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www.rockfordapartmentassociation.org

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MAY MEETING

Tuesday, May 21

The R.A.A. would like to invite you to our

Annual Spring Banquet/ Annual Meeting

Sam's Ristorante (6075 E. Riverside)

Tues - May 21st at 6pm

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After May 10, and additional guests, \$10. per person

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At last month's meeting we had a panel discussion about how to prepare a property for the next tenant. It included how to do a walk through with the tenant that is moving out, what to inspect, how they prepare the property for the next tenant, how to market the property, and how to interview prospective tenants. The meeting was well attended and very helpful.

Paul just got back and gave a quick overview of what is happening in Springfield.

The May meeting is our annual meeting and banquet. There are four board members that are up for re-election. They are:

Mike Cavataio

Steve Lantow

Ken Opperman

Mary O'Sullivan-Snyder

We will vote for the positions at the banquet.



Let's Get to Know LYNN OLSEN by Jerri Cole

Being single in this business can be very challenging and very overwhelming. Being single myself, there have been times I have thrown my hands in the air and asked myself, "WHAT AM I DOING!!!!!!!!!!!" As I read Lynn's interview, I am so inspired by the way she handles all the challenges she is facing and her great attitude!! What a multitasker!!!! What a role model for RAA!!!! Another one of the outstanding leaders in RAA.

"I'm 59 years old and started in the rental business 15 years ago. My husband was widowed and I was divorced, and we had been friends for over 20 years, when we decided to get married in 1998. Neither of us was in very good financial shape, so we decided we needed to do something that would enhance our retirement income. I suggested real estate, because my uncle who was a farmer always said, "land is always a good investment." We made our first offer a week before our wedding, and they accepted our offer while we were on our honeymoon. A few years later we put together an 8-year-plan to buy as many buildings as we could and Rudy would retire (he was older than me), while I worked another 3 years until I could retire. Then we would slow down and enjoy as much time together as we could. Well, as life has its surprises, in the 8th year of our plan, my husband was diagnosed with cancer and died. So here I am 4 years later still managing the 4 buildings we purchased (a total of 10 units)."

After losing my husband, I did retire from the Rockford Park District, where I worked for 16 years in Purchasing and 3 years in Auditing. Before that, I worked at the MILL, a treatment facility for adolescents with behavioral disorders for 3 years, and before that I worked at Quaker Oats for 12 years. I have a diverse Office Technical background, but I have learned to work pretty good with my hands too."

"I take care of my 87-year-old father, who lives with me, and the 2-family that he owns. I work 2 days a week at Carpenter's Place and volunteer on Fridays for Lutheran Social Services at the Resource Intervention Center and on May 10th I am teaching my first class on "How to Budget and Find Financial Stability" to people on probation."

"I have three amazing children, 2 step-sons, and a whole herd of grandchildren, which are the sunshine of my life!!!!"

"The thing I like most about being in the rental business is the ability it gives me to be able to be available to help out my children and be able to attend school functions with the grandchildren during the day. If there are things I want to do with them dur-

ing the day, I just do my rental work at night or on the weekend. I also value the great relationships I have built over the years with my tenants."

"The things I hate most is having to go through the eviction process and tenants that spend their money on trips and toys and then can't pay their rent. When I was divorced with 3 kids and didn't make a lot of money, I never missed a house payment. We maybe didn't have much else, but the bills were always paid. So I have no sympathy when delinquent tenants start making their excuses."

"One of my most memorable landlord experience was evicting a guy who thought I couldn't get him out. I called him several times throughout the eviction process, explaining where I was in the process and would he please just move his stuff out, so we wouldn't have to put it on the curb. He did not respond to any of my messages."

"When we showed up with the sheriff, the tenant was not home and the lock on the back door had been changed. Besides changing the locks on the back door, he nailed the other two exit doors shut with 3" spikes all the way around each door. What a mess that made of the woodwork!!!! I had to pay a locksmith to come and open the back door. To my surprise the tenant had not moved out a single item!!! Cash on the table, big screen TV, game systems, vcr, tons of movies and games, all his furniture and clothes!!!!!! Everything went to the curb!!!!"

"The funniest thing was, around 7 pm that night, the upstairs tenant called me and said the evicted tenant is out front with the police. He was trying to file a complaint against me for taking his stuff!!! The officer asked him if he knew he was being evicted and he told the officer how I had been calling him all the time about it. The officer asked if the sheriff was present when the stuff was removed and the upstairs tenant told him the sheriff was there. The officer just smiled and said to the evicted tenant, "Then why didn't you move out your stuff?" and then he left."

"As soon as the sheriff left, the neighbors went through the stuff on the curb and made off with any-

thing of value. By morning there was only a broken chair and a garbage can full of debris left on the curb. People were coming by all night long and taking stuff. I tried to get him to just move his stuff out, but some people just won't listen!!!!"

"As a single woman in this business, the best thing I ever did was join the Rockford Apt. Association!!!!!! I was very upset one day when one of my tenants threatened to sue me for keeping her security deposit. I sent out a plea for help to the email group to see if I had done things correctly and Vince and several others gave me great advice and calmed my nerves so I could get a good night's sleep!!!! Thanks again for those that

offered advice!!!! It was greatly appreciated!!!! I also learned, through the association, how to do criminal background checking on the county website, and that has been the greatest thing since sliced bread. I have been able to select much better tenants!!!!"

"The best advice I could offer new landlords is that screening your tenants is CRITICAL!!!!!! Do thorough background checks and check references, learn everything you can about the applicant before leasing to anyone. Also, for women in this business, when showing open apartments, try to group several showings together so that you are not alone with anyone for very long."

Condensation Mold

by Paul Gosh and Cassidy Kuchenbecker

Do you often get calls from tenants saying, "I've got mold growing all over my bathroom (or) around my windows!" or "My entire apartment smells musty, even my clothes are starting to stink. Do something."

If you've owned an apartment or condo building for any length of time this situation probably crops up more often than you'd like. The good news is most general mold growth in apartments is condensation-related, usually does not impact occupant health, and is easily cleaned and managed. But we need to understand why the mold is growing to stop it

Cause of the Condensation

Apartment units are especially susceptible to condensation issues from the build-up of moisture. The buildings as a whole generally have a higher occupancy density and a lack of mechanical ventilation bringing in dry outdoor air in winter months.

Showering and stovetop cooking are obvious sources of excess moisture in an apartment. There are several other items which may not be as obvious that should be taken into consideration:

Occupant density: A five-member family is going to create much more humidity than a bachelor for any given apartment size. Condensation issues are often seen when too many occupants are in too small of an apartment unit.

Bathroom exhaust fans: Many tenants don't use the bathroom exhaust fans. Ideally, the exhaust fan is operated during and for 15 minutes after showering. The bathroom door must remain closed when the exhaust fan is operating to properly remove the moisture. To ensure the exhaust fan is operated, install a timer on the light switch. When the light turns on, the fan turns



on. When the light is turned off, the fan operates for an additional 15 minutes. Be aware, if the fan is noisy, the occupants will not be pleased.

Apartment layout: Many apartment units have bathrooms with showers near the bedrooms. This provides an easy pathway for humidity generated by showering to condense on and around bedroom windows and other cold surfaces.

Cooking habits: Is your tenant an aspiring Emeril or just is often frying, boiling, or baking in the kitchen? If a kitchen exhaust fan that vents to the outdoors is not present over the oven, consider instructing the occupants to put a fan in the kitchen window to operate when the oven is operating. In addition, a gas-fired stove releases considerable quantities of moisture from the burning of gas.

Furnace/water heater: As just mentioned, any gas-fired appliance also produces moisture. The combustion products produced from gas-fired furnaces, boilers, and water heaters must be properly vented to the outdoors. Sometimes, however, these devices fail and the combustion products are directed indoors. These situations create both moisture issues and potentially life-threatening carbon monoxide exposures.

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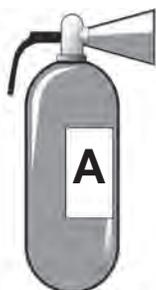
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Humidifiers: Many a child's bedroom has experienced excessive wall or window condensation due to the operation of a humidifier. Despite the claimed health benefits, humidifiers should not be operated.

Mold Growth

"Okay," you say, "Condensation is probably the reason mold grew in this apartment unit. What now? My tenant went on the internet and is worried sick about 'toxic' mold and wants this taken care of."

Most condensation-related molds are found in abundance in the outdoors; most people get exposed to them when they go outside. These molds tend not to become airborne unless you have several square feet of growth as well. It still looks icky, and may cause odors and grow on contents as well, so something should be done about it.

First things first: throw out your 'mold-killing' sprays and jugs of bleach. You want to use soapy water (dish soap works the best) and disposable rags. Per EPA guidelines if there's less than ten square feet of mold growth it can be cleaned by occupants or any

maintenance workers with these items. Next, discuss with your tenant about the source of moisture, typically showering and cooking, and get some insight into their habits. Instruct them to operate the bathroom exhaust fan during showers and for 15 minutes afterward and to keep the bathroom door closed as well.

Musty odors are typically caused by mold growth under carpeting installed on concrete slabs. The solution to this is often to remove the carpeting, discard the carpet pad, and thoroughly clean the concrete slab. We often recommend not installing carpeting on concrete, especially when you can't control the occupant's habits.



A man on his Harley was riding along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, God said, "Because you have tried to be faithful to me, I'll grant you one wish."

The biker pulled over and said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want."

God replied, "Your request is materialistic, think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking: the supports required reaching the bottom of the Pacific and the concrete and steel it would take!! I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that could possibly help mankind."

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally, he said, "God, I wish that I, and all men, could understand women. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing is wrong, why she snaps and complains when I try to help, and how I can make a woman truly happy."

God replied, "You want two lanes or four on that bridge?"



We had a very informative panel discussion last month about how to minimize Vacancies. Karl mediated the discussion, and four of our local experts discussed how they handle moveouts, inspections, and getting a property ready for movein. It was an excellent presentation, and we thank all the participants for their input.



Eric Peterson from
ABC Supply Co. Inc.



Dana Esparza,
Winn. Cty.,
Lead Program Mgr.
She presented how to
apply for the Lead Safe
Program.

Dean Impey

Hours:
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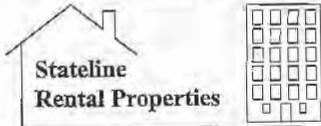
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Creating Lead Safe Rockford

Summer is almost here, which means windows will soon be opening and children will be playing outside. If you own an older (pre-1978) property, this could mean that your tenants' children will be exposed to high levels of lead and even become lead poisoned. Don't wait until it's too late. Protect your tenants and yourselves. The Winnebago County Health Department is currently accepting applications for the Creating Lead Safe Rockford 2011 program. This program provides free inspections and repair of lead hazards in rental and owner-occupied properties throughout Winnebago County. Apply now and avoid the summer waiting list! For full program details or to apply, please visit our website at www.wchd.org or call Dana Esparza, Program Manager, at 815-720-4130.

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WELCOME new members:

Steven Horvath, Fulcrum Enterprises LLC.
Marty Anderson, M. Anderson & Company
Robert & Julie Hardt

Rockford Apartment Association Code of Ethics

We, the members of the RAA, recognizing our duty to the public and the intimate nature of the relationship between the apartment resident and the owner, or manager, and being aware of the vastly increasing role of the apartment industry in providing the home of the future, and in order to provide the apartment-residing public with the maximum in quality and service upon the highest standards of honest and integrity, do hereby bind ourselves, with each and every member, together and alone, agreeing that, so long as we remain members of the RAA and so long as nothing contained herein shall be unlawful, we shall:

1. Promote, employ and maintain a high standard of integrity in the performance of all rental obligations and services in the operation of our apartment communities.
2. Maintain and operate our apartment communities in accordance with fair and honorable standards of competition, ever mindful of the purposes of the Rockford Apartment Association and in compliance with the by-laws thereof.
3. Strive continually to promote the education and fraternity of the membership and to promote the progress and dignity of the apartment industry in creating a better image of itself in order that the public may be better served.
4. Seek to provide better values, so that an even greater share of the public may enjoy the many benefits of apartment living.
5. Establish high ethical standards of conduct within the apartment industry in the business relationship between the owner, managers and suppliers of products and services to the apartment industry.
6. Maintain property standards of the appropriate governmental authority.
7. Ensure that every qualified individual, regardless of that individual's race, color, religion, gender, disability, familial status or national origin is afforded the same opportunity to rent an apartment and enjoy the benefits of apartment living.

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State Line Rentals	920 22nd Street	1-815-398-8886
Terra Creek Apartments	375 Bienterra Trail	1-815-397-3320