**; a link to **HCD's Mobilehome Assistance Center**; an index to the **HCD Codes & Standards** with clickable links; information about the **MRL Protection Program (MRLPP)**; helpful information you should know about **when you sell your home**; Dave Loop's series on **how and why residents should buy their park**; and ideas for **disaster preparedness**.
- \* **Growing GSMOL:** How to help GSMOL help you by bringing in new members, organizing members into Chapters, and helping your neighbors learn their rights.
- \* **Rent Stabilization:** Information about Rent Stabilization Ordinances, including a list of all the RSOs in the state with links to each one, and articles about the importance of RSOs

Check out the **NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** crawl for recent mobilehome news stories and announcements from GSMOL!

Further down the page you will find **buttons to join GSMOL**, make a **donation to GSMOL**, **renew your**

GSMOL membership, **subscribe** to our weekly legislative email bulletin "**This Week at the Capitol**," and visit the **GSMOL Store** where you can buy **GSMOL-themed clothing and household goods** and more.

At the bottom you can also find "**outside links**," such as to **HCD's website**, the **State Senate and Assembly websites**, and other helpful sites. There is also a link to the **Ed Fund Academy website**, where you can take "courses" on the MRL, HCD's Codes and Standards, and Rent Stabilization Ordinances (the latter is basically Bruce Stanton's RSO Manual broken up into small chunks).

Also at the bottom, and in the sidebar on the right side of most pages, you can find **Quick Links** to lead you to **the MRL**, our **Mobilehome Q & A** where many of your questions can be answered, videos of our **Zoom/Telephone "Townhall" meetings** with our attorney Bruce Stanton, and more!

If you are a GSMOL member and have requested a login account, you can access the **Members Area** where you can find **Bruce Stanton's Action Manual and his manuals on Rent Stabilization and Leases**; issues of our magazine **The Californian** going back to 2008 (including **indexes** so that you can look up articles in past issues); **GSMOL's Bylaws**; **GSMOL Policies & Procedures documents**, and a new **Leadership Resources** section just being started. News stories from the GSMOL News blog are also featured. To get to the Members Area, click on the **Members tab** near the top right corner. If you are a GSMOL member but don't have an account on the website, there is a **Request a Login Account** link under the Members tab.

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If you have questions related to the website, please contact **Anne Anderson, website content manager**, [a.bushnell.anderson@gmail.com](mailto:a.bushnell.anderson@gmail.com)



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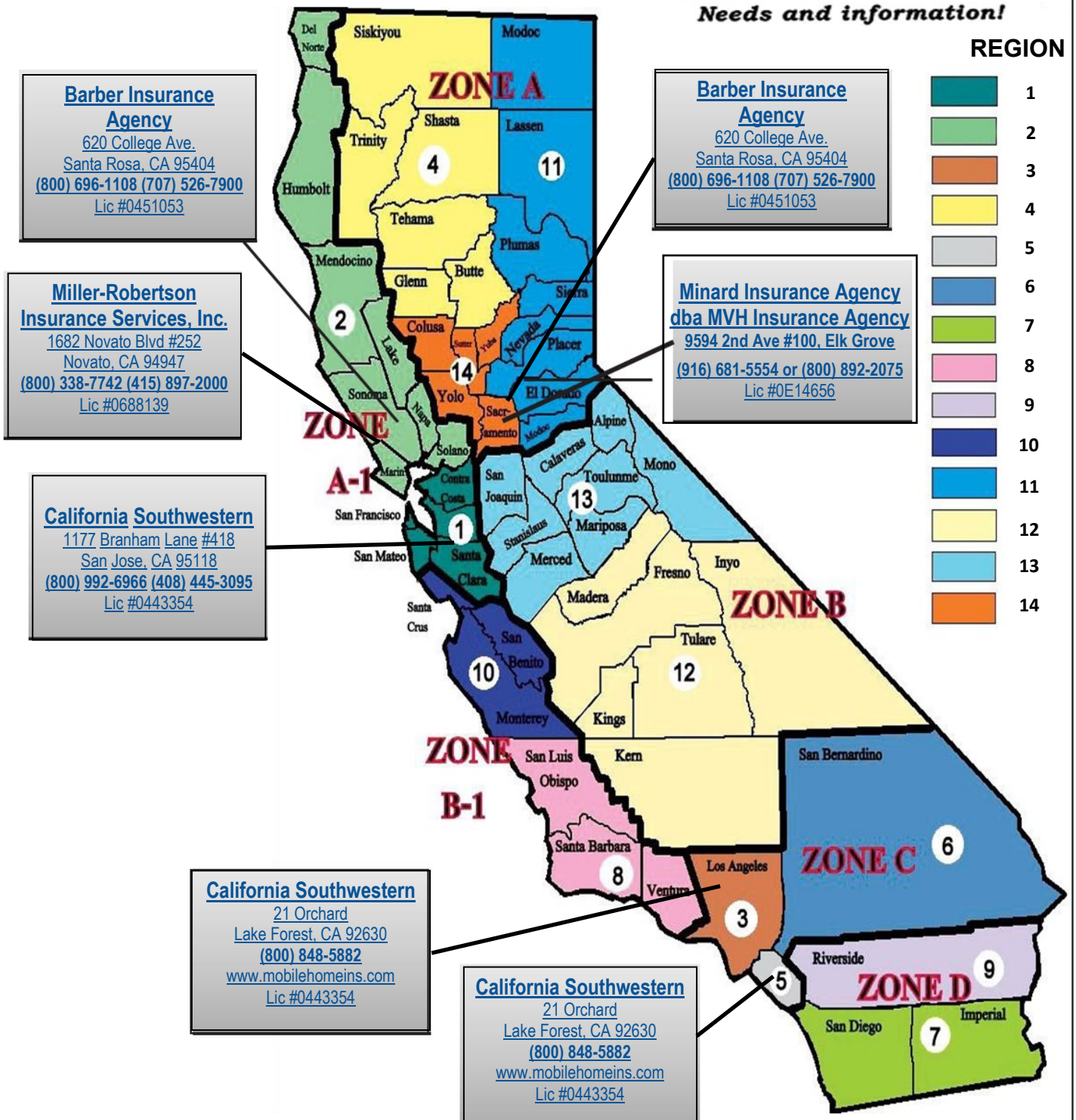




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# Protecting Mobilehome Inheritance Rights

By Bruce Stanton, GSMOL Corporate Counsel

I am often contacted by families following the death of a mobilehome resident, and asked what they can do to get the home secured and sold, or just to obtain an understanding of their rights as heirs to the estate.

The Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) portion of the California Civil Code contains a specific section which sets forth the rights of heirs or joint tenants when a homeowner dies. It is important that certain steps be followed by the heirs to ensure that they protect their rights to the home.

It is equally important that heirs know their rights ahead of time, so they will not fail to do what is necessary to maintain the mobilehome tenancy after the death of a family member. Otherwise, the park owner can use what is typically a time of confusion and emotions to deprive the estate of what is often its most significant asset value.

Where rent is not paid or some other violation of park rules occurs due to the actions of unsuspecting relatives, the park owner can use it as justification for requiring that the home be evicted from the park, or to de-control and raise space rent where there is local rent control in place.

Absolute vigilance by the decedent's family is required to ensure that this does not occur. Any homeowner reading this article can take pro-active steps now to ensure that his or her family understands what needs to be done to protect the mobilehome inheritance once the homeowner passes away. Like any other part of estate planning, the homeowner should be thinking in advance.

GSMOL recommends planning for the following issues:

## 1. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

This is essential. A homeowner needs to know his or her rights so that they can communicate them to family members.

Every mobilehome resident should have a copy of the MRL. On the GSMOL website, [www.gsmol.org](http://www.gsmol.org), it can be found (and downloaded if necessary) under the Resources tab. Or any resident can go to the park office and request a copy. The MRL requires a park owner to distribute a copy to all residents each year where a "significant change" of the MRL provisions is made by the legislature, so there will often be a copy kept in the home. But heirs who do not know anything about the MRL will need to know where to look for a copy of the law. This leads us to step 2.

## 2. INFORM YOUR HEIRS OF WHERE TO FIND MRL INFORMATION.

Just as you would tell family members where to find important papers, a Will, or funeral instructions, you should also advise your heirs how to secure and sell your home after your passing. Be sure that they know where to find a copy of Civil Code section 798.78, which is the MRL section that sets forth the rights and responsibilities of heirs. Make a copy of that section and leave it in a place where they can locate it or give it to them in advance with a copy of this article.

## 3. WHAT SHOULD HEIRS DO AFTER THE HOMEOWNER DIES?

It is important that heirs act immediately to prevent the loss of their inheritance rights in the home. Two options are set forth in section 798.78.

First, any heir, joint tenant, or personal representative may seek to sell the home "in place" in the park.

Alternatively, any heir or joint tenant may seek to establish a tenancy with the park and move into the home.

But for either of these options to be available, it is required that the decedent's estate satisfy all of the decedent's responsibilities, such as payment of rent and utilities or maintenance of the homesite. Thus, if the rent is allowed to go into default or other maintenance issues arise which are not performed after a notice is served, the right to establish a tenancy or sell the home is lost. 798.78(b) specifically provides that in such a case the park owner can require the home to be removed from the park.

IT IS THUS CRITICAL FOR THE HEIRS TO LEARN WHAT THE SPACE RENT AND UTILITIES PAYMENTS ARE AND PAY THEM IMMEDIATELY AS THEY COME DUE. The death of the homeowner does not deter many park owners from claiming a breach of the rental agreement if the rent or utilities payment is even one day late. And since the heirs may not visit the home immediately, they might be unaware that the first of the month has rolled around and a rent payment is due. No payments can be missed if the family wants to be certain that its rights are protected. And if a three-day notice to pay rent or utilities is served, it must be satisfied at once within the three-day period. The three days are calculated from the day after the notice is served.

*(continued on page 16)*



# Protecting Mobilehome Inheritance Rights (cont.)

Since service of any 3-day or 7-day notice by the park does not have to be personal, and the notice can thus be posted on the home and mailed to that address, it is important that the heirs visit the home regularly to check for posted notices, and that the mail be immediately forwarded to an address where it will be read. There is nothing worse than opening an envelope after the fact to find that an important deadline has been missed.

If a rent payment is not made within the three-day period, and there is a loan on the home, the heirs should immediately contact the lender and request that it “cure” the rent default by paying the rent to the park. Under 798.56(e) (4), a bank may cure a rent default twice every twelve months, and the park owner is obligated to accept the payment. This section presumably also applies where the homeowner has died, but the estate desires to maintain the right to sell the home “in place.”

Equally important is the duty of the estate to maintain the physical appearance of the home and the homesite. This means that landscaping must be maintained, and debris cannot be allowed.

Any seven-day notices for rules violations need to be corrected at once. Newspapers should be stopped, the home should be secured, and vehicles should be either removed, or otherwise stored only in the carport/garage at the homesite. A gardener should be hired to mow and weed the homesite if the heirs live out-of-town or otherwise are not likely to visit the home often.

It is also important to check for notices at the home regularly, in case something is posted on the home that is never received via mail.

To ensure the best possible communication, the heirs should meet with management as soon as possible following the death and identify new contact information for communicating with the estate. Rent bills and notices from the park should be sent there, so that communications do not fall into a “black hole” or notices are served which the heirs never see.

## 4. WHAT THE HEIRS SHOULD NOT DO.

One of the most frequent problems encountered by estates involves a “caretaker.” Often, the heirs allow someone to move into the home if it is otherwise vacant in order to watch over the home. This sounds reasonable enough, so that the home be protected from crime or vandalism.

And if it is perceived that cousin Bob will most certainly qualify to purchase or occupy the home, it might be tempting to allow him to just move into

the home early without qualifying for tenancy first. This should never be done. Most parks do not allow a non-tenant to occupy the home if a tenant is not present.

Thus, either scenario could trigger an immediate seven-day notice of a rules violation.

If the estate desires to allow someone to occupy the home, written permission should be obtained from the park first. Otherwise, the result could be a termination of the estate’s right to sell the home “in place.”

Note that this only applies to actual occupancy. Any authorized person, including heirs or third-party contractors or realtors can enter the home to clean, repair or secure it. But no one can occupy it by spending the night or establishing it as their residence.

If a seven-day notice is received for this violation, the occupant needs to be removed at once. Note that this scenario also does not help the potential tenant, whom the park might categorize as a “rules violator,” when an application for tenancy is later presented for review.

## 5. WHAT ABOUT SATISFYING AGE RESTRICTIONS?

In senior parks, or parks which seek to meet the Federal guidelines for “housing for older persons,” homeowners who are 55 or older often leave the home to much younger heirs who are under age 55.

The immediate reaction is that these persons are not old enough to live in the park, and thus cannot qualify for tenancy. But special exemption language in the Federal law allows heirs who are under age 55 to still inherit the home and live in it without compromising the park’s senior status under Federal law. Otherwise, the inheritance might prove to be without value for the family, and this was never the intent of the Congress when the 1988 laws regarding age limitations were passed.

This means that a park can never reject an heir based upon age status by arguing that it will lose its senior status under Federal law if a 40-year old heir is allowed to occupy the home.

The key is that only the heirs or blood relatives of the deceased homeowner would probably qualify for this exemption. Note that if the park otherwise has an age limit for all residents in its own rules, those limitations may still be enforceable and prevent occupancy by younger heirs.

*(continued on page 17)*

## 6. CAN THE PARK RAISE THE SPACE RENT?

The answer depends upon the local laws. If there is a local mobilehome rent control ordinance, it should be consulted. Many ordinances do not allow a park to raise rents to the family following the death of the homeowner.

But if the home is sold to a dealer, the rent can usually be raised, since local rent control laws do not protect commercial dealers or agents.

In conclusion, the ability to protect a home during the inheritance process can be tricky. But if these steps are followed, the family of a deceased homeowner should be able to inherit and realize the value of the mobilehome which has been left to them in a Will or Trust. Just as importantly, the intent and last wishes of the deceased homeowner can be honored and successfully implemented.



## Supplementary Instructions for Members

On Wednesday, March 13th at approximately 5:30 PM, GSMOL emailed ballots and instructions for the biennial election of Board Officers and for proposed changes to the by-laws for 2024. This email went to every eligible voter who had an email address on file with our office. Here are a few tips to make the voting process as easy as possible.

- ◆ GSMOL will mail you a paper ballot if you send a request to [GSMOLGoldenState@gmail.com](mailto:GSMOLGoldenState@gmail.com). Please allow at least 5 business days from the date of your request for your ballot to arrive.
- ◆ Place your member number, if known, and return address on the envelope when you mail your ballot to us. This ensures anonymity and eligibility. Member numbers can be obtained from your Chapter President or your local GSMOL Leader (see pg. 13).
- ◆ It is important that we receive as many ballots as possible. Our by-laws mandate that we have a minimum number of votes cast in order for the election results to be considered valid. Your vote matters!
- ◆ Local GSMOL leaders can answer questions you may have about the candidates, by-laws changes, and the process itself, so don't be shy about reaching out if you aren't sure about something.
- ◆ Election results will be published in the 2nd quarter edition of *The Californian*.

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