



THE osta

Quarterly Review

Volunteer Spotlight— Lu Wagner and Elizabeth Reid



Lu and Betty, who are both OSTA members at Madrone Hill in Central Point, have been members since 1989. They worked to form the chapter in the park and have held chapter offices over the years. Lu was also the Southern District Director at one time. Lu and her husband bought their home at Madrone Hill in 1985. Betty bought hers in 1986, so the women have been friends for nearly 30 years. Two years ago health problems forced Betty to sell her home and move into assisted living, but she retains her OSTA membership because she thinks “it is important to have advice when we have difficulties with management.”

Both women have been travelers, Betty to Europe and Japan when she was young and to various lakes, the Coast, Canada, and Yellowstone. Lu and her husband lived in Hawaii for 20 years, where they raised three children. Betty has a brother and niece who live near her. They both have enjoyed the helpful, friendly people at Madrone Hill and their years with OSTA. And we appreciate them!

VOLUME 36 NO. 4

FALL 2015

No Tricks, Just Treats, at OSTA Annual Meeting

This year we'll again be meeting at The Village Green Resort in Cottage Grove. The business meeting will begin promptly at 10 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m., giving you plenty of time to get home to feed candy to Trick or Treaters, unless you come from a distance and take advantage of the special overnight room rates. On either or both Friday and Saturday nights the inn has given us the special rate of \$69 for either a king or a double queen room in their remodeled sections, plus you can partake of breakfast in the restaurant. RV spaces are also available to reserve. Call early to be certain the block of rooms haven't all been spoken for.

Directors whose terms are expiring are Gary Walters, Rita Loberger, Chelsea Catto, Judy Morton, and Charlie Ricker. Members will also be voting on approval of recent board appointees Peggy Pound-Wilson and Jo Anne Downey. Any member who would like to be considered for the board should contact the office for an application and return it no later than September 21. It is essential that the board be able to review your applications before the election.

We're planning an exciting program for you with two legislators, Sen. Sara Gelser from Salem and Rep. Nancy Nathanson from Dist. 13 in Eugene, scheduled to speak on subjects of great interest to us. They are both supporters of our legislative goals. We'll also have Kylin Parks, the NMHOA ambassador joining us with information on manufactured home communities in other states. In past years we have alternated conventions with educational seminars, and this year we're planning to include an afternoon of small workshops with facilitators to help you with problems and questions that come up in your parks, such as those having to do with Committees of 7, Legal Aid, Referral Services. Mediation, Robert's Rules of Order, Park Purchase, Financing Assisted Living, Sub metering, and Membership recruitment. The education seminar portion of the day is still a work in progress.

And of course we'll have the silent auction again, so bring your donation baskets and special items and plan to be a generous bidder. Auction proceeds go toward our Helping Hands program.

You'll find the reservation form elsewhere in this issue. Chapters with bank accounts might consider providing part of the cost of sending representatives so more members can attend and return with worthwhile information to share.



MH/OSTA
Manufactured Housing / Oregon State Tenants Association

The OSTA Review is published quarterly by Manufactured Housing/Oregon State Tenants Association. MH/OSTA does not necessarily subscribe to all statements or opinions published herein. No portion may be reprinted without the expressed permission of MH/OSTA.

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From the Editor...

In a recent column, “Dear Abby” suggested ordering a free “Consumer Action Handbook” put out by the U.S. General Services Administration. So I did, and it is full of useful information on many subjects, such as being a smart shopper, filing complaints, finding resources, and getting consumer assistance.

A bit of information that opened my husband’s eyes has to do with house insurance, which all of us in manufactured homes carry and don’t think about until we have a claim. We learned that many home insurance policies include an “anti-concurrent causation clause,” which means the insurer has the right to reject a claim if a home is damaged during a disaster, such as a wind and rain storm, and they can’t determine which factor, the wind or the rain, did the actual damage. The GSA advises us to read our policies and if they contain an anti-concurrent causation clause, to ask our agent if we may opt out of that clause or else pay an increased premium to have full coverage.

I couldn’t find a complete policy, just the one paper that proves we have insurance, so I called our agent to find out. She said, “I don’t get that question every day” and that she’d call the company and find out. We were relieved to learn that our policy doesn’t have that clause, but the company will pay only once on a disaster, so a tornado or storm better not destroy a home a second time! I’ll share other information from the handbook when space allows.

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From The President...*Gary Walters*



To start off, I am happy to welcome two new board members, JoAnne Downey, right, from Eugene and Peggy Wilson from Brookings. They will be a great help to all of us. And to add to that good news, Charlie Ricker has returned to the board.

On a sad note, Ginger and I had a water leak in our home that caused \$3,000 worth of damage. So I am replacing floors and a lot of dry wall in the bathroom and utility room. Saved

some money doing that myself, but had to bite the bullet and hire the plumber.

I had a couple of district meetings in southern Oregon and on the Coast. I really like to have a lot of members turn out for these meetings. The photo shows those of you who weren't at the Medford meeting what you missed. The state meeting is next, so try not to miss it!

Gary



OSTA Remembers Pat and Fred Schwoch

Pat Schwoch died on July 2, just three months after the death of her beloved husband, Fred. She would have been 91 this August. In the early 1990s, Pat, Fred, and fellow park resident Frank Burleson revived a moribund Oregon State Tenants Association (now Manufactured Housing/Oregon State Tenants Association) and, along with John Brenneman of MHCO and MCRC, founded the Manufactured Housing Landlord/Tenant Coalition in 1997. She was a passionate advocate for MH park resident rights, and it sometimes seemed like she knew and was close friends with every park resident in Oregon. She was famous for her temper, and her pencil-throwing. She grew up in Southern Oregon, and worked once as a clothes-buyer for Fortmillers in Ashland, which contributed to her stylish look; that, plus her height and her shock of white hair and her passion made her well-known in the Capitol. But she also respected those park landlords whom she felt treated their residents right. She viewed Paul Brewer as a son, and I know he reciprocated. We have lost a dear friend.

—John VanLandingham

I have lost a mentor and a dear friend. —Rita Loberger



Good friends Pat Schwoch and John VanLandingham at the ceremonial signing of the Opportunity to Purchase law last year.



THANK YOU

Thank you for the lovely floral arrangement sent to the memorial service for my mother Pat Schwoch.

Your continued efforts to make and keep OSTA as a viable organization engaged in helping MHO's realize and protect their right is a great legacy and tribute to my mom.

Thank you.

Kathy Meddock and family.



Pat and Fred Schwoch

Photo taken by Carole Smith

Chapter News

To All Chapters: Please keep the OSTA office informed of the name and correct email address of all chapter presidents or main contact person.

Gainsborough, Eugene

from Rich Pitter, HOA President

Gainsborough continues to be a great park in which to live, with wonderful residents. We have a "card party" one afternoon each month and also play Bingo and Bunco monthly. We have a senior exercise program three mornings a week. Friday morning coffee is a big attraction. Every other month we try to have a dinner at the Clubhouse, with dinner out on alternating months. We recently had a lasagna dinner, and a Saturday biscuits and gravy breakfast. Also, the ladies and gentlemen have separate monthly luncheons. In addition, we have Monday night dinners and Saturday morning breakfasts out.

We greet new homeowners with a bouquet of flowers provided by management and delivered by a couple of our residents. This is a great way to meet and greet new homeowners and help them to become aware of the activities available in our community.

Gainsborough is in the process of implementing a fund raiser to help cancer patients, providing money to a group that sponsors the annual Walk for Life fund-raising event in Lane County.

Jacksonville Royal Mobile Estates

from Dee Evers, President

We had a successful park-wide social this summer with about 35 people attending.

River Bend MHP, Reedsport

from Charlie Ricker, Douglas County Director

Over 80 residents attended a special meeting in June to discuss park problems.

Knoll Terrace MHP, Canyonville .



Officers of the recently formed MH/OSTA chapter are, left to right, Linda Butler, secretary; Ericka Benaroyo, treasurer, and Lillian Anderson, vice-president. Charlie Ricker (not shown) is chapter president, and Henry Butler is producing The Knoll Terrace News. Residents have been enthusiastic about getting organized and are now in the process of forming a Committee of Seven to meet with the new landlord to discuss park issues

Columbus Greens MHP, Albany



The Committee of Seven met recently with owner Brian Fetterer to discuss concerns. Shown are left to right, Lynn Christman, Chuck Mills, John Meier, our new manager, State Senator Sara Gelser, Fran Huston (in front), Donna Winchester, Park owner Brain Fetterer, and Dustan Johnson.

SongBrook MHP, Eugene

from Jane Capron, Lane County Director

SongBrook was recently sold to R&D Management of California for \$13.8 million or just over \$98,000 per site. R&D owns parks in both California and Oregon. Commonwealth Real Estate Services out of Portland is now managing the park. Residents, under the guidance of CASA of Oregon, had offered \$10.2 million in a bid to buy the park, but that offer was rejected by Troy Brost, the former owner, who now lives in Hawaii. According to Colliers International, Brost's real estate broker, this was the most that's ever been paid for a manufactured/mobile home community in Oregon.

The SongBrook OSTA chapter gave a generous donation to Helping Hands, for which we thank them.

Chapter News Continued

Golden Oaks Estates, Springfield

Officers were elected and installed and a chapter charter presented to the newly formed MH/OSTA chapter at Golden Oaks in June. Recently sold to Investment Property Group in Irvine, California, residents have been informed that the park will be sub-metered. The new chapter also elected four board members. District director Jane Capron installed the officers.

Sunset View, Harbor

from Jan Henault, HOA president

Sunset View Senior Community HOA and OSTA chapter held their semi-annual combined meeting in July. Among the items discussed was fence maintenance. Homeowners feel that the "perimeter fence" is the owner's responsibility. The owner contends that it is the responsibility of tenants to maintain all fences located on their lots. After researching the subject we decided that responsibility for fence maintenance falls on the tenant unless their contract states otherwise. New MH/OSTA state board member Peggy Wilson volunteered to look into grants that would help folks with fence maintenance expenses. We have 12 household members of MH/OSTA.

Lane District Meeting

Over 40 people attended the Lane District meeting at SongBrook MHP and heard Rep. Nancy Nathanson, explain the components of the Landlord/Tenant Coalition bill presented to the state legislature this past session. The meeting also included discussion of our Chapter 90 state laws, a paper prepared by attorney John Van Landingham, OSTA board member and coalition facilitator (See the Right 2 Know section of the last issue of the Review to review these rights). The SongBrook OSTA chapter provided refreshments, and several people commented on how nice they were, including Tom Mitchell, Lakeridge OSTA president, who publicized the successful meeting (and food) in his park's newsletter. A special thanks goes to the refreshments committee consisting of Debbie and Mark Harden, Rene Forrer, and Barbara Campbell.

Adopt-a-School

It's that time of year again, time to remember the children in your neighborhood elementary school with donations of school supplies and other necessities, in some cases nutrition assistance. If your park hasn't already adopted a school, it's never too late. Our members have been great during the past years in providing not only school supplies in the fall, but knitted goods and gifts during the holidays and food for needy children during school breaks. Be good Grandmas and Grandpas to these children and let us know about your contributions so we can share in the December *Review*. Dewell Byrd, Miller Estates, shares a poem he wrote to inspire you to adopt a school:



Officers are, left to right, Bill Halderman, secretary, Diane Scott, treasurer, Carol McKenzie, vice-president and membership, and Larry Jones, president.

Come By the School

Reach beyond our grown-up years,
"London Bridge's Falling Down..."
come to school again, again...

jacks on the merry-go-round.
Our school days are all gone
and the years have flown, too.
The tether ball's torn loose,
"Skip, skip, skip-to-my-Lou."

Pigtails have all turned gray,
ink wells and quills are dry,
"...for we have gained this day."
The door sags, waves good-bye.
Warm wind yanks at the gate.
"Red rover, red rover..."
four-square is only two.
There's no four-leaf clover.

"Green gravel, green gravel..."
Give me your hand, my friend.
"...in and out the window."
We'll pass through grades again.

—Dewell H. Byrd,
national Golden Pen
recipient, 2011

OSTA Chat Room

Jane Capron, Your Host

In this issue we begin an on-going chat on various subjects that affect those of us who live in manufactured home parks. To get started, I asked chapter presidents:

What do you do to recruit and retain OSTA members

Jan Henault from Sunset View: Board Members assemble information of the local area, businesses, and organizations into a Welcome Package for all new residents and include information about MH/OSTA and applications to join. When we deliver the packages, we talk about MH/OSTA's purpose and accomplishments and encourage residents to join. Our newsletter also includes an article or other information about MH/OSTA. Board members are always willing to talk about MH/OSTA and answer questions whenever approached by residents.

Jane responds: When I was chapter president. We had teams of two members who called on new people with a little gift as well as OSTA information. Some tulip bulbs I gave a couple 15 years ago still bloom in their front yard every spring. While those folks have passed on, I have told the new member who bought their house that the tulips came from OSTA! OSTA Quarterly Reviews are available from District Directors or from me or Judy Morton via email. Just ask us if you need some.

Terry Smith from Miller Estates: As president of the board, and the board members themselves, we receive a variety of requests from homeowners on a fairly regular basis including help in finding a lost cat, letting us know the lights around the mailboxes are not working, to needing help with mowing a lawn, trimming a tree, needing help with an electrical or plumbing problem, small painting job, the list goes on and on. This is a big part of what our association is all about and getting the job done is very rewarding to me as president, and to the board members themselves. We like a challenge. We have the homeowners trust.

Jane responds: Be sure to read the Miller Estates feature story in this issue. Terry and his board are great recruiters, and Terry also buys and licks the stamps to send in membership checks! Offering service is a great way for chapters to show residents the worth of their membership. Terry is also super at retaining members, and while he didn't say this, I will: Terry works so hard that the homeowners wouldn't dare not rejoin without really hurting his feelings!

Charlie Ricker from Knoll Terrace: Probably the best way to motivate people to join is to let them see members sharing responsibilities and participating in activities. When other residents see the accomplished results from the organized efforts, then they too might consider becoming part of the team. Motivate your members and provide proof of the result of your activities.

Jane responds: Charlie is now Douglas County District Director and before that recruited over 100 new members for OSTA, so his suggestions are worth heeding. Charlie participated in all activities when he lived at SongBrook, and I'm sure he's doing the same at Knoll Terrace. OSTA presidents and board members need to attend all events and never forget to promote OSTA every chance they can. Of course, if people run when they see you coming, you may be engaged in overkill.

If you need selling points when you call on potential members, consider the following: MH/OSTA exists to get laws passed to protect manufactured home owners who rent the land under their houses. We also help you know and understand your legal rights as tenants.

Most of our legislative success has come through compromise with landlords in a landlord-tenant coalition. This year's bill, for example, passed the Legislature 89-0 and has been signed into law by the governor. It has benefits for both landlords and us, their tenants.

By joining OSTA, you help increase our strength because legislators know older folks vote, and so they listen to us. The more of us who belong to OSTA, the better, because there is strength in numbers, just as there is power in organization.

Next Issue: How do you communicate with a difficult manager? Be sure I have the name and email address of your chapter contact person!

RIGHT²KNOW 900.600 Committee of Seven

Chapter 90.600(5) (a) reads as follows: “The tenants who reside in a facility may elect one committee of seven or fewer members in a facility-wide election to represent the tenants....Upon written request from the tenants’ committee, the landlord or a representative of the landlord shall meet with the committee within 10 to 30 days of the request to discuss the tenants’ non-rent concerns regarding the facility. Unless the parties agree otherwise, upon a request from the tenants’ committee, a landlord or representative of the landlord shall meet with the tenants’ committee at least once, but not more than twice, each calendar year....After the meeting, the tenants’ committee shall send a written summary of the issues and concerns addressed at the meeting to the landlord...[who] shall make a good faith response in writing to the committee’s summary within 60 days.”

SO YOU’VE GOT THIS COMMITTEE OF SEVEN—NOW WHAT?

A GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

Keep written records

Insist that residents write out and sign their grievances. You can promise not to divulge identities, of course. You don’t want a later backlash, where someone says, “That wasn’t me who complained. I never said that.”

Insist that your committee members respect the privacy of those who complain. What goes on in the committee meetings should stay within the committee. The chair might provide an overview to the homeowners, but no names should be mentioned.

Prepare a list of goals based on complaints gathered from residents. Study the complaints, grouping them as much as possible, and ranking them as to importance to all residents. Try to word your list in a positive way, that is, for example, don’t say, “The manager should stop being so nasty.” Better to say, “We’d like a pleasant relationship between management and residents.”

Negotiate with management which of the goals on your written list they will consider. The negotiation will be give and take, involving discussion and no accusations. For example: one goal might be for the manager and residents to be more pleasant to each other. If management can agree that pleasant working relationships are desirable, then the committee and management can discuss together how to make that possible. Another goal might be to prevent speeding within the park. If management agrees that’s a worthwhile goal, everyone can discuss ways to prevent speeding.

Prepare a written list of negotiated goals and suggestions for achieving them for management and committee members to study. If there have to be personal complaints, they should also be offered in writing so that they can be clearly understood by everyone in the meeting (the person being accused needs to have a written copy of the allegation in order to defend him- or herself)

Expect management to respond in writing to the prepared list of goals within 60 days. If the response does not address issues to the committee’s satisfaction, contact OSTA and the Ombudsman’s office for mediation services.

A sample letter to your owner requesting a meeting with the Committee follows:

To:

From:

Re: Property Rights and Transactions—Title 10, Chapter 90.600 of the Oregon State Statutes

The members of the XYZ Mobile Home Park Committee of Seven

were duly elected on (date), and are

_____, chair

_____, secretary

We will contact you to schedule the first meeting.

(signed)

Park Closures Becoming a Reality Again

Manufactured homeowners in Alaska, Arizona, and Washington are seeing community closures, with some families still having mortgages on worthless homes. For example, the National Manufactured Homeowners Association newsletter tells us that 112 residents of Scottsdale, Arizona's Wheel Inn Ranch RV and Mobile Home Park are being evicted so that the land can be developed for other uses. Many of the residents are disabled and/or elderly, and some have lived in their homes there for more than 30 years. With the economy growing again, the danger of our MH parks being sold for other development has become reality. Now might be a good time for your OSTA chapters to review Chapter 90.645-675 about the closure of manufactured dwelling parks in Oregon. We can also present the information in the December OSTA Quarterly Review in the Right 2 Know section. Stayed tuned.

Identity Theft Self-Check

Directions: For each of the following statements give yourself 2 points if you can say "Always," 1 point if your answer is "Sometimes," and 0 points if your answer is "Never."

1. Cover or block the ATM keypad when I enter my PIN.
2. Carry only the identification, checks, credit cards, or debit cards I really need.
3. Use direct deposit for paychecks, tax refunds, benefits payments, etc.
4. Shred documents with personal/financial information before disposing of/recycling them.
5. Use passwords with a mix of numbers, symbols, and letters instead of easily-guessed words.
6. Review financial statements/bills monthly and identify/correct errors.
7. Review credit report annually and identify/correct errors.
8. Use secure mailboxes for incoming/outgoing mail.
9. Avoid providing/sharing personal information (e.g. SSN) whenever possible.
10. Review Medicare Summary Notices, Explanations of Benefits statements, and medical bills for suspicious charges.

Scores:

0-6: You are not doing much to minimize your risk of identity theft.

7-13: You have developed some good practices but have room to improve.

14-20: You are doing a great job to minimize your risk of identity theft.

(This quiz taken from a booklet by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the FDIC.)

Clarification about Service Animals

Attorney Matthew Johnson wants it made clear that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) doesn't apply to tenants in rental housing or manufactured home parks. He says, "The applicable Federal Law is the Fair Housing Act (FHA). The rules concerning service animals under these acts are different. For example, under the FHA "companion animals" are recognized as protected, while under the ADA they are not." The article in the last OSTA Quarterly Review may have misled some readers into thinking that they couldn't keep companion (service) animals, which are usually dogs, in their homes.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers government buildings and public places like stores and restaurants. While the ADA does not include emotional support animals, the FHA does. Some housing providers will be subject to the ADA, such as government owned housing. Some will be subject to the FHA, such as most landlords with more than four units, like manufactured home communities. A landlord is permitted to refuse accommodation for a service animal based on breed if allowing the animal would constitute an undue burden. An example might be if the landlord's insurance carrier would drop his coverage if an animal of a restricted breed were kept on the premises.

Notes in Our Mailbox

In the Right 2 Know section of the Summer Review, John did a fantastic job at making clear what can be a really muddled problem understanding manufactured housing and fair housing laws. Thank you!

—Mary Miller, Lee's MHP, Eugene

A Request to Our Members

from Rita Loberger, MH/OSTA Vice President

It seems the general perception of our lifestyle is that of a "mobile" community. I am attempting to change this. One person can shout to the wind with no results, but many voices can implement change. I am asking our members to assist with this change.

I contacted the elected representative in my voting district, who is Julie Parrish. I set up a visitation with her and ask that she come and visit my community. She was agreeable, and on a morning this past July we did a walk and talk. I showed her our clubhouse, the new homes in the process of being placed in our community, and spoke of the activities we have in our park. I have resided in Eldorado for almost 20 years and know the majority of the neighbors here. When passing their homes, I gave their names and sometimes a bit about them, like offices they have held, how long they had been residents, pets they shared with us, things that made them people, not just house numbers on a street.

Representative Parrish understands that we are homeowners living in manufactured homes, not renters living in trailers, as so many corporate types would have the public believe. I stressed that the "renters only" concept has to stop. We sat on my glider on the front porch and spoke of the importance of keeping this affordable lifestyle in place not only for seniors, but young families just starting out who cannot afford the expensive housing being marketed today. I spoke of the advantages of single-level homes with few if any steps and the community style of living where neighbors develop "forever" contacts. I told her the pride of ownership of one's own home is something we need to maintain.

Julie and I spoke of the need of enforcement of our Title 10, Chapter 90 laws that we continue to establish through the coalition. I hear on an almost daily basis from our 800-line phone messages that enforcement poses a problem for so many of us. After speaking with Representative Parrish, I feel she understands the necessity of obtaining enforcement of the laws we have worked so hard to establish.

I am asking you, my fellow OSTA members, to invite the elected officials in your districts to pay a visit to your communities. Let them become acquainted with the voters in their areas, the people who vote them into office—YOU. Introduce them to those of us, who by owning these homes and paying taxes, save the cities and counties thousands of dollars in construction costs by not having to provide new housing for the residents who would otherwise be displaced by the closure of our communities.



Rita Loberger with OSTA flowers at Pat Schwoch's memorial service



Julie Parrish

Our directors are available to meet with parks to explain rights and responsibilities and why it is important to establish OSTA chapters, thereby gaining strength and knowledge to help our communities function better. But we can't visit your park unless you invite us!

Miller Estates Thrives on Resident Cooperation

With the support of two-thirds of the residents, Miller Estates in Central Point, Oregon, can boast of having the highest percentage of OSTA members of all our chapters. They may have competition in the near future as there are a couple of other parks growing rapidly. But for now we honor the members of the Miller Estates Neighborhood Homeowners Association/OSTA chapter for their welcome support.

Miller Estates, a community for seniors age 55 and over, is unusual if not unique in that every one of its 75 homes is a Fuqua home. They range in size from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet, have front porches and entries facing the street, and all have two-car garages. Terry Smith and his wife, Carole, have been active in their NHOA/OSTA chapter for 13 years, Terry as president for the past eight years and Carole as secretary for over five years. Terry has also served as state president of OSTA, and nobody works harder than he does to promote OSTA.



Welcoming us to Miller Estates are Rene and Lorraine Reinhardt and Carolyn Craig with her dogs.

Terry tells us that Miller Estates was a dream of Marian Miller and her husband, Orth, who farmed the land that is now home to his friends and neighbors. The Miller children, Brad, Bob, and Carol Miller Bennett helped establish the park and Bob and Carol are the current landlords. The park has no on-site manager, no clubhouse, swimming pool, or game area. All community events must be held at some other location. So the homeowners association (NHOA) and OSTA chapter stay in close contact with landlords and residents through e-mail and personal contact and manage to have an enviable array of activities and projects. They have an active Adopt-a-School Program, and they have also adopted a street to keep free of litter. They have a new Neighborhood Watch program and keep a list of “helping hands” who can be called on to do odd jobs for neighbors.

When the Smiths first moved to the park, they and some of their neighbors contacted OSTA for a meeting to discuss homeowners’ concerns. Following the chapter’s organization, Fred and Pat Schwoch helped them solve some of the problems confronting establishment of their homes and protection of their rights. As a result legal problems were solved and the landlord and the residents pitched in to help solve other problems, including getting street signs, speed limit signs, an accessible back gate for emergency entry and exit, a “no soliciting” sign at the front entrance, lighted mailbox covers, a community bulletin board, and park rules approved by residents.



A little bit of Heaven in Central Point, Oregon.

The neighborhood association solicits ads for the community newsletter, publishes a park phone directory, and gives welcome baskets to all new residents. Residents have obtained a group rate for Mercy Flight ambulance service, and worked with the owners and the city to assure street repair and cleaning, fire hydrants painted and locations marked, and a sign for Orth Street across Hwy. 99. The OSTA chapter keeps residents apprised of their legal rights and who to contact for information about specific concerns. They were able to keep rent raises limited to the increase in the Consumer Price Index.

Even though they must find another locale for activities, the residents have their fun: They have two or more social events a year including an ice cream social, a fall festival, and a Christmas party.

Terry says, "I would not live in a mobile/manufactured home community without an OSTA homeowners association. Working as a group, representing the community, and working with management is the only way to go. I thank Pat and Fred Schwoch and the OSTA board of directors for their help. I am proud of our Miller Estates OSTA membership which is 65.7% at this time for their trust and confidence in us. I also compliment our NHOA/OSTA board of directors for all their hard work. Whenever something is needed by a homeowner, members or non-member, the board will either do the job themselves or find the right people to get the job done.



Neighbors walking "the loop" are Rose Mattern, Orval Schwartz, and Carolyn Craig.



Welcoming us to Miller Estates are Rene and Lorraine Reinhardt and Carolyn Craig with her dogs.



Two active residents are Rosalie Carroll and Louise Lafoya shown here dishing up chili.



Residents take pride in keeping their homes and yards beautiful.



Rosalie Carrol, the winner of the 2013 chili competition Judy Williams, and Jim Williams enjoy Judy's achievement.



COMMUNITY
WORKS

Our clubhouse is available for reservation by residents at no charge, with the expectation that users will clean up after their affair. Sometimes, management reserves the clubhouse for a family member's affair. More than once the next user arrives to find more work to do than should be required, in order to clean up the messes. We do not object to management reserving the clubhouse for family members, but we want to ask management to assure us that those affairs will leave the facilities clean. If you advise us to meet with the manager, how can we keep the meeting non-confrontational? And can you suggest a way for us to assert some authority?

—Concerned Residents



Dear Concerned Residents,

You can count me among those who believe that you should always leave a room at least as clean or cleaner than when you arrived so the next person to use it will be entering a good environment. Somehow it brings me great satisfaction to do so. Unfortunately, not everyone follows that practice, and this can lead to the unhappy situation in which you now find yourselves.

If you think that that meeting with your Park manager to express your perspectives about the situation might turn confrontational, your local community mediation center would be happy to provide the services of a highly-trained mediator, at no cost, who can facilitate the discussion to help you find a positive resolution to the issue. Mediators model (and thus teach) effective communication skills in the face of conflict and strong emotions. So not only can this specific issue be resolved, but positive relationships can be developed between residents and park management that enable future disputes to be resolved more smoothly.

As for being able to “assert some authority” as a group of park residents, there is an Oregon State Statute [ORS 90.600 (5)(a) & (b)] that allows homeowners in a park to elect a “Committee of Seven” to represent residents in meetings with park management. By law, the committee can bring any parkwide issue, except for rent, to the discussion.

This law provides an excellent tool that can benefit not only homeowners but park owners and managers, too. The idea is that good communication is the first step in achieving workable relationships. There are requirements to follow in setting up a committee. The Manufactured Housing/Oregon State Tenants Association can provide you a “Committee of Seven” Brochure that can help you get started.

Dear Marlena,

We have a park manager who insists all problems be reported to him. We have had both a prowler and a car broken into recently. The victims reported the incidents to management, the police, and our neighborhood watch committee. The manager won't accept any letters of complaint unless they include vehicle information, the amount of financial loss, and a copy of the police report, and are signed by the victim. Many of our residents are hesitant to give the manager information because he often pooh-poohs their concerns, saying there's no proof or that they're being paranoid. Our neighborhood watch committee requires people to sign their letters of complaint to us, but some of them are afraid we'll tell the manager even though we keep the complaints locked up. How can we build trust in our park among residents, the committee, and the manager?

—Neighborhood Watch Chairman

Dear Neighborhood Watch Chairman,

Trust is an incredibly important issue in most relationships, and if the park residents are not sure they can trust your Neighborhood Watch group to keep their personal information confidential, then building the relationship to a point that they can feel comfortable doing so needs to take place. A good first step might be to contact your local community mediation center to request that they provide a trained facilitator to

Mediation Memo—from Marlena Continued

help guide a conversation between residents and the people in the Neighborhood Watch group to determine what the residents would need to feel safe enough to reveal their complaints.

The Neighborhood Watch group might learn new information that would make them more flexible on their requirement that complaints need to be signed. A second facilitated discussion could take place between residents and the Park manager to develop a reporting system that worked well for everyone.

The key here is creating a safe opportunity for everyone to speak their minds in a comfortable setting (not a crisis situation), with a chance to be listened to respectfully. The goal of the mediation would be to develop a process for reporting complaints in a way that meets everyone's comfort level and needs. Needs such as the preservation of personal privacy for residents, the need for hard evidence for the Park manager to pursue wrongdoing, and the need for a calm and efficient approach to problems that will create a safer and more pleasant environment for everyone in the Park.

How can we force our park owner to give us receipts that will prove we paid our rent on time? Would a petition or letter be best or would it be better for a group to go talk to him? Could a mediator come in and help us? I'm tired of him holding my checks and charging me a late fee. --Fed Up

Dear Fed Up,

Oregon law require landlords to give tenants "written evidence of payment" for the rent if they request it. This protects tenants who pay in cash, who would have no other way to prove that they did indeed pay the rent, and on time. If you choose, you could purchase your own receipt book from any stationery shop and complete the transaction yourself, and just get your landlord to sign and date it when you pay your rent.

OR Title 10, Chapter 90, 90.140, 2) reads: "*A tenant who requests a writing that evidences the tenant's payment is entitled to receive that writing from the landlord as a condition for making the payment. The writing may be a receipt, statement of the tenants account or other acknowledgment of the tenant's payment. The writing must include the amount paid, the date of payment and information identifying the landlord or the rental property. If the tenant makes the payment by mail, deposit or a method other than in person and requests the writing, the landlord shall within a reasonable time provide the tenant with the writing in a manner consistent with ORS 90.150 (Service or delivery of actual notice).*"

Your park manager may not be aware of this law, but bringing it to his attention should remedy the situation of his charging unfair late fees. If it does not, you can contact your local community mediation center to request a mediator to facilitate a discussion about the problem between residents and your park manager.

Sign Up Now to Save Big Bucks

Weatherizing Your Home

from Bill Halderman

I've lived in Golden Oaks MH Park in my venerable 1966 Elcar mobile home for 13 years. For 11 of those years, I kept somewhat cool in summer with my trusty Sears & Roebuck roof-mounted swamp cooler and warm in winter by cloistering myself in the bedroom with a 1500- watt space heater.

In August, 2013, my application to Housing and Community Services Agency of Lane County (HACSA) and their weatherization program came through and contractors descended on my old home. When they left, my house had a new R-38 roof, new subfloor insulation, 13 double-pane windows replacing my single panes, a new water heater, and a new furnace. Cost to me was a \$350 co-pay for the windows.

The virtually free improvements came as a result of my qualifying as a low income homeowner. I live on Social Security plus a small union pension. My utility bill (electricity only) is about \$25 summer and \$89 winter, not a lot less than what I used to pay; however, I am warm now in the whole house and, in summer, my swamp cooler keeps indoors about 20 degrees chillier than outdoors, not 10 degrees as before.

In Lane County the weatherization program is scheduled, though not certain, to reopen September 1, 2015. Contact Mary Beth Andrews, Intake Coordinator, Energy Services Program, at (541) 682-2561. Other counties in the state have similar programs. The website address is <http://www.hacsa.org>.

Thoughts on Aging— Forgetting

by Gus Daum

[Ed.'s Note: OSTA poets join Gus to reflect on a subject that creates worries for us as we age]

Something's Missing

The keys I left on the dresser
that turned up in yesterday's slacks.
Doctor's phone number--- tip of my tongue,
wasn't his? Oh, yeah--- that's Jack's.
The rubber band ready to snap on my wrist,
What did I put it there for?
I know it was meant to jog my mind
but it just doesn't work anymore.
I drove here today, where is the car?
I always park close, can't walk very far.
Oh, yes! I rode today with a friend,
who's inside waiting---for our meeting to end.
I'm not hungry now, I seem to forget.
Was breakfast good, have I eaten it yet?
I know I had toast, there are the crumbs,
No orange juice, I maybe ate plums.
Whatever hour, whatever day,
My most frequent words are,
"What did they say."

—Gus Daum, Parkside MHP, Eugene

Early Retirement

It isn't every day I remember work.
Some days slip by like worn prayer beads
or like bubbles that glisten in the rain
and linger on the blacktop sidewalk
outside my "Man Cave" window.
Most days are filled with the music
of the slow-dance and slide by unnoticed.
Some days are filled with playing tourist
watching a column of leaf-cutters
and lazing iguanas in Cancun
or absorbing the drone of bees
that curtsy on red clover blossoms
half drunk on the nectar of their own gods.



It isn't every day I think of work.
I seldom remember there was a time
before the ache of half-filled days.
I'll bet they've already forgotten my name,
broken my coffee mug.
—Dewell H. Byrd, Miller Estates, Central Point

Whole
Out of the lonely well
Comes isolation felt so deeply
Tearing at my heart and soul
Crying out for you.
Up from the lonely depths
Creeping like a furtive cat
Watching for a careless bird
Comes a ray of hope.
Into my very core
Drawn there by necessity
Stealthfully and surely
Enters strength.
Down from the starlit sky
Beams a ray of light
Pierces my quiet heart
It comes from you.
Though you are dead and gone
From the sphere, here and now
Somewhere our spirit lives
And helps to make me whole.
— Dee Evers (on the death of my best friend)



Guidelines for Aging in Place and Staying Out of Nursing Homes

Information that crossed our desk states that the U.S. Administration on Aging wants us older adults to live in our homes for as long as possible. Of course, that's what we want, too. The following tips on how to age at home are worth consideration.

Is your home safe? Get rid of things like throw rugs and make sure electrical cords are away from where you could trip on them. Have you got grab bars in your shower and bathroom? Have you got enough light, especially nightlights, so you can see at night. You might need to spend some money to have a ramp installed. Maybe you could make use of OSTA's Helping Hands fund.

Have you talked with your doctor and family about your needs? Ask your doctor if it's still safe for you to drive. If not, check with the local senior transportation service, like RideSource, to get on their list. Does someone, like a next-door neighbor, have a key to your house? Do you make a daily phone call to a friend so you both know how you're doing?

Have you organized your important papers? You should keep a list of doctors' and family phone numbers handy where you and family and friends can find it. Designate a health care proxy to speak with your doctor if you become unable to do so yourself.

How about your meds? You need to take the proper dosage at the proper time, so consider a pill box or a chart listing your meds and when to take them. Local aging agencies might have someone who would visit your home and help organize your meds.

Cleanliness is important to your health. Get someone to clean your bathroom and kitchen weekly and make sure your refrigerator is cleaned regularly so that expired or stale food is thrown out. Ask for help, if you need it, vacuuming, washing clothes, or cleaning floors. Sometimes neighbors are willing to come in and help, but it would probably be better to hire someone.

Talk with others often. You don't want to be isolated in your house. Our manufactured home parks are a great place for us to age in place if we take advantage of the activities, one of which should be an exercise program, even a very simple one. Work with weights, if you can. Do squats, wall push-ups, and toe stands, some gardening, walking around the neighborhood, or any task that involves pushing, pulling, or digging. This is strength-training, which is important and can even be done from a chair. If you try any exercises that are a bit strenuous, you should get your doctor's okay first. Exercise keeps you alert.

MH/OSTA ANNUAL MEETING INVITATION

When: Saturday, October 31, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where: Village Green Resort, Cottage Grove, Oregon

Cost: \$20/person includes registration and soup/salad buffet lunch

Room Reservations: Overnight rates for the Manufactured Housing block of rooms is \$69 if reserved by Oct. 23 and includes breakfast. RV reservations available. When you call to reserve a room, be sure to say that you're with Manufactured Housing/OSTA.

Directions: From I-5, north or south, take Exit 174 east on Row River Rd. about two blocks to Village Green Resort on the south side of the street.

Registration Form

Complete and mail this form and your \$20 check by Oct. 23 to:

MH/OSTA P.O. Box 24958, Eugene, OR 90277

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone or Email Address _____

Park Name _____

(Reservations received after Oct. 23 will be \$25.)

Reserve the date:
October 31, 2015

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SALEM, OR
PERMIT NO 268



MH/OSTA
Manufactured Housing / Oregon State Tenants Association

We are your neighbors.

MH/OSTA Vision

Be the place that the owner of a home in any Oregon manufactured home park:

- Calls for help and directly, or by knowledgeable referral, receives the help they need.
- Trusts to protect and enhance the security, affordability, and quality of their housing choice.

MH/OSTA Mission

Continue to grow a membership network of park homeowners who are increasingly better organized and able to provide and promote:

- Ready access to park homeowner education and information;
- Awareness, protection, and development of park homeowner rights;
- Connection to park homeowner support services provided by others;
- Preservation of manufactured home ownership as affordable housing.

***We are stronger together
than we are alone.***



MH/OSTA
PO Box 24958
Eugene, OR 97402

If a friend or neighbor gave you this copy of THE
MH/OSTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

osta **REVIEW**

And you would like to start receiving a quarterly copy, it's easy!
Just become a member of MH/OSTA, for \$30 a year (the equivalent of \$2.50 a month) you'll get the OSTA Review, plus a whole lot more!

Join your neighbors today!



YES!

I want to join my neighbors to protect my rights as a homeowner.

☐

NEW MEMBER

☐

RENEWAL

☐

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

PLEASE PRINT. Please note that we respect your privacy. Your personal information is used for membership purposes only. We do not sell or share your information with any other business or organization.



<http://mh-ostablog.blogspot.com/>

MEMBER NUMBER

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME

NAME OF SECOND PERSON IN HOUSEHOLD

ADDRESS

SPACE NUMBER

CITY/STATE/ZIP

HOME PHONE WITH AREA CODE

CELL PHONE WITH AREA CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

NOTE: Providing your email address enables us to communicate with you inexpensively. Again be assured that your information is never sold or shared.

MANUFACTURED/MOBILE HOME PARK NAME

Would you like to receive your OSTA Review via e-mail? ☐

Please enclose \$30.00 per
Household annual membership dues.
(that's only \$2.50 per month)

Checks payable to MH/OSTA and mail to:
MH/OSTA
PO Box 24958
Eugene, OR 97402