



**Washtenaw Area
Apartment Association**

*** 21 Years ***

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

**June-July 2006
Volume 22, No. 5**

UPDATE

How to rent vacancies in record time

A lot of investors make the mistake of showing a rental unit before it's really ready. For a little extra time and money, a property can be made very attractive to potential tenants, resulting in higher rents, better prospects, and less time on the market. Here are some ideas to help market your property:

1. Make sure it's perfectly clean and smells good. The importance of cleanliness in selling your properties quickly and to the right people just can't be overstated. A potential tenant who is willing to overlook direct, roach corpses, or mildew smells is probably not the kind of customer you want anyway! For less than \$1200, you

can have a whole house made sparkling clean.

2. Exterminate. Even if you don't see bugs or rodents, it's a good idea to spend a few dollars to bomb the unit before you show it. Any investor who's had a roach run out of the refrigerator during a showing knows what I mean.
3. Pay attention to inexpensive details. Brass switch plate covers cost about \$.30 more than the regular plastic covers, but give a room a whole different, "finished" look.
4. Find out what your competition looks like. Spending a day driving around looking at other rentals in your area is a great use of your time. Remember that you're only trying to make your unit a little better than the others.
5. Use tricks to save money. In rental properties, particularly, you can save money sometimes by knowing how to do the little things instead of the big things. For instance, if a wall is not perfectly smooth, you can hide the flaws by painting it with flat paint. There are hundreds of strategies like this that cost pennies instead of dollars.
6. Know what works with tenants. When you're renting (not selling) a house, you have to know how a particular item wears. Because, as a landlord, you're the one who gets to replace it when the tenant moves. Carpet is a good example. When selling, quality and looks are crucial. When renting, wearability and price are para-

mount. I've tried dozens of types of carpet in rentals and always come back to the \$9 a yard plush carpet. It looks good and doesn't break my heart when you have to replace it 6 months later when the tenant moves.

7. Spend money where it counts. Everyone knows kitchens and baths sell houses. And guess what? They also rent apartments! So, why are you spending your money on new windows?
8. Hire the right people to do the right things. The people who do your painting and property maintenance are probably not the people who should do your cleaning. And the "handyman" who can do "everything" usually isn't and can't.
9. Light it up. One of the great overlooked sellers of units is light. Wash your windows, keep the shades up during showings, and make sure there's a bulb in every light fixture. Use 60 or 100 watt bulbs if your fixtures will handle them. A brightly lit house or apartment looks clean and welcoming.
10. Remember that there's a difference between a rental and your own home. If you're renovating the house you live in, your goal is to make it perfect. But in renting, your goal is never to have a perfect unit. It's to have one that meets the expectations of your potential tenants, and that rents to a highly qualified prospect in as short a time as possible.

WA3 **Calendar** *briefs*

**June 29 - Beach Party at
Harbor Cove and Beach
Club - Thank you to Midwest
for all your support.**

**September 21 - Nova Awards
at Instant Furniture Rentals**

**September 28th - Repeat of
the Pest Control Class sponsored
by Eradico Pest Control** (see page 3 for article)

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CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB:

www.wa3hq.org

Deadline:

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

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Getting to know your Board:

President, Jamie Schmunk

Your Company and Title - Wilson White Company
How long have you been a member of the WA3? - 3 Years

What is the most rewarding part of your position with WA3? - The opportunity to work with other members of the board who dedicate their time and efforts to make this association what it is today.

What was the last book that you read? - "Beach Road" by James Patterson

What has been your most memorable moment with the WA3? - Getting the Website up and running with the development of the member property listing has been a giant leap toward the future of the association and I have found it to be tremendously rewarding to be involved with it.

What is your favorite quote or saying? - "To acquire knowledge one must study but to acquire wisdom one must observe"

What other activities, groups are you apart of? - Washtenaw County Home Builders Association, Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors

What three words best describe your personality? - Honest, Personable and Devoted
If you could meet anyone - who would it be and why? - Tiger Woods... because most likely it would be over a round of Golf.

What has been the best piece of advice given to you and by whom? - You don't sell real estate you buy real estate... Chuck Carver Past President 1992

What other activities do you like to do for fun? - Family (three boys), Golf, Sports, Skiing, and Travel.

How did you come to join the WA3? - I wanted to become more involved with the apartment industry as a whole, to network and to meet people who wrestle with the same issues and hurdles that we struggle with on a daily basis.



This is a new section the newsletter committee is providing for the next few months to help all of you get to know those that are instrumental in shaping the associations future.

EO Message

By: Alice J. Ehn

Summer is finally here! By the time you read this the Golf Outing at Reddeman Farms Golf Club will have come and gone. This newsletter will go to the printer prior to the outing so the pictures, thank you's to the sponsors and the winners should be included on an insert. The next event is the Beach Party out at Harbor Cove and Beach Club on June 29th. There will be finger foods, beer, pop and margarites. Your families are invited. We have some games for kids and of course swimming and boating (bring your own boat) available for all. Don't miss this great event as you get ready for the 4th of July weekend.

Events coming up in the fall are the NOVA awards night at Instant Furniture Rental downtown Ann Arbor, a General Membership Breakfast at Weber's on October 17th, the Annual General Membership Breakfast on November 7th and the Holiday Awards Banquet on December 1st. We are working on a presentation from a graduate of the Dale Carnegie institute for the November meeting.

Education for the fall includes a repeat of the Pest Control Class but with extra pests being discussed, CAMT I starting October 12th, Real Estate License Continuing Ed Class from PMAM on October 10th, CPR on October 24th, and the GLAStar Education Conference in Lansing on November 10th with the awards being presented on November 11th.

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT FOR RENTAL HOUSING PROVIDERS

All the Lease forms that the association has offered in the past are now available FREE under the protected documents section of the WA3 website. You can still purchase the pressure sensitive double documents from the office but now all forms are also available online for all members to use. Keep in mind we will continue to have all our forms reviewed on an annual basis so don't copy the forms and use them for the next four years. If you are no longer purchasing the forms you should at least make sure you are using the most recent form by printing them online every time you need them.

Understanding the Smoke Alarm Rule Changes

The following information has been provided by your local Building Departments in order to explain the recent changes in the smoke detector laws. The actual law was published in an earlier newsletter.

In an effort to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the State of Michigan, the Michigan Legislature has passed Public Acts 64 & 65 of 2004 effective March 14, 2006. The Acts set a minimum standard for the installation of smoke alarms for structures built prior to November 6, 1974. Property owners have until March 14, 2007, to install smoke alarms in their building(s), structure(s), and / or residential dwelling(s) and be compliant with the law.

The minimum requirements of the Acts state that a smoke alarm, powered by a non-rechargeable battery (able to power the detector under normal conditions for 5 years), be installed in each sleeping room or directly outside each sleeping room, and one on each floor level, including the basement.

All structures built after November 6, 1974, must follow the codes set forth for new construction. Conformance with the Act does not circumvent the requirements of Section R313.1.1 of the Michigan Residential Code for smoke alarm upgrades during remodeling and alteration projects.

Smoke alarm devices shall be listed, installed, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's installation requirements, the provisions of the Code, and the provisions of NFPA 72.

The above information has been abbreviated and paraphrased. Please direct questions to your local Building Department.

Provided by a collaboration of the following building departments experts: Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor Township, York Township, Ypsilanti Charter Township, Pittsfield Charter Township, Superior Charter Township, Northfield Township, City of Saline, City of Ypsilanti.



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Ask the Expert...

What about Bedbugs? I have been hearing and reading a lot about them lately.

So far as is known bed bugs originally came from Asia, but they are seen in all parts of the world. They were well known in ancient times around the Mediterranean Sea. Requiring a warm, dry climate they did not spread to northern regions until buildings started to be heated, but when this did happen they soon became very abundant. They are becoming more common in North America due to a variety of reasons among those being increases in travel, and the broad use of baits exclusively for the treatment of pests.



Bedbugs are small, oval, flat, hard-bodied, wingless insects in which the wings are absent or reduced to stubs. When unfed, the common bedbug adult is 1/4 to 3/8 inch in length, brownish in color, and has scent glands that give off a characteristic odor. When it has not recently fed the body is paper thin, and almost red brown, after feeding, the body elongates and widens and the color changes to dull red. This apparent change is quite striking and may cause the observer to believe that two different species of insects are present. Bedbug development time may vary greatly even among individuals from the same generation, for this reason, both adults and nymphs will usually be present throughout the year.

Bed bugs only search for blood donors when they are actually hungry. In the intervals between meals they spend their time in suitable hiding places in the vicinity of the bed, such as crevices in the joints in the bed, behind the headboard, beneath loose carpeting, behind pictures, behind wallpaper, in plug sockets, light switches, etc. When hungry, bed bugs emerge from their hiding place and start to search for a meal. Their senses are not capable of guiding

(Continued on page 4)



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View from National:

National Accessible Apartment Clearinghouse Launches Enhanced Search Web Site

By Joe Sharp, CAPS

*2006 National Apartment Association Chairman of the
Board Actus Lend Lease*

Finding accessible housing has never been easier. Leasing accessible apartments has never been so simple.

The National Accessible Apartment Clearinghouse (NAAC), a free online housing registry resource created by NAA for U.S. residents with physical disabilities, recently launched an enhanced version of its Web site designed to help make it easier for residents with disabilities to find housing and for housing providers to list their available apartment homes.

For residents, the NAAC Web site, www.accessibleapartments.org, now has broader, advanced search capabilities and has added features that make navigation easier for those with hearing and sight disabilities. The keystroke functions are also simplified and are compliant with Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act.

Among the other resident benefits, users can access all

registered accessible apartments in their areas—or any other area in the country; they can tailor searches to whatever specific features they desire or require; and they can contact the community directly to apply.

There is no charge for owners to register or list and update available accessible units in their communities. Owners can adjust information, such as availability, description, amenities offered and rent prices. They also can upload floor plans and provide links to the community's Web site. Owners do not have to be NAA members to participate.

Providing these apartment homes shows renters and communities that the owners have taken a proactive step toward providing accessible housing.

In an average month, NAAC receives 300 to 500 phone and e-mail requests and more than 8,000 searches on the Web site from individuals with disabilities looking for appropriate housing.

The NAAC Web site receives sponsorship from NAA, the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), the National Multi Housing Council (NMHC) and founding sponsor American Computer Software, so that residents and housing providers can use the Web site at no charge.

I encourage members to take advantage of this opportunity to list your accessible apartments. If you have any questions, please contact NAA's Vice President of Government Affairs Barbara Vassallo at 703/518-6141 Ext. 106.

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(Continued from page 3)

them to a distant blood donor, but are attracted by the body warmth of the victim. Bed bugs can crawl up a wall and can also walk upside down on rough ceilings, but if they are not skilled they often fall down. In the course of about 10 minutes an adult bed bug can suck up to 7 times its own weight in blood. If left undisturbed, a bedbug can obtain a full blood meal in 3 to 12 minutes. It then retreats to its hiding place, where it digests the meal, mates and lays eggs until it is hungry again.

Eggs are laid in a hiding place, where they are attached to the substrate. A female lays 200 - 500 eggs, the actual number depending upon the temperature and other external factors. A given bedbug individual usually does not feed every night, but at intervals of a few days to a week. Bedbugs can live for 4 to 12 months without feeding, and will survive longer without a meal at lower temperatures than at higher temperatures.

Treatment

The only effective method of control is a thorough inspection and treatment using professionally applied materials. The biology of the bedbug and the availability of hiding areas, means no single material applied to the problem will insure success. The most effective approach will be multifaceted taking into consideration all of the buildings characteristics and developing a treatment regimen designed for a long-term solution.

Provided by: Jerry Hatch, Technical Director, Board Certified Entomologist, Eradico Services, Inc. Anyone with questions for Mr. Hatch can e-mail him at hatchj@eradicoservices.com or call 248-477-4800. You can also visit the Eradico Services web-site: www.eradicoservices.com

Public Act 147 Passed Landlord Self Repair Bill

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 4171

AN ACT to amend 1961 PA 236, entitled "An act to revise and consolidate the statutes relating to the organization and jurisdiction of the courts of this state; the powers and duties of such courts, and of the judges and other officers thereof; the forms and attributes of civil claims and actions; the time within which civil actions and proceedings may be brought in said courts; pleading, evidence, practice and procedure in civil and criminal actions and proceedings in said courts; to provide remedies and penalties for the violation of certain provisions of this act; to repeal all acts and parts of acts inconsistent with or contravening any of the provisions of this act; and to repeal acts and parts of acts," by amending section 5739 (MCL 600.5739).

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 5739. (1) Except as provided by court rules, a party to summary proceedings may join claims and counterclaims for money judgment for damages attributable to wrongful entry, detainer, or possession, for breach of the lease or contract under which the premises were held, or for waste or malicious destruction to the premises. The court may order separate summary disposition of the claim for possession, without prejudice to any other claims or counterclaims. A claim or counterclaim for money judgment shall not exceed the amount in controversy that otherwise limits the jurisdiction of the court.

(2) If the court awards damages for physical injury to the premises under subsection (1) by making an award for or based on the

cost of repairs, the court shall award damages for labor expended by a landlord or property manager in repairing the premises in the same manner as it would if the repairs were performed by a third party. A landlord's or property manager's labor under this subsection shall be compensated at a rate the court determines to be reasonable based on usual and customary charges for the repairs.

(3) If the court determines that the landlord breached the lease or contract under which the premises were held by failing to repair the premises and awards damages under subsection (1) by making an award for or based on the cost of repairs, the court shall award damages for labor expended by the tenant in repairing the premises in the same manner as it would if the repairs were performed by a third party. A tenant's labor under this subsection shall be compensated at a rate the court determines to be reasonable based on usual and customary charges for the repairs. Enacting section 1. This amendatory act applies to an action filed after the effective date of this amendatory act.

This act amends Chapter 57 (Summary Proceedings to Recover Possession of Premises) of the Revised Judicature Act to require a court to award damages for labor by a landlord, property manager, or tenant in repairing premises in the same manner as if a third party made the repairs; and require a landlord's, property manager's, or tenant's labor to be compensated at a rate the court determines to be reasonable based on usual and customary charges for the repairs. Introduced as a landlord only self repair bill, PMAM's lobbying efforts were successful in adding the property managers language.

Thank you to PMAM for your efforts!

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Special Thanks to our Guests at the May Luncheon:

Mark Lloyd, Planning and Development Services Manager from the City of Ann Arbor
 Bruce Fowler, Planning Director for Pittsfield Charter Twsp.
 Doug Lewan, Community Planner from Carlisle/Wortman Associates and Planning
 Consultant for Scio Township and
 Jim Kosteva, Director of Community Relations from University of Michigan
 (pictured left to right)

Hope to see you all at the Beach Party on June 29th in Whitmore Lake



NEXT MANAGER'S ONLY

June 22, 2006 • 8:30 to 9:30 am

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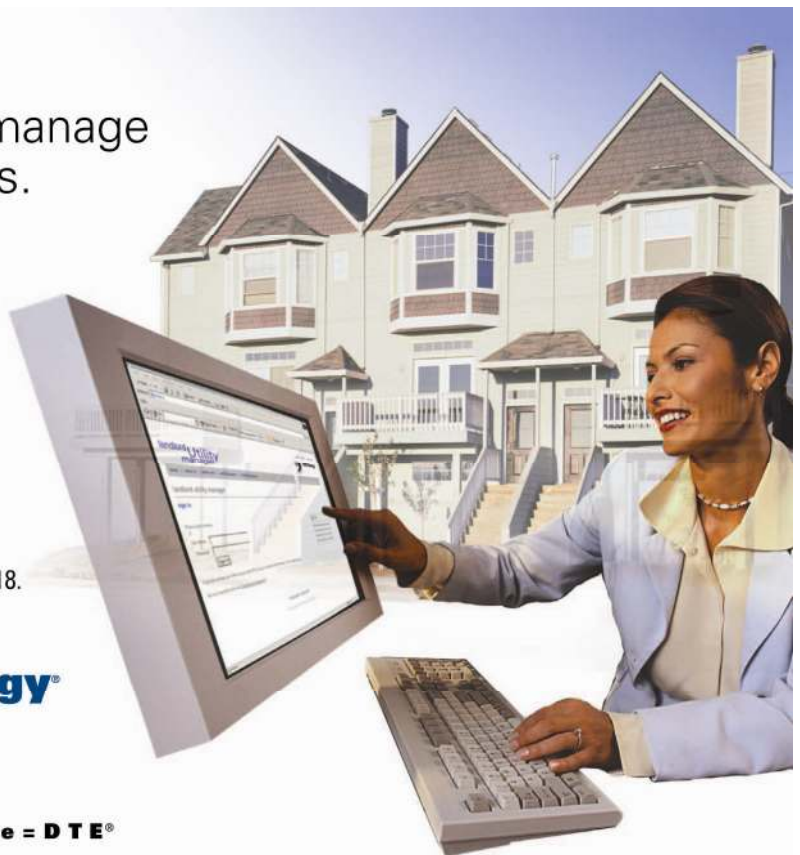
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Events:

June 22 - Manager's Only at Lake Village of Ann Arbor 8:30 to 9:30 am. Manager's Chat Session about whatever manager's want to talk about.

June 27 - GLAStar Award Training Session at 3:00 pm at Lake Village of Ann Arbor off of Main Street North of Briarwood.

June 29 - Beach Party at Harbor Cove and Beach Club. 5:30 to 8:00 pm. Families welcome. Drinks, Margarites, Food. Sponsorships Welcome...Call the office or go online for details.

September 21 - Nova Awards Night at Instant Furniture Rental, 341 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor.

September 27 - Pest Control Class, 9:00 to 12:00, Location to be Announced. Instructor: Jerry Hatch, Technical Directory and Board Certified Entomologist with Eradico Pest Control. Topic: Any and all bugs can be discussed.

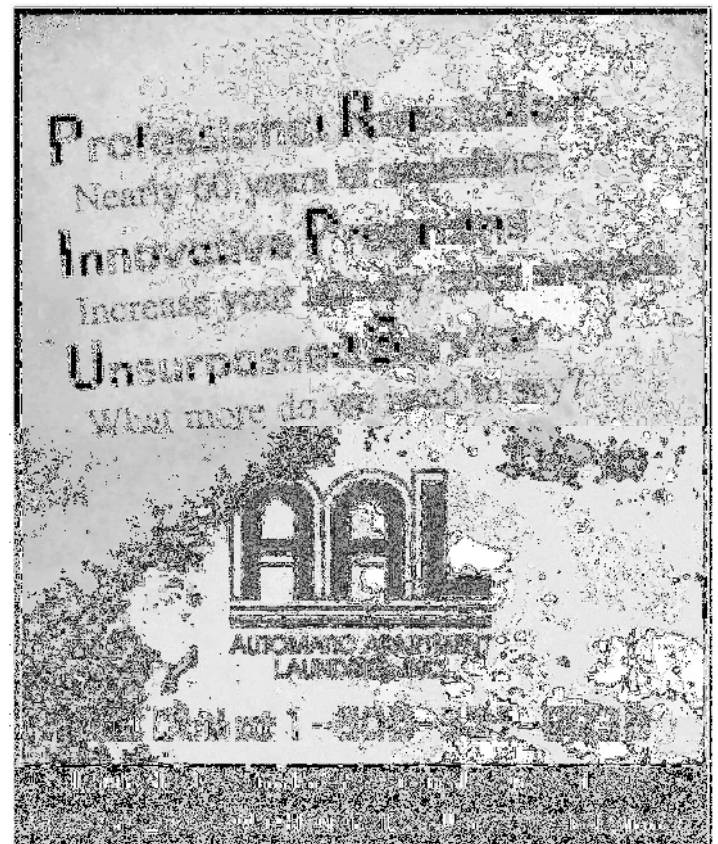
October 10 - Real Estate Con Ed at Cleary University. 6 hour Property Management Class that qualifies for Real Estate License Continuing Ed for the State of Michigan License

October 12 - CAMT I BEGINS.....

October 24 - CPR and First Aid, 9:00 to 12:00 at Hidden Valley Club House off of State Street.

November: Annual General Membership meeting and GLAStar Education Conference

December 1 - Holiday Party at Washtenaw Country Club



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