

Residential Resource

The Newsletter of the National Association of Residential Property Managers

April 2001

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The Mission of NARPM is to increase the professionalism and ethics of residential property managers.

Fair Housing: Enforcing this Simple Concept Requires a Complex Approach

By Jean Storms, MPM®

Fair Housing is a part of all of our lives — but as property managers, it looms predominantly on our everyday horizon. You know what they say — “it’s simple, but it’s not easy.” If you think about it — the concept is simple — don’t discriminate — but it’s often not easy to implement even though you may never intentionally discriminate. Everyday, a property manager must be a watchdog for discrimination. You have to be cognizant of your own actions, those of your employees or coworkers, tenants, and even those of your owners. You have to be willing to stand up for Fair Housing to be a true professional in the property management business.

Fair Housing isn’t just another rule — it’s the law!

To correctly follow Fair Housing, it is imperative to know what laws govern your actions. Here are four of the major laws enacted that determine Fair Housing procedures today:

- The Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1870
- Title VII of the United States Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended in 1988
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Equal Credit Opportunity Act

As a property manager, you must KNOW these laws and what they mean. Many states take Fair Housing even further (for example, the Unruh Act in California) and often add additional requirements. Real Estate governing agencies in many states also have a requirement for continuing education for licensing, specifically requiring Fair Housing credits.

Fair Housing means you cannot discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin in

the sale or rental of housing. Prohibited acts include refusing to sell or rent, discriminating on terms, discriminatory advertising, discrimination in the provision of brokerage services, “steering,” and “red-lining.” The Disabilities act takes it even further in refusing to rent or sell to those with handicaps.

There are so many areas in the property management industry to watch for the “pitfalls” of Fair Housing. Let’s examine a few.

Advertising Property

What could be more simple than advertising, yet even the most simple of words can mean discrimination. Just a simple three-line ad can put you in jeopardy if you do not use good judgment and careful use of words.

Advertising venues have increased over the years — newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and of course, the latest is on the Internet. Property managers have more and more ways to promote their properties.

Probably the easiest way to keep out of trouble with advertising is to follow this rule: Describe the Property, Not the Person. So, for example, instead of saying joggers, use jogging trail. Avoid using words such as single, family, couples, executive, etc. unless you have a specific qualified area such as a legal senior community. Opt for spacious, beautiful, heating, appliances, amenities — words, which can only describe the property, and you will remain on safe ground.

Showing Property

Have you examined your showing policies lately? If questioned, do you feel that you provide opportunity to all to view the property? Do you readily give out the address to all? Do you have open showings? If not, do

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President 2001

Hello NARPM Members,

As I write this month's President's message, I am flying home after a fantastic visit to Little Rock, AR, where Betty Fletcher, PPM, leads one of our newer chapters. The hard work and diligent planning from the current nine members was evident — over 30 managers attended this local meeting. The meeting ran smoothly and demonstrated true NARPM professionalism. The attendees even had the special pleasure of sharing Betty's birthday.

Once I arrive home, I will have only enough time to switch suitcases because many other NARPM events await. Tomorrow morning, I will fly to Seattle, WA, then drive to Blaine, WA, where I'll attend the Northwest Regional Conference. After returning home again, I will leave to visit the Tucson, AZ, Chapter. At the end of that week, I will fly to Portland, OR, to speak and visit with the local chapter. The last Tuesday of March, I plan to have breakfast with the San Diego, CA, chapter. Afterward, I'll begin preparing to attend April's state conferences in Georgia, Texas, and California.

I enjoy traveling to visit the membership across the country. I never tire of sharing ideas and am enriched to witness the escalation of professionalism and recognition of property managers. Gone are the days when property managers were referred to as "The Red-Headed Step Children" of the Real Estate industry. There is strength in numbers and we have made a difference.

A prime example of making a difference is the Ambassador Program which continues to expand largely thanks to our Ambassador Program Chair (AKA Mr. Ambassador) Robert Alvarez, MPM®, from Dallas, TX. If you've caught some springtime recruiting enthusiasm, contact Robert for more information.

Spring's arrival helps us all feel more enthusiastic in general. It seems appropriate, therefore, that April is Fair Housing Month. This aspect of our operations deserves plenty of positive effort. Review your policies and procedures to ensure you are in compliance with all local and federal Fair Housing laws. Do what you can in your community. I have the privilege of being a judge in a local children's Fair Housing poster contest this month. Programs such as this contest emphasize the importance of educating our children now to create a brighter future.

Spring also inspires us to enjoy the beauty of nature and renews our appreciation of life. So, walk the beach, hike a mountain, take a walk with a friend you have not seen in awhile, send someone a card when they least expect it, and, most importantly, take care of yourself. When is the last time you were pampered, had a massage, or just enjoyed some peace and quiet? Take some time, look around, and appreciate what you are blessed with. *Always* enjoy your time with your family.

Thank you for being a part of NARPM and *Sharing the Vision* with fellow property managers. I am proud to serve as your national NARPM President.


Melissa Prandi, MPM®



NARPM President
Melissa Prandi

OFFICERS

Melissa Prandi, MPM®
President
prandiprop@aol.com
415/482-9988

Michael Mengden, MPM®
President-Elect
mengden@txlandlord.com
713/895-9966

Christopher Hermanski, MPM®
Vice President
Convention Chair
Oversight Chair
chris@mainlander.com
503/343-0141

Andrea Caldwell, MPM®
Secretary
Membership Chair
agetto@aol.com
408/978-8100

Peter Meer, MPM®
Treasurer
meerandco@aol.com
303/322-1550

Raymond Scarabosio, MPM®
Past President
Nominations Chair
Finance Chair
landlordSF@aol.com
415/379-9035

DIRECTORS

Marc Banner, PPM
Affiliate Chair
mbanner@micron.com
208/377-8889

Wallace Gibson, MPM®, CPM®, GRI
Legislative Chair
CVILLECPM@aol.com
804/979-9723

Sylvia Hill, MPM®
Education Chair
sylvianarpm@aol.com
408/997-7100

Karen Hull, MPM®
Marketing Chair
khull@prop-mgmt-experts.com
209/465-5000

Elizabeth Mowry, PPM
Midyear Chair
emowry@ecentral.com
303/730-8170

Thomas Stokes, MPM®, CPM®, CCIM, CAPS
Publications Chair
TStokes@EpiCity.com
404/713-0202

Rose Thomas, MPM®
Editorial Chair
rose.thomas@pmpbiz.com
301/694-6900

Marcy Walsh, PPM
New Member Chair
marcy@sw-fl.net
800/488-3393

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Penny Patterson, MPM®
Certification Chair
pennyp@nwlink.com
253/531-9431

Erika Green, MPM®
Chapter Membership Support Chair
emailus@questps.com
817/763-9696 x101

Rick Ebert, MPM®
Grievance Chair
alpsgmt@prismnet.com
512/794-8171

Jean Storms, MPM®
Long Range Planning Chair
jslres@pacbell.net
916/771-3151

NARPM HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 140647
Austin, TX 78754-0647
Exec. Director: Roy Bohrer
Exec. Assistant: Sherri Beck CPS

Tel: 800/782-3452

512/381-6091

Fax: 512/454-3036

E-mail: narpminfo@narpm.org

Internet: www.narpm.org

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When a Pet Isn't a Pet

Accommodating the Needs of Residents With Disabilities

By Judy Cook

One of the most frequently misunderstood requirements of the Federal Fair Housing Act (“the Act”) is the necessity for property managers to accommodate the needs of residents with disabilities. We all know that if a resident or prospective resident with a disability makes a request for a reasonable accommodation, we are required to comply. What many of us don't know is how to carry out our responsibilities under the law in a consistent and fair manner.

Persons with disabilities represent the fastest-growing segment of our population. More and more often, we are faced with requests from renters with disabilities to accommodate their needs either through exceptions to our policies, or by allowing the renter to make physical changes to the rental property. As a manager of residential properties, it is imperative you understand your responsibilities under this important area of law.

What is a Disability?

The Act defines a disability as (1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) having a record of a physical or mental impairment, or (3) being perceived by another as someone with a physical or mental impairment.

What are some major life activities? Seeing, hearing, walking, talking, breathing, learning, and caring for oneself are all examples of major life activities. If a prospective or current resident has, previously had, or appears to have an impairment, he is considered disabled under the Act.

Because individuals with disabilities face negative stereotypes in addition to physical barriers, they often have a difficult time finding adequate housing. This is why the Act was amended in 1988 to include such persons as a “protected class” under the law. Allowing modifications to a dwelling unit and making reasonable accommodations upon request gives these residents the ability to fully use and enjoy the property.

Accommodations and Modifications

Many housing providers confuse accommodations and modifications. The resident with a disability is entitled to either or both, depending upon her needs. Simply defined, an “accommodation” is a change in your policies, procedures, or rules when that accommodation may be necessary to afford the person equal opportunity to use and enjoy their housing and related services. For example, a resident with a disability may request permission

to keep a companion or assistance animal, even though pets are prohibited in the home. A resident with a cognitive disability may request a monthly rent reminder, or that you provide leases and other documents in simple language.

A “modification” is a physical change to the property. Examples of reasonable modifications include allowing the renter to install grab bars in the bathrooms of the home, a ramp to access the

dwelling, or removing the base cabinets in the kitchen to allow a wheelchair to maneuver. In most cases, the resident pays for the modifications. If the housing is federally-subsidized, the landlord pays for the modifications. There is nothing in the law, however, that precludes the landlord from paying for the modifications. The landlord may require that the work is done in a professional manner, and may or may not require that the premises be restored to its original condition when the resident vacates.

How Do I Know if I Need to Make an Accommodation or Allow a Modification to the Dwelling?

It is the responsibility of the renter who has a disability to request needed accommodations or modifications. In fact, it is not advisable for the property manager to ever assume that the renter has such a need. This could be perceived as an infringement on the privacy rights of your renter. Just because someone may be using a wheelchair when you meet him, does not mean he requires a single-level home. Many property managers have a section in their rental applications that asks the prospective resident if he has any “special needs.”

Requests Must Be Reasonable

Requests for exceptions to policies or physical changes to the property must fall within “reasonable” limits or the property manager may deny the request. The Act defines reasonableness as (1) does not cause an undue financial or administrative burden to the housing provider, (2) does not cause a basic change in the nature of the housing program available, (3) will not cause harm or damage to others, and (4) is technologically possible. If the request meets those standards you are required to comply.

All Requests in Writing

As with other aspects of our business, the paper trail is critical to establishing consistent and fair practice on the part of the property manager. Even if the renter's disability is obvious to you as with a person using a wheelchair, you should require all requests



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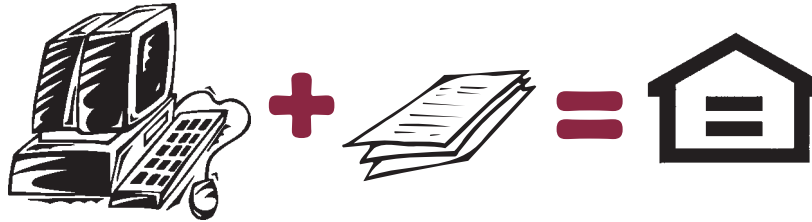
“Forming” Fair Housing

Use Your Computer to Design Consistent Documents

By Jean Storms, MPM®

You may think there are a lot of uses for a computer — but for Fair Housing? Actually, when you think about it, it’s the perfect tool. A computer can only discriminate if a human programs it to do so. And if a human dictates what goes into the computer and it lacks any input of discrimination, it will be discrimination free — what a concept!

Use your computer to help improve your property management in the area of Fair Housing by setting up nondiscriminatory documentation on your word processing programs — such as Word, WordPerfect, etc., so you can adopt “consistency.” These documents now can be used with *all* tenants. If your policies are the same for all tenants or prospective tenants, you can easily set up documentation to prove to Fair Housing you treat them all the same — at least on paper. It’s up to you to do the rest.



The additional benefit for setting up your documentation on your computer is you can then easily modify a form or letter when laws change or you notice something isn’t quite the “Fair Housing” practice it should be. Or you may see something you

wish to add to your documentation to improve your communication with tenants. It’s much easier to keep up with changes in our laws if you have it right on your computer. It’s by far cheaper as well because you don’t

have to take documents to a printer each time you wish a change and commit to printing hundreds of pieces of paper at a time which may need changing later.

To illustrate how to use a tool of the computer for Fair Housing, let’s use the “forms tool” in Microsoft Word. Since Word is a

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popular tool for many property managers, this program was chosen as an example. You can find similar “tools” on other word processors as well.

By using the “forms tool bar” located in Word, you can set up letters or forms that remain the same, but you can easily insert information by tabbing to a “field” and inserting information. Then you can save them as a “form,” by naming them appropriately and “protecting” them. Once saved in this manner, it’s a matter of bringing up the document and inserting the appropriate information.

Many people set up a word processing program with a standard letter, but then manually insert new information by typing over the old information each time they update the letter. This can lead to errors when you forget to delete old information. Setting up a true “form” can also speed up your correspondence and help to train your office staff as well. Keeping your staff consistent with documentation is also a Fair Housing advantage.

Here’s a great example — a letter that goes out to every tenant when they give a 30-day notice. Ever think about whether you told one tenant to prepare for moving and then when another walked in, you gave them another verbal description of how you expect them to leave the property. Then you meet the tenant at the property and they claim you never told them they had to wash the windows inside and out. You’re sure you did — that’s just common sense. But did you tell them or was it the other tenant that gave you notice on the same day? And then you have to defend it in court. It’s true that you had a lot in your rental agreement and you should, but it sure doesn’t hurt to give them a gentle reminder in the form of a three-page instruction letter that outlines exactly what you expect. You won’t hesitate to do it if it’s readily available and easy to accomplish in minutes. Better yet, you can give the task to a staff member to perform each and every time a tenant gives notice.

How can you make this handy letter that you can prepare in minutes for each one of your tenants?

- Go to Word
- Prepare a letter of instructions of what you expect from a tenant when they move out or any other form or letter you wish to create.
- Choose View/Toolbar/Form and click on the forms tool. You should see it appear on your screen with a new assortment of icons to choose from to make your form. If you use it often enough, you might want to keep it as a part of your working tools on your screen.
- The first icon on the forms toolbar resembles a little “ab.” Each place you wish to automatically insert information into your document, click on this icon. It will automatically “insert” a “form field” in your document. Before going on — move to the third icon over and type in any wording or instructions you wish in this field. This wording will automatically appear each time, but you only need to tab to this field and start typing and it will remove it. For example, these would be form fields you could create — name, address, city, state, zip code, etc. You can create a “form field” for any other

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“Forming”

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reason. If you wish to add a check mark box, then use the second item in the forms tool bar. Then each time you use this form, you have the option of filling in the box.

- But remember, you wish this information to go to any tenant. Prepare a letter you can personalize in the form fields and yet keep “consistent” with your information.
- Once you have completed your form, now you need to change it so you can “TAB” from field to field, so the key is to “Protect Your Document.”
- To “Protect your Document” go to Tools/Protect Document/Forms. You now should only be able to access your necessary fields and the rest of your document should be “protected” from change.
- Simply insert your information as you tab and you can prepare your document in minutes.
- In the future, if you need to make corrections to your “form” or “form letter,” simply “unprotect” the document, make your changes, then “protect” your document again and save it again.

If you consistently send out the same information to all tenants, you will have more peace of mind and a more orderly management practice. Plus you will be able to use this tool to keep to Fair Housing guidelines as well.

Another great tool to promote consistency is by using the “Merge” functions also located in your word processor. This works well if you have already established a database to use with your Merge forms. Once you have done that, you can later convert your “forms” made by the forms tool to merge letters. Simply change your “forms fields” to the appropriate “merge fields.”

Think of all the documents you can convert by using the forms tool or the merge function — rental agreements, addendums, letters, checklists, management agreements, and much more. If you are still typing in or writing in your information, you definitely have a new and exciting challenge by using the forms tool or the merge function. You won’t believe the time saved or the ease of use of your documents.

Jean Storms, MPM[®], is a property manager in Roseville, CA, and is co-owner of JSL Real Estate Services, Inc.

Deadlines for Residential Resource

JulyMay 15, 2001
AugustJune 15, 2001
September/OctoberAugust 15, 2001
NovemberSeptember 15, 2001
DecemberOctober 15, 2001

If you are interested in writing an article, please e-mail an attachment of your article in Word format to jjacobs@assnmgmt.com or send a Word file on 3 1/2" diskette to P.O. Box 140647, Austin, TX 78714-0647. All articles are subject to editing & approval of subject matter.

Fair Housing

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you have the same rules for all when showing properties? Obviously, someone may see the property before another party. Just make sure you are not “preventing someone from seeing the property” or “steering” certain types or groups of people to the property instead. Can anyone question your showing practices?

Qualifying Tenants

Review your qualifications for your tenant processing carefully as well. Are you approaching this for renting to a well-qualified tenant? Are you using “business requirements” and not personal ones? Do you base your qualifying techniques on items such as landlord history or income? Does your application reflect good business practice and consider all persons on the same level? Take a hard view of your application — if you were applying to rent the property, would you feel the application is based on good business and not personal prejudice? Obtain some independent opinions. Sometimes, we work with the same documents repeatedly and we simply *do not see the words*. A change in a sentence can save you from a lawsuit.

Maintaining Property

Do you have the same property requirements for all your prospective tenants — the same level of cleanliness, repairs, and upkeep? Do you require all tenants to maintain the properties equally? Do you make “deals” with some parties on maintenance and not with others? This can be very dangerous in the Fair Housing issue. Some may interpret this as favoritism. Look through all your documentation — are you satisfied you have the same expectations for all tenants?

Owners and Fair Housing

Sometimes owners are the biggest pitfalls for property managers in regard to Fair Housing. How many times have you had an owner ask you who the tenants are, what race, how many children, what religion, and the list goes on. What is your answer? Are you, the property manager, complying with Fair Housing? Do you fall into the trap of answering or do you stand firm in your answer — “I can’t

answer that — it’s discrimination,” even if it means losing the property and the client. If this happens, what have you really lost?

The Questions

As we’ve gone through this article, have you noticed there are a lot of question marks? Perhaps you think you don’t have to answer them — you follow all the rules. If you feel so comfortable that there are no questions in your life concerning this issue, I challenge you to review all your policies.

Let’s go — how compliant are you with Fair Housing? Take the challenge! Don’t be shy. Today, get out the following documents:

- Office Employee Manual
- Office Policy and Procedures Manual
- Tenant Application
- Tenant Verification Form
- Rental/Lease Agreements
- All Addendums
- All standard tenant letters
- Security deposit procedures
- Owner management agreements

- Standard owner letters
- All standard forms

Now, without looking at these documents, can you feel 100% sure you are compliant with Fair Housing? How long has it been since you reviewed these documents for compliance? Is the correct Fair Housing signage properly displayed? Does your receptionist answer questions correctly to the public? If a Fair Housing agent walked in tomorrow, would you have any anxiety? If you had to go to court, would you feel you were covered by your documentation?

I know you have worked and worked on your policies and your documentation, but when looked at in this light, do you think it’s worth another review — like maybe every year? Uh, oh — yet another question! If you are truly following Fair Housing, shouldn’t you always have this attitude? And isn’t it worth another question to ensure Fair Housing for everyone?

Jean Storms, MPM®, is a property manager in Roseville, CA, and is co-owner of JSL Real Estate Services, Inc.

Property Manager’s Source

You Make the Ethics Call

By Rick Ebert, MPM®

Property Manager A managed an 8-unit apartment house for Investor B. Property Manager A received a written offer to purchase the property from Buyer C. At a social function, Investor B and Buyer C met one another and both were astonished to learn that Property Manager A had not informed Investor B of the written offer to purchase.

After Buyer C closed the sale of the property with Investor B, Investor B filed an ethics complaint stating that Property Manager A had not represented his best interests. In reply, Property Manager A stated that her property management agreement did not have a clause requiring her to broker the sale, or to present offers of purchase, and that Investor B had never expressed to her a desire to sell.

Ask Yourself:

How do these kinds of comments and actions reflect upon our industry? What would you do differently, if anything? Would the property manager’s actions and comments be an ethics violation?

You Made the Call

Any investor would be interested to learn of a written offer to purchase. The absence of language in the property management agreement regarding submissions of offers to purchase, did not exclude the property manager from presenting purchase offers to her client. Article 3 of the Code of Ethics states: “The Property Manager has a fiduciary responsibility to the Client and shall at all times act in the best interests of the Client.”

Rick Ebert, MPM®, is with Austin Landmark Property Svcs., CRMC®, in Austin, TX.

News from Midyear

By Tom Stokes, MPM®

Denver was hot for NARPM. Despite temperatures just above zero and banks of snow on the ground outside the downtown Hyatt, NARPM members report that the February 2001 meeting was full of hot topics for residential property managers.

One of the best received presentations was offered by members of the Colorado Chapter. The mock trial over a security deposit dispute presented by Joanne Greer (AKA tenant Miss Goody Two Shoes) represented by Ann LaPlank, Esq., and litigant landlord Normal Rockwell Jones, played by Arne Anderson was full of insight. The proceedings were presided over by a local magistrate, Judge Jeffrey Lane with advocate Deb Wilson, Esq., and the advocates were each licensed attorneys from the area. Those witnessing the trial were able to hear the attorneys and judge explain strategy as well as nuances of the law. An example was the judge's explanation that even though tenant Two Shoes had painted over the family mural of landlord Rockwell without prior permission, he would not award full replacement cost. His justification was founded on the principle that the law despises waste. Since he could not establish market value for the mural that the landlord was willing to pay \$2,600 to have it restored, he would not award damages in that amount. The lack of consensus on his judgment was indicative of the thorny issues related to landlord-tenant law.



Mock trial

Lt. Clerene Shelley of the Lakewood, CO, police force reviewed tips for ensuring the safety of one's staff and residents. She said that the key was to understand control and not to allow the other person to obtain it. Illustrating with members of the audience she demonstrated how a look, a sound, a touch could quickly and imperceptibly lead to another person placing themselves in control of the situation. Offering again the cautions we've heard before, she reminded the attendees not to ignore their intuition. Anticipation is another strong element of self-defense. One should constantly be thinking of what might happen in a given situation and of responses that could prevent harm. Use space — physical separation — to distance oneself from danger. Look a potential aggressor directly in the eyes and speak to him/her. In her experience these steps will often cause a would-be attacker to look for a less threatening target.

Fair Housing, always an engaging topic for property managers, was given a new look by Housing Specialist Nancy Snow of the Colorado Civil Rights Division. Nancy teaches the federal investigators how to review and enforce Fair Housing regulations. As she says, she "checks the checkers." Her session "Sticky Fair Housing Issues for NARPM Members" advised members of the care they must take to avoid using phrases such as "mature person," "students," "married," "no children," or "empty nesters" to screen potential applicants. While it is often not the intent of a property manager to improperly discriminate, if the actions of the manager result in a different level of service to a protected class then, Snow reminded the attendees, a manager can be found guilty of improper discrimination.



Property Management with an ALTITUDE

February 15-16, 2001



Membership committee members (l-r) Marc Banner, PPM, Stephen Foster, PPM, Jim Smith, PPM, and Lawanda Corbett, PPM, discuss improvements to the Chapter Leader Handbook.



Susan and Steve McClellan (seated), of Conyers, GA, are "solicited" for 50-50 raffle tickets by Robert Winger of Sacramento, CA. Susan was the proud winner of a gift certificate.



Education Committee members (l-r) Raymond Scarabosio, MPM®, Sharon Howard, Joe Medinger, PPM, and Arlene Lopes, PPM.



National instructors (l-r) are Peter Meer, MPM®; Jean Storms, MPM®; David Holt, MPM®; Mark Kreditor, MPM®; Sally Backus, MPM®; Raymond Scarabosio, MPM®; Bruno Friia, MPM®; Wallace Gibson, MPM®; and Kit Garren, MPM®.



Lifetime member of NARPM's Denver Chapter, Lola Morrow (left) is pictured with President Melissa Prandi, MPM®, (center) receiving the proclamation from LaTrisha Underhill of the office of the Honorable Wellington E. Webb, Mayor of Denver, that February 15, 2001, is NARPM Day in Denver, CO.



Reviewing proposals for the revitalization of certain chapters are Membership Committee members (l-r) Lois Carwin, PPM, Harold Kalles, and Matt Schall, MPM®.



Marketing Committee Chair Karen Hull, MPM®, (left) reviews additions to the NARPM store, such as the newly revised Why You Need A Professional Property Manager brochure, with committee members Julie Potts, MPM®, of Austin, TX and Courtney Balzer of Ft. Collins, CO.



Dolores Bedard, PPM, (standing left) makes a point in the "How To Get Your Designation" session while presenter Sally Backus, MPM®, looks on.



Newly minted Professional Property Managers (l-r) are: Dolores Bedard, PPM, of Boise, ID; April Sanders, PPM, of Whidbey Island, WA; Betty Fletcher, PPM, of Little Rock, AR; and Joe Medinger, PPM, of Universal City, TX.

PPM Designation Will Change

By Penny Patterson, MPM®, Certification Chair

It was announced by our National Board of Directors that NARPM's use of the Professional Property Manager (PPM) designation has been challenged by the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) and by Prudential. The former has registered their use of the similar Certified Property Manager® (CPM) designation and the latter has a Prudential Portfolio Manager designation. NARPM has been in discussion with each organization and is in agreement to discontinue its use of the PPM in the near future. In the meantime, NARPM is pursuing other possible designations for registration by the U.S. Patents and Trademarks Office in order to prevent similar objections in the future. Members are asked to be aware that use of the Professional Property Manager designation will be transitioned to a new designation, probably within a year, and at no cost to the

members. If you have any questions, you may contact our national headquarters or Certification Chair Penny Patterson, MPM®.

The Certification Committee appreciates the efforts of Betty Fletcher, PPM, for contributing her PPM candidacy package for use by the committee in advising members how to go about applying for certification. "The package was awesome," says Penny Patterson. "I've reviewed dozens of these applications during my tenure and Betty's is one of the best!" Members who wish to refer to Betty's materials in preparing their certification, may find it under the Certification section of the NARPM Web site. Patterson adds, "Information like this, as well as the Mentor's help will become even more critical to the certification process as complete applications will be required a minimum of thirty days before they are awarded. Those wishing to receive a designation

at our National Convention in Kansas City must get their packages to Headquarters no later than the middle of August — get started now!"

Candidates for certification may look to their mentor for assistance in getting started and in staying the course during the application process. The MPM® Mentors are Joyce Klinge, MPM®, and Suzanne Reeder, MPM®. The PPM Mentors, by region, are: East — Sandy Cope, PPM, Jan Desch, PPM, and Marty Roberts, PPM; Central — Betty Fletcher, PPM and Greg Fedro, PPM; Mountain — Linda Holzer, PPM, and Dolores Bedard, PPM; West — Ellen Webster, MPM®, Jim Pickett, PPM, Jerry Maupin, PPM and Deanna Blanton, PPM and for Hawaii, we have Mary Love, PPM. If you aren't sure who your mentor is, call our national headquarters or the Mentor Chair Valarie Bethel-Dopson, MPM®.

Affiliate Members Listing By Services

Access Controls:

Marwest Access Controls, Inc.

Advertising:

HomeRentals.net

HometownRent.com

Rent Connection

Rental Advisor, Inc.

Rentalhouses.com

Rental Properties USA, Inc.

Rentals.com

Appliance Sales:

Sears Contract Sales

Business Products:

Peachtree Business Products

Claim Services:

Home Claim Services

Insurance:

Geo. F. Brown & Sons, Inc

Legal Services:

Law Offices of DeMartini & Walker

Law Offices of Heist & Weisse, P.A.

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Software:

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Old Forest Software, Inc.

CMS Inc. (PROMAS)

Instant Software, Inc.

Property Automation Software Corp.

REMANAGE.com

Winning Edge Software Solutions

Yambay Technologies

Yardi Systems, Inc.

Tenant Screening:

Backgrounds USA

National Credit Reporting

Rent History, Inc.

For more affiliate information, please
visit the NARPM Web site

www.narpm.org

When a Pet is Not a Pet continued from page 3

be in writing. The National Fair Housing Advocate publishes a guideline for written requests. That guideline can be found on the Advocate's Web site at www.fairhousing.com. You might consider providing a similar guideline or a form letter to residents who request accommodations or modifications.

If it is your company policy to do so, you may require that the resident provide verification from a qualified professional of the need for the requested modification or accommodation. This professional does not have to be a medical doctor. A social worker, psychologist, or other professional qualified to substantiate the resident's need can provide the verification. Be careful when requesting verification. If you require it in one instance, require it in all instances, whether or not the resident's disability is obvious to you.

Don't Ask For Details

The Act prohibits the property manager from prying into the specifics of the renter's disability. We may not ask (1) what the disability is, (2) the nature of the disability, (3) the severity of the disability, (4) how the renter acquired the disability, or other intrusive questions about the disability. The renter may choose to disclose details about the disability, but is not required to do so under the law.

Company Policy and Training

A policy for handling requests from residents for accommodations and modifications should be included in your company's operations manual. Your agents and employees must know the law and follow your procedures consistently in each and every case. Many property management companies are now conducting periodic training for their employees in fair housing law. Training is available through a number of sources, depending upon your location. Check with your local fair housing advocacy organization, the State Attorney General's office, or the Department of Real Estate for public and private training offerings. For additional information on private training, please log on to <http://cookcompany.net>.

Be Consistent

Above all, be consistent in your handling of requests of this nature. Put everything in writing, including your approval or denial of requests for modifications and accommodations. If a request is not "reasonable" in its nature, document your reasons for denial, and clearly communicate those reasons to the renter. If you require verification of the need for an accommodation or modification, require such verification in every instance.

How Can I Learn More?

There are numerous sources of information on the Federal Fair Housing Act. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has a great Web site at www.hud.gov. From that site, you can link to specific subjects of interest. One of the best ways to learn about the Act is to become involved in your local Fair Housing advocacy organization. Not only will you learn what issues are most pressing in your community, but you will develop an understanding of the issues from the perspective of the housing consumer. Developing a balance of information will help you to become a better housing provider.

Judy Cook, Cook & Company, LTD., CEO, author, and instructor, brings a level of sophistication and knowledge to the field of property management education rarely seen in the industry. She is a licensed Nevada real estate broker-salesman, with over 20 years of experience ranging from brokerage office ownership and management to sales, leasing, and fee management of both residential and commercial properties. Her extensive background, combined with her engaging presentation, result in consistently high-quality delivery of up-to-date information to her students. Founding Member and Chapter President — Northern Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM); two-Term Chair, 2001 Treasurer — Truckee Meadows Fair Housing; 2000-01 Chair, Education Committee — Reno/Sparks Association of REALTORS®; Charter Member and 2000-01, Vice President — Nevada (Sagebrush) Chapter of the Real Estate Educators Association (REEA®); Approved by U.S. Department of Justice as a Fair Housing Trainer to Respondents in HUD Fair Housing Claims; ITI® and REEA® Trained Educator.

NARPM Road Show — Chapter Five

By Andrea G. Caldwell, MPM®

Chapter Leaders take note...this is your opportunity to enhance your chapter by developing its growth, building your affiliate program, offering educational seminars, and winning awards for your efforts!

Take advantage of the "Road Show" and invite us to your area. We will assist you in promoting the event, provide you with a speaker (maybe even the National President) and show you how to build your chapter.

One of the best things you can do for your group is attend a Leadership Class. The Chapter Leadership and Development Class is being taught at the California Conference in San Diego on April 27-28, 2001, and at the FARPM Conference on May 16, 2001. The class is also scheduled at the National Convention in Kansas City on September 19, 2001, at which time suggested chapter forms will be available on disk to those attending the class. If you have not received your Chapter Leadership Manual, please contact headquarters and request a copy. It was recently revised and is full of useful information. It was distributed to those attending the class at Midyear in Denver.



The Road Show this month is heading to Florida for a planning meeting and to participate in the Leadership Development class at the FARPM conference. In the Road Show's rear view mirror is Little Rock, AR, with the largest attendance ever for its chapter; Tucson, AZ, with new life there after a visit from President Prandi. Portland, OR, has seen the Road Show come to town and is feeling the exciting after-effects and Atlanta, GA, is helping spread the

NARPM word to Savannah by mentoring a new chapter in that area.

WOOOO...WOOOO...don't let us pass you by. We are adding cars (new chapters) to the NARPM train as we move across the United States. Hook up with us as we continue to "Share the Vision;" it's getting brighter every day.

If you would like to participate in this membership movement, contact Chair Andrea G. Caldwell, MPM®, at agetto@aol.com or 408/978-8100.

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Welcome New NARPM Members

The following is a list of new members from February 1, 2001,
to February 28, 2001

| | |
|--|---|
| Suzanne Athey Remarkable Property Management 5414 Miller Heights Rowlett, TX 75088 972/475-5085 | Joan Lord Horizon Realty 15 South Carroll Street Frederick, MD 21701 301/662-8300 |
| Cathy Davies Cathy Lynch-Davies Property Management PO Box 451 Davis, CA 95616 530/750-3540 | June Marston McGinnis & Associates 300 Garden of the Gods Road Colorado Springs, CO 80907 719/686-8326 |
| Patricia Drost First Rate Property Management, Inc. 2072 N Woodford Avenue Meridian, ID 83642 208/939-3100 | Jennifer Memenza Realty Group Property Management 6 Montgomery Village Avenue Gaithersburg, MD 20879 301/921-2648 |
| Petra Dumais Coldwell Banker McFadden & Sprowls 3047 Estero Blvd. Ft. Myers Beach, FL 33931 941/463-6555 | Denise Merritt Century 21 Commander Realty 2705 Highway 77 Panama City, FL 32405 850/769-5775 |
| Donald Earls Housing Helpers 1212 S College Avenue Ft. Collins, CO 80524 970/224-1411 | David Mutters Arvida Realty Services 902 S US Hwy. 1 Jupiter, FL 33477 561/748-6310 |
| Wendy Frenzel Laurel Property Services Inc. 1212 1/2 Washington Avenue Golden, CO 80401 303/278-4241 | Helene Perron Coldwell Banker McFadden & Sprowls 7500 College Parkway Ft. Myers, FL 33907 941/939-3336 |
| Sylvia Gauthier SJC Management Group 614 Harrison Street, #A Sumner, WA 98390 253/863-8117 | Michael Pugh Old Dominion Property Management 2340 South Main Street Harrisonburg, VA 22801 540/433-2454 |
| Lori Gill Windermere Property Management 435-108th Avenue NE, #104 Bellevue, WA 98004 425/455-5515 | Carolyn Schaeffer Key Agency Inc. 1201 S McCall Road Englewood, FL 34223 941/474-3228 |
| Marvin Hegar Valentine Realtors 8800-55 Hazelhurst Austin, TX 78729 512/918-9171 | Jeanee Wallace Property Management Experts 9610 Adams Street Elk Grove, CA 95624-2305 916/686-8371 x5502 |
| Sean Hurley Frank T. Hurley Associates Inc. 2506 Pass-A-Grille Way St. Pete Beach, FL 33706 727/361-1949 | Danya Wolf Johnson Properties 2017 Continental Place, #8 Mount Vernon, WA 98273 360/424-0300 |
| Joyce Kramer Bradley Scott, Inc. 400 Warren Ave., Ste. 450 Bremerton, WA 98337 360/479-6900 | Kimi Zemar Housing Helpers 1212 S College Ave. Ft. Collins, CO 80524 970/224-1411 |
| Evelyne Lillie US Invest, Inc./Mountain Meadows Realty Box 2206 Minden, NV 89423 775/782-9557 | Affiliate Member Michael Conley Rent History, Inc. PO Box 5991 Auburn, CA 95604 877/674-5486 |
| R. Arthur Locke Real Estate III PO Box 8186 Charlottesville, VA 22906 804/973-8333 | |

Sylvia L. Hill, MPM®, National Education Chair



1. How did you get started in the property management profession?

After 21 years with ‘Big Blue,’ otherwise known as IBM, I took advantage of a voluntary leave package. I was looking forward to a couple of weeks just relaxing; however, Rocky had other plans. He and I crossed paths just two days after I left IBM, and he offered me a job as an assistant with the idea that I would get

my Real Estate License and become a property manager. At this point, I knew Rocky but nothing about the profession — except that Rocky expected the same customer service and quality that I had been used to providing. That was seven years ago, and today I have my Brokers License and am the Director of Real Estate Services.

2. In what extracurricular activities are you involved?

This is where my calendar takes a big role. Each Thursday night is my date with my grandchildren; Wednesday night is Bible study and Sunday morning is church. Gil, my husband, and I love to RV on rare available weekends and we are also in the middle of several projects to improve our home. I always have a book at hand (for those long red lights and traffic jams) and have been known to read far into the night!

3. What did you want to do when you grew up?

I was a Champion Freestyle Roller Skater as I grew up and had visions of skating in shows and teaching others to skate; however, as reality started to hit, I wanted to be an accountant, like my dad. This, of course, would be coupled with a wonderful family, a beautiful home, and travel. God has been gracious, as all of these have been given to me. Well, property management isn’t exactly accounting — it’s a lot more fun!

4. What was your perceived greatest strength?

Perception and integrity in all that I do. I’ve learned to listen when that little voice tells me that something isn’t quite right. Then, the part of me that likes to analyze situations kicks in and helps move toward a resolution that is a win-win for everyone. Whether dealing with owners or tenants, getting to the root cause of a problem and then dealing with it in a straight-forward manner helps build the trust that is the foundation of an on-going business relationship.

5. What was your biggest mistake, and what did you learn from it?

Not firing an employee soon enough when I was in management at IBM. By not stepping up to the problem, I caused an even bigger problem for both the company and the employee. It was a disaster and left ill feelings on both parts. This experience has really come in handy with a tenant who is causing problems on the property or an owner whose demands are unreasonable. Delay in addressing the situation results in a bigger problem.

6. What is the size of your company and what services does it provide?

H.M.S. Development, Inc., is a full-service Certified Residential Management Company (CRMC®). This means the owner can come to us with a fixer-upper that needs renovation, a 1031 exchange, a problem tenant, or just a property that needs managed. Our maintenance division works with tenants and owners to make all repairs, upgrades, or insurance claims. We have four property managers, an assistant, and administrative staff. Our area of coverage is all of Santa Clara County.

7. How has NARPM impacted your business?

Rocky Maxwell, our owner, is a founding member of NARPM — therefore, it has greatly impacted our business. When I came to work for Rocky, there was no question about whether or not I would join NARPM; it was expected. NARPM was my graduate school for property management; since getting my license, I have not missed a conference, Midyear, or convention. The PPM and MPM® classes were eye-openers and greatly increased my learning curve. I still get ideas to implement from other property managers and I believe I’m able to offer some assistance to others as well. Being a member of NARPM is a give and take atmosphere that promotes professionalism.

8. What future goals do you want to attain in the industry?

NARPM has truly held the standard high for residential property management. I am working toward getting some of our education classes available through our Web site and continuing to use the Internet to the benefit of our members and the industry in general. In California, the laws and courts are tenant-oriented; I look for opportunities to educate real estate agents, news media, and government agencies on who we are and what we do.

Sylvia L. Hill, MPM®, is Director of Real Estate Services for H.M.S. Development, Inc., CRMC®. H.M.S. manages single-family homes, town-homes, condos, and small investment properties. She is a Past President of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of NARPM and was treasurer of the Women’s Council of Realtors. She joined NARPM in 1994 and has served on the Membership and Certification Committees. Sylvia is currently the Chair of the Education Committee and has served on the Board since 1998. She currently resides in Morgan Hill, CA, with her husband.

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Hear! Hear!

Calling for Applicants to Write a New MPM® Course

At the Education Committee meeting held at the Denver Midyear Conference on February 15, a motion was passed to write a new MPM® course. This is a result of comments received from members who have their PPM and would like to work toward their MPM®, as well as those who are currently candidates. Two of the current MPM® courses are appropriate for the large property management company but not for the small one-manager operation. The new course would provide another alternative for the small-business owner.

The new course will be on Owner/Client Relations. Basic subject matter is defined as identifying owner needs and requirements, legal requirements, educating owners and anticipating their needs, cultivating, maintaining, and terminating owner/clients, and effecting change in the owner/manager relationship. A signed contract between the author and NARPM will be required; there is a stipend paid to the author and the course remains the property of NARPM. A subcommittee will review all applications and the results will then be presented to the Board of Directors for approval. Once approval is obtained, the contract will be signed and an agreed upon time line established.

If you are interested in writing the course, please submit your resume including your experience in education and writing courses to Education Chair Sylvia Hill at sylvianarpm@aol.com by May 1, 2001.

Ambassador Program

February 2001 New Members

Sponsoring Member

Rose G. Thomas, MPM®

Kara Julien

Jerry Maupin, PPM

Cindy Van Mater, MPM®

Mildred Paulsen, MPM®

LeeAnn Guidotti

Theresa F. Reed, PPM

Donald R. Earls

Susan McClellan, PPM

Francine Ferri

James Pickett, PPM

Karen Hull, MPM®

Elizabeth Morgan, PPM

Judith Cook

Sponsored Member

Jennifer Memenza

June Marston

Johnny Los Hornyak

Greg Mattioni

Joan Lord

Carolyn Schaeffer

Lori Gill

Danya Wolf

Kimi Zeman

Steve McClellan

Helene Perron

Petra Dumais

Joyce Kramer

Jeaneen Wallace

Sean Hurley

Evelyne Lillie

2001 PPM/MPM® Certification Classes

| Date | Location | Class | Instructor |
|------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Apr. 25-26 | San Diego, CA State Conf. | MPM® PP&ER | Sally Backus, MPM® |
| Apr. 26 | San Diego, CA State Conf. | PPM Tenancy | Peter Meer, MPM® |
| May 14 | Orlando, FARPM Conf. | PPM Maintenance | Kit Garren, MPM® |
| May 15-16 | Orlando, FARPM Conf. | MPM® Risk Management | David Holt, MPM® |
| May 15 | Orlando, FARPM Conf. | PPM Technology | Jean Storms, MPM® |
| May 16 | Orlando, FARPM Conf. | PPM Marketing | Fred Richter, MPM® |
| May 19 | Oakland, CA | PPM Marketing | Ray Scarabosio, MPM® |
| June 18 | Ft. Worth, TX | PPM Marketing | Mark Kreditor, MPM® |
| June 18-19 | Ft. Worth, TX | MPM® PP&ER | TBA |
| June 19 | Ft. Worth, TX | PPM Operations | Mark Kreditor, MPM® |
| June 20 | Ft. Worth, TX | PPM Maintenance | TBA |
| June 21 | Atlanta, GA | PPM Tenancy | Wallace Gibson, MPM® |

Interested In Sponsoring Certification Classes?

Opportunities are available to chapters that would like to further member education, promote certification, and increase their chapter funds by sponsoring a Certification class. However, it takes time to plan a class — so give your chapter five to six months lead time if you wish to sponsor one of these events.

Please find out more by calling Sylvia Hill at 408/997-7100 or e-mailing her at sylvianarpm@aol.com. Sylvia can provide you with the details you need to make a Certification class a successful venture.

To register for classes, complete the registration form and mail or fax with payment to NARPM Headquarters. For more information call Headquarters at 800/782-3452.

PPM/MPM® Class Registration

FEES

| PPM Classes | Preregistration* | On-site† |
|--------------|------------------|----------|
| Member | \$195 | \$225 |
| Nonmember | \$250 | \$280 |
| MPM® Classes | Preregistration* | On-site† |
| Member | \$395 | \$450 |
| Nonmember | \$450 | \$505 |

* To receive the preregistration price payment must be postmarked, faxed, or e-mailed 30 days prior to the class.

† Attendees must pay the on-site fee when registering on-site or sending payment in less than 30 days prior to the class.

CLASS INFORMATION

- On-site registration begins at 8:00 am. Class hours are 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.
- PPM classes qualify for 6 hours of NARPM certification.
- MPM® classes qualify for 12 hours of NARPM certification.
- All materials will be given to students on the day of the class.
- All attendees are required to make their individual hotel reservations.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations must be received in writing. If cancellation notice is received at least 30 days prior to the class, a full refund will be issued less a \$25 processing fee. If cancellation notice is received less than 30 days before the class, a 50% refund will be issued. No refunds will be made on the day of class; however, the registration fee can be applied to a later class with a \$25 transfer fee.

Due to low registration, a class may be cancelled with 15 days prior notice. Registration fee would be credited to a future class.

(Please print or type)

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

List Classes

| Name of class | Class Date | Cost |
|---------------|------------|----------------|
| _____ | _____ | \$ _____ |
| _____ | _____ | \$ _____ |
| _____ | _____ | \$ _____ |
| | | Total \$ _____ |

Method of Payment

I have enclosed a check for \$ _____ Ck/M.O. # _____ Date _____

Please charge my credit card in the amount of \$ _____ as follows:

VISA MasterCard Discover American Express

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Name of Cardholder _____

Billing Address _____

Signature _____

I authorize Association Headquarters to charge my credit card. I understand that my billing statement will read "Association Headquarters."

Two Easy Ways to Register

1. MAIL your form with payment to NARPM, P. O. Box 140647, Austin, TX 78714-0647.

2. FAX your form with credit card payment to 512/454-3036. Please do not mail the original.

Rent Ready Tips — Or How To Make A Great First Impression

By Betty Fletcher, PPM

Spring has sprung and with it comes a prime relocation season. In choosing a new home, prospective tenants will place high priority on location, appearance, and the rent rate.

While you can't easily relocate your rental home to a better neighborhood, you can have a positive impact on the existing neighborhood by screening your applicants. What is their history of care for past rental homes? If they are relocating locally, consider a visit to their current residence. This will be the condition of your property once they move in.

Appearance, now this is where you can really shine! Since you only get one opportunity to make a great first impression, approach your property with an objective eye and ask yourself:

- Does the exterior look well maintained? Is the yard freshly mowed? Does the entry look warm and inviting? Now is the time to touch up the paint and fix any torn or damaged screens. Mow the yard and trim the hedges. Consider a new welcome mat at the front door.
- Do the appliances and fixtures sparkle? Are the carpets and floors clean? If not they should be! Clean, sanitize, and deodorize. Replace dingy switch plate and outlet covers with new ones. Install a new shower curtain.
- Do all light fixtures function? Consider replacing any worn-out light fixtures with an inexpensive ceiling fan and light kit.
- Are the window coverings in good condition? Vinyl mini-blinds can give a clean, updated look and are inexpensive. Remember to cut looped cording for tenant safety.

If you can't repair it — replace it. If you can't clean it — erase it with a fresh coat of paint.



While you can't control the market rents, you had better know your market and set fair market rent rates. Vacancies are expensive for both your owner and you.

As property managers we are known by the property we manage. Focus now on building a reputation for excellence in your local property management market.

Betty Fletcher, PPM, is owner and principal broker of Fletcher Property Management, Inc., in Little Rock, AR. She serves as the current President of the Central AR Chapter of NARPM.

Note from the Editorial Chair...

April's issue reflects a somewhat new idea for the *Resource*; from now on, certain months will have designated themes. April is Fair Housing Month throughout the country and now also for the *Resource*. Traditionally April's *Resource* has been largely unofficially devoted to this theme. Thanks to President Prandi's initiative, we plan to publish issues officially devoted to respective themes, for the following months:

April: Fair Housing

May: Certification/Designation

June: Education

July: Membership/Ambassador Program

Of course, the articles and features you've come to expect will continue, but we hope, through the increased focus, to provide even more in-depth, practical, and inspirational information.

— Rose Thomas, MPM®