



# Park owner has history of bad-faith dealings

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The owner of Wildwood Mobile Villa is no stranger to many residents of manufactured home parks in Keizer and Salem.

Irvine, Calif.-based Investment Property Group also owns Briarwood Estates and McNary Oaks Mobile Villa in Keizer and five others in Salem. Brian Fitterer is the principal owner of IPG.

In 2005, the executive director of the Manufactured Home Owners of Oregon (MHOO), told *Keizertimes* that Fitterer is “the poster boy for why our organization exists.” MHOO fought for manufactured home owners in the

state, but has since become the Manufactured Housing Oregon State Tenants Association (MH/OSTA).

*Keizertimes* began looking into Fitterer in 2004 when he sent notices to two dozen residents in Iris Village, another manufactured home park he owned at the time, notifying them that they had three months to come up with at least \$50,000 each to purchase the land their manufactured homes were sitting on or risk having it sold out from under them.

Fitterer took advantage of changes put in place by the Oregon Legislature in 2003 to allow manufactured home Please see OWNER, Page D2

# of Keizer growth

Rising rents at Keizer mobile home park are one way residents are feeling the squeeze of rent burdens

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

*Editor's note: Residents of Wildwood Mobile Villa spoke with the Keizertimes, but requested that we not use their names in out of concern of reprisal.*

When it comes to growth in Keizer, spaces like Wildwood Mobile Villa are where the rubber will hit the road. Residents fear that it's already happening.

“We used to fall into that low income [space]. It is not anymore,” said one resident of the senior manufactured home community.

Since 2008, rent at the park located in north Keizer skyrocketed from \$395 to \$675. The new owner, Investment Property Group is increasing it another \$50 this May. [For more on IPG and its owner, Brian Fitterer, see sidebar].

In addition to the rent increase, new residents will shoulder the costs of sewer, water, garbage and stormwater bills, all bills that were once included in the space rental. According to a local manufactured home sales agent, Wildwood is now the most costly mobile home park in all of Salem-Keizer.

“The first thing I ask a client is if they've checked into the rates here. It's hard to find clients who will stick with a purchase after they find out about the rent,” the sales agent said.

The increases in the cost to live in Wildwood put residents between the proverbial rock and hard place. Many own their homes, but the spaces where they are located are owned and rented out by IPG. They can attempt to sell their homes, but there are already six others in the park on the market with rental rates scaring off buyers. Even if a willing buyer appears, they can leverage the cost of rent over the price they are will to pay for the home on it – even though they are owned by two different entities.

The other option is moving the home to another park, which exposes the fallacy of calling manufactured homes “mobile homes.”

“The majority of houses in Wildwood are 40 years and older. If you found a space on private

property some place else, most cities will not allow you to bring one in more than 10 years old. The prejudice on manufactured homes is very widespread,” said the sales agent.

A resident said there are only about eight homes that are less than 10 years old in the park. Moving one to a new park would also cost at least \$10,000 by most estimates.

“The people can't move the homes and they are going to take a beating when they shut this park,” said one long-time resident.

Amber Monte, president of IPG, said the company has no plans to shutter the park.

“We are long term community operators and there are no plans to close this community. In fact, we've never closed a single community in our company history and have no plans to do so anywhere,” Monte said.

Fitterer also offers a discount for current residents struggling to pay the rent.

“It is self-funded by the park owner and provides a 10 percent rent discount to any resident who is struggling to make ends meet. The discount never has to be repaid and our residents can continue to renew it annually if their financial situation does not improve,” Monte said.

Monte said the amenities make Wildwood “superior” to other parks in the area and justify the high rental rate.

“The prior owner invested over \$700,000 in new water lines, new sidewalks and other improvements for the community just before the sale occurred,” Monte said.

One of the residents *Keizertimes* talked to said the largest part of those improvements went into fixing leaky water lines throughout the park that added to the owner's expenses.

“That should have lowered the rent, but it increased,” he said.

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“The people can't move the homes and they are going to take a beating when they shut this park.”

— Wildwood resident

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- Oscar Bettison: Commission (World premiere)
- Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 25
- Brahms: Symphony No. 2



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JANUARY 24, 2020, 7:30 PM

- Eun Sun Kim, conductor
- Benjamin Grosvenor, piano
- Texu Kim: Spin-Flip (U.S. premiere)
- Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 2
- Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 3



### Beethoven's Fifth

OCTOBER 25, 2019, 7:30 PM

- Carlos Kalmar, conductor
- Johannes Moser, cello
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- Lutoslawski: Cello Concerto
- Beethoven: Symphony No. 5



### Pictures at an Exhibition

FEBRUARY 7, 2020, 7:30 PM

- Carlos Kalmar, conductor
- Augustin Hadelich, violin
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- Paganini: Violin Concerto No. 1
- Missy Mazzoli: Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)
- Mussorgsky/Ravel: Pictures at an Exhibition



### Stephen Hough Plays Mendelssohn

NOVEMBER 1, 2019, 7:30 PM

- Clemens Schuldt, conductor
- Stephen Hough, piano
- L. Boulanger: Of a Sad Evening
- L. Boulanger: Of a Spring Morning
- Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No. 1
- Schumann: Symphony No. 1, “Spring”



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MAY 29, 2020, 7:30 PM

- Kazuki Yamada, conductor
- Baiba Skride, violin
- Schumann: Violin Concerto in D Minor
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- Bizet: Symphony in C
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