



Kenosha Landlord Association

A Local Chapter of the Wisconsin Apartment Association

Volume 29, Issue 10

November 2016

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Kenosha Landlord Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 1505,
Kenosha, WI 53141

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To Our Members

We would like to thank our KLA Member, Barbara Domenk-Stasierowski, for her presentation on Tenant Screening Criteria. Barb's presentation gave the members great information not only on the screening process but also on how Landlords can make certain they are in compliance with the current laws.

At the next meeting, Wednesday, November 16th, Rick Russell, from Wisconsin Legal Blank, will give a presentation on all the forms currently available to our members. Rick will also be showing the members how to navigate the WLB website when ordering online.

The November meeting will be the last meeting of the year. There will be no meeting in December. In January we will be having the Annual KLA Holiday Party to be held at Circa on Seventh. See invitation insert on page 11.

DISCLAIMER: The Kenosha Landlord Association publishes this newsletter to create awareness of issues relating to the rental housing industry. Information is compiled from a variety of sources and the views and concerns expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the Association.



Fair Housing Demystified

Source: <http://www.multihousingpro.com> / By Peggy Shaw / September 2016
Submitted by: Chuck Powell



Multifamily speaker and trainer Anne Sadovsky, who specializes in fair housing issues, became an advocate very early in life.

When she was 14, she became friends with Ruby, a black girl, who worked in her aunt's hair salon in McKinney, Texas, and had many conversations with her about how the black kids were treated, relegated to separate schools with used school books and to the back of the bus and banned from the lunch counter at the diner downtown.

"One Saturday I went to get my hair cut and I asked my aunt if I could take Ruby to lunch. We went out to get in the car. I closed my door and looked over to say something to Ruby and she'd gotten in the back seat," Sadovsky recalled recently.

"I said, 'Ruby, get up here with me,' and she said, 'I can't.' I said, 'That doesn't apply to us because we're friends. Get up here.' She started to cry and when she started to cry, I started to cry."

Later, she complained to her aunt and grandfather, with whom she lived, that it was terribly unfair and they agreed, but added that it was just the way it was.

"So, that really was the beginning of my interest in treating people with equality and fairness," said the 74-year-old Sadovsky.

By 1968, when she got her start in the apartment industry with a job as a recruiter for I.C Deal Company in Dallas, the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) introduced meaningful federal enforcement mechanisms, outlawing refusal to sell or rent a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Disabled persons and families with children were added to the protected class list twenty years later, through HUD's Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and the Americans with Disabilities Act that became law in 1990.

Today, the hottest fair housing topics include the April 4 criminal background ruling and ongoing issues related to accommodating assist animals and the fake certificates that have lately become a problem for multifamily leasing agents, said Sadovsky.

The new guidance issued by HUD in early April tells landlords that turning down prospective residents based on their criminal records may violate the Fair Housing Act.

While people with criminal records aren't a protected class under that act, the de facto problem is that some 80 percent of convicted felons are black or Hispanic, ergo members of a protected class.

Many landlords nowadays farm out their background checks to a third party like CoreLogic's Safe Rent for prospective resident screening to avoid discrimination claims or lawsuits, but those apartment companies and communities that do their own background checks are advised to first focus on credit and rental histories when checking out rental applicants.

"We may not have to get to the criminal part because we don't have to rent to them if they have bad credit or have been evicted or can't pay their rent, have bounced checks or they don't have a job," she said.

The fake assist animal scam is another big fair housing concern today.

According to guidance issued by HUD in April of 2013 that explains obligations of housing providers with respect to animals that provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, those disabled persons may request a reasonable accommodation for any assistance animal, including an emotional support animal.

"When the claimed disability is not visible, we have been given the right to request confirmation that the animal is necessary to aid the resident," she explained.

Continued on page 3

EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY

FAIR HOUSING IS THE LAW!

Fair Housing Demystified

(con't)



In recent years, multifamily owners have learned to handle the situation more effectively. When a resident says, "I have a handicapped permit and I need a parking space, we now give them a reserved parking space. It doesn't have to say 'handicapped' at all," she said.

In fact, a handicapped sign actually reveals that someone has a disability, which is not legal.

"We give them a little sticker or cardboard that goes on their dashboard with a matching number. You don't use their apartment number. You don't use their phone number," said Sadovsky.

If other residents ask the apartment community manager or front desk person why the resident has a reserved parking space, to answer "They have a disability" would be revealing something about that resident that should not be discussed with other people.

"So, what I'm telling everybody to say is, 'The federal government has given that resident permission and approval to have a reserved parking space,' and, if they say, 'Why?' we say, 'That's confidential and it's between that person and the government.' It typically stops people from asking more when you say it's the government," said Sadovsky.

Another disability issue she addresses in her multifamily presentations relates to public restrooms. If an apartment community has a restroom in the office that is not handicapped accessible, it is not a public restroom and the public should not be allowed to use it. It must accommodate people with disabilities for it to be considered public, she said.

When she says that to people in seminars, "they just freak," because they've got older properties built in the '70s and '80s and the office restrooms weren't designed to accommodate handicapped people.

"I tell them, 'Your option is to not have a public restroom or to remodel your restroom to make it accessible.' I explain to them that fair housing dovetails with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are trying to get accessibility for people with disabilities everywhere we can."

Editor's note: Sadovsky is neither an attorney, nor qualified to give legal advice. She does not work for HUD or this publication

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The How And Why Of Becoming A Really Likable Property Manager

Source: <http://www.propertymanager.com>



As I listened to this long-time property manager describe his losses I was astounded. “These ungrateful owners don’t deserve me. I’ve worked hard for them and their residents and this is what I get?” Although this man was intelligent, his people-skills and mannerisms were brash, condescending and curt. Nobody enjoys the company of doing business with a person who abruptly talks down to the them.

Like many folks, he didn’t seem to realize he was being rude and abrasive. After patiently waiting for him to finish his heartfelt, self-justifying oration, I asked him, “What’s your plan to solve this problem?” Apparently that was what he was hoping I had up my sleeve...some answers and a plan to help him. I thanked him for his confidence and told him I’d get back to him after giving the matter more thought.

After reflecting on the property managers I know or have heard about who are well-liked by both their clients and their tenants, I came up with the following action-steps below.

- Talk to people who know you well, care about you, and are able to be blunt with you. Ask them to tell you the facts about how you affect them and make them feel. Seek the painful truth.
- Have a business conversation, a face-to-face meeting with a client or resident. Ask permission for someone to video you and you only. Tell the other person it’s for your “self-evaluation.”
- After seeing the video and recovering from the many surprises, begin a list of ideas for self- improvement. Watch the video as many times as you can until solutions arise in your mind.
- Be certain you come across to others as authentic and genuine. We all want to have relationships based on trust. Who do you know who is a good example of authenticity? Emulate them sincerely and ask for a little coaching as well.
- Practice being a focused listener. Instead of focusing on how you’ll reply, zero in on understanding what the speaker is saying and then ask relevant questions. As I often say, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
- Choose to respond rather than react. If you’re being confronted with accusations or demands, take a deep breath, let the person know you’ve heard them, and pause. In that awkward but powerful pause ask yourself, “Am I in the right frame of mind to respond courteously.”
- When pausing before responding, consider asking for a “time out.” It’s often appropriate and thoughtful to say, “I want to think about your concerns carefully and get back to you later.”
- Make being reliable a top priority in all your relationships. Clients, residents, family and friends need to be sure they can count on you. Be punctual, don’t keep people waiting and be a person of your word.

The property manager I shared these 8 suggestions with took them to heart. Although he still has a tendency to be condescending and reactive, he’s becoming a more likable person and professional. Instead of losing clients and good residents, he’s attracting more than ever. His personal life is more peaceful and satisfying too. Most of all he’s more “comfortable in his own skin” as he describes it.



What The Election Means To Your Business + Presidential Landscaping Tips



While many property managers may be distracted by and entertained with the political elections in the U.S., now may be an auspicious time to shift our focus. How about two disparate attention targets?

First, how do the presidential elections impact the cost of housing? My research found that residential real estate prices usually fall during a closely contested presidential election year. This is also the case in the final year of a two-term presidency. In fact, if we look at the transitional years of 2000 and 2008 it becomes more obvious that this year may be a housing market depressant.

Despite the lowest interest and mortgage rates ever, housing in the hottest markets like New York City, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Seattle in the Pacific Northwest have already cooled down. What's caused the drop? There are many factors including high prices and fewer qualified buyers. The economies of these ebullient areas helped support strong prices, but are they sustainable?

Also, presidential elections usually point to big potential changes in economic and housing policies. The uncertainty tends to scare many real estate buyers and dissuade over leveraged investors. The tighter the election, the more investor unease, and buyers often sit on the sidelines until the election is over. This year's presidential candidates are keeping this "anxiety index" to a boil. When all the votes are tallied, and if the Fed finally continues its interest rate increases, housing prices may actually drop about 2% for 2016 according to a number of industry experts. This isn't abnormal.

No one that I'm aware of is calling for a housing bust like we experienced in 2007 through 2009. Like so many bubbles, the real estate market may be ready for a systemic pullback. Be ready for opportunities.

Now we'll shift our attention to ideas about landscaping in autumn. A well-maintained, attractive property will keep and attract residents almost as much as a great location or a fresh coat of paint.

The falling leaves of election season need to be raked and removed. Keep your lawn areas green with a careful sprinkling of a good quality organic fertilizer. Simply said, don't put off your lawn maintenance.

- Arborists suggest that pruning trees, especially young ones can be a prudent idea before winter too. Pruning and shaping young trees helps them grow attractively and also promotes robust, good health.
- Do everyone a favor and reduce the use of those loud, obnoxious lawn blowers that cause clouds of dirty air. Raking is good for grass and sweeping doesn't take that much more time. Residents will thank you.
- Empower your landscaping crews with well-maintained equipment. If you hire landscapers, make sure they have the kind of tools that will do a good job. Ask to see a sample of their work at other locations.
- Although flowers may not grow well during the election season, consider putting down a fresh coat of ground cover or bark chips. Let the emphasis be on mulching tree roots with a light, colorful layer.
- Let the autumnal period be a reminder to communicate with your clients about plans for next year. Discuss the contents and ideas in this article and see what resonates with them. The weekend before the November elections daylight saving time ends. Call your clients the week before and tell them they'll be gaining an hour on Sunday morning so they can get some extra sleep.

Everyone likes more time and some good news. Shower your clients and residents with as much as possible, and see how your business will grow in the seasons ahead. Be proactive!



NO BATTERIES IN SMOKE DETECTORS

Source: mrlandlord.com



Landlords often discover that there are no batteries in the smoke detectors of their rental property. Sometimes this discovery takes place when landlords are doing a preventive maintenance check or a service call on the property. Often it is discovered after the renter has moved out. And tragically sometimes it is discovered after a fire has occurred in the property.

It's easy for landlords to put the blame on the resident and say that the battery was in place when the resident started renting, and that it is their responsibility to make sure the battery stays working or to replace when necessary. In at least one state, California I believe, it is actually the landlord's responsibility to check the battery every 6 months. Residents have even been known to remove the batteries to stop the smoke detector from accidentally going off or chirping, or to use the batteries for some other item in the home.

The bigger point is, what can landlords do to help increase the probability that the smoke detector will always be working? The following are two suggestions:

1. Purchase the smoke alarm with 10 year lithium batteries. Not only do they last longer, but the resident can't get to the batteries without literally breaking open the alarms.
2. When one landlord does his quarterly maintenance inspection, he carries spare 9 V batteries with him. He buys them in mega packs at Sam's Club for about \$1.50 each. As per his lease, the resident must keep a working battery in a smoke detector at all times, and failure to do so results in the landlord (or his representative) replacing it for them. This is a bill of \$10 per battery. Surprise! Now all of the residents tend to have functional smoke detectors after the landlord's first visit.



FACEBOOK CAN BE A LANDLORD'S BEST FRIEND

Source: mrlandlord.com



For pre-screening applicants, utilizing Facebook as a screening TOOL, can help you with your detective work. Here's how one landlord utilizes Facebook.

"Generally people leave their pictures up and leave themselves unguarded. When I do my email pre-screen, 99% of people give their real name. It's very easy to look up a given name on Facebook. I've only found two that haven't had some sort of a profile. Yesterday I looked up a gal. Her Facebook posts were about celebrating being clean 100 days with pictures of a needle. Sure, it could be about her celebrating for someone else. But her other posts substantiated what I was thinking.

The other thing about Facebook is that you can see applicants' pets and get at least a good idea of how many people are in their family. If they post that they have three kids and they show pictures, then that unmask the pre-screening claim that only two people will be living in the house. Hmmm. Also, the gal that replied in this pre-screen questionnaire I sent said she had an "English terrier" (which doesn't exist). So of course I found out that it's a pitbull mix.

If you're not on Facebook, make a fake profile so you can check these things! It's also interesting to see their friends. It's not necessarily about partying, just what's acceptable among their group. You can see if the applicant is a gamer, a gangster, if they have dogs, and what clubs they belong to in some cases. For example, if the applicant is a biker enthusiast. Very telling."



Managing Property In A Challenged Neighborhood

Source:comportone.com



No one needs to tell you that managing property in a "challenged neighborhood" can be a trying experience. Police calls can be frequent, and existing residents can be skeptical that things will change.

You must follow strict guidelines, and have a clean, pleasant and comfortable place for people to call home. Prior property management experience is helpful before jumping into this type of risky investment. Many investors purchase rental property without understanding the amount of work involved or the laws that relate to rental property management. Add to that inexperience the dynamics of a neighborhood with a high density of low-income households and high crime, to unformed owners and you will have a situation that can create problems for the entire community.

However, in various challenged neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area, owner and managers can work together to improve the community. We can join forces with local law enforcement officials, security companies, elected officials and neighborhood residents to change the way our neighborhoods are perceived and the way business is done.

The Major Issues

There are many issues facing owners and managers in troubled neighborhoods. Some problems relate to poor screening by neighboring owners. It is frustrating when other owners are not willing to set high standards. In many situations a lack of management presence and the owner's unwillingness to deal with disturbances can lead to the deterioration of the area.

Another issue is the lack of responsible residents. The skills and resources of prospective residents seem to have decreased. Many residents lack the knowledge about caring for an apartment and the ability to follow rules. Dealing with applicants who have trouble reading the application and understanding the provisions is very time consuming. Because of these challenges, more "in-depth" management is required to enforce lease provisions, to collect rent, and to keep behavior in line.

While some neighborhoods may be termed "troubled," not everyone managing property in such areas agrees with that characterization. Some may choose not to identify these management issues as problems. You could see them as opportunities and challenges to meet the residents' needs, to bridge the low-income with dominant society. If we do continue label communities, we do a disservice. We need to look at the quality of people. People need to be given the opportunity to succeed; labeling provides them an excuse to quit. These issues are complex. Lack of parental control over juveniles. Socioeconomic difficulties faced by families, or the density of apartment buildings can be factors in a neighborhood's decline. Many times a parent of a problem juvenile may be addicted to drugs, or they deal drugs as a fast moneymaker.

Some problems are the result of residents not having a vested interest in their neighborhood. Lack of ties to the community itself is a big part of the problem. Neighborhood problems can also be blamed on poor environmental design. The degree of attractiveness of any location says a lot about its owners and the type of people who frequent the place. Poor lighting and unkept buildings and lawns can exacerbate crime problems.

The Media's Impact

According to owners and managers interviewed, the media also shares the blame for the poor image of certain neighborhoods. Some see news coverage as a hindrance to efforts to improve their neighborhoods. But unfortunately it makes headline news when problems are present in apartment communities. Many citizens do not realize they (the media) are actually only speaking of a very small portion of the community.

Continued on page 9



Managing Property In A Challenged Neighborhood

(con't)



Many managers understand that the media are trying to analyze the issues, but they say what people remember is the map of "troubled" areas of the metro area. A better approach would be to focus on the affordability of the apartments in these areas and the efforts being made to improve the neighborhood. The future of any area is its ability to attract responsible residents. The media needs to realize the negativism they create and emphasize the positive instead.

Reaching Good Residents

Marketing apartments in a troubled neighborhood presents its own problems. Many times, prospective residents will have conceived notions about the neighborhood. Some just hang up when told where the property is. It helps to try to focus on benefits rather than just location. Stress that you have a diverse resident base, and you also have residents who have been there for a number of years. Invite them to talk with your residents, drive through the neighborhood, down the street, and to come see your property. Some may be turned off by the neighborhood immediately. Others may make an appointment and then drive by without stopping. However, the majority may give you the benefit of the doubt and stop in to see what you have to offer.

Take a long-range view of marketing your apartments. Many think once the residents are attracted, the job is done. Instead, owners and managers must demonstrate respect for residents and consistently uphold the rules and regulations. It is necessary for owners to be present and maintain their property. Visibility shows you care.

Positive Steps

Police involvement has a positive effect on neighborhoods. It is important that police make a commitment to the area and know the residents. City and county officials, as well as community agencies must be involved. For instance, recreational and family assistance programs provided by local centers are very important to residents. These organizations can also help residents start Neighborhood Watch groups.

Positive experiences can be gained by working with other owners. For example, if you have had trouble with trespassers on your property, you can issue warning, and trespassing tickets. If the warning ticket is issued to someone at one property, it serves as notice at all the properties. If the trespasser is then seen on another property in the area, the violator will be fined.

If your neighborhoods are "challenged," set your sights high, and aim for that goal in everything you do. Be willing to take an empty apartment for two months to get a quality resident. Many good residents are out there, without high paying jobs, looking for a great apartment.

If you have a quality property, be proud of it and let everyone know it. Let prospective residents know you are proud of it, too. They will feel your pride.



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You're invited to the
Kenosha Landlord Association
Holiday Party!!

Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 7:00pm
Cocktails at 6:30 pm

Location: Circa on Seventh
4902 7th Avenue
Kenosha, WI

Dinner includes: Dinner Entrée (buffet selection), salad, dinner rolls,
dessert, and choice of coffee, hot tea or soda. Tip is included in the cost.
** Please note there will be a Cash Bar. **

The cost is \$15/person paid by January 12th.
\$25.00/person at the door.
Please complete the form below and send with a check payable to:
Kenosha Landlord Association P.O. Box 1505 Kenosha, WI
53141

Deadline to sign-up is January 12, 2016 - No exceptions!

Name: _____

Name: _____

Telephone () _____

Kenosha Landlord Association
2016 Annual Holiday Party
Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 6:30pm
Location: Circa on Seventh



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53141

Deadline to sign-up is January 12, 2016 - No exceptions!

Name: _____

Name: _____

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Kenosha Landlord Association
2016 Annual Holiday Party
Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 6:30pm
Location: Circa on Seventh



The Future For Kenosha Landlord Association Help Keep Us Strong



The KLA Association is only as strong as our members, and the participation of our members is critical for our growth and success. We have established a number of committees (teams) to ensure that our association continues to meet our goals, retain and add members, and provide education, leadership, and representation to ensure that YOU are able to operate your rental business successfully, ethically, and responsibly. The board members and committee members have agreed to volunteer their opinions, skills, and time to make this association the best it can be. Please consider getting involved and help make a difference in YOUR association.

All KLA Members are invited to the BOD meetings held on the First Wednesday of the month. There will be a meeting on December 7th. December's meeting will be held at the Shagbark Apartments Clubhouse (4042 Washington Rd, Kenosha). The meeting starts at 6:00. There will be no membership meeting in December.

Be sure to get your Holiday Party invites filled out and sent in or brought to the November meeting. The deadline is January 12th to get the great savings on a great event. After January 12th the cost is \$25.00 per person.

Next Meeting

Fireside Restaurant & Lounge

2801 30th Avenue
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November 16, 2016

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7:00 p.m. meeting**

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Kenosha Landlord Association

**Rick Russell from
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