



THE UPDATE

The Voice of the Washtenaw and Livingston County's Rental Housing Industry!

Volume 23, Issue 1 — January/February 2007

Always available at www.wa3hq.org

RESIDENT FUN!

Easy, Economical, and Fun Activities for Your Residents

By Mary Gwyn, CPM

Brainstorming for this Resident Retention Workshop, I came up with 50 Resident Fun Activities. Most of these ideas are relatively low cost, low labor, and if need be, short notice kinds of activities. They also hit on widely varied activities, so hopefully you'll find something for a diverse group of residents. Once you know your residents' preferences, you can tend toward the activities they like. But don't judge activities merely on attendance. In a large community, interests will be varied, and you want to meet as many of your residents' needs as you can – not just a particular social crowd.

I think I've told you that I'm from the KISS school (Keep it Short and Sweet or Keep it Simple, Stupid!) So the ones your team can divide up and do simply and SOON will be the best ones to tackle!

Okay, so they are not all for EVERYONE, but surely you can find 20 reasonable activities on this list!

1. **Come By the Office for a GREAT BIG KISS!** Buy some chocolate kisses, maybe even the giant ones, and put a sign up at the entrance with red and white and heart-shaped balloons. This is great for residents and prospects alike!
2. **TGIF Night:** Thank Goodness It's Friday! Make it SO EASY that you could even do it once a month! One Friday have residents "drop by" for 6 Foot Long Subs. Then order Dominos next time. This should only be EASY STUFF! For you AND for the residents!
3. **MARCH MADNESS!** Rent a BIG SCREEN TV and buy plenty of microwave or huge bags of popcorn and sodas. Have residents come watch the college play-offs and then if it's successful, later the

NBA play-offs. With lots of the top teams in the country you can generate some great friendly rivalries – maybe even have team memorabilia as giveaways.

4. **BEACH AT THE _____!** Just like the cardinal is the state bird, Shaggin' is the North Carolina State Dance! With our great clubhouse, you have 2 options – Shag Lessons one month and then a month later, a DJ with good beach and have a BEACH AT THE _____ dance! You could even have it be after the weather's warmer and have the dance at pool side on our great pool deck! If it rains, no worries – you can have it inside!

5. **FLICK NIGHT!** Rent a big TV/VCR for a Movie Night. Build up excitement by sending some potential titles around and polling residents for which movie they want to see.

6. **Apartment Kids Club:** Once a month or more frequently if you can do it EASILY, rent a TV/VCR and show kid-type movies, either in the conference room, or maybe even in a vacant apartment with "borrowed" or rented chairs. Have the activity occur the same day every month so it's easier to remember. Maybe you could also have a "Special Guest" each month. Perhaps a clown, someone to teach a few minutes of gymnastics, the local librarian, a storyteller, someone to paint faces, etc. Again, the key is EASY!

7. **Apartment Kids Club 2:** We partnered with a local church building for an after school program which included TUTORING! Lots of elderly from that body wanted to come help after school, and it gave us a great benefit for our residents.

8. **NASCAR NIGHT!** EVERYONE in the south LOVES the races! So rent the BIG TV and have the race on in the clubhouse. I think the races are usually on Sunday afternoons, so it may distract a little from leasing, but it will be worth it. Some of the races are other times, such as Saturday evening. Maybe you could hunt down some autographed memorabilia to give as prizes. Or maybe you could get hold of some tickets to a future race.

9. **International Hors D'oeuvres Night:** Get a caterer to compile a list of neat foreign appetizers. Say, toasted ravioli from Italy, egg rolls, artichoke dip, chili con queso, etc. Let this be a "sophisticated" night, with candles and maybe even the caterer serving.

10. **HAT NIGHT!** It's just a pizza or make your own sandwich night, but with a twist – to be admitted you must wear a hat! You'll be SHOCKED at what some people



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WA3 Calendar Briefs:

- January 23 - General Membership Meeting at Weber's Inn - Topic: Wage and Hour Issues (exempt employees, overtime requirements and more)
- January 24 - Customer Service for Office Leadership and Techs Education-3 CEC
- January 25 - Taking Charge of Change Education-3 CEC

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Published By:

Washtenaw Area Apartment Association
2008 S. State Street, Suite C,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734/663-1200; FAX 734/821-0497
Email: info@wa3hq.org

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Deadline:

15th of the month for next month's publication.
Submit all materials to
Alice Ehn, Executive Officer

2007 Directors:

Executive Officers:

- Tom Clark, *President*
Clark Properties; 734-996-2836
- Melissa Seitz, *Pinnacle Realty*
- Jamie Schmunk, *Wilson White Company*, 734-995-0600

Directors:

- Kelly O'Donnell, *Program Chair*
Edward Surovell Realtors; 734-994-1400
- Francis Clark,
Madison Property Management; 734-994-5284
- Brent Maring, *Product and Service Council Co-Chair*; LPiT Solutions/PropCore; 616-632-2222
- Brad McFarlane, *Membership Chair*
McMullen Realty, 734-769-1800
- Bonnie Bisson, *Product and Service Council Co-Chair*; Instant Furniture Rental; 734-327-4500
- Melissa Fuller, *Newsletter Chair*,
McKinley; 734-769-8520, x.287

PMAM

REPRESENTATIVES:

- Melissa Seitz, *Pinnacle*
- George Markley, *McKinley*

Property Mgmt. Assoc. of Michigan

Association Executive: Kathy Vallie
2757 44th St., Suite 306, Wyoming, MI 49509
616/531-6141, FAX 616/257-0398
www.pmamhq.com

National Apartment Association

201 N. Union Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314
703/518-6141, FAX 703/518-6191
www.naahq.org

President's Message:

By Tom Clark

I would like to begin by thanking the board of directors and the association for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president for 2007. Many important issues surfaced during last year and if that is any indication for 2007, we can expect an interesting and busy year.

I would also like to thank Alice, the members of the board and all the members of the association for their continued support and help on committees that guide our association forward. Any additional help is always welcome.

To better understand who I am and what I am about, please see the article on page 3.

EO Message

By: Alice J. Ehn

2007 starts with a bang

First on January 23rd we have a General Membership Speaker that everyone that has employees needs to come and hear. Mel Muskovitz, Employment Law Attorney with Dykema Gossett will discuss "Wage and Hour Issues (exempt employees, overtime requirements and more)". This is at Weber's Inn at 8:00 am so you can all be back to work by 10:00.

Then comes education. Sue Weston, Regional Training Director for Pinnacle and **National Trainer** will be in town. She has offered her time at a very **very** reasonable rate to give back to this small association with 2 of her most popular classes. Wednesday afternoon brings "Customer Service for Office Leadership and Techs" and then Thursday Morning is "Taking Charge of Change". You should really take advantage of these classes for only \$49 here in Michigan. These same classes cost as much as \$100 in the Texas market. Sue has over 25 years experience in the property management field and it would be good to start your year off with quality education such as this.

At the end of the month starts the NALP classes and then February 15th starts the CAM. There is a new online registration process through NAA that you all will need to adhere to. I will check this out over the next month so that I can work with all of you to sign up via the new procedures.

February 6th will be a new and improved Education Trade Expo. The first part of the day will offer Michael Finney, President and CEO from SPARK with an Economic Seminar that is sure to give you insight as to what will happen in the business environment for 2007. Cost to attend the Seminar is only \$30 and well worth it. Next in the day is lunch for everyone and the Trade Expo. There are prizes through out the next two hours while we set up for the **NEW MAINTENANCE MANIA**. Maintenance Mania is sponsored by The Home Depot Supply and NAA and comes to us direct from the California Home Depot offices. All we need do is set up the games, score the participants and anyone that plays on a team can qualify to win airfare, lodging and conference registration to the NAA Education Conference in June in Las Vegas Nevada. There are cash prizes locally for 1st, 2nd and 3rd for all seven games. Last but not least, don't forget to sign up for your chance to win \$250 Gift Certificate to Briarwood Mall through the virtual Trade Show online at www.wa3hq.org. Everyone that fills out the registration online and then attends the trade show has the ability to win.

Finally, on February 7th is PMAM's Capital Day in Lansing. The day consist of speaking to your congressman and senators and then participating in a reception for all Legislators from 4 to 6 pm. Everyone that cares about what happens in this next two years in Lansing should attend the reception and make your voice heard. Contact me for more information on any of this.

Getting to Know your Board: Tom Clark, President



Your Title? President

How long have you been a member of the WA3? About 8 years.

What is the most rewarding part of your position with the WA3? Seeing the outcome of the hard work of the members of the association.

What was the last book that you read? Currently reading Culture Warrior by Bill O'Reilly.

What has been your most memorable moment with the WA3? Two – the challenge the association made to the proposed change in the Ann Arbor city dumpster collection and the effort made to make our views known on the newly adopted early lease signing ordinance.

What is your favorite quote or saying? If you don't stand for something you can fall for anything.

What three words best describe your personality? Meticulous, determined & reserved

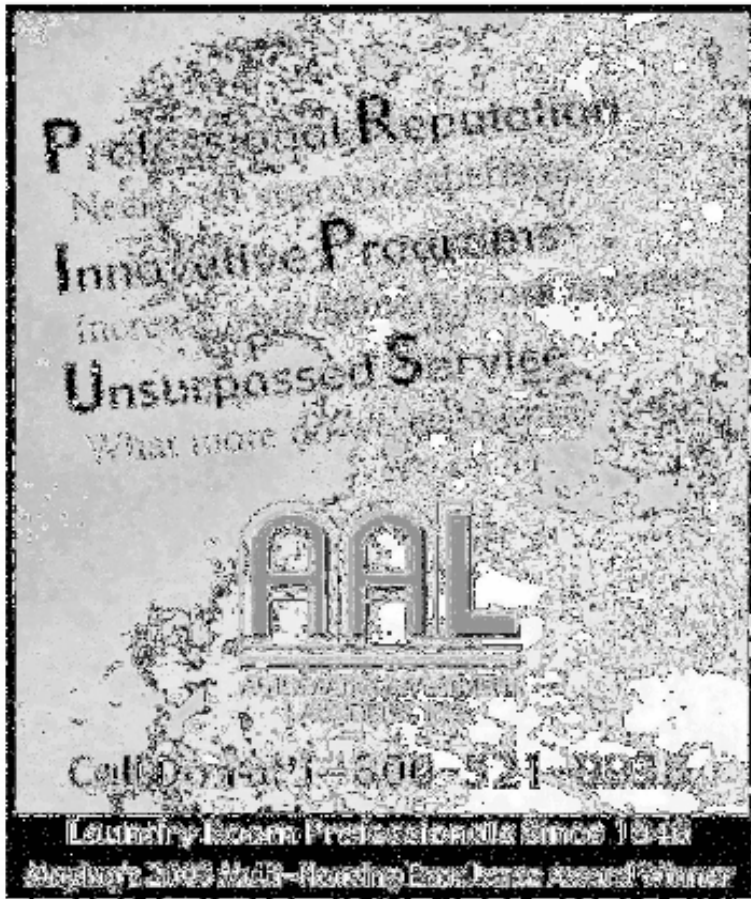
If you could meet anyone – who would it be and why? Tough one. Probably ancestors of my family I never met to see how their values impacted and shaped my family.

What has been the best piece of advice given to you? Do what you can to try and make all your surprises good ones.

What other activities do you like to do for fun? Golfing and spending time with family and friends.

What keeps you up at night? Things I think I could have done better.

What is your pet peeve? The lack of alternatives being offered or lack of effort to offer alternatives during any type of negotiations.



(Continued from page 1)

will do for a laugh!

11. **DAGWOOD NIGHT!** Have a great big sandwich bar – get some ideas from a Subway sandwich place. Have a million condiments, choices, etc. Give prizes for the biggest sandwich, the thinnest sandwich, the one who eats the MOST sandwiches.

12. **Sundaes!** Have a Sundae Bar – Maybe even on a Sunday. What a great, messy, easy, fun event for all ages. For a “Young Life” event we actually made a 20-foot long sundae and everyone just dug in and got what they wanted (IT WAS SO COOL!) – probably too messy for indoors but great for this summer at the pool. But you could still do an easy one inside with bowls of cherries, cut up bananas, etc. To make the 20 feet long banana split, take pieces of gutter (yes, GUTTER!) and cover it with foil, attaching lengths to get your desired length. Fill it with the ice cream, pineapple, pre-cut bananas, chopped nuts, fudge sauce, whatever else goes in one – then finish it off with spray can whipped cream! For extra fun, have the residents assemble the actual banana split before eating it!

13. **Wine Tasting:** This one probably poses some liability problems, so DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT unless you have owner/management approval! Lots of local wine merchants will do the tasting for a low cost per person, often including snacks.

14. **THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE CHOCOLATE NIGHT!** We have tons of GREAT desserts: Chocolate cheesecakes, triple fudge brownies, chocolate chip cookies, chocolate fondue, chocolate mousse, chocolate covered pretzels, hot chocolate to drink, EVERYTHING made of chocolate! Maybe even offer the recipes for people to do their own! (By the way, I have recipes for anything that's chocolate!)

15. **Be Cool By the Pool School:** Have swimming lessons for different ages and possibly a life-saving course. Instructors could be through a joint program with the YMCA, or through a local College or Community College, or even this summer through a local phys ed teacher who's off for the summer and is willing to teach to earn a few bucks.

16. **Backyard Barbecue – BYOB!** That's BRING YOUR OWN BEEF! Get out the corn on the cob, and throw the burgers on the grill! Either contract the whole meal or rent a huge grill and have residents BYOB – bring your own BEEF! We provide drinks, condiments, and even the “chef.” Doing it this way you don't have to worry as much about how many come because you're mostly buying things you can keep for next time.

17. **Put A Shrimp on the Barbee Night:** Plan an Aussie barbecue, complete with “native” Australian dishes. It won't be hard – we eat the same things – but only we know that!

18. **Apartment Investment Club:** Have a stockbroker or professor from the college commit to take an investment club for 6 months, 1 meeting a month. Have the person give a brief workshop the first meeting, then get together with the club once a month for 6 months to see how they're doing. After that, hopefully they'll still want to keep the club together!

19. **American Beauty Night:** Get someone from the Clinique or Estee Lauder counters, or from Mary Kay Cosmetics, or one of the other beauty product lines, to come over and give a make over, skin care techniques, make-up techniques, colors, maybe even a facial! Or give a facial as a prize!

20. **Ballroom Dancing at the _____:** Have a dance instructor give one night (or more if response is good) of Ballroom Dance lessons in the clubhouse! Have it candle lit, low level lighting, and maybe even follow up with a dance a month later! You can often get an instructor free if you let him/her market the place he/she teaches (try Fred Astaire).

21. **I WANT TACO BAR!** (Play off the “I want taco bell” ads). Have a taco bar at the clubhouse, complete with Mexican music, maybe even a local mariachi band to play! Follow it up with a pinata for the kids to beat while blind-folded to get the candy out! Easy but fun!

22. **Gardening Made Easy:** Have a local landscape store employee, or someone from the Agricultural Extension Service or local College Horticulture Department student or teacher give some pointers on gardening in SMALL SPACES. Have this SOON since garden preparation has to be done in early spring. In fact, we're already too late for sugar peas! Maybe our own local TV resident horticulturist extraordinaire would be willing to be our speaker, or be able to find us one! Maybe we could even have a

(Continued on page 5)



NAA Accessibility Task Force Holds First Meeting

By Dave Watkins, CAPS
2007 National Apartment Association Chairman of the Board
Greystar Management Services

The NAA Accessibility Task Force held its first meeting Dec. 12. The task force's purpose is to explore strategies to reduce the number of enforcement actions against the apartment industry, to develop effective training strategies for staff--especially onsite staff--and to accelerate industry awareness of this issue and the resources available to enhance compliance. NAA will keep members informed about the task force's progress.

An excellent HUD resource, the Fair Housing Accessibility First Web site, www.fairhousingfirst.org, offers training materials and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. NAA members may register online for a free accessibility training program that covers:

- Disability rights laws;
 - A technical overview of the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act; and
- Common design and construction violations and solutions.

In January, HUD will offer this training in Lake Charles, La., Cleveland and Biloxi, Miss. Apartment owners, developers, architects, trainers, legal counsel, compliance managers and risk managers attended a recent HUD Fair Housing Accessibility First training session and found the program extremely valuable. Please call 888/341-7781 for information.

NAA Education Conference Inks Speaker: "The Pursuit of Happiness"

NAA invites members to hear the inspiring life story of Chris Gardner, who was portrayed by Will Smith in the recently released movie "The Pursuit of Happiness," when Gardner speaks at the 2007 NAA Education Conference & Exposition in Las Vegas on June 28-30.

A true testament to the perseverance necessary to go from "rags to riches," Gardner overcame obstacles, broke negative cycles and displayed the self-motivation it takes to be a success. Gardner's storytelling captures his audience completely, and his humor lights up the room.

Always hard working and tenacious, Gardner faced a series of circumstances in the early 1980s that left him homeless in San Francisco and the sole guardian of his toddler son. Not willing to give up Chris Jr. or his dream of financial independence, Gardner started at the bottom.

Today, Gardner is the owner and CEO of Christopher Gardner International Holdings with offices in New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

National Accessible Apartment Clearinghouse Wins Award

NAA's National Accessible Apartment Clearinghouse (NAAC), a Web site that provides a central resource of free, searchable national accessible apartment unit information for residents with physical disabilities, earned national recognition from the Council of State Governments (CSG) for exemplary partnership with CSG, the states and their communities.

NAAC includes listings of 80,000 apartment homes in 50 states, helping residents find apartment homes to meet their needs. CSG plays a vital role in bringing the private sector together with the public to meet their housing needs. Contact NAAC's hot line at 800/421-1221 for information on how to list available apartment homes.

Gov. Brad Henry, CSG president, presented the award during the CSG annual meeting in December. NAA's NAAC Coordinator Shelly Cook accepted the award.

NAA Encourages Members to Participate in National Job Shadow Day

With the goal of helping to promote the apartment industry as a viable career choice, NAA members, through NAAEI, are encouraged to participate in Ground Hog Job Shadow Day on Feb. 2.

The national program allows employers to welcome high school students into their workplace so they can "shadow" workplace mentors to see and experience what working in their respective industries is all about.

This is a great opportunity for high school students to gain firsthand experiences about what it's like to work at all levels of the apartment management industry. From business and finance, to customer service to maintenance and design, there is a wide variety of exciting job skills used every day in apartment management. This is a chance for NAA members to demonstrate the industry's attractiveness to potential employees.

Full details are available at www.jobshadow.org or www.naahq.org.

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Resident Fun con't:

kids gardening party where they start their own seeds in a pot, etc.
23. Roller Skating Night: Rent a local roller rink for the evening and have only residents of the apartment community. Or open it up to others in the local community as well if you think you'd rather have a big crowd. This is a great kid and adult activity. The rink will probably be willing to help with contests, such as limbo, roll the dice and land on a square, speed skate by ages, maybe even some figure skate contests! (Can you tell I go roller skating?)

24. Block Party – Have a party in the parking lot with live music, food (either a catered barbecue, covered dish or hot dog party, etc.
25. Dessert Night – Everyone brings his/her favorite dessert!
26. Self Defense/Personal Safety Class – I had a great guy do one for managers – he would probably do one for you. Steve Grinstead, Coalition for Crime Prevention, Durham, NC. Police will often help with things like this.

27. CPR Classes –community college or emergency service staff for free!
28. Community Watch with local Police Officer helping. Might be able to use a local D.A.R.E. or other program officer.

29. Massage Techniques – local masseuse to speak and give basic techniques.

30. Stress Management Workshop (someone from college, hospital, or Charter Hospital – they'll usually speak free!)

31. Karaoke Party – Rent a Karaoke machine and let your residents SING! Serve refreshments and have a party!

32. Friends of the Library Night – local librarian talks about its service

33. Artist Corner – Professor from local College teach workshop on art or even teach a sketching class

34. Square Dancing Lessons!

35. Mary Kay, Tupperware, Longenberger Basket, Pampered Chef parties

36. Wedding Consultant to speak about wedding preparations

37. Game Day (or Night) – Run Across the Yard, Pillow Case, 3-Legged Race, Pass Orange in Neck, Ring Toss, Horseshoes, Musical Chairs, Red Rover, Capture the Flag, Kick the Can, etc. Do an old fashioned game day (or evening) outside with all the fun games you can think of. Give great "Dollar Store" prizes to all the winners. End with a Barber Shop Quartet (they usually perform free or cheap!) and an old fashioned ice cream social!

38. Parade – Kazoo parade for kids or Pet Parade through the entire community, with everyone "dressing up" his/her pet and taking it for the Parade Route. Give prizes for best dressed pet!

39. Progressive Appetizers Party: Residents can show off by preparing appetizers or you can inexpensively cater. But so that EVERYONE gets a taste of everything, bring out a few dishes at a time. As one is emptying, "progress" to the next one!

40. Tennis Clinic or tennis lessons with local pro or someone from local College

41. Talent Show Night! Have residents "show their stuff" at a talent show for all ages! Award awesome prizes!

42. Covered Dish! Let all your residents show off their culinary expertise! Provide the drinks, plates, cups, napkins, etc.

43. Card Game Night – can be adult or family oriented depending on games being played (poker, crazy 8!)

44. Mother's Morning Out – For stay-at-home moms, have a monthly or weekly get together. If feasible, have it so the kids can be there playing. Say, in a different area of the clubhouse, have finger paints or macaroni and bean art or other kid-oriented activity so moms can talk while kids play.

45. Bridge Club – Once a month have a bridge club in the office where we provide snacks, tables, tallies, etc. It should attract a mature clientele.

46. Computer/Internet Training – Hire a "geek" to give some basics!

47. Walking Club – Have a sign up sheet in the office for people who want to "power walk." Market it on mail kiosks and in laundry room. Have the meeting time set on the sign up sheet. Maybe have someone from the local Y or gym give a brief fitness talk on the kick-off or first one. Maybe keep a "mileage log" in the office so people get some recognition.

48. Casino Night – Have a poker night in the clubhouse. You can do it as fancy or easy as you want. You can rent craps tables, poker stuff, roulette wheels and even gambling costumes if you want. For just a simple activity,

set up a few card tables, provide sodas and chips, and let everyone play.
49. Family Game Night – Bring out the board games – everything from Monopoly, Candyland and Parcheesi, to chess, backgammon and checkers. Let them bring their own games as well. Fun for the whole family!
50. Chess Club – for the true chess aficionado, have a sign up sheet and have the Club meet in the Clubhouse to play monthly or weekly.
51. Classical Music Night – Have Chamber musicians from the local college music school give a concert. Choose string quartets or quintets, woodwind quartets or quintets, or possibly even small jazz quartets.

Well, what do you think? Okay, I heard a few chuckles, but basically out of the 50 ideas here did you find a few you could pull off??? Let me know what you think!

Mary Gwyn is a trainer, speaker and problem-solver, specializing in marketing aspects of the industry. She can be reached at 336.884.8845 or email her at MGwyn@AptDynamics.com.

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Associate Spotlight: RentFAST



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Events:

JANUARY:

17th - Managers Only, Spicetree Apartments, 8:30 to 9:30 am - Open to all members managers. Free



23rd - General Membership Breakfast, Weber's Inn, 8:00 am.

Speaker: Mel Muskovitz, JD, Dykema Gossett Employment Law. Topic: Wage and Hour issues (exempt, overtime requirements and more)



24th - Customer Service for Office Leadership and Techs, 1pm to 4 pm, Cleary University off of Plymouth Rd - Cost \$49 member/\$79 non-member



25th - Taking Charge of Change - 9am to noon Cleary University off of Plymouth Rd - Cost \$49 member/\$79 nonmember

Both Classes Instructed by Sue Weston, Regional Education Director for Pinnacle and Former Director of Education for the National Apartment Association in Washington DC. Sue has over 25 years experience in the property management industry and is CAPS and CAM certified.

(EACH OF THE ABOVE CLASSES QUALIFY FOR 3 CEC FOR NAA DESIGNATIONS)



30 and 31st - NALP - National Apartment Leasing Professional Designation - Cost: \$375 member/\$500 nonmember - Location: Hidden Valley Apartments off of State Street.

FEBRUARY:



6th - Education Trade Expo and Maintenance Mania - Speaker: Michael Finney, CEO and President SPARK, Topic: Economic Forecast for the Business Community. Cost to Keynote: \$30 member/\$65 nonmember. Lunch and Trade Expo to follow: Cost FREE. Also, visit the Virtual Trade Show online at www.wa3hq.org for a chance to win \$250 Gift Certificate to Briarwood Mall.....Then participate in the **MAINTENANCE MANIA**. 7 games, much fun, 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes for all 7 games and a change to win airfare, lodging and conference registration to the National Apartment Associations June Education Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

7th - Capital Day in Lansing with PMAM - Sign up to visit your state representatives and senators and attend the Reception afterward. If you don't communicate to your elected officials you cannot expect they will know how to represent your rental housing interests in Lansing. Please lend your voice to this effort.

February 5th through February 16th - The Home Depot Supply Promo weeks. Purchase your supplies at The Home Depot over these two weeks and the apartment association will get 1 1/2% of your purchases. This is an easy way to support your association without costing you anything extra.



15th - CAM - Certified Apartment Manager Starts.....Sign up now.



What Is Maintenance Mania?

- ◆ A National program offered by the NAA and its affiliates and Presented by The Home Depot Supply (THDS)
- ◆ Competition conducted by a local affiliate comprised of a six timed events based on frequent maintenance issues plus a racecar competition.
- ◆ Participants can register as individuals and match their skills against their industry peers in any or all of the seven events
- ◆ Participants wanting to compete for the National Championships must form a team of two and declare their intention to compete in the National Championship Qualifying Program when they register with the local affiliate
- ◆ Each National Championship Qualifying Program team's combined total team time to complete all competitive events is submitted to NAA
- ◆ Two fastest teams in the five NAA Maintenance Mania regions win an opportunity to go to the Maintenance Mania National Championship at the annual NAA Education Conference and Exposition



FEBRUARY 6 EDUCATION TRADE EXPO

Take a Virtual Tour online at
www.wa3hq.org for a chance
to win \$250 Gift Certificate



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