



CDARPO

Capital District Association of Rental Property Owners

Newsletter

December 2017



Empire State Plaza, Albany

Please submit your photos and descriptions to Ray Koloski (rayhats@gmail.com)

Next Meeting Thursday, December 14

@Best Western plus Franklin Square Inn (Across From Dinosaur BBQ)

Featured Speaker:

Robert Newberry

*CDARPO Website Manager / Owner of Renttropolis
(Details on Page 4)*

Speak-Up

**Networking around the
Refreshment and Resource Tables**

Advice to the Houselorn



By Mac Mowbray

I hate to say "I told you so," but I did. I have already had my first call for a frozen outdoor faucet! I will list things to do for winter one more time and then I will shut up.

1/ Shut off all outdoor faucets inside the house. Open the outdoor faucet to drain any water in the pipe that might freeze and split. If you leave water in the pipe after the shut off, you might get a nasty surprise in the spring.

2/ Check ALL heating equipment. That includes auxiliary heat tenants might provide for themselves. Space heaters can cause fires if too near drapes and shades. Check extension cords to see they are not frayed. Also make sure they are not just lamp cord. You need heavier extension cords for electric appliances. Also, in nearby Pittsfield gas space heaters that do not require flue venting are being sold; these could cause a problem in small tight rooms. I would advise against them. Make sure your oil-fired furnaces and boilers have been cleaned and checked. Be sure to tell the tenants to be on automatic delivery if they are responsible for providing the oil. When the tank is empty, no heat, pipes freeze.

3/ Make sure the storm windows are down tightly. Check to see if tenants have closed and locked windows with no storms.

4/ Check the doors to make sure the weather stripping does not need replacement.

5/ Arrange for snow plowing and removal from sidewalks and driveways and parking lots.

6/ If you have stairs, make sure salt or other ice melter is available when ice forms. If possible, install nonskid treads on steep stairs.

7/ Last but far from LEAST, check roof drains and gutters. This should be done until the last leaf has fallen from the trees. Wet leaves can freeze and stop up those drains and gutters.

Rotterdam got a nice early Christmas gift that we all wish we could get. I wonder what he told Santa when asked what he wanted for Christmas.

Here's the REST of the story. He says; my grandmother passed away unexpectedly and left me a six-family. (Well seven, if you count the studio apt. for a superintendent.) He says the place was built in the early 1950s. It is not fancy, as it was put up quickly to house returning soldiers who were house hunting and not finding much to choose from. My sister wants nothing to do with it and has signed the necessary papers to deed her share to me. The building is full. The tenants pay on time. Less than market value

for the neighborhood. However, the apts. are out of date. It is a NORC (naturally occurring retirement community). Several tenants have been there since the place was built!! The others are not much younger. The apartments are good sized. They are about 1200 sq. ft. My wife wanted me to sell the place, but is now agreeable to keeping it. That's because I just took early retirement and she wants something that keeps me out of her hair.

In short, where do I start? Mac says: Lucky you! No mortgage, tenants paying rent!

I would take the most logical path, since you are not putting out fires and fixing things out of sequence. Start at the top. Have a few contractors check the roof and decide whether or not it needs replacement. Next check to see if more insulation could be put in the attic or crawl space. Most likely 65-year-old insulation will need replacing. Do the same thing with the power supply. Make sure there are enough amps for each apartment. The same goes for the plumbing. If it is galvanized iron pipe, it should probably be replaced. It is near the end of its useful life. If it is copper, depending on the mineral content of the water, it may still be ok. If there is only one boiler or furnace, get several heating contractors to assess what your options are. Assess the hot water heater or heaters at this time also.

Next, I would get the exterior painted or sided unless it is brick. The windows can be done all at once or one apartment at a time. I say that because the 1950s did not give us the best windows, so I am quite sure the windows should be replaced unless it has already been done. Most of the time, replacement windows are not close to giving you the savings the suppliers tell you they will. Depending on location you may have requirements as to what type of windows you can use.

When all of this is done, it is likely you will encounter other needs in the process, so don't be surprised at how long all this takes.

You are at the point to tackle each apartment as a tenant dies or moves to a retirement home. So this is the fun part. You get to redecorate the apartments. With no tenants to work around, you can do things logically. If the house is in a good area—schools, traffic, neighbors, not too near the railroad tracks etc.—spend the money to modernize the kitchens and baths. Your choice if you want to go first class or middle of the road. Never go cheap, it never pays. Make sure every square inch is cleaned, painted, varnished, new counters, new appliances, etc., washer and dryer in the apt., if possible. If there is a laundry room in the building, gussy it up so tenants will not object to using it. Put in coin-operated machines. If you don't, they will be doing other people's laundry and your water bill will look like the national debt. At this point, you can decide whether to replace the windows. Get several quotes and check the specs carefully. There is a lot of junk on the market. You also should have an electrician add more outlets in every room. Much has changed since the 1950s, especially in the kitchen and bath.

That's all for this month. Hope your Thanksgiving was happy.

Mac / 463-4310 or gmm400@hotmail.com

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Often Overlooked But Important Maintenance

By Mo Kafka

Here are a few housekeeping items that can help prevent home fires, reduce utility cost, increase efficiency and lifespan of appliances, and keep the air indoors cleaner.

Clothes dryers are a leading cause of fires. Usually the problem is the highly flammable lint clogging the internal workings of the dryer or exhaust duct. Even if you clean the lint screen diligently, it still builds up.

The first photo shows inside a dryer exhaust duct that hasn't been cleaned in about five years. All this build up makes it hard for the dryer blower to exhaust the moist air. It takes longer to dry clothes, and wastes time and energy.

Clean the entire duct annually by taking it apart, bringing it outdoors. Spray it with a garden hose and then scrub as needed. If it can't be disassembled, use a shop vac, then a wire brush made to fit a 4" diameter duct. Finally, wear gloves, reach in, and scrub it clean. Spray flexible ducting at both ends with an outdoor hose until clean. If you have a flimsy vinyl or foil duct, replace it with a rigid aluminum one, or use only the heaviest duty aluminum expanding duct made for dryers, which is harder to work with but safer.

At least annually, have someone who knows about clothes dryers disconnect it from the power source and carefully disassemble it to thoroughly vacuum and wipe clean all the internal components, including the motor and turbine. Make certain fabric softener residue is washed off of all surfaces. Periodically wash the lint screen gently with soap and water so any residue from fabric softener is removed. These nearly invisible residues can clog the screen and render the dryer less efficient.

If you allow tenants to have their own dryer, specify in the lease that they are liable for any damage caused by their equipment and that it is mandatory that the owner be allowed to have it inspected for safe installation and use, as well as professionally serviced and cleaned annually at tenant expense. This is crucial to keeping safe from fire as well as gas or electric hazards from improper install. Seek legal guidance for stipulating and enforcing such requirements. If you provide clothes dryers, be very vigilant about such servicing. Where dryers receive heavy use, cleaning and service must be done at frequent intervals.

In the kitchen and bath, exhaust fans are essential to reducing moisture problems in a house. Fans are also a source of potential fire if they aren't maintained, as the motor may overheat. Debris or grease in the fan or exhaust line could catch fire.

The second photo shows a bath fan caked with lint. Bath fans usually unplug and unscrew from their housing for service by someone reasonably handy. Annually service; make sure power is off, and carefully take apart the unit. Vacuum lint and debris and use a household cleaner or soap and water to wipe down parts. Wearing gloves, reach into the duct and get it clean. If accessible, take the ducting apart and put it back together and clean as directed for dryer ducts.

Check that the built-in damper where the housing connects to the duct opens and closes smoothly. This is important so it remains shut when the fan is off. This reduces the possibility of vermin entering or of conditioned air exiting. Clean the exterior vent damper and make sure the flaps operate smoothly. If the damper is located on the roof or out of reach, have it cleaned when gutter or roof maintenance occurs. If a fan vents into an attic or wall, have someone competent vent it outside, or you may end up with a mold or grease problem inside. Examine the fan assembly itself. If it is old and has an oil port on the motor, add three drops of household oil for fans.

If not neatly, apply a bit of spray lubricant to the motor shaft. Twist the blades or turbine by hand; if they don't spin free and easy, further service or replacement is needed.

On kitchen fans, clean or replace the metal-framed filter inserts. Aluminum filters can go in the dishwasher or soak in ammonia in a sealed container overnight, then rinsed. Dry the fan unit and reassemble snugly, and it should work efficiently and quietly. If a fan burns out or is worn, get a replacement for just the fan assembly from a hardware store or on line by name and model, or bring that removable portion with you to the store to match it.

The third picture (bonus point if you identified it) is a dust- and lint-caked coil on the bottom of a late model refrigerator. The fourth image shows unit after cleaning. Before, one could not even see the coils. A refrigerator works hard when its coils can't get air flow and will waste energy and be less likely to properly protect food during hot weather.

Roll out the refrigerator, unplug it, and remove the bottom grill in front and cardboard panel at the bottom back (if it has them). Use a soft paint brush or cleaning brush to loosen dirt, and vacuum with a crevice attachment taking care to not bang or damage coils or tubes. Next dampen an old towel and have a partner hold it over the opening in back. Put your vacuum hose on the blower end or use a compressor and blow the dirt out of the coils towards the towel. This will make a mess, but the wet towel should help contain it. Then hold the wet towel in front and blow the coils from behind. Use a damp cloth to gently wipe off any fan blades, drip trays or other accessible surfaces that might be dusty or dirty. Clean the front grill and back cover, reinstall, clean floors and walls in the alcove, and roll the refrigerator back into place.

Caution! If you tip a refrigerator over, do not turn it back on for several hours. Check that the doors are well aligned, they close properly, and their flexible gaskets are clean and seal well. Plug it in and confirm it is working. Some refrigerators are completely sealed units nowadays, so if you don't see any coils just focus on keeping the cabinet clean.



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Featured Speaker

Robert Newberry



Robert Newberry, manager of the CDARPO website and owner of Renttropolis, will demonstrate the use of the CDARPO website and Yahoo groups.

He will review:

1. Registration for the Yahoo Groups
 - a. Discussion group
 - b. Newsletter distribution group
2. Posting and responding to questions on Yahoo
3. Member registration on the CDARPO website
4. Changing user profile setting within the website
5. Posting and reviewing a tenant listing
6. Renewing your CDARPO membership online

Bob is a managing partner of NewWard Development LLC, a web development company and the owners/developers of Renttropolis.com.

Renttropolis is one of the leading vendors for property management software for landlords and property managers. Renttropolis tracks over a million dollars of rent each month.

CDARPO website: www.cdarpo.org
 Contact Bob: Robert@newward.com or 518-505-3609

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5 Tips for Raising the Rent

Excerpted from an article by Brian Davis on Bigger Pockets

Many landlords hesitate and fear raising the rent. But it's a part of the business, as raising prices is a part of any business. Inflation waters down the value of your rents each year, all while expenses ranging from taxes to insurance to repairs continue to rise and cost landlords more money.

Here are five tricks to avoid falling behind other rents in the neighborhood—and earn your best possible returns on your rentals.

1. Raise the rent incrementally every year.

Raise the rent by 2-4% every single year like clockwork. It will keep the rent competitive at market levels, and it's a manageable increase for your renters. Perhaps most important of all, it sets expectations among your renters. They'll come to accept annual rent hikes as a fact of life, like paying taxes.

2. Never raise the rent by more than 8%.

Raising the rent by 2-4% won't scare off your renters. At 5-7%, they may start considering whether to move. Above an 8% rent hike, many tenants will move on principle, if not because you've busted their budget. Again, don't put yourself in a position where you're \$200 below market rents! It's not fair to you, and it's not fair to your renters when you raise the rent by so much at once.

3. Consider offering another option.

If you do raise the rent significantly, consider offering your renters an alternative to avoid the hefty hike: locking in a longer lease. Imagine the following scenario: The rent is \$1,500, and you're raising it to \$1,590. Your tenants aren't happy. But you offer a way out, you'll lock in the rent at \$1,550 for them if they sign a two- (or three!) year lease renewal.

Why would you make such a sacrifice? Because turnovers are where landlords lose the most money.

4. Remember that better relations with your renters = higher renewal rates.

Whenever you call your renters about anything, spend 60 seconds warming them up first by asking about their personal lives. Keep a brief file on each tenant—their children's names and ages, their interests, their jobs, and what was going on in their lives the last time you talked to them.

Example: "Hi Betty, how are you doing? The last time we talked, little Bobbie was in the playoffs in his little league. How'd he and the team end up doing?" or "I know you'd been worried about that merger at work. How'd that go?"

Shift the context from an adversarial "money-grubbing landlord" relationship to a collaborative human relationship. When you deliver the bad news that the rent is going up, they'll take it much better knowing it comes from someone who asks about their lives and their children.

5. Implement dual communication: phone and written notice.

By law, you must send written notice of rent increases. It must also be delivered within a certain timetable, usually 30, 60, or 90 days before the lease expires. Call your renters to deliver the news the same day you mail the written notice. Be friendly, professional, and polite but firm.

After investing a minute or two in the small talk we discussed earlier, present the news like this: "Betty, I wanted to reach out and give you the courtesy of a phone call before sending off the renewal form. This year, the rent is going up by \$40. You've obviously been a great tenant, and we'd love to have you stay on. You should be receiving the renewal form over the next few days, and we'll email you an electronic version as well since that's easier for most people to check off, e-sign, and reply back with."

If they push back against the rent hike, just respond with, "I understand, Betty. But rents go up alongside our expenses; it's just a part of life. We'd love for you stick around, and we may be willing to negotiate a lower rent increase if you're willing to sign a longer-term lease. But if you decide to move on, we understand, and we'll work together for a smooth move-out process."

See? Nothing to be afraid of.

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FREE EPA LEAD TRAININGS

December 2017

CLASS SIZE IS LIMITED—REGISTER TODAY—ALL TRAININGS ARE FREE

Funding for RRP classes is provided by Albany County Department of Health, Rensselaer County Department of Health, and Schenectady County Public Health Services



Effective April 22, 2010, workers performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination and must be certified. This federal EPA Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) rule applies to contractors, painters, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, window replacers, roofers, and landlords.

Trainings to become EPA certified are offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County, an EPA accredited training provider. This course is approved for purposes of certification under Section 402 of Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) for the respective discipline.

Upon successful completion of the RRP Initial course including passing an exam at the end of the class, participants are EPA certified renovators. This certification is good for 5 years. Certified renovators must take a RRP Refresher course before their certification expires.

Failure to comply with EPA's RRP program requirements could result in penalties of up to \$37,500 per day per violation.

Questions can be answered by:

Alex at 518-765-3529/ARK249@cornell.edu OR

Nancy at 518-765-3521/NKL1@cornell.edu

PARTICIPANTS MUST PRE-REGISTER

Please register online:

https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events.cfm?dept=201

ALL RRP INITIAL TRAININGS INCLUDE: Continental Breakfast * Lunch * Refreshments * Course Manuals & Materials

New York State code officials successfully completing Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County's 8 hour EPA RRP Initial training course will receive 8 hours of Professional Development Electives toward their 24 hours of annual in-service credit. (Individuals must sign in, complete all paperwork, have their picture taken, pass the exam, and sign out. All students must follow these procedures to receive in-service training credit for this class.)

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2018 Slate

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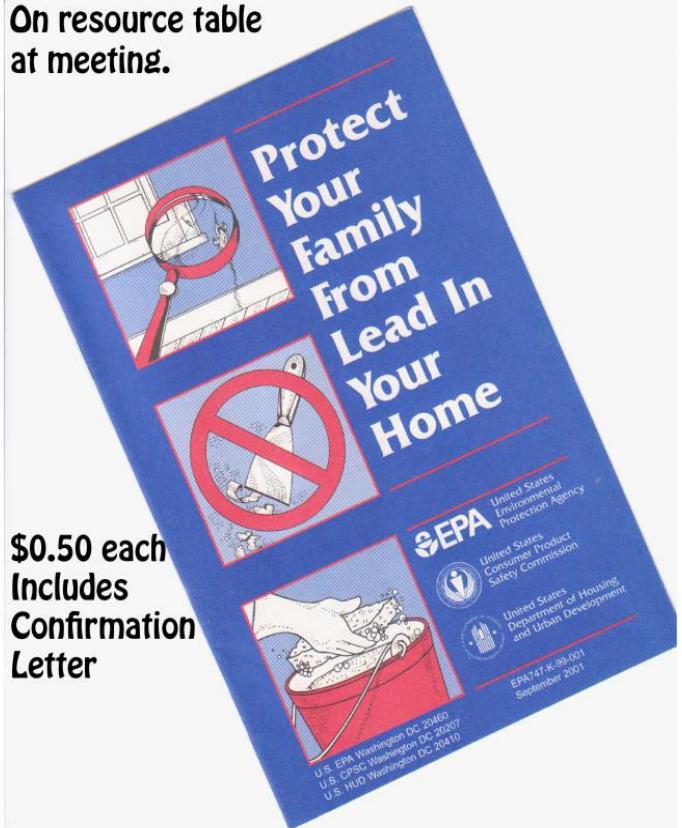
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On resource table
at meeting.



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**CDARPO members represent the entire Capital District –
Albany, Rensselaer, Troy, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties.**

Please join us!

Dues are \$45 emailed newsletter or \$50 snail mail newsletter.

Already a member? Renew your CDARPO membership for 2017.

Find our membership form on-line at www.cdarpo.org.

Know of a prospective member or a landlord who needs help? With their permission, send their e-mail or address to membership@cdarpo.org or call (518) 433-7377. We will send them newsletters and information.

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CDARPO can help.

We offer 10 newsletters each year, general meetings with professional speakers, and members with years of experience.

Next Meeting

Thursday, December 14

***The Best Western Plus Franklin Square Inn
(Across from Dinosaur BBQ)***

Troy, NY

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**One 4th Street
Troy, NY 12180**

**Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month
September – June.**



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CDARPO

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