

Rights of renters grab the spotlight

OH, YES, 'tis the season to be jolly. But for many of you 'tis also the season when you face the question of agreeing to a new lease on the abode you occupy — probably with an increase in monthly dollars — or take the alternative route and move to another, cheaper shanty.

With that in mind, I recently attended a workshop on tenants' and landlords' rights and responsibilities. On your behalf, I taped 50 minutes of advice and comments delivered by Attorney LaRue Davis on what Michigan law permits and demands.

He didn't leave an audience of renters, property owners and management company representatives in doubt for long as to what a career in real estate law has taught him, declaring in his opening remarks: "A lease is like the Ten Commandments; it is 'thou shalt not.'"

Much of what was said was based on common sense, such as, "The relationship between tenant and landlord is so important. Many times people stop talking to the landlord for whatever reason. When someone gets into a situation like that and is at odds with the landlord, it's not helping the tenant at all."

"Unfortunately, the law is usually on the side of the landlord. It's a recognizable fact and it's something renters have to deal with, although both sides have numerous rights and responsibilities."

SOME OF THE tenant responsibilities may seem trifling to young people, but they are not. Davis used this as a case in point:

"The tenant always should have good communication with the landlord. Let's suppose he has a leaky faucet. That has to be communicated to the landlord, and the same with any other problems."

"It would hurt the tenant not to communicate. It is his obligation to do so. Otherwise it may escalate to a situation whereby the landlord holds the tenant responsible, such as letting the leaky faucet continue until spillage results in ceiling stains and repairs in the apartment below."

"The landlord can say the tenant had the duty to inform him of the problem before it got worse. It's up to the tenant to keep communication open and let the



through
bifocals
**Fred
DeLano**

owner or management company know. Most of these companies are based in Oakland County, with concentration in Southfield and Troy. But they do have a telephone number and can be called.

"Many people start with verbal communication, but I suggest a written follow-up, perhaps even a certified letter."

After Davis mentioned that partial payments do not have to be accepted by a landlord, and that the eviction process can be started right then, he was asked whether there are limits on how much a landlord can raise rent with proper notice.

"IN MICHIGAN we don't have any kind of statutory law on rent like New York City and California where they have statutes that prohibit landlords from raising rent," he said.

"Because of that, and if there's no law that says, 'Thou shalt not raise rent,' then I'm saying there's a likelihood a landlord will be allowed to raise it if he or she can indicate it was not in retaliation or vindictive. But in the eyes of the court it has to be reasonable."

We were told that rental "is the simplest form of property possession," and perhaps the oldest such form. A tenant has the right to quiet and peaceful enjoyment, which includes not being disturbed even by the landlord entering the premises without consent except in an emergency.

The premises should be inhabitable, kept in good repair, and in conformity with local and state safety and health codes.

When the session broke up, a second memorable phrase besides "thou shalt not," which stuck in mind, was this: "It's the landlord who basically can set the ground rules."

If you rent, don't forget it.

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.



Taverns were among the establishments visited by Farmington Hills police cadets during a liquor law investigation.

Police tactics are criticized

To the editor:

Come on, Farmington Hills. Let's applaud our great police department on liquor store crackdowns. Or should I say liquor store entrapments?

Chief Dwyer, you said the girl (who is the most controversial) was wearing blue jeans, sweaters, nice pants — normal 19-year-old clothes. Well, I was working at one of the establishments that was cited and if that girl was supposed to look like a minor, I'm 80 years old.

This girl was heavily done up, in a suit, with a man who was also in a suit. She looked at least 28. Some of my other friends stated how their trappers looked: man in a pin-striped suit with a brief case, girls with wigs. As a minor myself, a few on the list I knew about, and I'm glad you're starting to crack down on them.

But give me a break, Mr. Dwyer, with all the nice places that were caught, like Mountain Jacks, which can't afford to lose their liquor licenses, you must have gotten the idea that something was wrong about your plan.

At the store I work at, we card anybody that looks 25 and younger and if we're not 100 percent sure we'll card someone older.

I'll tell you right now, if that girl had come up to me, I would have sold to her, too; and I card practically everybody. Luckily, I didn't sell to her because everyone that did was fired, which was unfair to some. Something was drastically wrong with your plan, Chief Dwyer. Maybe next time you'll do it the right way.

Lisa Serda
Farmington Hills

Educator was way off base

To the editor:

As a former principal in the Farmington school district, I take exception to a comment made in the Nov. 20 Farmington Observer by Eva Swenarton, newly appointed administrative assistant from the Ypsilanti school district.

She indicated, "This is the first time anyone has known what an effective teacher is." Her comment is totally unfounded and demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding the Farmington school district, which has enjoyed nationwide respect for its educational programs and staff.

Personally, I am not aware of the Ypsilanti schools achieving such acclaim. I cannot allow comments such as these to go unchallenged. I fail to see how the new appointees from Ypsilanti can make a positive impact on the curriculum of the Farmington Schools with these kinds of comments.

Mel Blackman
Farmington Hills

Losing candidate lauds supporters

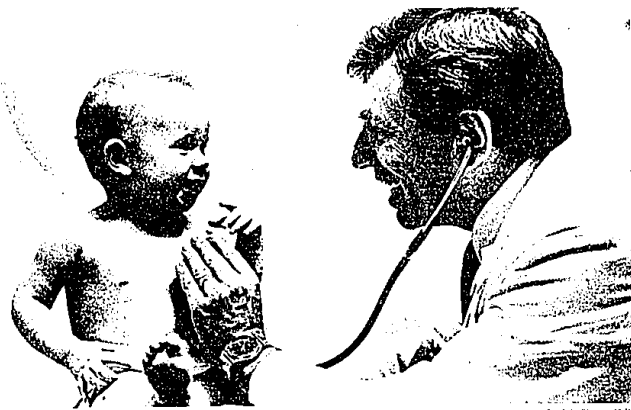
To the editor:

We have just completed a long, heated and difficult campaign for Circuit judge. Running a countywide campaign is no easy task in a county such as Oakland County, with its vast size and large population.

My family and I and the campaign committee would like to express our appreciation to all of those persons in Oakland County who contributed funds, worked on the campaign and voted for my candidacy.

Thank you!

Lawrence R. Terman
Bloomfield Hills



Stanford A. Singer, MD

Beaumont's Physician Profile is your key to finding the right doctor

Choosing a physician is one of the most important health care decisions you make. That's why we started the Beaumont Physician Referral Service. And that's why we developed Physician Profiles on our doctors. To help answer your most important questions about a doctor and help you choose one who's right for you.

The Referral Service is available to answer questions like these:

Where did the physician receive training?

The referral advisor who helps you can tell you where a physician went to medical school, and where the doctor resided, and where the physician received any specialized training.

Is the physician board-certified?

Board certification indicates that a physician has expertise in a particular area of medicine and has been recognized as a specialist by a governing board of physician authorities. 95% of all Beaumont physicians are board certified in a medical specialty.

Does the physician have a solo practice, or is he or she part of a group?

There are advantages to seeing a physician who has a solo practice, and

there are other advantages to seeing one who is member of a group. The primary difference is that when you see a solo physician, you see only that physician. When you see a physician who is part of a group, and you need an appointment on short notice, you may on occasion see a member of the group other than your regular physician.

Does the physician accept your insurance plan, or method of payment such as a credit card?

The referral advisor can tell you before your visit what insurance plans and methods of payment are okay, or if a payment schedule can be worked out, so you don't have any last minute surprises.

Is the physician the age and sex you're most comfortable with?

You may be more comfortable with a male physician who's older, while another person may prefer a female physician who is younger. Whatever your preference is, the referral advisor will make every attempt to find you a

physician with whom you'll be comfortable. More than 1,500 doctors use or work at Beaumont hospitals. The odds are good there's one who's right for you.

How do you use the Referral Service?

Beaumont's Physician Referral and Information Service is available for your use without cost or obligation. It is open between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM Monday through Friday. The toll-free phone number is: 1-800-633-7377.

Beaumont
William Beaumont Hospital

Physician Referral and
Information Services

1-800-633-7377