

ALOC NEWS

www.cumberlandlandlords.com

May 2, 2005

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

Vol. 11, Issue 5

Cumberland Fair Housing Office

Darrell Lee Powell, who was formerly with WHAG and made a brief run for the County Clerk's office, has assumed a new post with the City of Cumberland as the City's fair housing specialist. Darrell will be handling complaints and or problems with housing issues whether it is rental or purchase. He will be making the rounds of various groups to speak about the program which is designed to cover all "protected classes" based on federal, state and local laws. Those include sex, race, age, marital status, disability and sexual orientation.

While the City has had few complaints over the years this program was initiated by HUD to focus more on fair housing issues. Darrell will also be working with Cumberland's Human Relations Commission.

We will probably arrange to have Darrell as a speaker at one of our meetings later in the fall of 2005 so that the membership can get more details on this important aspect of residential housing.

Starting in May the Commission will be meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5 PM in City Hall and the meeting is open to the public.

For more information about fair housing or to make an appointment you can reach Darrell Lee Powell at 301-777-5970 ext. 134. Additional information on fair housing is also available through the city's website, www.ci.cumberland.md.us.

Quicken Rental Program

We have heard that Quicken has added some capabilities to its QuickBooks program to handle rental. We don't have any details but if you are a Quicken user you may want to check with them to see what's new. Quicken is a great financial program and is easily adaptable to track your rental financials.

May Meeting

Our May 9th meeting will mark the end of our regular meetings until fall and we will be reviewing the legislative activity for 2005. We have also invited the members of the Frostburg Landlord Association to attend this last meeting of the season.

Meeting Schedule Change

As explained somewhat in past newsletters the membership is considering changing the meeting schedule. While there are still many important issues to discuss (but not as many as in past years) it seems that meeting as often as we do is unnecessary. If problems with the housing code erupt we could arrange special meetings. It has been proposed that when we start our fall 2005 meetings we meet as follows:

September 12, 2005
November 14, 2005
February, 13, 2006
May 8, 2006

This schedule would still allow us time to review legislative matters as it is usually February before we have any idea about pending bills and we can hold a special meeting in March or April if needed. Many members indicate that the newsletter keeps them informed and this will continue to be published on a monthly basis. Please note that many other Landlord groups in Maryland meet quarterly or yearly.

We will vote on this at the May meeting. We would appreciate having as many members as possible present to help us decide on our schedule.

The Nolo Press

This firm delights in publishing books to help us common folks avoid having to use lawyers and they publish quite an extensive list of books, many about the Landlord-Tenant relationship. For more details check out their website at www.nolo.com.

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1-06

MPON Legislative Update

Our Maryland Property Owners Network has advised us that the Legislature has signed off on a number of bills and in particular we will be looking at lower lead blood levels to trigger risk reduction work and or qualified offers. These levels will go down from the current 20 ug/dcl and 15ug/dcl to 15ug/dcl and 10ug/dcl. The reasons for this change, which was heavily endorsed by the Governor and many groups on both sides of the table, was to keep the Lead Program from being eroded by lawsuits. Many inventive Lead Liability lawyers have tried to make an end run around the regulations requiring the MDE to defend its program, regulations and blood lead levels in court. These new levels will probably pull more kids into the program; however it will bring the levels into line with those established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) making it easier to defend in court. Certainly this will reduce lawsuits, which no insurance covers, but it will also capture more children bringing them into the program. Hopefully for us in Western Maryland we will not see our numbers increase as much as the metro areas.

For Landlords with paid staff you need to look at the increased minimum wage passed by the legislature. This will increase wages from the old federal level of \$ 5.15 to \$ 6.15. While few employers today pay the minimum wage it will certainly drive up all wages if it is signed into law. We believe that the Governor will veto this bill, but who knows for sure what will happen.

Another troubling law that could severely impact Maryland's ability to attract new business is the so called "Wal Mart bill" that requires employers of more than 10,000 workers to pay at least 8% of the payroll towards the cost of Health Insurance or pay a special tax to the state for the difference. While this would only affect one employer at this time it is expected to be the springboard for requiring all Maryland employers to provide Health Insurance for their employees. Again this may face a veto and we will not know the outcome for a month or so.

The MPON will be meeting in June and we will have an in depth summary available later for the membership.

Leases and other Documents

ALOC has available leases, rental applications and tenant checklists for sale, at cost, to members. The cost for each item is as follows: Small print Lease @ \$ 0.50- Large print regular or HUD Lease @ \$ 1.25- Rental Application @ \$ 0.50 - Move in Checklist @ \$ 0.50 - Lead Paint Brochures, both EPA & Maryland and document receipt@ \$2.50 for the set - Document Receipt for MDE & EPA brochures (disclosure) @ \$ 0.25

These forms are kept at Jeff's office, TWR Comm. at 549 N. Centre Street. Any paid member can stop by and pick up whatever they need. If you need more than 5 of each item please call at least 24 hours in advance so that we can make sure we have plenty on hand. Call 777-2692 ext 113,115 or 147 Monday through Friday and you can talk to Pam, Gary or Kathy. Please note: We do not keep MDE or City Housing registration forms on hand.

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Meeting Schedule

May 9, 2005

June NO MEETING

July NO MEETING

August NO MEETING

September 12, 2005

Meetings are held at the
South Cumberland Library
on Race and Seymour St.
at 6:30 PM

Thought for the Month

"Whatever you are, be a good one."

Abraham Lincoln

"Character is doing the right thing when no one is watching"

J. C. Watts

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

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