

THE AMHO NEWS

A NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURED
HOME OWNERS

FALL / WINTER 2019-2020

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AMHO has had a great year, and here are a few examples: We've made great Legislative progress in passing HB1582. Thanks to all of you who showed up at hearings and all of you who signed petitions. We truly can make a difference when we stick together with one voice.

We also won a one-year moratorium for the ten manufactured housing communities within the city of Bellingham, to enable the City Council and City Planners time to study the best way to preserve these ten communities into the future. Thank you to all of the Bellingham residents who came to the City Council meetings and spoke up!

As you know, AMHO board members are all volunteers. And, just like you, we all live in Manufactured Home Communities, and we relate to your issues because we have the same experiences as you do. We work tirelessly to improve on those experiences for all of us.

AMHO is a registered 501(c) (3) non-profit organization and all gifts/donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. We exist on grants and donations. We have a "virtual" office (not a brick and mortar storefront) and we personally absorb a lot of our own travel expenses.

Happy Holidays

Please, if you can afford an end of year tax deductible donation to AMHO, we promise to use your money wisely. Thank you for supporting our very worthy cause and donate by check by mailing to our address at: P.O. Box 30273, Spokane, WA 99223, or online at www.wamho.org.

Thank you for a great year! Enjoy the Holidays!

Sincerely, *Anne Sadler, President, Mount Vernon*

Including your AMHO Board:

Gary Lunde, Vice President, Puyallup
Ginny Leach, Secretary, Federal Way
Sharon Bishop, Treasurer, Nine Mile Falls
Randy Chapman, Director, Spokane
Joanna Crocker, Director, Kenmore
Kristi Hillshafer, Director, Lynnwood
Birte Olsen, Director, Olympia
Ken Squier, Director, Federal Way
Jim Fry, Board Advisor, Virginia Beach, VA

AMHO'S MISSION

STATEMENT:

The mission of AMHO is to promote, represent, protect and enhance the rights and interests of manufactured home owners in the state of Washington through communication, education, negotiation, and preservation of our communities.

AMHO Featured Director,

Birte R. Olsen

I purchased my manufactured home in Seashore Villa, Olympia, WA in 2002. At that time, I knew absolutely nothing about laws pertaining to manufactured homes and their communities. Very early in 2004, a neighbor came to me for help. Could I email a State Representative, whom I had known for years, who had voted against a bill presented by the homeowners? This I did, and am proud to say, the Representative voted with us the rest of her life.

Next, same neighbor, asked me to be present at 8:00 a.m. at a Committee Hearing and sign in “Pro.” I came and met so many wonderful and dedicated people in the hallway and during the Hearing I became so taken in by the procedure of Government in Action I have only missed very few Hearings since then. It is now 15 years later, I am on my sixth year as a board member of AMHO and six years as a Delegate to the Senior Citizen Lobby. I still find it exciting attending the Hearings, but must admit, it is very frustrating when you have worked hard to promote a Bill and then it fails to pass; but also, a wonderful feeling when YOUR Bill passes.

I would do it again in a heartbeat, and I encourage anyone to become involved. It is your home and your life that is at stake. Take care of it!

Birte Olsen, Director



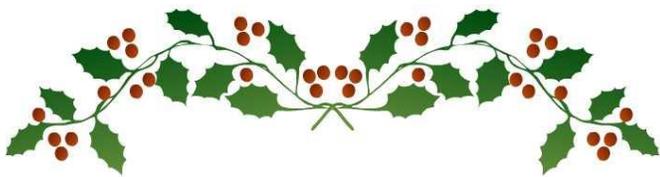
Birte Olsen is shown here with Governor Jay Inslee while he signs our House Bill 1582 (new amendments to RCW 59.20). She is standing up front wearing her green AMHO shirt!

It's Time to Alter Our Rent Control Laws

James Fry

The most important issue to manufactured homeowners in the State of Washington is the rapidly increasing rentals being paid for the land our homes sit on. These rental prices have been steadily on the increase over the past 5 years moving from a price of \$400-\$500 per month to well over \$1,000 per month in some parks. The only justification for these increases is not improved services or conditions, but rather, because other parks are doing it and we want to keep up with the others. If this trend continues the manufactured homeowners in the state will be forced out of their homes for financial reasons purely because of the greed of the park owners. Something must be done about this situation.

Whenever the topic comes up about having some accountability ascribed to the park owners to try to Change this pattern, the answer is given that “rent control is unconstitutional in the state”. The real story is that, 39 years ago, a law was passed (not a constitutional amendment of any kind) that would have established rent control. The battle over the initiative was contentious and expensive, with



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opponents pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into their efforts — ending in the most costly political campaign in Seattle’s history at the time. The passage of RCW was very political in nature, was one of the most costly of political campaigns and its passage fit nicely into the mood of deregulation in the nation. The law that is still in the books states, “No city or town of any class may enact, maintain, or enforce ordinances or other provisions which regulate the amount of rent to be charged” - RCW 32.21.830, however, and is the final answer regarding rent control at this time.

It is time this law is challenged in our legislature. Over the past years many of our laws have changed to keep up with the times and reflect the will of the people. Our national constitution has been changed 27 times. Our local laws have also been significantly altered.

- We have not had laws allowing the recreational use of marijuana until the law was changed.
- We have not had laws allowing the marriage of couples of the same sex until the law was changed.
- Our driving laws have changed many times over the years causing the speed limits to increase up to a high of 70 MPH and then reduce to 55 MPH and then creep up again to our current speed limits.
- Our voting age in the state was decreased from 21 to 18.

While this list is not complete, it has been our practice to discuss and alter our laws over the years. Is it not now time to alter the rent control laws? It is time for our legislative efforts to include the discussion of accountability in rental rates. It is going to be a very hard fight, but it is worth the effort. *James Fry, AMHO Board Advisor*
November 2019



List of Attorneys that would work with MHC Residents:

1. **Dan Young**, dan@truthandjustice.legal; (206)-962-0676 cell (preferred contact); (206)-829-9947 office; (206)-641-3208 fax.
2. **Chelsea Hicks**, chelseah@nwjustice.org; contact at NW Justice Project (works exclusively with Manufactured/Mobile Home Owners); 206-464-1519
3. **Omar Barraza**, Barraza Law Firm 10728 16th Avenue SW, Seattle, WA 98146, (206)-933-7861, omar@barrazalaw.com (Consulting Basis Only)
4. **Keon Knutson**, 506 Second Ave., Suite 1400, Seattle, WA 98104, (206)-486-5366 <https://www.avvo.com/messages/241096>
5. **Shawn Alexander**, 1400 King Street Olga, WA 98279; (360)-376-6820 <https://www.avvo.com/messages/294>
6. **Steven Schneider**, 621 W Mallon Avenue, Suite 505, Spokane, WA 99201; (509)-838-4458; info@stevenschneiderlaw.com

I have personally talked with each of these Attorneys and they agreed to talk with our MHC residents regarding their MHC issues:



Randy Chapman,

Goes to Kennewick

Recently, Benton/Franklin County Legal Aid contacted AMHO for help with three Santiago Kennewick, Washington communities - all owned by the same company in California. The homeowners had enough and wanted answers. They wanted to know their rights, and how to handle managers who came knocking on their doors with outrageous demands to shape up their lots and homes to meet their specifications.

A date was set, and a place arranged for the homeowners to meet on Friday night, October 4th. We set to work printing "Know Your Rights" brochures, AMHO applications, and making sure we had all the tools needed to help these great homeowners in Kennewick. We were told that we might expect 150 people. We were not disappointed when over that number showed up leaving us with standing room only. We were aided in our presentation by a Spanish interpreter and the Attorney for Benton/Franklin Legal Aid who answered legal questions that came up.

At the end of the presentation, when I asked for a show of hands of those ready to organize and create a Home Owners Association (HOA) nearly every hand went up. When I asked for the hands of those willing to work a few evenings with me to establish their HOA by setting down their Articles of Incorporation and registering with the Washington Secretary of State's office as a State non-profit group, I had the commitment of nine people, three from each community.

That night as I reflected on the homeowners standing together for their rights, my 150-mile drive back to Spokane was just a piece of cake. I would do it again. **Randy Chapman, AMHO Director**



Randy Chapman is up front wearing his green AMHO shirt that says: "Mess with Me... and You Mess with the Whole Manufactured Housing Community!"

AMHO Featured Community

Recently, some of the residents of CANYON MOBILE PARK in Bothell, found themselves in a situation that required a little extra assistance from the Washington State Attorney General's office.

After numerous attempts at contacting management to no avail, the decision was made to fill out their complaint forms. We actually had two batches of complaints that were hand delivered to the AG's office in downtown Seattle.

It is my firm belief that by hand delivering these complaints had a much bigger impact than it would have if they had been mailed in separately. All total, there were 62 complaints filed by 18 residents out of about 140 in our community. Several residents commented they didn't want to participate due to previous and ongoing intimidation by the manager.

Some of the complaints included: Street lights not working (most now work); Clubhouse condition (clubhouse is currently closed to resident use for renovation); Water being shut off without notice (community manager has had the law explained to him as to what constitutes an emergency); Tree limbs overhanging homes (now have been trimmed).

As a side note that no one expected, the community manager has left his position, so now we are dealing with his boss and communication has gotten a little better. Although, his leaving was never the intent of the complaints being filed.

If I could offer any words of advice to other communities, DOCUMENT EVERYTHING. If you have an HOA, send copies of everything to the board. Take photos when appropriate (photos don't lie). Be specific in your complaints with facts, i.e., emails sent, photos taken, dates and times of conversations, etc.

Is our community perfect now? Not by a long shot. Is it improving? Only time will tell. One thing that management does know about this group of Senior Citizens, is we know how to fill out complaints and we know how to get to downtown Seattle to deliver them. As it turns out, the general manager who oversees the Owner's six communities had to respond, or have their attorney respond to our complaints.

Cordially, **Duane Love, President**
Canyon Park Advocates for Preservation.
AKA Canyon Mobile Park HOA



Pat Winkowski, Charlene Martin, Duane Love, Laverne Grace Meadows, and Janet Myers

Amendments we won on HB 1582 effective July 29, 2019:

1. Proportionate reduction in rent if utility payments included in rent are subsequently billed to you separately.
2. 14 days within which to pay rent (up from five days). However, Landlords can charge a per diem late fee beginning on the sixth day up to and including the 14th day, or anytime during that period until the rent is paid.
3. Twenty days within which to comply with a community rule (up from 15 days).
4. Three months grace period following the 30 days' notice of a new or amended rule going into effect.
5. 120 days within which to sell home, if you have been evicted for non-payment of rent, provided you stay current in rent during this period.
6. Affordable housing advocates and others permitted to hold meetings in the community to educate home owners about their rights.
7. Landlord required to provide prospective home purchasers with:
 - a. Accurate record of past five years rental history of space they want to move to.
 - b. Complete copy of rental agreement, rules and regulations, prior to rental agreement being signed.

Other parts of this new law include requiring the Department of Commerce (DOC) to staff a working group to evaluate several aspects of manufactured home living. AMHO has taken part in these meetings during the past four months. Our last and fifth meeting is scheduled for December 9th in Olympia.

(continued on Page 6)

HB 1582 (con't)

Two additional future meetings are scheduled for homeowners in the Spokane area to attend on: Saturday, January 11th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. And for homeowners in the Bothell/Kenmore area to attend on: Saturday, January 18th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Note: The meeting venues are still to be determined. If you have a suggestion for a neutral meeting space with room to accommodate approximately 100 people, please contact Brigid Henderson, Washington State Department of Commerce at: 360-725-3035

Another part of this new law is Limited Dissemination which, under certain circumstances, could keep the reason for an eviction silent, so that homeowners would not have any negative statement on their rental history, that might prevent them from accessing other housing.

CONTACT US

President: Anne Sadler
360 - 610 - 0358

Vice President: Gary Lunde Westside:
253 - 973 - 5868

Randy Chapman Eastside:
P.O. Box 30273, Spokane, WA 99223
509-343-9624

E-Mail: amhoinfo@gmail.com



AN ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURED HOMEOWNERS IN
WASHINGTON STATE

We invite you to send comments to the "Letter to the Editor" at the AMHO email address:

amhoinfo@gmail.com

