



# OCTOBER MEETING

## Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2014

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Meeting Location

**RAAR**

6776 East State Street  
Rockford, IL 61108

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### WELCOME

#### new members:

Steven R. Niemczyk

Bartholomew Bloese

## Candidates for Winnebago County Sheriff

Gary Caruana and Bob Springer

**Tues - Oct. 21 at 7pm**

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

**Networking 6:30 P.M.**

**General Meeting 7:00 P.M.**

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RAA's October meeting will be a discussion with the two candidates for Winnebago County Sheriff. Our current Sheriff Dick Meyers is retiring. We wish him well in his future endeavors and thank him for his strong support of our members.

When he took office, Sheriff Meyers made a commitment to ensure that orders for possession were enforced within three days of the date the judge determined possession should be returned to a landlord. Over the years, whenever I would run into Sheriff Meyers he would always check to make sure his office was getting the job done in three days. I was always happy to report that they do. We are very fortunate to have that level of service. From my work with our state association, I am aware that landlords in other cities wait weeks and sometimes months to have orders of possession enforced.

I am interested to hear from the two candidates, Gary Caruana and Bob Springer, as to whether they are willing to commit to the same level of service that Sheriff Meyers has provided. In addition, we will discuss issues related to crime in rental property. I believe that too often the obligation to control crime is delegated to rental property owners. Crime Free Housing policies that impose penalties on property owners when a tenant is accused of a crime are becoming common. We don't have established Crime Free Housing policies in place here at this time but it has been discussed by our local officials.

The person who holds the office of Sheriff has a great deal of influence over our business. This is a very important election for RAA members to be involved in. Past sheriffs in Winnebago County have retained the office for a long time. I hope you all can attend to add your questions and comments to the conversation.

—Paul Arena, RAA President



## **GARY CARUANA**

Gary Caruana served nearly a decade as a Winnebago County Deputy Sheriff. During this time he served as a patrol officer, corrections officer, and process server allowing him to develop an understanding of the workings of the entire department.

In the early eighties Caruana made the decision to move to the private sector where he began his long time career with United Parcel Service (UPS). Caruana rose through the ranks of the corporation. During this growth he also attended college earning a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree.

At UPS Caruana became the Corporate Investigative Security Manager responsible for facilities in Illinois including Chicago, Peoria, and Rockford airports. This responsibility covered 12,000 employees and millions of parcels carried by thousands of vehicles across the state. Caruana developed working relationships with Local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies including the post 9/11 master operating security plans within O'Hare, Rockford and Peoria airports.

Caruana retired a year ago from UPS and began discussing his desire, for his potential run for Sheriff of Winnebago County. On September 5, 2013 he made his candidacy official before a crowd of over 150 friends and supporters. Caruana has also substitute taught in the local public school system and has been a volunteer for Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful. Caruana currently is serving as a commissioner on the Rockford Board of Fire and Police, and continues to stay in contact with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Caruana resides in Rockford with his wife and daughters.



## **BOB SPRINGER**

Bob Springer has served Winnebago County in law enforcement for over 30 years. He began as a Corrections Officer in the jail and worked his way through the ranks to Deputy Chief. Throughout his time at the Sheriff's Office he worked in every component of the agency. As Deputy Chief, Springer worked closely with current Sheriff Dick Meyers to reduce crime in Winnebago County.

In 2004, Bob Springer expanded his training by completing the FBI National Academy. During his career with the Sheriff's Office and then after retirement from the department he worked as a commander, coordinator and trainer with ILEAS where I led teams of law enforcement personnel from across Illinois in response to disasters like Hurricane Katrina. ILEAS is, The Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System, which is part of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, ILEAS also readies law enforcement personnel for local and regional responses. As the Region 2 commander for ILEAS I worked with eighteen County Sheriffs and hundreds of Police Chiefs to create a 60 officer team, which is a deployable resource for every agency in the region including Winnebago County.

Bob Springer worked closely with Sheriff Dick Meyers, state and federal agencies to innovatively fight crime. Springer understands that crime in the 21st Century must be combated regionally, because criminals act with no boundaries. Bob Springer's leadership is needed in the Sheriff's Office to assure continued success.

## News from September's Meeting

The values of our investments are affected by the stability of the neighborhoods where our properties are located. Many areas in Rockford have neighborhood associations that help to maintain the quality of the neighborhood. It is in our member's best interest to do whatever we can to support the efforts of those groups and to communicate with the neighbors of our properties. To strengthen our relationship with neighborhood associations, last month the RAA hosted a forum discussion with representatives of these groups. The tone of the conversation was very positive.

To continue building our relationship with neighborhood associations, I encourage all RAA members to seek out the groups where your properties are located. Join those groups so that you can be involved in the conversation on issues affecting the areas where you have invested. Make your tenants aware of these groups as well. Connecting tenants with their neigh-

bors provides a sense of community that may encourage them to take pride in the place where they live.

During our discussion, one to the speakers asked whether we would rather neighbors call the landlord or the city when there is a problem at a rented property. There is an impression among some of the neighborhood groups that landlords are unapproachable and don't want to be bothered with complaints. I for one would much rather hear from a neighbor than a City of Rockford inspector. To help connect our members with neighbors the RAA offers a property contact directory on our web site. This program is an effective tool to provide a means for neighbors of our properties to get in touch with us. If you have not already posted your properties and a contact number on the directory please consider doing so. You can access the directory at [RockfordApartmentAssociation.org](http://RockfordApartmentAssociation.org).

—Paul Arena, RAA President

## Notes from Ricky L. Davis

### Leasing Property in Fall and Winter

Not many people move when it is cold. So if you do get someone to lease in the months of Oct., Nov., Dec., & Jan., you should write your lease for 16 months instead of 12. You do not want that lease to expire in the colder months when we have fewer people looking for rental property. I want my leases to expire at the end of Feb. or March because tenants often get their income tax returns at the end of January and may be looking for a change. Some of these changes are because of high heating bills or changes to their family status meaning they need more or less space. I also recommend that you give them December's rent free if you are having a hard time renting in these colder months. Call it a Holiday Special because most people will spend more money in Dec for x-mas presents.

### Planning for Winter

With fall upon us we need to be thinking about getting our properties ready for the colder months. One of the things we do is go around to all the furnaces before it gets cold to start them up and make sure all is running well. We look at our older properties that do not have newer windows and put plastic over them help the lower the tenants' heating bills. We also check our houses with outside storm windows to see if caulking is necessary to prevent heat loss. Another heat loss problem we see is where basement windows have single pane glass that should be insulated and boarded over. Install window well covers to prevent rain and snow from getting in and to minimize and air loss. Inspect and

tighten any loose window latches. You also need to consider weather stripping around storm windows and exterior doors to help tenants control heating costs. Also check dryer vent flaps and any pipes going outside that might have air gaps. Check any outside faucets and cap them from the inside or put covers over them. You may think by these suggestions that I am tenant-friendly. No, these steps help reduce expenses for tenants making it more likely they will stay and continue paying rent through the winter months. It costs more money when they move out and our properties are vacant. If your unit or house is going to sit vacant in winter make sure it is winterized properly.

### Tenant Maintenance

If your tenants are behind in rent before the cold season you need to get them caught up or get them out, because if they cannot pay when it is warm they will not pay when its gets cold. Work on a plan to help them. This is your unit, show you care. You could give them a discount in winter because of heating bills. Speak to them about it. If they have trouble with the heating bills there are services that can help them but let them know early in the season. Nicor is not suppose to cut off gas in the winter but I have seen it done and it only takes once for pipes to freeze.

I have given you a few things to think about. Most of you know all of this but a reminder to get back to basics in tough times is what is needed. I will be happy to share more with a phone call.



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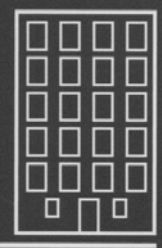
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## Meet Flo Ziemer by Jerri Cole

Funny how we can almost always remember our first impression of someone. My first thought of Flo was what a nice person! Conservative, dedicated, articulate, and smart also came to my mind. This still is my impression of her.

I have been married for ten years. My husband was also involved in property management before we married so we have been doing it together ever since. We have two sons in college and a daughter in 3rd grade. Our sons help us out at the apartments part-time.

I love reading and spending time with family and friends. We have a very big extended family so we always have family get-togethers. In the future I would like to do more traveling with my family.

I first became a landlord about 13 years ago. My Dad encouraged me to buy property for an investment. I had no experience so I decided to join the Rockford Apartment Association. I have learned so much from this organization. The members have always been great when I needed help. This organization has been wonderful! Paul Arena and the other board members have put a lot of hard work into making the RAA what it is today.

What I like best about being a landlord is being able to provide a nice place to live and seeing tenants who take pride in making it their home. I also enjoy getting to know the tenants. It's nice to have an investment that I have some control over and that rewards me for my work.

What I don't enjoy about being a landlord is doing paperwork! I also don't enjoy babysitting. We don't go out of town very often, but when we do, we always seem to have issues that come up.

One time I had a tenant that would always leave the front door to the building open and unlocked. Every time I would go over there I would remind her to keep the door closed and locked. One day one of my tenants called me and told me that when they went downstairs they found a homeless man sleeping on the basement floor in their storage unit. They were surprised and told him that he had to leave. After that incident, I shared what had happened to the tenant that would leave the door open. She never left that door open again!

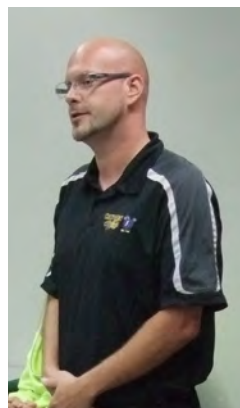
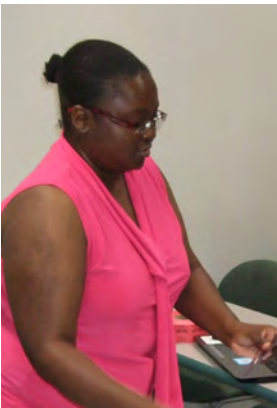
If Rockford wanted to help landlords, they could start by helping to lower our property taxes. Property taxes are making it harder and harder to have investments in Rockford.

If I could change anything, I would love to change the way we have to file our taxes. As I said before, one of my least favorite things to do is paperwork. It would be nice if we had some sort of flat tax that everyone would have to pay so that we could avoid all the processing of paperwork.

Two of my pet peeves are picking up other peoples garbage and tenants not being honest.

My best advice for new landlords is to join the RAA and go to the meetings. Screen your tenants really well and don't be afraid that you won't find a qualified tenant. Don't let the tenants get behind on their rent. They will never be able to catch up.

## September Meeting



*Left: Jackie Andrews from A&F Judgement Enforcers Center: Troy Hess from Carpet Wizard Right: Cyndie Hall, Cathy Johnson, Dyanna Chandler, Karen Hoffman, and Joe Owen*



Dean Impey

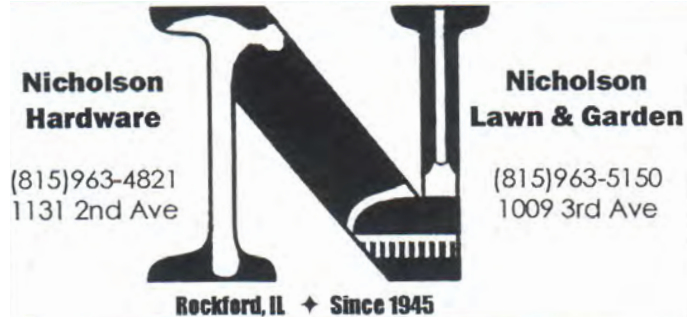
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## Rockford Apartment Association Code of Ethics

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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## OCTOBER MEETING

Tuesday, Oct. 21

### Candidates for Winnebago County Sheriff

Gary Caruana and Bob Springer

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*Forms are available at the following locations. Please call in advance to be sure someone will be available to help you.*

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State Line Rentals	920 22nd Street	1-815-398-8886
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