

*"Alone and our voice is small. — Stand together and we will be heard." Barbara Bowen, NAM*  
*"Many voices make a platform on which all of us can stand" - Murna Lindsey, NAM*

## **THE CAMPGROUND MEMBERSHIP DILEMMA**

Barbara Bowen, NAM President  
NAMBarb@earthlink.net

There is an element of organized crime that detracts from the total RV Life experience for retired members of our society. Help us eliminate that element so seniors can enjoy their retirement safely. Report the scam artists to your Attorney General, to the Federal Trade Commission, and to NAM. File official complaints. We'll help you do it.

Be sure your friends, neighbors, and your children are prepared and can protect themselves from this kind of fraud. Pass the word on to others...

(See "Dues 'Til You Die!" Page 2)

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## **STATE SUES CAMPGROUND FOR FRAUD**

From the Rockford Register Star  
July 1, 2005

*(Submitted by Murna Lindsey)*

ROCKFORD, IL – State Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed a lawsuit in Winnebago County on Thursday alleging that a private campground failed to bring the facility back to public health standards after floods in 1993 and 1996.

Ron Ulakovich, the owner, developer and operator of Willow Creek Resorts, has been charged with violating the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act by failing to provide electrical hook-ups, sewage disposal and drinking water as contractually obligated.

Madigan's office received 40 consumer complaints against Willow Creek, 3905 S. Bend Road

(See "IL AG Attacks Campground Fraud - Page 3)

## **5 STAR UNDER SCRUTINY FOR "DUES 'TIL YOU DIE" SCHEME**

BY THE  
**US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (USFTC)  
AND US POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE (USPIS)**

Following numerous complaints about the outrageous 5 Star "Dues 'Til You Die Scheme", the US DOJ has asked the FTC and USPIS to look into the matter. NAM has forwarded many complaints to them about this very issue. We are in the process of accumulating similar complaints about other companies.

NAM believes that the growing practice of trying to trick and coerce people into paying money, every year until the victim dies, should be prosecuted as a criminal offense and should be punished by jail time and heavy fines.

IT IS IMPORTANT that each of you tell your friends that they should immediately file an official "written complaint" when a campground or camping club tries to extract money from them in this way

Log onto our web site to file a complaint at:

<http://www.natlassoc.org/forms/index.htm>.

There is no cost to file a complaint.

If you don't have internet access just send us a stamped, self-addressed, size #10 envelope telling us you want a complaint form and we will mail it to you right away. (See page 4)

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## DUES 'TIL YOU DIE!

The following are typical excerpts from threatening letters sent to elderly campground members who, for various reasons, needed to end their relationship with the campground. Note that the "Contract Fee" or "Initiation Fee" in each case is paid in full! The scam artists want additional "Annual Dues" payments until members actually die:

- "Since it is apparent that you have no intent to honor your contract I am prepared to recommend that we litigate this account against you, report the account to the credit bureau, and have you summoned to appear in the appropriate county court with jurisdiction over this matter. I will be contacting your county property tax assessor to determine the legal description of all real property owned by you for the purpose of a lien should we win a judgment against you. I will also be obtaining a credit report to determine any bank accounts, automobiles, etc. that you own. Per your contract, we will add collection costs, attorney fees, and court costs to the amount we ask for in court."
- "The membership services department has received your request to cancel your membership based upon a medical and financial hardship. Unfortunately, we cannot cancel your membership until we receive the following information:
  1. A written description detailing your medical condition and the impact that it has on your financial well being;
  2. A letter, from your physician, detailing your medical condition and its impact on your ability to utilize your membership;
  3. A description of your current income, expenses, and assets and a description of how you are unable to continue your membership obligation(s); and
  4. Proof that you have attempted, for at least a period of six (6) months, to sell and/or transfer your membership."

How long MUST we pay dues and maintenance fees for a campground membership? Is it really a legal contract if it has no ending date? Can our children be forced to pay annual maintenance fees after we are no longer able to do so? How many times can a campground change hands, file for bankruptcy or change owners before we are no longer obligated to pay the fees?

There are important unanswered questions about this relatively new business. It is not always obvious that existing "Consumer Protection Laws" also apply to the membership campground situation. Most people do not know where to turn for help because of the complexity of this multi-state industry. More often than not we hear RVers discussing various scams and the comment is "Oh, so you got stung by that one too!"

It's time to join forces and try to stop the unscrupulous practice of taking advantage of our seniors! Together we can make a difference.

The National Association for Members of Campground Resorts, Condominiums and Timeshares (NAM) is a non-profit organization founded on August 20, 1997 to help members organize in order to have their voices heard at all levels of government and by resort owners and developers. We publish a quarterly newsletter and maintain a web site at [www.natlassoc.org](http://www.natlassoc.org) where you can file complaints with the US Federal Trade Commission, Attorneys General in several states, and with our organization.

*Barbara Bowen*  
NAM President

Contact Barbara at: [NAMBarb@earthlink.net](mailto:NAMBarb@earthlink.net)

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• DID YOU EVER NOTICE THAT  
THE ROMAN NUMERALS FOR 40 ARE XL

• THERE'S A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR  
IF YOU LOOK FOR IT.  
I WAS JUST THINKING HOW NICE IT IS  
THAT WRINKLES DON'T HURT.

## STATUS

*DOUGLAS H. NAPIER, ESQ., ATTORNEY FOR THE CLASS*

This Class Action Lawsuit has been successful against several defendants.

We recently finalized the settlement with Northeast National Bank and Northwest National Bank. We have appealed a ruling dismissing Liberty Bank and will hopefully prevail on appeal. If not, we will look into filing suit against Liberty Bank in a different forum.

We won a judgment against 900 Capital in 2004 but they are still in bankruptcy. It will be a while before we know when/if we will be able to collect anything on our \$6.5 million judgment against them. In that bankruptcy, however, the Trustee recently negotiated a \$70,000,000 judgment against one of 900 Capital's principals, Mark Cohn. Hopefully, this will provide adequate funds to pay some of the class members' claims.

We are now down to three defendants - Western American National Bank (WANB), Cavalry Investments, and Travel America.

I am focusing much of my attention on WANB.

The Iowa Supreme Court ruled that WANB must pay the members for all amounts collected by WANB then distributed to other banks. That same court recently rejected their request for an appeal based on jurisdictional issues. We are in the process of collecting additional evidence to confirm the amounts that WANB owes the class members, but they are resisting heavily. They have offered a settlement, but it is much too low and has been rejected.

This class action lawsuit is still quite active. Our firm is determined to get justice for former TAI members.

Never giving up or giving in.

Douglas H. Napier  
NAPIER, WOLF & NAPIER  
607 Eighth Street, Suite One  
Fort Madison, IA 52627  
(319)372-2934



*"Hate evil,  
love good;  
maintain justice in the courts."  
Amos 5:15*

## ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL ATTACKS CAMPGROUND FRAUD

Willow Creek opened in 1985 offering utility hook-ups for recreational vehicles, access to a dumping station, a clubhouse, swimming pool, petting zoo, miniature golf course and fishing to members, many of whom signed long-term contracts, some as many as 99 years. Members paid about \$5,000 to join, sometimes more, and annual membership dues of \$400.

The campground along the Kishwaukee River was cited by the Illinois Department of Public Health for failing to meet state codes in the years after the floods. It lost its state recreational license from February 2002 to August 2004 but continued to operate and sell memberships, the lawsuit alleges.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, owners attempted to collect dues from members who no longer used their memberships and who stopped paying dues, the lawsuit states. Some were asked to pay "walk away" fees to end their contracts.

Madigan's lawsuit seeks a civil penalty of \$50,000 and an additional \$50,000 for each violation concerning fraud. The lawsuit also asks that the court prohibit the camp's ownership from further consumer violations and let members out of their contracts without penalty.

## THANK YOU DOUG

We at NAM want to thank Mr. Doug Napier for his skill and his tenacity on behalf of former TAI members. We just wish, as he does, that the TAI class action suit would progress more rapidly through the court system.

It is clear that some of the defendants in the lawsuit are making every effort to hide the money trail and delay the legal proceedings with hopes that he will give up.

Thank you, "Bulldog" Doug,  
for hanging in there for us...

NAM

# YOU ARE THE KEY

How will your friends, your children, or your neighbors know if they are in danger of being trapped by a fraudulent membership camping scheme?

The answer is so very clear. YOU must tell them.

You know by now — who some of the scam artists are and how they operate. Pass it on.

You know by now — what to ask before a person signs a contract with a campground. Pass it on.

You know by now — how to help someone who has already been tricked. Pass it on.

You know by now — how to file a formal complaint with the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Pass it on.

You know by now — how to file a written complaint with a state Attorney General. Pass it on.

You know by now — that you are not alone in your effort to escape from these fraudulent schemes.

Make sure that others know that they are not alone either.

We must help each other. Don't be shy. Pass it on...

*NAM*

## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEMBERS (NAM)?

NAM was organized to advocate for ALL people who use campground resorts, condominiums, and timeshares. We want to stabilize and improve the rights of members. Many of us, speaking with one voice can make things change for the better. NAM is that voice. We will work with government agencies, campground resort owners/developers, and others to stabilize, improve, and enforce your rights.

There is no fee for our newsletters nor any service we provide. We do, however, depend on donations from people who believe in what we are doing. We are registered with the government as a nonprofit organization and your donations are tax deductible.

You can help. Join the NAM — Make a Difference. Send us the following information, it will not be provided to any non-government organization and will not be used for commercial purposes by anyone.

Note: NAM may "not" obligate you in any way to pay money for any purpose without your explicit consent.

### GET IN TOUCH WITH US:

INTERNET SITE: <http://www.natlassoc.org>  
eMail Address: [chmn@natlassoc.org](mailto:chmn@natlassoc.org) (or @.com)  
Voice Nr: (937) 236-2882

### GET THE NEWSLETTER: (There is no cost to you.)

Send us 5 or 6 Self-addressed, Stamped, size #10 (Business Size) Envelopes to:

NAM Treasurer  
4740 Silver Oak Street  
Dayton, Ohio 45424-4650

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in supporting the NAM. I want to:

- Receive the NAM newsletter.
- Reproduce/distribute my copy of the newsletter.
- Make a donation to support NAM activities.

I am enclosing a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Report on issues related to  
RV campers or timeshares

We also want your comments and suggestions.

Please send them to us at:

NAM  
4740 Silver Oak Street  
Dayton, OH 45424-4650

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