



# WAA News

Volume 36 Issue 4 • May 2015 • Connecting the Rental Community Right Next Door and Across the State

## MEMORIAL DAY

*Honoring the memory of those who served*

### Is Your Property Prepared for a Tornado?

on page 5

### WAA/WRHLC Legislative Day Recap

on pages 10-11

### 6 Tips to Keep Good Renters Renting

on page 21

**Don't miss this year's "new and improved" conference, WAA Landlord Education Day, with keynote speaker, Toni Blake! Register this month to save money! See page 12 for the full schedule and complete the registration form on page 13 TODAY!**



# 2015 Roster of Events

(for a full calendar of events, visit our website at [www.waonline.org](http://www.waonline.org))

## BOARD MEETINGS

**Saturday, September 19 • 10:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.**

Ho-Chunk Conference Center & Casino, Baraboo

*Lunch (optional) will be at the Stand Rock Buffet. The group will go up at noon.*

*Cost is \$12 all inclusive.*

Please **RSVP** to Kristy at the WAA office no later than **Monday, Sept. 14th.**


Mark Your Calendar

October  
**10**

2015 Landlord Education Day & Trade Show

**MARKETING SHINE**  
With Your Budget In MIND!

A Special ENCORE Performance  
By: Toni Blake




*Cut out & Save!*

**2015 WAA DATE**

**Saturday, September 19**  
Board Meeting  
*Ho-Chunk, Baraboo*

**Saturday, October 10**  
2015 Landlord Education Day  
& Trade Show  
*Chula Vista Resort, WI Dells*

**Saturday, November 14**  
Board Meeting  
*Ho-Chunk, Baraboo*

**WIN! WIN! WIN!**

**A Pizza Party for  
YOUR Local Association...  
Grow your Membership!**

**\$100 Pizza Party**  
for the Local with  
*highest percentage growth*  
over 2014!

**\$100 Pizza Party**  
for the Local with the  
*highest number of new members*  
over 2014!

*See page 17 for ideas on how to grow your local  
membership this year and WIN!*





## WAA/RHR Executive Committee

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\* WAA Regional Director

\*\* Education Chair \*\*\*Both RD & Education

**Bold:** Forms Representative

## TEAMWORK

We need YOU! Our association is only as strong as our members and member participation is critical for our growth and success. We have established a number of standing committees (teams) to ensure that our association continues to meet goals that are set, retains and adds members, and provides education, leadership, and representation to ensure that YOU are able to operate your rental business successfully, ethically, and responsibly in our state. These members have agreed to volunteer their opinions, skills, and time to make this association the best it can be. Please consider getting involved as well and help make a difference in YOUR association, the Wisconsin Apartment Association!

**Education Committee** – Dale Hicks-Co-Chair (JARPA, Janesville), Matt Ruch-Co-Chair (BPMA-Beloit), Sherrie Dorn (SWLA, Racine), Julie Fay-Krivitz (Associate), and Pamela Strittmater (AALA, La Crosse)

**Legislative Committee** – Chris Mokler-Co-Chair (Winnebago, Oshkosh), Dale Hicks-Co-Chair (JARPA, Janesville), and Jessica Olson (AALA, La Crosse)

**Membership Committee** – Paul Winans-Chair (AALA, La Crosse), Julie Fay-Krivitz (Associate), Pamela Strittmater (AALA, La Crosse), Jeff Pralle (AALA, La Crosse), Kris Mueller (MAAA, Marshfield), and Gus Orozco (SWLA, Racine)

**Conference Committee** - Diane Orozco-Chair (SWLA-Racine), Kathy Haines (Associate), Julie Fay-Krivitz (Associate), Kelly Jensen (SWLA, Racine), Bill White (Associate), Dawn Powell (KLA, Kenosha), Lori Thurloff (AANW, Green Bay), and Dale Hicks (JARPA, Janesville)

**Website/Newsletter** - Pamela Strittmater-Co-Chair (AALA, La Crosse), Diana West-Co-Chair (CVAA-Eau Claire), John Dorn (SWLA, Racine), and Hank Drechsler (Member at Large)



## President's Letter



Hello WAA Members! I want to **Thank everyone** who attended the WAA Leadership/Committee Work Day on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells. I'm very thankful for the leaders among us and for those who are faithful in serving the members of the WAA. It takes TIME, MONEY, and EFFORT to keep the WAA together!

The Wisconsin Way says there are over 1.5 Million Tenants! This means there are Thousands and Thousands of Landlords in the State of Wisconsin! These landlords need to be part of the WAA! Why? When we are in an industry where we are serving 1.5 Million Customers, there are going to be laws that govern our industry. Since Billions of dollars change hands every year in our industry, just in Wisconsin, do you think we should stick our head in the sand and pretend that laws don't matter **OR** should we be organized and professional in dealing with these matters? I don't know how you feel, but I would rather choose the latter.

I want to encourage all of you to continue to support the mission and efforts of the WAA and encourage your fellow landlords to get involved and stay involved. We also need to show leadership and teach the next generation.

Here is a short definition of what a leader is:

*Leaders help themselves and others to do the right things. They set direction, build an inspiring vision, and create something new. Leadership is about mapping out where you need to go to "win" as a team or an organization; and it is dynamic, exciting, and inspiring.*

The WAA needs your leadership and support in many ways! Please get, and continue to stay, involved!

Don't forget to mark your calendar now to attend the "new and improved" WAA Conference... the **2015 WAA Landlord Education Day and Trade Show on Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at Chula Vista Resort** in Wisconsin Dells! You can see the full schedule on page 12. There will also be a fun, networking KICK OFF on Friday evening. Please complete and return the registration form on page 13 **by May 31<sup>st</sup> and save some money**, too!

In closing, I have a challenge for you. Would you be willing to call just one landlord (one who is NOT currently a member of the WAA) this next month and invite them to your next Local Association meeting? If that challenge is not tough enough for you....I have another one. Call me with your suggestions and let me know how the WAA can serve you better. You can reach me on my cell at 715-421-6403. I will make sure your voice is heard.

**WE need YOU...and YOU need US!**

Thank you!

*Dean Ramsden*

WAA President



## Is Your Property Prepared for a Tornado?

By Tim Blackwell,

[www.propertymanagementinsider.com](http://www.propertymanagementinsider.com); April 2, 2015

Spring hardly came in like a lion as far as tornadoes go. Until damaging twisters hit Oklahoma and Arkansas in late March, one of the historically heaviest months for spawning, Tornadoes were as meek as a lamb. None had developed in the first three weeks, and only four warnings were issued nationwide.



Weather forecasters say that cool, stable air and a swift jet stream across the U.S. has been keeping Tornadoes at bay this spring. Some are calling the uncanny season – one that rivals another in the 1950s when no tornadoes were reported in March – a tornado drought.

However, the season is far from done. April and May are prime times when twisters turn sunny spring days into rolling balls of destruction in communities across the country. No matter the current weather pattern, being aware and alert of changing skies is essential.

For apartments where high concentrations of people are gathered, tornado preparedness becomes particularly meaningful. Residents may only have minutes to find shelter before a tornado hits.

According to ready.gov, people should go to a pre-designated area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar or the lowest building level when tornadoes threaten.

If there is no basement, the center of a small interior room like a closet or hallway on the lowest level will work, especially for occupants of a high-rise apartment.

The idea is to put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Always stay away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Also, get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck.

Tornadoes shouldn't be taken lightly. They can spin up to 300 mph and leave a path of destruction in excess of a mile wide and 50 miles long. Each year, they cause roughly \$400 million in damages.

A number of websites, including the National Weather Service and the American Red Cross, offer useful tips on tornado preparedness. These are an excellent source of information for apartment managers to help educate residents and staff on what to do in the event of a natural disaster. Here are a few of the basics:

### Know the difference between watches and warnings

**Watch:** Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Review and discuss your emergency plans, and check supplies and your safe room. Be ready to act quickly if a warning is issued or you suspect a tornado is approaching.

**Warning:** A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Tornado warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property. Go immediately underground to a basement, storm cellar or an interior room (closet, hallway or bathroom).

### Watch for tornado danger signs

Ominous skies are an indication that a severe weather event is about to occur. Typically, a tornado emerges from a thunderstorm as a rotating funnel and extends to the ground. Watch for dark, green clouds, wall clouds, flying debris, large hail, funnel clouds or visible rotation and a roaring noise.

(cont'd on page 6)



(cont'd from page 5)

### **Stay informed about weather conditions**

During any storm, listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings. Also, tune into local weather channels or internet weather sites to see the latest radar activity.

### **Know your community's warning system**

Communities have different ways of warning residents about tornadoes, with many having sirens intended for outdoor warning purposes.

### **Designate a safe area within the community**

Pick a safe room or area where residents can go during a tornado. This should be a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows. Consider having the safe room reinforced. Plans for reinforcing an interior room to provide better protection can be found on the FEMA website.

### **Practice, practice, practice tornado drills**

Practice periodic tornado drills so that everyone knows what to do if a tornado is approaching. Just like in the event of a fire, residents should be prepared to evacuate their apartments in an orderly fashion.

### **Prepare the outside of the property for a tornado**

Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged limbs from trees. Move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that can be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.

### **Prepare and maintain an emergency survival kit**

Make an emergency safety kit and periodically check on it to make sure it's ready to go in the event of a disaster. The American Red Cross lists a number of essential items in its survival kit, including having a flashlight, battery-powered radio, a first-aid kit, multi-purpose tool, cell phone with charger and non-perishable food and water.

The first step to surviving a tornado is adequately preparing your staff and residents.

## **Criminal Background Check Tips for Landlords**

*From [www.alwayscreening.com](http://www.alwayscreening.com); March 14, 2015*

As a landlord, it's important to protect your property, assets, and reputation. Conducting criminal background checks on new tenants is the best way to ensure your safety, both personally and financially. Plus, having a strict criminal background check policy will help attract good tenants that make safety their top priority when looking for a new residence.

Here are the top four tips for apartment tenant screening to help you ensure you're housing the best tenants possible.

1. Unlike credit reports, criminal background checks don't require specific identifying information like a social security number. Instead, you will need to rely on the information the prospective tenant provides to link them to their background. Therefore, be sure your rental application includes dates of birth, their full legal name, and previous addresses.

2. Criminal background checks can be done on both state and national levels. Using a national background check is the best because you can find out if applicants are providing incomplete information on their application.

3. Know that in some states, criminal background checks are regulated. Nonprofit groups that assist ex-convicts have lobbied for more tenant-friendly laws, so be sure you know your local rental laws.

4. Require the same level of screening for all applicants. If you choose to screen some instead of others, you could be accused of discrimination.

When you use a sophisticated apartment tenant screening company, you can be certain you are doing the best to protect your property, profits, and reputation.



## Ask the Doctor Monthly Q&A

By John H. Fischer, aka Dr. Rent

Welcome to the latest edition of *Ask the Doctor*, in which John provides an answer to a question that he recently or frequently receives. If you have a question you would like covered in a future issue, it can be submitted to John at [drrent93@hotmail.com](mailto:drrent93@hotmail.com).



### Question:

We have a tenant who purchased a therapy cat for psychological support. She has a note from her doctor verifying this. It is not a service animal such as a seeing eye dog.

Our lease has a pet provision stating that pets are only allowed after the landlord agrees to it, a pet agreement is signed, an additional deposit is made, and an additional rent payment is agreed to. We have agreed to allow her to have this pet, but would like to see both the deposit and rent payments for liability reasons.

The tenant is wondering if it is legal for us to charge her additional rent since it is a prescribed therapy animal. My hunch was that since it is in the lease, and they signed it, they are obligated to pay rent regardless of state or federal laws. I checked state and federal laws, and it didn't look like we couldn't charge extra rent for a therapy pet.

Can we legally require both the additional deposit and monthly rent payments?

### Answer:

It has been a well-known fact that service animals are not considered pets. Under fair housing laws, a landlord must allow a service animal as a reasonable accommodation. Because it is an accommodation for a disability, it is not a pet and not subject to pet rents, pet deposits, etc. Service animals are strictly defined in the law.

Comfort/Companion/Therapy animals are not specifically addressed in the law as written, however a policy statement from HUD a few years ago established that for enforcement purposes, HUD was going to set the same accommodation standards for these animals that they do for service animals. Therefore, assuming the animal has been deemed medically necessary (and typically a doctor's note is all that is needed), this animal must be allowed as a reasonable accommodation, no pet rents and no pet fees apply. Also, they are allowed in no pet buildings because they are an accommodation.

The law does state that the tenant needs to take care of the animal (proper licensing, shots, pick up after it, not allow it to become a nuisance, etc.).

With both service animals and comfort/companion/therapy animals, a landlord can determine the request is unreasonable if there is a problem after taking occupancy. In rare cases, when allowing the accommodation creates a hazardous situation for a different tenant with pet allergies, it could be determined allowing the animal is unreasonable. However, I would STRONGLY suggest legal counsel if that determination is going to be made as the potential fines and penalties for not accommodating the disability are substantial and severe.

**Editor's Note:** *Answers in this column are specific to Wisconsin, other states may have different landlord-tenant laws. Nothing in this article should be considered legal advice. Dr. Rent along with the Wisconsin Apartment Association recommends you contact an attorney familiar with landlord-tenant law if you need legal advice.*



# Associate Member Directory

## **CONTRACTING/ DISASTER RECOVERY**

ARC Restoration & Contracting  
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www.arccontracting.com

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Landlord Services, LLC  
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Green Bay, WI 54301  
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Fax: (920) 436-9856  
www.wicreditreports.com

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Focus on Energy  
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## **FINANCIAL**

Baer Insurance (Formerly Independent  
Insurance Services, Inc.)  
9701 Brader Way  
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Ph: (608) 830-5815  
Toll-Free: (888) 729-2237  
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WaterStone Bank  
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## **FORMS**

Wisconsin Legal Blank Printing & Forms  
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## **INSURANCE**

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## **LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT**

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# Associate Member Directory



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- Gary Paul (920) 207-5271  
Madison - Paul Schneider  
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Milwaukee, Oak Creek, Racine,  
Kenosha - Frederic Ryan  
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/Minnesota.html

Hallman Lindsay Paints  
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Buyer's Access  
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jgraziano@buyersaccess.com  
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Newmark Grubb Pfefferle  
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## WAA Newsletter Dates & Procedures

1. Items for newsletter should be forwarded to [kristy@waaonline.org](mailto:kristy@waaonline.org), electronically whenever possible.
2. Please submit news articles in the following formats: MS Word, Html copy, PDF, MS Works, eps, jpeg, tiff or text format.
3. Your articles, either by email, fax, or US mail must be received by the 3rd of the preceding month.

Please send your articles to:  
Kristy Weincke  
PO Box 2922  
Oshkosh, WI 54903



# 2015 WAA/WRHLC Legislative Day...



**WAA Leadership at Legislative Day on Wednesday, March 18th**  
*(left to right):*  
Dean Ramsden, WAA President;  
Chris Mokler, WAA Treasurer & WRHLC Co-Chair;  
Dale Hicks, WRHLC Co-Chair;  
Gary Goyke, WAA/WRHLC Legislative Liaison; &  
Joe Dahl, AASEW President

*Right & Below:*  
WAA members & guests at WAA/WRHLC Legislative Day. Over 60 people were in attendance.



Topics covered at this year's Legislative Day included CCAP funding & mandatory e-filing, Wisconsin Historic Tax Credit policy, small claims fee legislation & increases, higher interest rates for judgments in small claims cases, changes made in the governor's budget on local assessments, a report on local legal advocacy, Crime Free Lease Addendums (2013 Act 76-updated), the new "One Strike" proposal, and Tenant/ Municipal Water Bills (SB 517/AB 725-updated).



*Above:* Chris Mokler presents the 2015 Advocates of the Year award to Pamela Strittmater & Jessica Olson (not pictured), Apt. Assoc. of the La Crosse Area.

*Below:* Chris presents the 2015 Outstanding Public Service award to the City of Milwaukee Health Department



*Above:* Dean Ramsden presents the 2015 Partnership award to the Wisconsin Realtors Association.



*Left:* Dale Hicks presents the 2015 Spirit award to the Wausau Area Apartment Association.





# 2015 Landlord Education Day Schedule

## 2015 WAA Landlord Education Day & Trade Show Schedule

(All seminars/events & locations subject to change without notice)

Friday, October 9, 2015			
	7:00pm – 11:00pm	<b>2015 LED Kick Off</b> <i>Silent Auction/50-50 Drawing</i>	
Saturday, October 10, 2015			
<b>Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup></b>	7:30am – 8:00am	<b>Registration &amp; Breakfast Buffet</b>	
	8:00am – 9:45am	<b>Keynote: <i>Marketing SHINE with Your Budget in MIND!</i></b> <b>by Toni Blake</b>	
	10:00am – 11:00am	<b>Trade Show</b> <i>Silent Auction</i>	
	11:00am – 12:00pm	<b>2015 Legislative &amp; Political Update</b> <b>by Gary Goyke, Chris Mokler, &amp; Dale Hicks-WRHLC</b>	
	12:00 – 1:00	<b>Trade Show &amp; Lunch</b> <i>Silent Auction</i>	
		<b>Track A – Basics Track</b>	<b>Track B – Legal Track</b>
	1:00pm – 2:15pm	<i>Forming a Good Rental Business (An Introduction to WAA-Approved Forms) – John H. Fischer</i>	<i>How to Prepare Evidence to Make Your Small Claims Court Case – Andrew Schmidt, Schmidt &amp; Schmidt S.C.</i>
	2:15pm – 3:15pm	<b>Trade Show</b> <i>Silent Auction</i>	
	3:15pm – 4:30pm	<i>Dos &amp; Don'ts (A Practical Guide to Fair Housing Compliance) – John H. Fischer</i>	<i>Security Deposit Withholding – Andrew Schmidt, Schmidt &amp; Schmidt S.C.</i>
	5:30pm – 6:30pm	<b>President's Reception</b> <b>Music by All That Jazz</b> <i>Silent Auction</i>	
	6:30pm – 9:00pm	<b>Dinner &amp; Annual Meeting</b> <i>Silent Auction</i>	
	9:00pm	<b>Hospitality Room</b> <i>Refreshments</i>	

# 2015 Landlord Education Day Registration



## Registration Form 2015 Landlord Education Day & Tradeshow

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
at Chula Vista Resort,  
Wisconsin Dells

### MEMBERS: ONLY \$99/person!

**Includes all sessions & meals on Saturday & KICK OFF event Friday evening.**  
These rates apply through May 31<sup>st</sup> for WAA members only. Rate then increases to \$119/person.  
**Take advantage of the savings & register NOW for this year's "new & improved" event!**

### NON-MEMBERS: ONLY \$129/person!

These rates apply through May 31<sup>st</sup>. Rate increases to \$149/person beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Name of Registrant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Local Affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

First-Time Attendee     Local Officer     Past State Association President

**TOTAL Conference fees \$\_\_\_\_\_ Please draft check to "WAA Conference"**

*Sorry no refunds or transfers. Registrants may resell registration if necessary.*

Visa or Master Card Payment

Name on credit card: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CW: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your annual dinner choice and list name(s) for each choice:*

( ) *Beef Medallions Mondovi* \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Medallions braised with red onions, shitake mushrooms & Robert Mondovi Pinot Noir, served over buttered fettuccini.)*

( ) *Atlantic Cod Asiago Provencal* \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Broiled & topped with fresh roma tomatoes & melted Asiago cheese, served with wild rice pilaf.)*

( ) *Honey Buttered Half Chicken* \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Braised & seasoned with savory spices & herbs then finished with signature honey butter, served with garlic mashed potatoes.)*

### Registration **DOES NOT** include hotel reservations . . .

Chula Vista, 2501 River Rd, Wisconsin Dells

Visit [www.chulavistaresort.com](http://www.chulavistaresort.com) or call 888-805-0248

and mention ID#D06609 to get the special room rate of \$119/night for a tower jr suite.

**Room Block closes on September 8<sup>th</sup>!**



**Wisconsin Apartment Association PO Box 2922, Oshkosh, WI 54903**

**(920) 230-9221 \* [admin@waaonline.org](mailto:admin@waaonline.org)**



## Local Affiliate Updates

### **APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN (AANW), GREEN BAY**

*Info submitted by Kathy Haines*

At our May meeting, we will have a panel of seasoned landlords to answer audience questions. Members are encouraged to send their questions to [aptassoc@new.rr.com](mailto:aptassoc@new.rr.com) in advance or relay them at the meeting. An open roundtable discussion between landlords will be encouraged.

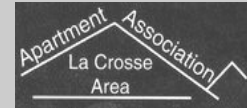


Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1015 Lombardi Ave., Green Bay  
Networking at 6:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:30 p.m.

### **APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE LA CROSSE AREA (AALA)**

*Info submitted by President Pamela Strittmater*

The appellate brief, City of La Crosse response and our final rebuttal have been filed with the State of Wisconsin Appeals Court. We are now waiting for those judges to put the case on the calendar, review it and reply with a written response. Hopefully this will be done within a few months. Thank you so much to the locals and individuals that have donated to our legal fund. All contributions are very much appreciated. We have a very strong case and hopefully we can win for all in the rental housing industry. Funds are still needed, so if you would like to contribute, please contact Pamela Strittmater at 608-317-3678 or [ptstritt@aol.com](mailto:ptstritt@aol.com). Thank-you so much to all for your support!!



Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Moose Lodge

### **CHIPPEWA VALLEY APARTMENT ASSOCIATION (CVAA), EAU CLAIRE**

*Info submitted by President Diana West*

On April 13th, Gary Goyke, WAA/WRHLC Legislative Liaison, spoke at our meeting. Thank you, Gary, for taking the time to give our group an update!

Check out our new website at [www.cv-aa.org](http://www.cv-aa.org)!

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Elks Lodge, 3411 Stein Blvd, Eau Claire

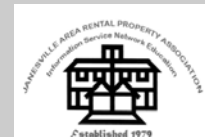
### **JANESVILLE AREA RENTAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATION (JARPA)**

*Info submitted by Dale Hicks*

May 21st - Denise Webb from Hagen LLC will share information on creating an LLC, as well as other pertinent tax deduction strategies.

June 18th - ECHO, Karen Lisser, Tonya, and Jessica will explain the format for monetary aid.

July - JARPA Picnic



Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Commercial Bank, 1400 Blackbridge Rd., Janesville



## **KENOSHA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION (KLA)**

*Info submitted by Secretary Jeanette Marchetti-Hamm*



Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Fireside Restaurant, 2801 30th Ave., Kenosha  
Networking with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. & meeting at 7:00 p.m.

## **MARSHFIELD AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION**

*Info submitted by President Kris Mueller*

In April, we had Kathy Haines, Landlord Services, LLC, as speaker at our Educational Seminar. Topics included: Screening tips; Using screening criteria; What to look for on a credit report; Laws when using credit reports; and Free websites that are useful to landlords. Thank you, Kathy, for the very useful information that everyone was able to take home.

At our Board Meeting, we had Mayor Meyer as a guest. He spoke for about 1-1/2 hours informing us on city affairs, garbage pick, street repair, utility information, gave a Clinic and Hospital update, and also about the plans for the city-owned subdivision. He gave good information and also some ideas on future speakers.

Educational seminars are on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Belvedere Supper Club, Marshfield  
Networking & dinner (at your own expense) at 6:00 p.m. & seminar at 7:00 p.m.  
Board meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of every month at the Sunrise Restaurant. Everyone is welcome!

## **SOUTHERN WISCONSIN LANDLORD ASSOCIATION (SWLA), RACINE**

*Info submitted by President Jon Frickensmith*

Visit our website at [www.racineswla.org](http://www.racineswla.org)!

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of each month at Harbor Lite Yacht Club, 559 State St, Racine  
Networking & food at 6:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:30 p.m.

## **WAUKESHA AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION**

*Info submitted by President Adele Vogel*

May 20<sup>th</sup> is our meeting date. Plans are pending.

We are having our 2015 WAA conference drawing at our June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and then we take the summer off. So, no meetings in July or August.

September 16<sup>th</sup> we will be having our annual TACO NIGHT for our members and Associates. It's our 'Give Back Taco Picnic' for our members.

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Waukesha Eagles Club, Grandview Ave, Waukesha  
Networking/dinner at 6:30 p.m. & speaker begins at 7:00 p.m.; Business discussion to follow.



## Local Affiliate Updates

### WAUSAU AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

*Info submitted by Larry Sommer*

Serving Marathon, Lincoln, Portage and Wood Counties. The Wausau Area Apartment Association currently has 72 members that manage approximately 7,000 properties.

Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Sam's Pizza, 5811 Bus. HWY 51 South, Schofield  
Networking at 6:30 p.m. & meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### WISCONSIN RAPIDS AREA RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS

*Info submitted by Helen Streekstra*

Our meetings always are at the Hotel Mead beginning at 5:00 with a social time including a pizza buffet with the meeting starting at 6:00.

Meetings are held 4 times per year: Next meeting is Monday, June 1st at the Hotel Mead  
Social/dinner at 5:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:00 p.m.

### WINNEBAGO APARTMENT ASSOCIATION, OSHKOSH

*Info submitted by President Donn Lord*

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at Benvenuto's Grill, 300 S. Koeller St., Oshkosh  
Board meeting at 5:30 p.m., social (in the bar) at 6:30 p.m., & business meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the back room.

*We're waiting to hear  
from you . . .*

Beloit Property Managers  
Association  
and  
Fond du Lac Area Apartment  
Association.



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## Increasing Member Retention for Associations

By Tobin Lehman, Lead Strategist at New North

Growing retention in an association takes a lot of energy from all aspects of your operations. Marketing typically gets the brunt of the responsibility for attracting new members and keeping them engaged, but a true retention strategy contains efforts from all disciplines inside the association. No one department can be responsible for the full engagement of a member. Once a member is a part of your organization, they touch customer service, communications, member services, events, etc. Their experience in all of these aspects of your association drives the retention of that member.

Let's take a look at some of these items and how they work for member retention.

### Value Presentation

When a customer becomes a member of your association, they bring with them an *expectation of value* for your association. It could be word of mouth, an email blast, or a printed ad, somewhere along the way they developed a perspective on the value of your association and it will only grow as they engage further with you. In case you missed that - *They have a perceived value*. So at **all levels and roles within the association there must be a standard for value presentation to fulfill this value and then exceed it**. Sometimes this can be called "brand experience" or "customer service" but what we are really talking about is the value each one of these services conveys to that member during their membership. Countless books on customer service and brand will tell you that each interaction creates touch points that define the value and experience each member has. Simply stated, everyone needs to be aware, and have a plan for setting a standard for value presentation with members both new and old. Can you identify the value your role presents to a member? If so, how do you execute that to exceed the stated value?

### Online Presence

In our digital age, if you do not have an online presence you are already behind the times. The Website falls into the same value presentation that we mentioned earlier. It's a core channel that can drive lots of value for your members. You can do this by presenting a value to the current member, as well as the prospective member.

Many organizations focus on attracting members with their Websites, but few focus on keeping members engaged and getting value from the membership with this powerful tool. By defining your retention model first, you can then find ways technology can service those needs with your Website. The growth potential with this channel is immense; why not use it for retention too?

### Welcome Kits

Another simple tool for setting value presentation with a member is a welcome kit. This is a wonderful opportunity to allow all aspects of your association to establish a value presentation with this new member. Beyond the typical ID card and brochure, this kit might include member services contacts, information on newsletters, and most importantly next steps like involvement areas for new members. When you focus on acquisition, the welcome kit is your finish line. **When you focus on retention, it's your escalator**. It is the beginning of a relationship that will guide a member from "anonymous new member" to potential leadership or deeper involvement in the organization. You must know the engagement progression that needs to take place for your new member to become an advocate, leader, and lifetime member. This starts with the welcome kit. It sets the tone, delivers on preconceived value, and moves them forward to exceed that value.

### Consistent Communications

Through the lifespan of this member, you need to present consistent communications that have a clear value presentation. A weekly or monthly newsletter with news and updates is essential, but it must also work to build a value presentation to the member. Each piece of communication should contribute to the value presentation for your membership driving that member to new levels of commitment, engagement, and ultimately retention. During your editorial process, keep in mind the progression that needs to take place for your member to further engage in your organization and cater to that path. Make sure you include opportunities for those call-to-actions in your communications. This goes beyond conference sales and industry news. How is your association bringing value to that member, and how can you share that?

In closing, **Member Retention** is becoming a more important topic with associations across the US and abroad. With more associations being born daily, your market share is at stake. Developing value in this competitive market, then delivering to exceed that value will be a true path to retention for your membership.



### Dealing With Tenants Who Have an Addiction to Drugs or Alcohol

*Learn how fair housing rules affect renting to tenants with an alcohol or drug problem or history.*

*From [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com)*

Many landlords don't know that tenants across the United States are protected against housing discrimination based on the fact that they have an addiction. This means that landlords who turn away prospects or treat tenants differently simply for being an alcoholic or addicted to drugs risk liability under fair housing law.

#### Addiction As Disability

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) (42 U.S. Code §§ 3601-3619 and 3631) bans discrimination based on disability, which it defines as a "physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities." Federal regulations clarify that protection extends to addiction to drugs and alcohol (24 CFR § 100.201(a)(2)).

#### What About Drug Use?

While addiction itself is protected as a disability, illegal drug activity isn't. The FHA doesn't bar discrimination against tenants who are current illegal drug abusers and tenants who have been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of drugs. The FHA specifically excepts "current, illegal use of or addiction to a controlled substance" from its protection (42 U.S. Code § 3602(h)). Also, federal regulations clarify that while the ban on disability-based discrimination includes "any mental or psychological disorder," it doesn't include "addiction caused by current, illegal use of a controlled substance." (24 CFR § 100.201(a)(2)).

#### Tips When Dealing With Tenants

Here are four "don'ts" to follow at your rental property when it comes to addiction:

**1. Don't ask only certain applicants about drugs.** Federal regulations make clear that you may ask all applicants whether they're current illegal abusers or addicts of a controlled substance and whether they've been convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance (24 CFR § 100.202(c)(4) and (5)). Landlords who ask this question only when meeting applicants who they suspect have an addiction are violating the FHA's ban on disability-based discrimination. Similarly, asking this question only of minority applicants could lead to fair housing liability based on other protected classes, such as race or national origin.

**2. Don't be afraid to take action against dangerous tenants.** Even if a tenant has an addiction and is protected against discrimination, you can always take action against such a tenant if he or she is causing harm or making threats. Federal regulations make clear that there's no protection for "an individual whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others" (24 CFR § 100.202(d)). Say a tenant frequently returns to your property at night drunk, waking up and cursing at neighbors and causing damage such as breaking windows. You're concerned that if you take any action against this tenant, you'll be violating the FHA because you believe this tenant is an alcoholic. The FHA makes it clear that if a tenant is causing or threatening harm at your property, the fact that the tenant has a disability can't be used as a defense; so you shouldn't fear violating the FHA when you're legitimately trying to keep people safe from danger and your property intact.

**3. Don't let a personal bias interfere with fair housing compliance.** When it comes to dealing with tenants who have an addiction, you must follow the FHA and not your own rules. For example, say you don't like the idea of an alcoholic living at your property. A friend spots one of your tenants at a recent Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, prompting you to consider not renewing the tenant's lease. Taking such action for this reason would violate the FHA because the tenant is protected for having an addiction.

**4. Don't feel pressured to make accommodations.** The FHA requires landlords to consider all requests for accommodations in connection with a disability and grant them if they're reasonable. If a tenant needs an accommodation to a policy or practice because of a drug addiction and the requested accommodation is reasonable—that is, it won't impose an undue financial and administrative burden—then you must grant it. But you may deny requests that aren't reasonable, even if they relate to a tenant's addiction. For example, say a tenant informs you he has a drug addiction and asks for some leeway when it comes to making rent payments on time. You shouldn't have to grant this particular accommodation request because late rental payment forgiveness isn't something that a tenant needs because of a disability. Letting tenants pay rent late because they have a disability is unreasonable because it interferes with the fundamentals of your rental business and would require repeated, material violations of the tenant's lease.



## Water Conservation in Apartment Buildings

From [www.american-apartment-owners-association.org](http://www.american-apartment-owners-association.org)



As a landlord, some of the biggest expenses are utilities like electric, gas and water. While some landlords have the tenants in each apartment pay their own bills, other complexes choose to include utilities in the rent.

Either way, the amount of water used at the building can become costly, even if the landlord pays just for shared spaces, lawn care, and related water-using areas. By keeping that in mind, it is easy to see that water conservation can become a hot topic for a landlord, in order to save on utilities and make the apartment building profitable.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways in which landlords can conserve water. These include:

### Installing Low-Flow Fixtures

One of the best ways to conserve water in an apartment building is to make sure all the apartments and every common, public area has low-flow fixtures. Toilets, sinks, and shower heads that use less water are excellent choices, because they reduce how much water gets used automatically, without having to think about it.

There’s no need to warn tenants or keep reminding them about water usage, and that can keep tensions and frustrations lower, as well. These fixtures are generally not much more expensive than others, but they can save a lot of money in the long run.

### Limit Lawn Watering by Using Native Plants

If you choose plants and grasses that are native to your environment, they won’t require as much water to keep them alive and healthy. That’s great news when it comes to water conservation, and can also save you a lot of money over time. These kinds of plants also often cost less, because they are common to the area and don’t have to be imported. That makes it a money-saving win on two counts.

### Avoid Water Features Like Pools and Fountains

The more water features you have for tenants and guests, the more water you’re going to have to use. It’s a much better choice to eliminate those kinds of things. You can still have a great apartment community without a big community pool, and it’s not necessary to have fountains in the lobby or out front in order to impress potential tenants. Rather than focus on those things, conserve water and focus on other ways to make the complex and the community areas great.

### Recycle Rain Water and “Gray” Water

With barrels and other collection devices, you can use rain water and “gray” water – the water from sinks, bathtubs, and washing machines – to water the lawn and other landscaping features. This water doesn’t cost anything, and it’s safe to use for many different types of applications. It will help you spend less on the landscaping, while still having it look good.

With so many ways to conserve water in an apartment building, it’s surprising that more landlords aren’t making it a priority. If you add it to the list of important ways to save money, you’ll be ahead of many other complex owners.



### How to Get Rid of Squirrels

From [www.bobvila.com](http://www.bobvila.com)

Don't let the bushy tails fool you. They may be cute and bright-eyed, but if left unchecked, squirrels can do an impressive amount of damage, not only to your garden, but also to your home (particularly the attic and eaves). While there's no quick and easy way to get rid of squirrels, you can do a number of things to slowly shoo away these mischievous creatures. Whether you're responding to an existing squirrel problem or seeking to prevent one, read on for a five-step action plan.



#### 1. Focus on food.

If the neighborhood squirrels seem to be more interested in your house than in the one next door, it only makes sense to investigate the reason why. First things first, scan your property for an obvious food source, such as a bird feeder. Even if mounted on a tree or atop a pole, bird feeders are well within reach of squirrels, agile animals capable of jumping eight to ten feet with relative ease. If not going to go to great heights in search of food, squirrels are just as likely to dig for it. Garden bulbs, in particular, are vulnerable. In lieu of protecting your flower beds with chicken wire, consider planting strategically placed daffodils. Since these perennials are poisonous to squirrels, they act as effective deterrents.

#### 2. Prevent passage.

Everyone knows that squirrels are expert climbers. What you may not have realized is that, by banding tree trunks with plastic or metal collars (sometimes known as baffles), you can prevent squirrels from progressing along those routes that afford access to vulnerable areas, such as the overhang of your roof.

#### 3. Opt for odors.

To augment your other efforts, hang ammonia-soaked rags on the branches squirrels seem to favor. Doing so has proven moderately successful for Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek, CA. Alternatively, you can purchase and spread predator urine, available for sale at garden supply stores or home centers. The downside is that such treatments must be reapplied after every rainfall.

#### 4. Count on chemicals.

There are many chemical repellents on the market that work well to get rid of squirrels. Look for products containing the active ingredient capsaicin. While some homeowners choose to spray repellent near entry points to the attic, others go a step further and apply it directly to bulbs before planting.

#### 5. Trap and relocate.

A last option—perhaps a futile one—is the use of live-catch traps. Even when baiting the trap with a squirrel favorite like peanuts, expect to wait a few days for the trap to become a familiar part of the environment, something the squirrels feel comfortable investigating. Once that introductory period has passed, be sure to check the trap twice daily. If you trap a squirrel, act quickly to relocate it from your property to a suitable location at least three miles away, preferably across a major highway or large body of water.

Before doing anything else, the wise course is to check in with your local fish and game department, since various municipal and/or state laws may govern the treatment of squirrels where you live. In California, for example, it's illegal to trap gray squirrels without a permit. Note that some of the heaviest regulations pertain to the use of rodenticides. For that reason alone, putting aside all ethical questions, it's recommended that you rely solely on nontoxic control methods.



## 6 Tips to Keep Good Renters Renting

From [www.american-apartment-owners-association.org](http://www.american-apartment-owners-association.org)

An ideal tenant is every landlord's dream. Once you find them, you want to hold on to them as long as possible. But how do you go about doing that? Here are some ideas that can help you keep your good tenants as long as possible.

### Go Out of Your Way to Treat Them Well

It doesn't take much to make renters feel more appreciated. A housewarming fruit basket or flowers when they move in, a holiday card or maybe some cookies during the Christmas season, or maybe a newsletter with some helpful tips for renters. Staying in touch and showing appreciation is one way to make sure that your tenants know that you care more about them than just their money. You don't have to insert yourself into their lives, but just letting them know that they are appreciated will go miles when it comes to a landlord-tenant relationship.

### Address Issues Promptly

If something breaks or if something isn't working properly, the faster you can get the problem fixed, the happier your tenant will be. Whether it's something simple like a squeaky door, or something more complex and expensive like a broken water heater, the faster you can fix the problem, the happier the tenant will be. For one thing, it shows that as a landlord you care about your tenants. While major things such as broken water heaters or no heat or air conditioning will fray anyone's nerves, the fact that you had it fixed as soon as possible will make a difference. Things break down all the time — most tenants understand this — but the sooner you can fix it, the happier the tenant will be.



### Listen to Your Tenants' Requests

If your tenant has any requests or concerns, you need to at least listen to his or her problem. While you may not wish to fulfill the requests, you need to explain to them why you cannot do what they ask. If you can, or are willing to, say yes to their requests, then by all means, do it. Some requests aren't so unreasonable that going a little out of your way isn't a big bother.

### No Month-To-Month Leases

Month-To-Month leases allow the tenant to rent the place without a long-term contract. The problem with this is that your tenants can leave — and leave you high and dry looking for a new tenant. It's better to have a minimum of a year lease — if not longer. You can offer a slight discount to a tenant who decides to rent for an extended period of time. Maybe you can offer a fixed rental payment in the contract, or promise that the rent will not go up for a certain length of time.

### Offer a Discounted Lease for Those Who Extend Their Leases

One way to keep a tenant is to offer a lease extension for a year or longer is discounted. The discount could be anything from keeping the lease the same amount as they are paying now, or maybe a smaller increase than newer renters must pay. Maybe you could offer them a free month's rent? By making your rental property more appealing, your good tenants won't leave to rent somewhere else.

Editor's Note: Be aware that changes in notices that are required if there is a breach of the lease if the term is longer than one year.

### Rent to Pet Owners

Many landlords do not rent to pet owners or limit the size of dog or even the breed of dog. Being a pet-friendly landlord makes you and your properties more desirable. Pet owners are less likely to move if their rental allows them to keep their chosen pet. You're more likely to keep good tenants because their animals are more accepted by you.

These are some of the ways that you can hang on to your good tenants. Simply by being a good landlord and be conscientious and responsive when your tenants need help will go a long way toward keeping the good renters.



# WAA Contact Information



## Wisconsin Apartment Association

PO Box 2922, Oshkosh, WI 54903  
(920) 230-WAA1 • [www.waaonline.org](http://www.waaonline.org)

### Extra WAA News Subscription (12 months)

WAA Regular Members	\$40.00
Associate Members	\$55.00
General Public	\$80.00

## WAA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

### WAA RENTAL HOUSING CERTIFICATION CLASSES

#### Rental Housing Certification 100 Series

The Basics, is devoted to keeping rental property owners informed and education on new laws. Comprised of seminars on basic property management aimed at the new rental property owner, property manager, leasing agent; it is also suggested as a refresher series for those who have been in the business a number of years. Classes in this module are:

- \* 101 The Law and the Landlord I: Wisconsin Statute Chapter 704
- \* 102 The Law and the Landlord II: Consumer Protection (ATCP) Chapter 134
- \* 103 Fair Housing Laws
- \* 104 Lead Paint Awareness
- \* 105 Credit Reports
- \* 106 Basic Recordkeeping
- \* 107 Screening Your Applicants
- \* 108 Screening Workshop
- \* 109 Nuts and Bolts of Eviction
- \* 110 Bonding and Garnishment

**NEW for 2014:** "Landlord & Tenant Law in Wisconsin" by John H. Fischer – This is a 8-hour educational session that takes an in-depth look at Wisconsin-specific landlord-tenant regulations and also covers some of the most important federal regulations that deal with rental housing."

## Why Join WAA?

The WAA is your portal to the rental housing business in Wisconsin. Membership gives you access to what you need to know and what you need to do to run your rental properties successfully, ethically, and responsibly.

### 10 things every successful landlord needs to know. Do you?

- Fair housing information
- Applicant screening and processing
- Eviction procedures
- Rental forms specific to Wisconsin
- Lead based paint requirements
- Rental disclosures required by law
- Bills and rental housing policies under discussion at the Capitol.
- Best rental housing management practices
- Document storage, security, and disposal
- Property marketing techniques

\*Information in these articles should be used as a guide only and should not be relied upon as the sole source of information relating to its content. Additional sources of information may be listed herein. No warranty, either expressed or implied, is made with respect to the information contained herein. Neither WAA nor RHR is responsible for any loss, inconvenience, damage (whether special or consequential) or claims arising out of the use of the information contained. You should always seek advice from your attorney regarding any legal matters.



## **The Small American Landlord: A Guide to Tenant Screening**

By Matt Angerer

### **Overview**

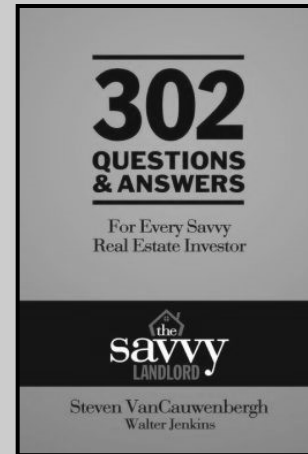
The fourth book from the Savvy Landlord to give you more insight in the wild ride of real estate investing.

Real estate investing can be difficult at times when you have to deal with the unsuspected circumstances regarding tenants, contractors, bankers, and costly repairs. 302 Questions & Answers offers you simple, straightforward solutions that can save you time and money in the operation of your business. Written in a quick, easy, and accessible style, this comprehensive handbook guides you through all areas of investing in real estate.

302 Questions & Answers simplifies key terms you need to know and provides answers to solve those curious questions. It also gives specific tips for the non-technical investor in all of us.

How do I evict a tenant?  
Can a bank call up a loan anytime?  
What is the difference between ARV and policy value?  
What fees can I charge my tenants?  
When should I add apartments to my portfolio?  
Will texting my tenants cause any privacy concerns?  
What are the dangers of not using a move-in sheet?  
Should I self-insure my properties?  
How much cash should I keep in the bank as a safety net?  
When should I raise the rent? How often can I do that?  
What is the capitalization of income?

....and 291 more questions with answers!



## **Stealing the Show**

From [www.american-apartment-owners-association.org](http://www.american-apartment-owners-association.org)

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