



FEBRUARY MEETING

Tuesday, February 18, 2014

The R.A.A. would like to invite you to our
Networking / Vendor Information 6:30 P.M.

General Meeting 7:00 P.M.

Tenant Screening

Tom Klein—Winnebago County Clerk
of the Circuit Courts

Tools available through the County web site for tenant screening followed by a panel discussion of best practices in tenant screening, included evaluating rental history, income standards, criminal records and credit history.

Tues - Feb. 18th at 7pm

Cost: FREE for members, \$15. non-members

As our members receive the February edition of the newsletter we are turning our attention toward spring. I know many of you share my desire to put down the snow shovels and start focusing on renting units. Spring is a busy time for housing providers. The increase in rental activity that comes with the end of winter brings the need to screen prospective tenants. Our February meeting of RAA will be on the topic of best practices for tenant screening.

Deciding who we conduct business with is one of the most important tasks of a property manager. Early in my career a property owner said to me that the easiest thing to do is hand a tenant the key and the hardest thing to do is to get it back. The decision of who we give the keys to our property can have a significant impact on both your financial and emotional well-being.

The nature of our business is to trade to a tenant the right to occupy and control your property in exchange for a monthly rent payment. Once you accept a tenant you can't undo that decision on your own. In order to terminate our business relationship with a tenant, we must go to the courts and ask permission to recover possession of our property. As you all know, that is complex process.

Screening is not only about finding reasons to deny applicants. It can also be about finding ways to say yes. We only make money when our units are occupied. Some prospects will be a clear no, some will be a definite yes but many will be a maybe. Converting those maybes into successful business relationships can make a significant difference in the profitability of your investments.

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Meeting Location → **RAAR**

6776 East State Street
Rockford, IL 61108

JOIN THE RAA!

Members enjoy . . .

- ✓ 8 monthly meetings with guest speakers covering a variety of property management topics
- ✓ Winter Member Mixer
- ✓ Spring Banquet
- ✓ A Web link or page advertising your units on the RAA Web site
- ✓ Member networking with current tips, bargains and referrals
- ✓ Knowledge of State and local political issues affecting property managers and owners
- ✓ Monthly newsletter

A one-year membership is \$99.

To join or e-mail RAA, go to
www.rockfordapartmentassociation.org

To join the e-mail group, go to
RAAmembers@yahoo.com

WELCOME new members:

Tomas & Cher Miller
Nick LaBansky
Scott Robins



Let's Get to Know Ron Clewer by Jerri Cole

As I read over Ron Clewer's interview I thought of all the headaches and rewards of being a landlord and what we go through on a daily basis. I then thought of what Ron might go through. As landlords, if we make mistakes, we are the ones who have to take the blunt of it. We miss valuable time with our friends and family because we have to take care of everyone else. As CEO of the RHA, he is not only responsible for himself, but for all the other employees as well. I see Ron as a strong, smart, caring person who is trying to correct all the past years of mistakes. What a huge undertaking!!!! Is he offending some people? Of course he is!!!! Can this job be done without offending someone? Of course not!!!! Is he making a big difference? Of course he is!!!! He has made a huge difference in making the tenants take responsibility for their actions and this has made it much easier for landlords and for the RHA. He also has dedicated time to educate the tenants on what it takes to be

a good tenant. He also tries hard to connect with the RAA and address our concerns. We need to say a very loud "Thank You" to Ron and be grateful to him for what he has accomplished!!!!

Describe yourself: "Hmm, describe myself . . . Serious to the point of maybe uptight, opinionated and rarely quiet about things that matter."

Favorite Hobby: "Photography, traveling and on occasion, just relaxing. I am a proud father and husband who quietly longs for more time with my wife and kids."

What led you into the job you have now? "I wanted to stay in Rockford and use my abilities to truly make change in our city. I first came to the Housing Authority to discuss artist housing. About 6 months later I became the Director of Development (December 2010). As time progressed, I began to lead Public Housing and then accepted the CEO role in 2012."

What do you like best about your job now? "The people I meet and serve and giving rise to the quiet voices."

What do you like least about your job now? "The judgment and mistrust from all directions - it seems inherent in many government roles."

Do you have any rentals of your own? "I don't. There was a time I had interest in property. Now I can't."

How many of the units for RHA are you in charge of? Can you expound on some of the joys and some of the headaches involved? What are you trying hard to change? What do you see happening with RHA in the next 5 years? "1910 public housing units and manage another 1870 Section 8 vouchers with private sector clients. Some of the joys are watching the talents of the folks we have and how they use them to elevate from poverty. How people can transform their lives when in the right environment. The biggest headache is creating that environment and I and my staff are working hard to do just that—create an environment

of success. I see RHA being a substantially different agency that serves as a partner with our community to develop our economy through quality and opportunity for all; clients, partners and neighbors. We will be a leader in these efforts; no longer a silent fringe agency."

What are you working on to help landlords? "Better process, including speed and accuracy. Time is money and bureaucracy gets in the way. I want to establish mutually friendly, professional business partnerships that support both the tenant and the landlord."

What can the landlords do to help you? "Hold the tenants accountable. Too much perception and poor performance rises to the forefront causing good people to lose faith and opportunity in the Section 8 program."

Strange or funny story that has happened to you on the job? "There are too many...I'll be respectful and pass on this question."

What are your pet peeves? "Closed minds and the saying, 'We've always done it this way'."

Your best advice for anyone involved with the RHA? "There have been many government regulatory changes and many internal changes. We are growing through these changes and hope to emerge a better, more customer friendly agency and a partner with quality landlords. Please take the time to understand the programmatic changes and regulations as it strengthens our ability to serve you."

Any thing else you might want to add? "The agency has been in transition for some time and is starting to emerge as the agency I believe it can be. Please have patience and if you find your concerns are not addressed as you hope, I would like to know about it."

Clubs or organizations you are involved in:**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

NAHRO - National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials - International

Development Committee & IL Legislative Liaison
 Nat. Level - Com. Member Intl. Housing Com.
 Reg. Level - Com. Member Intl. Housing Com.
 State Level - Legislative Liaison

PHADA - Public Housing Directors Association

NICHA - N. IL Council of Housing Authorities

IREM - Institute of Real Estate Management

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

Director - Bridge Rockford Alliance

Director - Illinois Housing Alliance

Chairman - Civic Design Advisory Group

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Board Member - Miracle Mile

Board Member - Community Action Agency

Board Member - EDEEN (Economic Development, Education and Entrepreneurship Network)

Board Member - Rkfd. Police Chief Advisory Board

Committee Member - Transform Rockford (Visioning Committee CoChair)

Committee Member - Rockford Public School Dist 205 Accountability Committee

Committee Member - Alignment Rockford

Committee Member - RAVEN (Rockford Area Violence Elimination Network)

Committee Member - RPS Dist 205 Academy Curriculum Dev. Com. (Auburn H.S.)

Committee Member - Rockford Region CEDS Planning (Comprehensive Ec. Dev. Strategy)

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Knowing a prospect's history helps to structure a lease agreement that decreases the chance of headaches. Sometimes past rental problems were the result of an unexpected loss of income, a health problem or a roommate problem. Those types of issues in a prospective tenant's life might have changed, making it possible for you to accept them as a resident. You can't prevent the recurrence of past problems with your lease agreement unless you know about the applicant's history. That is the goal of proper screening. Getting extra deposit or having a family member cosign the lease are examples of lease provisions you can utilize to give you enough security to offer a prospect housing.

Screening is also a process of documenting the implementation of your leasing policies. Fair housing laws are complex and require uniform treatment of all applicants. You must be able to clearly document the reasons why you were willing to structure a lease that would allow you to accept one prospective tenant but deny another. Imposing strict occupancy standards and making no adjustments in your lease structure has the least liability but might not always be practical based on market conditions and your need to meet your financial obligations.

Making good decisions on who we do business with is a skill that housing providers learn with experience. I hope you can all join us this month to share what you have learned yourself and to pick up new ideas from your fellow RAA members.

—Paul Arena

www.RockfordApartmentAssociation.org

1-800-RAA-6676

PO Box 2502, Loves Park, IL, 61132

Achieving A Better Paint Finish

by Brian Kern

Here are a few tips to create a better paint job. Before opening the paint can, it is important to prep the walls. Begin with screwing a drywall screw near each popped nail. Gently remove the offending nail. Fill small holes or imperfections at least two times with a putty knife. Lightly sand with a sanding pad after each application. Use a metal patch to cover large holes and coat with joint compound. It's usually best to apply compound and then sand three times for larger holes. After working with compounds they should be primed. This will reduce the splotchy look from the final product. Priming will seal the newly repaired areas to help the paint stay on the surface like the existing surface.

Now, it's time to paint. One of the best secrets is to keep the paint "wet" on each surface until completion. Do not start and walk away. Start with the ceilings. By painting ceilings first, you will cover splatter or drip marks when the walls are painted. Edge the corners, then roll. It's ok to get paint on the walls because you will paint them later. Edge only enough that you think will stay damp, so you can roll into it. This allows the paint to blend together.

When it comes to the walls, start at the top and let gravity work for you. Cut in or edge one wall at a time then roll it. Edge near the ceiling then the corners and trim. Roll the wall, starting at the top. Paint from top to bottom. Now repeat on each wall. Keeping the paint "wet" on each surface area, before moving to another surface area, will help you achieve a better finish.

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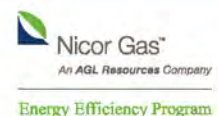
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January Speakers



LoRayne Logan from Transform Rockford



Cyndie Hall from Neighborhood Network of Rockford

Of all the blonde jokes, this one has to be the best— because it makes football make sense!

A guy took his blonde girlfriend to her first football game. They had great seats right behind their team's bench.

After the game, he asked her how she liked it.

"Oh, I really liked it," she replied, "especially the tight pants and all the big muscles, but I just couldn't understand why they were killing each other over 25 cents."

Dumbfounded, her boyfriend asked, "What do you mean?"

"Well, they flipped a coin, one team got it and then for the rest of the game, all they kept screaming was 'Get the quarterback! Get the quarterback!' I'm like... Helloooooo? It's only 25 cents!"

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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:

- 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.
- 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 bylaws thereof.
- 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.
- Seek to provide better values, so that an even greater share of the public may enjoy the many benefits of apartment living.
- 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.
- Maintain property standards of the appropriate governmental authority.
- 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.

Financial statement available upon request to members in good standing.

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Guest Speaker: Tom Cline

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