

# ALOC NEWS

www.cumberlandlandlords.com

January 3, 2005

Associated Landlords of the Cumberland Area  
ALOC Phone (301) 759-0530 P.O. Box 1867

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## Landlord – Tenant Complaints – Screening II

Continuing from last month we hope you have already checked out the income and work history and have confirmed that this tenant has the finances to afford the unit and has reasonable expectation of keeping his job for a while. Requesting a recent pay stub and proof that all of his utilities are paid up to date may also be helpful in making a decision.

Your next step is to contact his current or past landlord to get specifics regarding their rental payment history, other tenant or police complaints and did the old Landlord ever have to take them to court to collect the rent? You should also find out if they got their security deposit back and did they leave the rental unit as agreed and with proper notice?

Once you have progressed through these steps you could have a credit and or criminal background check made. If they have problems on their credit record it will typically line up with utility problems. If you need help analyzing the credit report, check with the bureau that issued it for assistance. The criminal background check will usually show all arrests and the dispositions of the various cases. It is not unusual to have a number of arrests or charges on the record without an actual conviction. These can sometimes be hard to understand and you may want to consult with your provider for details. Many of the reports that I have reviewed show no convictions which could indicate a plea bargain or possibly the case was placed on the stet docket. Keep in mind that anybody can get arrested or be charged with a crime and that doesn't necessarily mean that they are trouble. On the other hand if there is a lot of activity it could be indicative of future problems for you if they ultimately rent from you. Not all court records are cross referenced to social security numbers so it is possible that you may get information about another person with the same name!

One recommended method to check up on a prospective tenant is to visit their rental unit to see what condition it is in. This can be the single best investigative method available to you. If the house and the grounds around are neat and clean and the insides are in reasonable condition this can go along way to convincing you that this tenant could be a good one! More Next Month!

## DUES TIME

If you find a dues notice attached you will need to pay your dues for 2005 on or around January 1st. Many new members who recently joined will not have to pay dues as the amount for 2005 was collected when they recently joined. Members having any questions about their dues can call Jeff Hutter at 301-777-0379 evenings and weekends.

## January Meeting

For our first meeting of 2005 we have Pete Wotring from Tom Thumb Pest Control who will be our speaker. For members with question about bugs, pests and exterminating this should prove to be an interesting meeting. We also hope to have Bob Roman, who is a locksmith, in attendance to inform the membership about locks and lock systems. Carey Walker will be conducting the meeting as Jeff Hutter will be out town.

## Future Lead Paint Items?

With the 2005 legislative session soon starting we are all wondering what it has in store for us! As of this date we have no insights into any new rental/lead bills as it appears that slots, medical malpractice, tort reform and budget balancing may take up a lot of time. The Maryland Property Owners Association will probably meet in January or early February to review the situation.

We have yet to see the MDE's Blood Lead Surveillance report for 2003 which is usually issued in late November, so we have no idea as our improvements in performance this year. This information is very helpful when we have to testify before the Environmental Matters Committee.

All rental units registered with the MDE's Lead Poisoning Program must re-register each year in December and hopefully all of the members have renewed for 2005 which is due at the MDE by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The rate this year was increased from \$ 10.00 to \$ 15.00 per rental unit.

If you have not renewed or did not get your paperwork please contact the MDE as soon as possible to get this done!

**Richard Bonig**  
**Rental Property Inspections**  
**Dust Wipe Tests/Visual Inspections**  
301-777-1369

MDE: Certified Lead Paint Visual Inspector  
HUD: Certified Lead Sampling Technician  
9-30-04

## *Carey Walker*

Lead Inspections for Rental Housing  
Visual Inspections and Dust Wipes  
201 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cumberland, MD 21502  
301-722-8328

3-05

## Highland Enterprises LLC

Lead Abatement - Lead Risk Reduction  
Rental Property Maintenance Contractor

Telephone 301-729-1086  
FAX 301-729-4801 - Pager 301-546-0221  
3-30 / 9-30

## Robert Saville

VISUAL INSPECTOR  
MDE Inspections Lead Dust Wipes  
LEAD PAINT SUPERVISOR  
"Excellent Rates"

Telephone/FAX: 301-729-2994

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## HUD Problems

Over the past year or so I have been receiving a constant stream of complaints regarding the HUD program in the City of Cumberland as administered by their Housing Assistance Office in the basement of City Hall. This had been further compounded by recent HUD requirements for copies of all MDE registration and inspection information. Though I have not received any specific reports about rent abatements, it was one of the promised enforcement tools mentioned when they sent out their notification letters.

I will be arranging a meeting with some supervisory people at City Hall and will discuss it with the Mayor. I anticipate this will be sometime in February. Last year I asked people to write letters of complaint to the Mayor and Council and I again encourage you to do so as soon as possible with a copy sent to me. I will also attempt to contact the County HUD office regarding this issue. Any input either positive or negative regarding the City or County HUD programs would be appreciated so that I have a complete picture. Please respond in writing to me either via regular mail or you can email me at [jjhsr@hereintown.net](mailto:jjhsr@hereintown.net).

Briefly a couple of problems reported to me. The first involved a member who had a HUD tenant who was renting 2 units (without full knowledge by the Landlord) at different locations with 1 HUD and 1 out of the program. When HUD discovered all of this they came to the conclusion that the Landlord's rent should be abated back some months to cover the problem. As the tenant was no longer renting from the Landlord the abated rent would be deducted from other rents paid for other tenants on the HUD program. On the surface this does not appear to be legal or ethical but a careful examination of the HUD contract reveals that they have the right to do this! Another problem centered on a lack of appropriate notice given to Landlords or tenants about the status of their contracts. A tenant's rent was abated due to lack of response to a notice but yet there was not proof that the tenant ever received the notice which was to be sent by certified mail with return receipt. The same occurred with the Landlord. Both of these problems were shrugged off in a rather cavalier fashion by the Cumberland HUD office according to reports I received.

## ALOC DUES for 2005

It is that time of year again when membership dues in the amount of \$ 40.00 will be due. Payment by January 1st will be appreciated. A dues bill will be enclosed with member's newsletter if your payment is required.

The dues cover the costs of our mailing and correspondence, membership in the Maryland Property Owners Network, telephone costs, costs associated with attending meetings in Annapolis, development and reproduction of our leases and etc. When you see some of the fines levied against landlords for failure to register or comply with the myriad of laws in effect, our dues represent a real bargain! We will keep you informed!

### ALOC Officers

J. Jeffrey Hutter President  
Carey Walker Vice President  
Stephanie Hutter Secretary  
J. Jeffrey Hutter Treasurer  
  
Board of Directors  
  
Clarence Anderson  
Steve Jenkins  
Bob Saville

### Want to save \$\$\$ Money?

Kitchens, bathrooms and etc.

You could save hundreds on your Tub, Tile and Countertop repairs.

If it has a finish, let Copman's refinish it!

### Copman's Refinishing

Because the job is not complete, until it's been finished

A division of Copman's Home Works...MHIC #74778 301-722-3697 10/05

### Meeting Schedule

January 10, 2005

February 14, 2005

March 14, 2005

April 11, 2005

May 9, 2005

June NO MEETING

July NO MEETING

August NO MEETING

Meetings are held at the

South Cumberland Library

on Race and Seymour St.

at 6:30 PM

### Thought for the Month

Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn.

John Wesley (founder of Methodism)

Champions keep playing until they get it right.

Billie Jean King (tennis champion)

### TWR Communications 301-777-2692 9-30-05

TWR supplies quality high speed Internet Access, both dialup and Wireless in the Tri-state area. TWR provides other computer services including training, computer repairs, networking and website hosting. If you have need of storage space check out our self-storage facilities on Necessity St. TWR is an agent for Cellular One, operates a wide area network with wide area paging and mobile 2-way radio. Check us out at [twr@hereintown.net](mailto:twr@hereintown.net)

### Marsh Neilson & Sons General Contractors

Replacement windows, doors, painting, trained in Lead Abatement, Also roofing, porches and decks, plumbing and electrical work.

Lets us take care of your lead problems!

For more information call

### A-1 Inspections, Inc.

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INSPECTIONS RESIDENTIAL AND  
COMMERCIAL LEAD INSPECTIONS

PHONE 301-724-LEAD

301-724-5323

6-05

### The Credit Bureau, Inc.

We have been in the business of building databases for over 50 years. Let us build one for you! For those of you contributing rental history, thank you. For those who haven't called me, it's easy.

800-825-6604

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