

OPINION: Affordable Housing Protects Senior Residents

by *Guntram Wolski*

My parents purchased Thunderbird Mobile Estates in McKinleyville out of bankruptcy with their life savings in 1972. They were immigrants from Europe who scraped some money together by working hard, and they used all their savings and took out seven mortgages in order to purchase the park. They worked hard to improve the property from what was a pretty run-down park to the beautiful, well-maintained park it is today. It provides some of the best affordable housing in the heart of McKinleyville.

My brother and I are now the second generation running the park, and I expect my child will continue as the third generation. I have been to gatherings of park owners and I see the same thing, the older generation with their children and grandchildren as the future of their parks.

Our park is always full, as people buy and sell their homes as their life needs change. No one has ever complained that our rents are too high or that our rent increases are inappropriate.

The proponents of Measure V would have you believe that we are “greedy” and committing “elder abuse” by charging new residents \$425 per month rent for the wonderful home location, infrastructure and services we provide as part

of the rent. Even some of the proponents who live in what is arguably the most beautiful park in the county pay only \$488 per month. Average rents in Humboldt County are about \$435 and some include many utilities.

The proponents of Measure V would have you believe that the “greedy” mobile home park owners will toss a senior out on the street for not paying their rents, or would let their pet starve. There could be nothing farther from the truth. Not only would that be bad for business — it would be immoral! Every park owner works with their senior residents to help them get the assistance they need.

We have always run Thunderbird Mobile Estates for the benefit of our residents. Measure V will make this very difficult and expensive for all. Please don't believe the negative hyperbole and untruths you hear about park owners. Get the facts! Please Vote No on Measure V and save our affordable housing.

Guntram Wolski is owner of Thunderbird Mobile Estates, a 40-unit mobile home park off Pickett in McKinleyville.

“The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings.”

—Masanobu Fukuoka (1913-2008), Japanese farmer-philosopher

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