



# FEBRUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

CAPITAL AREA HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
“LANDLORDS WORKING TOGETHER”

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### CAHA Website

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As January comes to an end, we pass the statistical 'coldest part of the winter' and the price of oil has, by-and-large, remained low. It's also time for the oil committee to start working on a contract for next year. This is the time for those of you who were unhappy with the results of last year's bid to volunteer to be on the committee.



Harold Booth  
President

The past year has been a difficult time for all of us, concerned about the very volatile price of oil. It's been a trying time for the oil companies, too. With any luck, they will be hungry for our business - a big Thank You to all of you who switched to Webber last year - it helps our bargaining position to have winning our bid mean increased business. It ALSO means that those companies who lost business as a result of not winning - or not being considered because they wouldn't meet our bid specifications [New York Port pricing] - might be more willing to submit a lower, or New York-based bid this time.

As you doubtless know, the next meeting [February 10] is our annual meeting and banquet. This year it's at the Elks Club, with the doors opening at 5:00, Happy Hour at 5:30, and the dinner at 6:30. The board has been busy rounding up door-prizes and planning the 'entertainment'. Remember



The Augusta Elks Lodge will host the annual banquet on February 10.

that this meeting is also when we elect board members for next year. Anyone interested in running for a position on the board is encouraged to make that interest known - you can send an e-mail to any of the board members [our

*PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE,  
continued on next page*

### NEXT MEETING:

FEBRUARY 10, 2009 ~ 5:00 P.M.  
AUGUSTA ELKS CLUB  
ANNUAL BANQUET. GET YOUR  
RESERVATIONS IN EARLY!

### NEXT MEETING:

MARCH 10, 2009 ~ 7:00 P.M.  
K.V. FEDERAL CREDIT UNION  
FEATURED SPEAKER: DARREN MATTHEWS,  
ENERGY EQUIPMENT CONSULTANT

# ASK THE LAWYER

## “SCREW THE RENT.... GET A TATTOO”

This was the message on a bumper sticker I saw recently in Augusta on the trunk of an old car operated by a heavily inked young man. My guess is that he is more likely a Tattoo Artist engaged in promotion of his trade, then a landlord. How can landlords minimize financial losses caused by tenants who spend their rent money on something else, necessary or not?

the application. Too often I am engaged to evict tenants where there is an inadequate security deposit, or the deposit has not yet been paid in full.



### 1. SECURITY DEPOSIT: GET IT PAID BEFORE THE TENANCY BEGINS.

The deposit is the only payment the landlord will recover at the end of the tenancy in most cases. State Law permits acceptance of up to two months' rent as a security deposit, though most landlords require the equivalent of one month's rent.

It is a mistake to permit tenants to move in without an adequate deposit, or to permit monthly installment payments toward the deposit. If a prospective tenant cannot raise the money to move in, it is likely they cannot afford the apartment, or cannot prioritize their budget. The inability of an applicant to pay the full security deposit at the outset is adequate grounds to deny



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### 2. NOTICE TO QUIT: SERVE IT PROMPTLY, AS SOON AS GROUNDS ARISE.

It is a mistake to accept excuses for non-payment of rent, or to allow a tenant to fall behind without taking action. If the tenant cannot afford the rent this month, it is unlikely the tenant can pay twice that much next month.

If an eviction is necessary, the Notice to Quit is the first essential step. The Court system has reduced the number of dates available for evictions, and the process may now require an extra two to three weeks to complete.

**ASK THE LAWYER,**  
*continued from front*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, *continued from front*

e-addresses are on the newsletter] – or be nominated from the floor.

This column also represents, for me, the end of a year as the president of CAHA. I'm reminded of what is sometimes reputed to be an old Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times." It has certainly been 'interesting'.

My solar collector continues to pump hot air into my cellar on sunny days, and with the longer days and higher

sun, it's doing it for a longer time. I did make some emergency repairs recently – the temperature extremes [teens below overnight, high nineties during the day – or to put it another way, eighty degrees difference side-to-side for 1/2-inch plywood] have had an unforeseen warping effect – so I'll be making some more 'design changes' once May or June get here. In the meantime, I still get some nice warm air for 'free'.

Stay warm, and see you at the banquet.

Hal Booth

**Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Capital Area Housing Association (CAHA)  
Held at KV Federal Credit Union  
January 13, 2009**

The meeting came to order at 7 PM. President Harold Booth introduced Buddy Carlton from Maine Energy Conservation. Buddy introduced Al Millet of Green Energy Products who presented a very interesting discourse about the Fitch Fuel Catalyst, which is claimed to improve fuel-oil as it passes through the device, resulting in increased efficiency. The Fitch is available through Buddy's company for \$ 499 plus installation, which must be done by a licensed oil-burner technician since the installation requires three combustion-efficiency tests and changing the burner nozzle.

Following Al's presentation, Buddy's business partner, Rob Jordan, presented information about their company which offers consultation about energy conservation. They offer three levels of service. For \$99 they offer a walk-through to point out possible inefficiencies. For \$199 they offer the walk-through plus use an infra-red camera to detect heat-leaks in your building's shell. The above pricing is for 2 - 4 units, with each additional unit costing \$25.

For \$399 they offer a full energy audit and provide a written report of your building's energy efficiency. This audit includes the use of a blower-door to identify air-leaks as well as the infra-red camera. They provide a list of possible repairs as well as an estimate of the possible savings from each repair. The full energy audit is \$200 per unit for buildings with more than two units.

At 8:10 Joan Swanton made a motion to approve the secretary's minutes from the last CAHA meeting of December 9th., 2009. Rob Jordon seconded that motion which passed unanimously.

Ramona Venskus made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as written, Tim Dennett seconded that motion, which also passed unanimously.

Then V. President Tim Dennett passed out tickets for the drawing for the \$25 gift certificate, and Chris Karagiannes won.

Ramona Venskus made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned; Rick Gilbert seconded that motion and the meeting closed at 8:14 PM.

*Respectfully submitted, Ramona Venskus, secretary pro tem  
for Barbara Eckhardt who was unavailable because of illness.*

**ASK THE LAWYER**, *continued from page 2*

Even the landlord holding a full month's security deposit is now likely to suffer a loss because the eviction process will take more than a month to complete.

If the landlord allows the tenant to pay and stay after service of a Notice to Quit, it still impresses upon that tenant, and others in the same building (tenants talk), of the importance of making rent payment a priority.

**3. PAST RENTAL REFERENCES AND HISTORY: CHECK THEM BEFORE THE TENANCY BEGINS.**

The tenant's history with previous landlords is often a good barometer of how the tenant will treat you and your property. I know of some tenants that accept

sequential evictions as a way life. They pay enough to get into an apartment, then nothing more. Each time they are evicted, they go to trial with free legal representation through Pine Tree Legal. The landlord suffers significant financial losses in unpaid rent and legal fees even when they win in Court.

I have evicted one woman in particular more than once for different owners and I see this same woman being evicted from someplace else every couple of months. Obviously the landlords are not checking this woman's references before accepting her as a tenant. Incidentally, I noticed that this woman has a number of tattoos.



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