



Spring 2018 Newsletter

Inside AMHO

with Kylin Parks
AMHO Consultant/Organizer



Kylin with Kenmore homeowners and advocates

As I reflect on the last five months since rejoining the **Association of Manufactured Home Owners** I realized that we really needed to first look at the “Big Picture”. Why the organization was started 11 years ago, and where is it now compared to the original vision? And, most of all, how do we ensure that we are on track to make this the strong and vibrant organization that we all know it can be?

I keep coming back to one word:

“Together”!

As many of you know, **AMHO** was started by a group of manufactured home owners who had just been through one of the toughest fights of their lives to save their homes, most of which were headed to the dump to make room for small and expensive stick built homes by a developer that had just purchased their community. This would wipe out an entire community of hard working, tax paying, proud people just trying to live out life as comfortable as possible with the means they had worked so hard for. They won that fight and saved their homes, but realized that so many others could also find themselves in the same place they had just been. They knew that they needed to take their experience and help others, hence, **AMHO** was born.

As I started out on a new journey with **AMHO** in January of this year, I soon realized that we needed to take a good hard look at all that **AMHO** has done to lend a hand up to other manufactured homeowners facing the unique issues of living in land lease communities. We also needed to assess how we are keeping up with changing times, and if there’s a need to diversify. It became clear that a business plan needed to be created and implemented to refocus **AMHO** into the supportive organization that our members need in today’s climate.

So the work began! I interviewed each board member and asked their take on **AMHO**’s pluses and minuses, and what changes they feel are needed. An all-day Board Retreat brought out many great ideas and a commitment to regroup and build a stronger foundation that is even

better able to help homeowners solve issues, and provide them with the tools they need to navigate the waters of living in a manufactured home community. We gained hindsight on a few missteps, and realized the need to do better at keeping in touch with our membership.

We also recognize that we need to address all homeowner issues, and here's where YOU come in: **AMHO** wants to hear from you because the needs and expectations of our membership are what drive the direction of our statewide advocacy organization! An important discussion will be held at our upcoming Annual Meeting on June 23rd (see insert) that will give you the opportunity to guide us down the right path of how we can best support our members and become the successful and powerful organization we know that **AMHO** can be.

I hope to see many of you at the **AMHO** Annual Meeting so that you can help become a part of the solution and direction! If you're unable to attend the annual meeting we would still love to hear your input and ideas. Please email them to me at kylinparks@gmail.com.

Now, I have a favor to ask of you:

The next time you think of **AMHO**, ask yourself not what **AMHO** can do for you - but what we can do together, because ***"Together we will Succeed"***!



President's Message



Greetings **AMHO members and friends:**

I hope that you are enjoying this terrific Spring weather! I forecast that 2018 will continue to be an interesting year with lots of opportunity for being proactive regarding the needs of folks who live in manufactured housing communities within our State. It was a disappointing year for passing bills in the State Legislature, but we have high hopes for 2019!

It is important to communicate with your legislators now. Invite your Senators and Representatives to come speak with you regarding the legislative highlights of the 2018 session, and begin conversations with new candidates who are seeking election this Fall.



Obtain their commitment for the passage of bills that support manufactured homeowners in the upcoming year because we need YES votes for legislation supportive of affordable housing, security of tenure, and manufactured housing community preservation. (continued)

Have you signed up for continued membership in **AMHO**? Yearly membership of \$15.00 is crucial for support of **AMHO**'s outreach and advocacy efforts! That's just \$1.25 per month and includes delivery of the **AMHO** news to your mailbox or inbox four times a year! Have you spoken to others in your community to encourage their membership and participation in our events? We can make a difference by standing united and speaking in unison!

Please plan to attend **AMHO**'s 2018 Annual Meeting being held at Mariner Village in Everett on Saturday, June 23rd. A fun and informative day of special programs and events is planned, with lunch provided for \$6.00. Be sure to share the enclosed event flier with your neighbors by posting it on your community bulletin board and sending word through your email/phone tree, and invite a neighbor or few to join you. We look forward to seeing you there!

Don Carlson, **AMHO** President

*Editor's note: A huge THANK YOU to Don for having served as **AMHO** President for 2017-2018. We appreciate Don's commitment to continue as an exceptionally strong advocate in Olympia for manufactured homeowners residing in land lease communities!*

Kenmore Mobile/Manufactured Home Community Preservation Efforts

*By Stacy Valenzuela, **AMHO** Member, Board Member of Lakewood Villa MHC in Kenmore*

At the end of 2017 my neighbors and I were informed by AMHO that the city of Kenmore had placed a moratorium on the mobile home park that we live in. Suddenly there was discussion of future development of all 6 mobile home parks within city limits to increase density. Each of these parks is a community within the city, each watching out for the other.

Redevelopment would displace 500+ residents from the only affordable housing at 30% of income for seniors, veterans, disabled, and those living on a low or fixed income. This crisis seems to be moving from city to city across our and other states, pushing out affordable housing and displacing hundreds of low and fixed income residents in order to increase density for luxury units. Many homeowners have invested thousands of dollars into their homes, and displacing them stands to increase homelessness. By attending several city meetings, requesting to preserve and protect our homes, we have learned that the affordable housing unit rates are being calculated at a rate much higher than the average fixed or low income of under \$20,000. This rate is even higher than many of Kenmore's workers can afford.

AMHO shared their knowledge of Washington State manufactured housing tenant laws with us, has helped us to organize our Home Owners Association (HOA), and has supported us during numerous meetings. Their experience has been invaluable in helping us to maneuver the complex dialogs with Kenmore city leaders. With **AMHO**'s help, there have been communities in the past that have banded together to preserve their parks. This was done by implementing an organizing strategy that was successful in convincing local policy makers to establish a manufactured home community zoning overlay. This allows a community owner to (continued)

change the use of their land by applying to the city or county for a rezone, which gives the homeowners the opportunity to be a part of the public process in the rezone decision.

We are currently requesting that Kenmore preserve and protect our mobile home parks with an overlay similar to what Bothell, Lynnwood, Spokane, Marysville, and other cities across Washington have adopted. Some of the community owners claim they do not want to sell or redevelop their park land, and this was a familiar start of the crisis for each of the above cities. We are hoping that Kenmore will decide to preserve and protect these affordable housing units and support the residents who reside within the manufactured home parks. With **AMHO's** support, we will have our voices heard! We are looking to our city to do the right thing.

Community Disaster Preparedness Program: Map Your Neighborhood

*By Tobi Ricca, a homeowner in Mariner Village MHC - an **AMHO** Member HOA in Everett*

Is 'Disaster Preparedness' an oxymoron? How do we really prepare for a disaster?! Mariner Village MHC was up to the challenge of proving that it need not be an oxymoron. Whether you stick to a program as outlined, or expand it to include park-wide services like we did, always remember that however far you decide to go will put you further ahead than doing nothing. The ultimate goal of the program is for neighbors to help each other to the best of their ability.

Our program began in July 2016 with a visit from the County Emergency Preparedness Department to introduce the 'Map Your Neighborhood' (MYN) program. We divided the Park into 14 sections, created a map showing the homes in each section, and then called residents to a meeting. By the end of that meeting we had good interest in the program. Over the coming year we found volunteers to host each Section's initial meeting, used customized forms to collect the demographics, specific needs, pets, skills, and equipment information that MYN suggests, and at each meeting the group participants filled out forms and identified 2 section leaders. The response to the program, and the readiness of residents to become involved, varied - but we could see that interest was building!

In Summer 2017 we held a meeting of Section Leaders and created a 9-person Steering Committee and 4 sub-committees for Advanced First Aid, Equipment/Rescue, Fund Raising, and Participation - which works to inform and involve residents. Over the next 6 months we raised over \$3,000 and purchased a generator, 20 walkie-talkies, and a shed to store supplies. Now into Spring 2018 we will be shifting focus to the Participation Committee and encouraging everyone to become better prepared. Our Program is "all-for-one and one-for-all" and, active participants or not, *EVERYONE* will receive help to the extent we are able to provide it.

When setting up a program like this don't worry about the naysayers. There will be plenty of people who like the idea of neighbors looking out for one another, and once things start to happen you might be surprised by how many naysayers eventually say "yes"! (continued)

We are happy to offer support and suggestions, so please feel free to contact me, Tobi Ricca, at tobi.ricca@gmail.com.

*Editor's note: Tobi will be at our Annual Meeting and attendees will have an opportunity to meet and chat with her! Many **AMHO** members well know the trials and tribulations of Disaster Preparedness efforts either personally or community-wide, and this is a terrific opportunity to gain some tips and insight from Mariner Village's exceptionally successful program!*

AMHO 2018 Annual Meeting Sneak Peek!

AMHO's Annual Meeting Committee has been busy planning a fun and informative event for you. Spring truly *is* a season of new beginnings, and our mid-year Annual Meeting feels very much like a *new year* to us! We began working hard on improving communication with members in January and have really enjoyed the interest, insight, and inspiration that have come from our wonderful **AMHO** members! The programs lined up for this event directly reflect YOUR requests and reflect OUR commitment to better meet our members' needs and expectations. As Kylin's article states: **AMHO** wants to hear from you because the needs and expectations of our membership drive the direction of our statewide advocacy organization!

Mariner Village MHC is an easy-to-find destination: Fill your car and head to I-5, taking exit 186 for WA-96 E/128th St SW. Turn Left at 128th St SW, right at 8th Ave W, and then left at 124th St S.W. The community will be on the right and the gates will be open to welcome you in. Parking is available at the clubhouse as well as in marked driveways. Arrival is as early as 9:00AM to check-in and enjoy coffee, pastry, and social time until the program gets underway at 9:30AM. Mariner Village homeowner and Chef Randy Crabtree will be preparing a delicious luncheon for our enjoyment. We will also have a variety of special door prize offerings!

Several exciting programs have been planned, including "The Direction of **AMHO**" by Kylin Parks, organizer/consultant, a discussion about the refocusing and future direction of **AMHO**; as well as a guest speaker from ROC NW who specializes in resident ownership of manufactured housing communities. The four breakout sessions will include: Aging in Place, How to Strengthen Your HOA – sharing successes and missteps, Community Preservation – personal insight and experience, and Communicating with **AMHO** - an interactive discussion of how our statewide organization can best support you. Your feedback and ideas are vital to this interactive brainstorming session that will drive further conversations and a member survey! Add in some updates and a few reports, a little business, and a great opportunity to be with friends old and new also living our chosen lifestyle, and it will be a full and very rewarding day!

We encourage you to extend invitations to friends and neighbors to join you! You see within this newsletter the vital importance of manufactured homeowners standing united and using their voices to be heard. Let's turn up our volume! ***"Together we will Succeed"***

Legislative Wrap-Up

By Ishbel Dickens, Chair of the Legislative Planning Group (LPG)

The 2018 legislative session ended on time, but with many bills still lying on the floor of either the House or the Senate. Some of the bills that did not make it to the Governor's desk this time included bills that would have impacted manufactured home owners.

HB 1514 (longer notice of closure), which would require 18 months' notice before a community could be closed, progressed but was never brought to a vote on the floor of the House. Its companion bill, SB 5520, did not get a hearing in the Senate Financial Institutions Committee.

HB 1798 (opportunity for non-profits and others to purchase communities that are for sale) passed out of the House Judiciary Committee with strong partisan support! Unfortunately, the bill was not given a hearing in the House Finance Committee, and its companion bill in the Senate, SB 5627, was amended almost beyond recognition.

HB 1884, though not strong, would have allowed a bit more flexibility for home owners being displaced when their community closes. Even though homeowner advocates and community owners worked together on this bill, it too was left on the floor of the Senate without a vote.

As you can see, the legislative process is a long and arduous one with sudden decisions and twists of fate having a huge impact on what you actually end up with!

All of this speaks to the need for manufactured home owners to connect early and often with their legislators: educate them about the issues you face in your community, be prepared to call and email your representatives and senator on a regular basis, develop relationships with them and their staff, and go to Olympia for hearings whenever possible.

Never underestimate the power of your vote! Statewide elections will be held this Fall so consider hosting a candidates' forum, since this is where the manufactured housing issues are mostly dealt with. 2019 will be the start of a new 2 year legislative session. This will be a time for us to bring new proposals that could have significant impact if we can find the legislators to support them. Contact **AMHO** for help hosting a forum in your community! Things will never change in Olympia unless you elect people who care about YOUR interests/issues – but they first need to know what your interests/issues are!

One bill that was new this session, and that we are sure will be back in 2019, would allow cities and counties to have more say in how business income is regulated. This could mean that local authorities would have the freedom, that they currently do not, to be creative about rental income – something that is near and dear to all of our hearts. Hopefully this is something we can all put tremendous effort into, as will many others across the state.

To those of you who contacted your legislators, who came to Olympia to testify on behalf of our bills, and who encouraged others to also get involved, **THANK YOU SO MUCH!** (continued)

**GOOD THINGS COME
TO THOSE WHO
~~WAIT~~
TAKE ACTION!**

We plan to be back in 2019, stronger than ever, and with your help we will win stronger protections for all who choose manufactured home living. Participants of the LPG (Legislative Planning Group) met this month for some debate and collaborative forecasting in order to identify legislative priorities for the coming year. Please stay tuned to the **AMHO** news - and be sure to sign up for legislative email alerts – to receive all of the latest updates!

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