



In true Montana spirit, the Chuckwagon . . . the newsletter to fill your fair housing appetite.

### **Tales Roun' the Campfire**

A synopsis and/or update of cases filed with the Montana Human Rights Bureau (HRB), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and/or federal or district court. This summary is not all inclusive. . .

**From Michael M. O'Neil,  
State Director  
Montana Home Choice Coalition**

Barb Willis purchased a condominium at the Clark Fork Commons project. Her perseverance, hard work, and patience has paid off in her becoming a homeowner. Barb is using a Section 8 voucher issued through the Missoula Human Resource Council and is the first person in Missoula to be approved for this program.



Barb Willis dangling the keys to her new home.

Our special appreciation goes out to Jerry Petasak and all the folks at North Missoula Community Development Corporation and its Land Stewardship Program for their efforts in developing Clark Fork Commons, creating affordable homeownership significantly below market, and for their patiently waiting and holding the unit for sale until the Section 8 homeownership program start-up was completed.

Special thanks goes out to Bob Liston at Montana Fair Housing for his assistance and advocacy on Barb's home ownership quest. I appreciate the personal support Barb received through the past 18 months from Nancy Maxon and Marsha Katz at the Rural Institute on Disabilities at the UM. Also thanks to Ellie Sigrist and HomeWORD, and Montana Home Ownership Network, for providing the home buyer education and for linking Barb to the HomeStart savings program.

Thanks to Missoula HRC - Jim Morton and Mary Gehl - for getting the Section 8 Homeownership program up and running and their work getting Barb prepared for Section 8, along with the always reliable and resourceful Brendan Moles. We appreciate MDOC Section 8 for adopting the Homeownership option, and Montana Home Ownership Network (Sheila Rice) and Fannie Mae (Maureen Rude, Mary Lou Affleck, and Jerilee Brooks) for their efforts at supporting Section 8 Homeownership implementation statewide.

We appreciate the continued efforts of the Montana Board of Housing (Bruce Brensdaal and Nancy Leifer) for their support of homeownership for persons with disabilities. Barb benefited from financing through the MBOH Disabled Accessible program at 2.75%. A special thanks to Doug Jensen for his efforts.

Last but not least - our special thanks goes out to Missoula Federal Credit Union, especially Rachel Bemis and Linda Rayfield - for all of their efforts arranging Barb's financing. Missoula Federal Credit Union is a great Coalition partner.

Home ownership for persons with disabilities is a story of Perseverance and Partnership. Thanks to everyone for making Barb's home ownership quest successful. Section 8 Homeownership is an important tool. Let's make certain that it is available, and is as flexible, to communities across our state opening up homeownership opportunity to all.

## Tid Bits from the General Store

Montana Fair Housing moved our office on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Our phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and website address remain unchanged.

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We have a number of workshops scheduled for the year. All workshops are approved for Continuing Education Credits with the Montana Board of Realty Regulation (mandatory credits) and for attorneys with the Montana Bar Association. To schedule a workshop in your area or for your organization, or to register for any of our workshops, please contact Pam Bean at [mfhzng@montana.com](mailto:mfhzng@montana.com) or call 800-929-2611/542-2611.

August 10, 2006 – **Kalispell**: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

November 8th, 2006 – **Bozeman**: 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.

November 9th, 2006 – **Helena**: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

November 14th, 2006 – **Billings**: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
8 a.m. to Noon: Fair Housing 101  
1 p.m. To 4 p.m.: Design & Construction.  
Collaborative effort with City of Billings.

December 1st, 2006 **Billings**: 8 a.m. to Noon  
Emerging Markets – a presentation coordinated by the Community Housing Resource Board addressing the need for housing developed using Universal Design

\*\*\*\* Montana Fair Housing wants to welcome a couple of new members to our family: Sarah Etzel, our Investigation Specialist, had a baby girl, Bryn Etzel, on September 19, 2005. Vikki Brady, our Intake Specialist, had a baby girl April 11, 2006, Laraya Rowland. \*\*\*\*

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### **Shootin' the Bull**

**by Bob Liston, Executive Director**

Annual Conference in Review

Montana Fair Housing held its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Conference April 20 & 21 at the Fairmont Hot Springs Resort.

Florrie Brassier, South Puget Sound Fair Housing Center, and Kathy Helland from the Montana Human Rights Bureau, started things off with an overview of the federal and state fair housing laws. This overview is provided every year at our conference to ensure participants leave with a basic understanding of fair housing and any new interpretations of the laws derived from case law. Participants were pleased with the "understandability" of the presentation and the new information discussed about developing case law addressing age and domestic violence issues. The biggest concern raised was that there was not enough time for questions and answers.

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### **Staff:**

Bob Liston, Executive Director  
Pam Bean, Projects Coordinator  
Sarah Etzel, Investigations Specialist  
Victoria Brady, Intake Specialist  
Marsha Steinweden, Bookkeeper

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I want to support the efforts of Montana Fair Housing toward reducing the occurrence of housing discrimination in Montana. Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership contribution:

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Discrimination in housing occurs when a housing provider makes a decision about a consumer's eligibility for services based on the consumer's protected class status. A housing provider cannot deny you services nor place special terms and conditions on you BECAUSE OF your membership in a protected class. Protected classes include: Race/Color, National Origin, Religion, Sex (including sexual harassment), Familial Status (presence of children under the age of 18 or pregnancy), and/or Disability (Mental or Physical, including requests for reasonable accommodations and/or modifications). In the state of Montana it is also a violation of the state's Human Rights Act to discriminate in housing related transactions based on marital status, age, and/or creed.

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Chris Brancart, from Brancart and Brancart in Pescadero, California, followed with a “State of Fair Housing” presentation addressing emerging issues and case law developing in the last year. As usual, Chris did a great job in not only providing excellent material, but holding people’s attention, even through the “hot flashes” and “frigid moments” we had with the room temperature. I think a couple of comments really summed up his presentation — “absolutely incredible lecture,” “speaker grabbed my attention and kept it for the duration”, “topic interesting and enlightening” and “HUMOR!”

Chris also conducted a presentation on Advertising managing to balance the “letter of the law” with HUD’s memo to clarify some of the “hot” issues — putting some common sense to work and providing practical information. Interest peaked when the discussion turned to “internet advertising.”

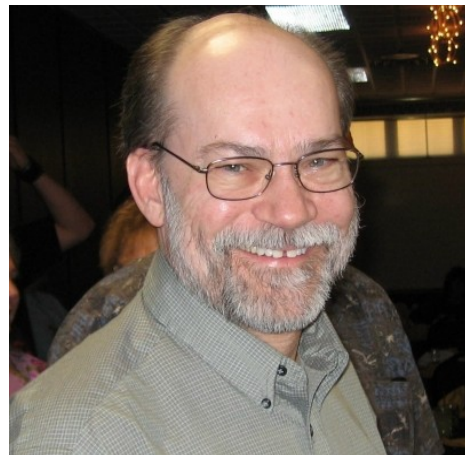


Florrie Brassier came back in the afternoon and conducted a presentation on Reasonable Accommodations and Reasonable Modifications. First, Florrie went through the “nuts and bolts” of what RAs and RMs are and then used some “real life scenarios,” working through examples with the

audience. People enjoyed the format Florrie incorporated into her training and left this session feeling more confident with their ability to address these issues. Requests for accommodations and/or modifications are “hot issues” daily for housing providers and for Montana Fair Housing. We were glad to hear Florrie did such a great job providing information in a format participants could “digest.”

Chris was back again, doing a presentation on Sales and Lending. Due to the nature of the audience, there were not a lot of participants in this session, but those that attended found the information to be useful and interesting. Chris shared some historical information as well as the “typical” sales/lending case, and current case law addressing predatory lending issues.

Friday morning consisted of two of our most popular sessions — the Montana Landlord and Tenant Act facilitated by Klaus Sitte, and Compliance with Design and Construction Provisions with Chris Brancart. As usual, many folks would have liked to attend both of these sessions, but...



Klaus Sitte, Director of Montana Legal Services, gave his typical “stellar” performance in detailing the relevant information covered by the Montana Landlord and Tenant Act. Montana Fair Housing receives more calls about landlord/tenant issues than any other topic, and this is our opportunity to have the expertise of someone who knows the topic as well as, if not better than, anyone else in the state. There was nothing markedly new this year with case law, but Klaus took the opportunity to go through the act and discuss scenarios that some people hadn’t experienced.

Real Estate Dynamics, Inc., from Billings, received our annual “Duh, It’s The Right Thing To Do” award for their work developing neighborhoods with visitability features. During the dinner, a Mardi Gras theme, participants were able to view the “world-premier” of The Jefferson River Boys, a hot new blues/rock band from Whitehall.



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If you suspect unfair housing practices  
and/or want to find out more about  
discrimination in housing contact:

**Department of Housing  
and Urban Development**

1-800-877-7353  
TDD 1-800-927-9275

or

**Montana Fair Housing**

1-800-929-2611  
1-406-542-2611

Montana Relay Service: 711  
website address: [fairhousing.montana.com](http://fairhousing.montana.com)

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