



Association of Manufactured Home Owners 2018 New Year Edition Newsletter

President's Message



Happy New Year, **AMHO** Members and Friends!

We are happy to start fresh in 2018! This will be an interesting and exciting year for those of us who live in manufactured home communities. **AMHO** welcomes Kylin Parks as our organizer/consultant and wishes all the best to Ishbel Dickens as she moves on to an active 'retired' status. Those of us who are retired know that only means a more hectic pace than ever before, but with more options for how you spend your time!

Our Board continues to function well in this New Year and meets on the second Thursday of each month. There is important legislation that **AMHO** is encouraging to pass in Olympia and we need your help letting legislators know which bills need their support. Please note the information included within the emailed Legislative Alerts on how you can write, call and e-mail your personal Senator and Representatives. Your individual help is essential!

AMHO is committed to helping homeowners residing in manufactured home communities throughout the state to organize and form Home Owner Associations. This strength in unity helps us all when it comes to communication, support, and awareness of the issues that we often face. Please let us know if **AMHO** can assist or support your community in any way.

A special thank you for your response to **AMHO's** December membership campaign and donation drive! We loved seeing how members combined the two by 'rounding up' their check! We greatly appreciate your ongoing support. Membership in **AMHO** continues to be vitally important as we are only as strong as our members make us, together. Your involvement helps **AMHO** continue efforts to build a unified and collective voice for manufactured homeowners throughout the state, and dues revenues help **AMHO** meet operating expenses and carry out outreach services to communities. Thank you all for your involvement and support!

Please stay in touch with **AMHO** via email: amhoinfo@gmail.com or telephone: 253-334-1433 or 509-343-9624, and be sure to visit the **AMHO** website at www.wamho.org

Don Carlson, President, **Association of Manufactured Home Owners**



Ishbel welcoming attorneys and students to a Bar Association event. This photograph captures the heart and spirit of this incredible woman.

Ishbel Dickens Retires

Greetings **AMHO** members and friends.

Yes, after 30 years of working for and with manufactured homeowners, I have retired, effective December 31, 2017. However, this is adieu and not goodbye! I plan to stay around to help with state legislative initiatives, local zoning ordinances, and with the homeowners at The Firs Mobile Home Park in SeaTac.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my work with **AMHO**. It has been a real pleasure to meet so many homeowners throughout Washington and to have been a part of your lives and your struggle. We have accomplished a lot but there's much more to be done to ensure you have the peaceful enjoyment of your home that you richly deserve.

When I am not working on manufactured housing issues during retirement, I plan to attend hot yoga and water aerobics classes, read and knit, and play field hockey locally and internationally, including in New Zealand, the Netherlands, and at a World Cup tournament in Spain later this summer. I also hope to spend more time with my grandchildren.

I look forward to seeing you in Olympia.

Best, Ishbel Dickens

Kylin Parks Joins AMHO as Organizer/Consultant

Kylin lives in a Manufactured Housing Community in Lynnwood that was sold to a developer 11 years ago. She was part of the leadership team that worked with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County to preserve 98 senior homes by helping to secure the State and county funding needed to purchase the community. This grassroots effort affected her so profoundly that she changed her career to community organizing and education around housing issues.



Kylin (L) at an association meeting in OR in 2015 while serving as a community organizer with NMHOA.

Kylin went on to work for Columbia Legal Services organizing manufactured housing communities across the state to educate them on their rights and the importance of forming homeowner associations to unify their community's voice. She served as a board member of the National Manufactured Homeowner's Association for five years and led training sessions at their National Conventions. She went on to be the Education Director for the Tenants Union of Washington for five years before returning to organizing for the National Association where she worked as an organizer in Boulder, CO with manufactured home owners.

(Kylin Parks Joins AMHO as Organizer/Consultant, cont.)

We are delighted and honored to have Kylin Parks join **AMHO** as our organizer/consultant. **AMHO** long-timers will recall Kylin not only as being the co-founder of **AMHO**, but also know of her vast experience and dedicated efforts as a manufactured housing advocate even at the national level. Kylin's goals are to connect with the members of **AMHO**, listening and reporting to the board what the members' needs are, and to implement programs to meet those needs. Kylin would love to hear from you by phone: 425-318-2488 or by email kylinparks@gmail.com.

Community Communication

It's no coincidence that the word 'community' shares a whopping *eight* letters with the word 'communication'! Communication is the key to creating two important things in a community: harmony and action. Developing a plan for communicating information community-wide is essential and must operate efficiently at every level of priority so that community residents can reach one another quickly in an emergency or other matter requiring prompt attention.

Enter the tried and true 'phone tree', now even more efficient through new technologies, and also now more likely to be referred to as a 'communication network'. The widespread use of cell phones means that calls, texts, and emails are often instantly available at the touch of a device. By any name a phone tree often proves to be one of the single best tools for organizing a community, and the process of collecting information for it is a great way for residents to meet one another and begin to further develop their common interests. Your community may already have a phone tree or something similar in place due to having a neighborhood watch or emergency preparedness program. If not, here are two more reasons why you should! If you've tried and floundered at a phone tree please try again as many communities are now finding success and efficiency due to folks of all ages now using cell phones, texting, and email!

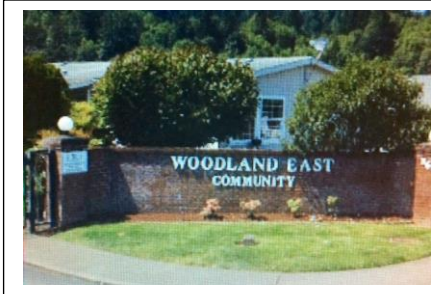
In addition formation needs to move quickly AND be readily available and easily accessible. Through its social activities and events, neighborhood safety and security programs, and homeowner information and resource discussions, residents of a community find their needs and interests in common and come together to better meet those needs. Homeowners residing in manufactured home communities are often unaware of the unique responsibilities and rights associated with this form of housing. This is no less important than the items listed above, and makes it even more important that homeowners unite to strengthen their voice.

AMHO and its members, all of us together, are also a community working to build a network of communication. Helping communities to organize and strengthen their voice is one of **AMHO's** priority missions as this in turn is the building block for a strong collective voice statewide. With 1,400+ manufactured home communities, and more than 70k lots within them, our collective voice can be as strong as we decide to commit to taking action to make it become.

The time to commit to action is NOW - before *your* community is the one facing closure.

Let's make 2018 the year we organize, communicate, and really turn up the volume!

Words of Wisdom from Woodland East



On July 1, 2017 our friendly, family owned 55+ manufactured home park of 130 delightful seniors was purchased by new owners who unfortunately believe that they are above the law.

Along with a letter notifying us of the purchase of the park came a notice of a rent increase of over 54%!!!

We informed the owners that they could not raise our rent until our contract date of March of 2018 as we had already had an increase in 2017. However, they refused to honor our request so we were forced to take action. Several homeowners filed Dispute Resolutions with the Attorney General's office and it was ruled that, yes indeed, we were correct. A rental increase was not allowed until March of 2018. Therefore, by filing Dispute Resolutions, we were able to save each homeowner almost \$1,200.

Fast forward to November 2017 and once again, our now less-than-desirable new owners decided they would have individual water meters installed in our homes and begin charging us for water beginning January 2018. Low and behold, once again we filed Dispute Resolutions with the Attorney General and once again, the owners were wrong. Our current contract clearly states that the landlord pays for water, sewer and garbage and they cannot charge us until they issue a new contract.

What 2018 holds for us with these folks is unknown, but what we do know is that the Dispute Resolution program works. I urge any manufactured homeowner who leases a lot in a park to use the Dispute Resolution program if you are unable to reason with your park owner. When you file a Dispute Resolution state the RCW 59.20 statute your issue relates to and detail the facts only. Although it is difficult sometimes, keep your emotions at bay. The staff at the Attorney General's office is overwhelmed at times, so just giving them the facts along with copies of your contract, correspondence or anything else that pertains to your personal case is all they need. You can easily file these online or by mail.

And just one last thought...do not wait for or expect your neighbor or your friend or someone else to file. You need to file on your own behalf. I personally know of a situation here in our community where a homeowner filed a dispute and was awarded \$2,400 in back rent. Her neighbor right next door was not because he did not file a dispute. So, stand up for yourself...do not be intimidated...do not be bullied...the law is on your side!!

Jan Stagner, **AMHO** Member and Homeowner in the Woodland East Community

The Manufactured Housing Dispute Resolution Program

Access to the MHDRP through the Attorney General's Office is your right under the law! The 2007 WA State Legislature recognized that there are factors unique to the relationship between a manufactured/mobile home owner and their landlord and found that many homeowners who experienced



(The Manufactured Housing Dispute Resolution Program, cont.)

violations of the manufactured/mobile home landlord-tenant act (MHLTA) were often left without protections or access to legal remedies. In response a law was passed authorizing the Attorney General's Office to administer the Manufactured Housing Dispute Resolution Program and enforce the MHLTA.

The MHDRP strives to educate, foster relationships between homeowners and community owners, and facilitate communication among the parties in an effort to resolve disputes. For additional information, including general questions, or to request a dispute form or other literature, call program staff toll-free at **1-866-924-6458** or at **206-464-6049** within King County. Email them: MHDR@atg.wa.gov or visit them on the Web: www.atg.wa.gov/MHDR.aspx

2018 Legislative Update

Congratulations to all the **AMHO** members and friends who made their way to Olympia in the early hours of Wednesday morning (Jan 10) so you could be there for the 8am hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on our top priority bill – HB 1798 – Opportunity for non-profit agencies to purchase and preserve manufactured housing communities. The hearing went well, and we are awaiting the bill to be voted on during the Judiciary Committee’s executive session. Many thanks to all of you who took the time to contact your state representatives seeking their support of HB 1798.



Manufactured homeowners and advocates in Olympia to use their voices in solidarity.

Another priority bill – HB 1514 – longer notice of closure is in House Rules at this writing. This bill would give homeowners an additional 6 months’ notice prior to their community closing. We had hoped for 3 years but the bill was amended to 18 months. The original 3 years is still in the Senate version of the bill, so we are hoping for a hearing on that original bill soon.



Manufactured homeowners from Kenmore and AMHO’s President Don Carlson testify in Olympia in support of HB 1798.

All **AMHO** members with set email preferences are sent the Legislative Alerts and hopefully you are acting upon them. Things move very quickly during session, so please do call and email your legislators as soon as receive an Alert. It takes every one of us, and our friends, neighbors, and family, making these calls and sending the emails to truly make a difference.

Keep in touch with your legislators on a regular basis – if they do not hear from you they will think you are not interested in your own future.

Ishbel Dickens, **AMHO** Volunteer

Housing Advocacy Day, February 1st

If you receive this before Housing Advocacy Day on February 1st then please consider coming to Olympia that day. This is a great way to learn how to be as strong an advocate as possible for the housing bills you care about! You will have an opportunity to meet with your legislators to encourage them to support our bills, and you will meet other homeowners from different communities across the state. Please contact Kylin Parks, **AMHO** Organizer/Consultant, for more information via email: kylinparks@gmail.com or by phone: **425-318-2488**



Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources

The three R's, so to speak, at least one of which led you to **AMHO** and to becoming a member. The road to learning and protecting our homeowner rights is a journey made better by sharing insight, information, and resources with one another.

We encourage you to visit the **AMHO** website often at www.wamho.org to find important information about your rights, and links to frequently requested resources. Check the website regularly as one of our New Year's resolutions is to update it more frequently in 2018.

The **AMHO** newsletter comes to you by email or US Mail, or both, at your preference. We are proud to offer newsletter distribution to all **AMHO** members! The 2017 e-membership offer was well received and enables **AMHO** to conserve resources by streamlining the distribution of news and information to our members, and in turn making it easy for YOU to share it as well!

AMHO is BIG on two-way communication! We are always here to listen and respond to your questions and concerns, and we always welcome your input, suggestions, contributions to the newsletter, and your willingness to volunteer. If there are topics of interest you would like to see featured in the **AMHO** News please let us know. We appreciate your efforts within your community and are here to assist and support you in any way that we can. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at our contact information below. We hope to hear from you soon!

Organizer/Consultant, Kylin Parks

Email: kylinparks@gmail.com Phone: **425-318-2488**

Central Email: amhoinfo@gmail.com

Membership Services: amho.volunteer@gmail.com

Westside Board Contact, Don Carlson, President:

Phone: **253-334-1433**

Mailing address: PO Box 3606, Federal Way, WA 98063

Eastside Board Contact, Randy Chapman, Vice-President

Phone: **509-343-9624**

Mailing address: PO Box 30273, Spokane, WA 99223