

Residential Resource

The Newsletter of the National Association of Residential Property Managers

November 2000

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LAISSEZ LES BONS TEMPS ROULER! (Let the Good Times Roll!)

By Karen Ebert, MPM, President, Austin Landmark Property Services, Inc., ALPS CRMC

The good times did roll at the 12th annual NARPM convention: Good fun, good food, good education, and good networking. This year's Convention Committee outdid themselves. Melissa Prandi, president-elect, (now president) tasked the committee with delivering a class act convention. It is hard to be perfect, but they came very close. Peter Meer MPM, and Rose Thomas, MPM, delivered a comprehensive and quality workshop series. And the vendors offered many specials and give-aways. The offsite events received countless accolades while the vendor exhibit was one of the best NARPM has offered. Our new management company had a lot to do with this year's success. As Jean Storms stated in the "Share the Vision" daily newsletter, "No where else can you find the variety of programs that are offered during this great event." Even our Marketing Committee outdid themselves by offering quality NARPM denim and polo shirts.

Many NARPM members, family, and friends came beforehand to take advantage of the rich historic and culinary experiences that New Orleans has to offer.

Other committees will shout the praises of various groups that made the convention successful as well as give credit to those who earned their designations. This author would like to highlight those *first time* attendees at the convention. When veteran members who have attended numerous conventions begin to think they are getting in a rut where it comes to convention experience, they need to pay attention to the enthusiasm and excitement from those who are attending a convention for the first time. First time attendees may be members who have belonged to NARPM for some time but have never taken the opportunity to attend a convention. Or they may be *new* members attending for the first time. We offer you their impressions as they reflected on their experiences and the benefits they received.

Julie DiGuilio, San Rafael, CA: "I enjoyed putting faces to names. The offsite event was great. [That was the Mardi Gras style parade to

Michaul's Restaurant for food, music and other fun activities.] So far as the educational part of the convention is concerned, the workshop on the 'Checklist to Success' was the best. I'd like to implement everything on the list!"

Joe Dalmon, San Rafael, CA: For Joe, it was ditto for the fun part of the convention. "The best part was the interaction with the property managers in the different sessions." Joe stated that the most important priorities were to follow the suggestions from the 'Disaster Planning' workshop and the 'Tips of the Trade.' Joe is now full of passion for working towards his PPM designation.

Joanne Greer, Ft. Collins, CO: Joanne agreed that the parade and off-site event for Thursday night was her best fun experience, but coming in second was the 50/50 raffle, (even though she didn't win). She was charged up by the excitement and humor of the attendees. She was drawn in by the friendly and humorous atmosphere. "I'm going to use the idea from the tech workshop from Jean Storms and put our security deposit return forms in Excel. It will save a lot of time."

Kathryn Pelling from San Jose, CA, a first time visitor to New Orleans, said that seeing the town was the most fun followed by *the parade* and a tour of the Mardi Gras museum. Kathryn returned to her job with numerous ideas for marketing. "I'm really looking forward to using some of the great ideas especially from Karen Hull's workshop."

One anonymous attendee stated they made a long list of suggestions for improving their procedures based on the presentation of our keynote speaker Professor P. P. (I don't think they knew that he was our notorious Past President Mark Kreditor.)

These new members or new attendees at the convention will certainly be making the good times roll in their offices as they approach their jobs with a rejuvenated enthusiasm and the tools to make them more successful at what they do.

Greetings from Your New National President

I am finally catching my breath after the incredible experience of attending and chairing the 12th annual NARPM convention.

Property managers from all over gathered to network, share experiences, laugh, and be the *best* they could be. The convention was a huge success, from the swamp tour with now Past President Ray Scarabosio to the quality workshops and fabulous instructors.

The opening ceremonies were done with tradition and style. All heads turned as the audience stood for the presentation of the colors. We were pleased to hear Erika Green, MPM, with her incredible voice, sing *God Bless America*; blessed to have an opening invocation led by Past President Kit Garren; and we enjoyed the traditional Parade of Chapters.

The off-site event, I am told by many, was the best yet. We closed down the streets for 10 city blocks, marching behind a police escort and uniformed marching band. And several locals in costumes joined in to help. In fine form, we strolled down the street dancing, singing, throwing strands of beads, and letting bystanders know NARPM was in town. We arrived at our destination, Michaul's, and the Cajun fun began. Eating Cajun food, dancing Cajun style, and watching Cajun food preparation were only part of the fun.

The next few days were filled with our Membership Luncheon and honoring our new "Chapter of the Year" — in Atlanta, Georgia — and the "Co-New Chapters of the Year" — Central Arkansas and Northwest Counties. Friday we were hilariously entertained by keynote speaker Professor Ravi Patel, or Professor P.P. Yes, it was Past President Mark Kreditor, MPM, for those still wondering how this stranger knew so much about NARPM.

Closing the event with style and elegance, we gathered for a sit-down dinner and the installation of the 2000-2001 National Directors and Officers. We said a special "thank you" to retiring Board Member Jean Storms, MPM. Fred Richter, MPM, was given an honorary lifetime membership. And we enjoyed the moment as a well-deserved Presidential Award was presented to Penny Patterson, MPM. Ray Scarabosio, MPM, recapped his year and said his goodbye as the National President.

Taking deep breaths as I was introduced, I realized this was my moment: The passing of the gavel and the national presidential title. I was fortunate to have shared this event with so many long-time friends present, along with my attorney Vince DeMartini and his wife, my significant other Jack Damato, and my 13-year-old son Matt.

When the convention was officially closed, we enjoyed an evening of laughter and dancing.

I have served NARPM many long hours — given this Association my all. It is with great pleasure I serve the next 15 months as national president. I look forward to traveling around the country to see many of your offices and visiting the local NARPM chapters, but most of all personally "SHARING THE VISION" with all of you.

As I thanked my convention committee, I realized how much work went into this event. We had an almost 50-member team bring this together. Endless details to be tended to made for extremely long days and nights. Yet, it was worthwhile; I wanted to be sure everything was in its place and was just right.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for your support and hard work in making this *our* Association and continuing to touch people in our industry.



Melissa Prandi MPM
Your National President



NARPM President
Melissa Prandi

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Your Board Hard at Work!

Marcy Walsh, PPM

The dust had not even settled on Convention 2000 when your National Board met on Sunday morning! As a new Board member, I felt a few anxiety pangs as I walked into the room. What was I to expect? Did I remember my *Robert's Rules of Order*? How do I present the motions from our committee? All the worries and concerns I had were quickly forgotten as President Prandi called the meeting to order. Already nicknamed, "the People's President," she made each of us "newbies" welcome. We may have looked a little tired after a full week, but the Board was energized. The consensus, from comments received from convention attendees, gave us an overall feeling that this was an excellent event. The membership is truly our barometer, and this is why the evaluations are so important.

If you have never attended a National Board meeting, I would suggest that you attend as a guest. It is an awesome experience. Committee reports were our first order of business. On Wednesday each committee chair presented a brief outline of the work that had been accomplished and presented any motions to the Board that were recommended by their respective committees to improve current procedures or member support. The Treasurer always asked from where funds would come if a cost was connected to the change. I was comforted to see that Association funds are not spent frivolously and that what is in the forefront of the Board's consideration is always "How will this benefit or impact the membership?" After watching our management company, Association & Society Management, Inc., handle different situations and the overall running of the convention, observing them on the National Board level was also impressive. Both Roy Bohrer and Sherri Beck are professional on all levels. They offered constructive comments when procedure changes were suggested, and they were enthusiastic in the support of our recommendations — some of which meant changes that affected their daily routine!

Committee reports, budget planning for 2000-2001, and board member assignments made for a full day. I left the meeting fully charged and ready to do my part in promoting, supporting, and expanding the NARPM membership. It is one thing to say, "We are members of an organization," but being an active, participating member is really from where the reward comes. As you give, so will you receive — in knowledge — and expertise.

Marcy Walsh is with Vineyards Properties, Inc., in Naples, FL.

Deadlines for Residential Resource

December	October 18, 2000
January	November 15, 2000
February	December 15, 2000
March	January 15, 2001
April	February 15, 2001
May	March 15, 2001
June	April 15, 2001

If you are interested in writing an article, please e-mail an attachment of your article in Word format to tharris@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.

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Business Products:

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Tenant Screening:

Accusearch
Backgrounds USA
National Credit Reporting

For more affiliate information, please
visit the NARPM Web site

www.narpm.org

What's New in Education?

By Sylvia Hill, MPM

The primary goal of the Education Committee is to raise the level of professionalism in our industry by raising the level of knowledge and ability of our membership through ongoing continuing education on topics relevant to residential property managers. That's a mouthful and a big responsibility! However, your Education Committee is ready to face the challenge with some new, innovative, ideas.

Effective January 1, 2001, any new member will receive \$100 off the cost of a PPM class taken within 12 months of joining. The purpose is to help increase the number of property managers wanting to take these courses at the local level and boost Certification participation. Do you know someone straddling the fence about joining NARPM? Maybe this will make up their mind.

The instructors we currently have for our PPM and MPM classes are excellent according to the instructor evaluation forms we receive from those classes. However, are these the best? What if we need more? The Instructor Subcommittee is inviting submissions of applications by those who meet the qualifications. The instructors will have two-year terms but may serve more than one term. Why make this change? To ensure we are meeting our goal of having the best qualified

instructors for your class.

Some states are scheduling three PPM classes between now and next convention to provide an opportunity for members to take all three PPM classes without having to travel across the country. Would your chapter like to give a local PPM or MPM class? Call Association Headquarters (800/782-3452) to get a copy of *Guidelines for Sponsoring a Local PPM/MPM Course*. This informative booklet gives time lines, expenses, marketing ideas, and all the forms you need to have your own course. All the local courses given in the past year have earned money for the local chapter. And as a bonus, some chapters gained members as a result.

What about education at the local chapter for short courses or seminars? Watch our Web site for a list of NARPM educators who are currently teaching classes. Do you have a course you want to add? Send an e-mail to Joe Medinger (manorrent@aol.com).

The PPM Marketing course was just rewritten by Fred Richter and now includes information about marketing your company on the Web. It premiered at New Orleans and was *very well* received. You may want to consider retaking the course since it's content has changed. The next two courses to be updated will be PPM Maintenance and PPM Tenancy. Watch for more information on these courses as they become available.

Have you been waiting for the MPM course, "Operating a Maintenance Company" to be offered? Wait no more; send an e-mail to sbeck@assnmgmt.com to let NARPM know you are interested. When we have enough names (20+), it will be offered. The current plan is to offer it at the National Convention in Kansas City next year if enough students register.

Your new NARPM Web site has a list of planned PPM and MPM classes listed. If you see one you want to take, don't wait to get a flyer or for the *Resource* announcement — call NARPM Headquarters to get registered.

Your Education Committee not only meets at the National Convention and the Mid-Year Conference, but also has two conference calls between meetings. If you have a question or concern regarding Education; please e-mail sylvianarpm@aol.com. We're looking forward to a great year.

Sylvia Hill, MPM, is with HMS Property Management in San Jose, CA.

Did You Know?

By Wendy Frenzel

The Denver International Airport (DIA) is larger than Manhattan. See this and other "Did You Know?" facts when you come to the Mile High Mid-Year in Denver, CO, February 15-17, 2001. The conference will be held in downtown Denver at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Come for the classes. Stay for the fun and sun. The Hyatt has a sister hotel in Beaver Creek where they would be happy to help you enjoy the mountain winter sports of Colorado. Please fax or e-mail Elizabeth Mowry, 303/730-0221 or lrec@ecentral.com, so the Hyatt can set up a special trip for NARPM members.

Did you know...? There will be a special guest in Denver who hasn't missed a NARPM convention in many years, but has never been asked to speak or pay a registration fee. Join the special guest in Denver February 15-17, 2001.

The Ambassador Program

by Robert Alvarez MBA, CRB, MPM

I recently returned from the 12th Annual Convention of the National Association of Residential Property Managers, and decided to write about my experience. Once again, I enjoyed saying hello to my old friends and was reaffirmed with the camaraderie I found throughout the convention. For me, the pinnacle of the convention was when I was given the honor to present the first NARPM Ambassador Award. This program began in November 1999, in an effort to increase our membership. The first NARPM Ambassador was Robert Locke, MPM, of Crown Management Corporation, CRMC, in Atlanta, GA. Robert sponsored 6 new members in 7 months.

Something that impressed me about the program were the statistics that proved it is successful. As of mid-September, less than a year since the program began, 93 members sponsored 137 new members. Obviously, the program is a tool that will increase our membership base.

NARPM's goal this year is to achieve 2000 members in the year 2000! You can help attain this goal and reward yourself at the same time. Recruit five new members this year, and you will receive an Award Certificate that you can use toward paying your renewal dues or national conference registration for the coming year.

Our first Ambassador, Robert Locke, MPM, offers the following suggestions for recruiting:

First, recruiting is for everyone. This is not a job exclusively for membership committees and board members. Everyone should be looking out for prospective members.

Second, you should always be prepared to talk to someone about NARPM. I have a packet of information in my trunk that includes a local newsletter, a national *Resource* magazine, a membership application, and reasons why someone should be a NARPM member. I usually meet a prospect for a cup of coffee and tell them why I joined, and invite them to our next meeting. Our chapter has a policy that a member prospect can have lunch on the chapter. This makes it very easy to invite a prospect to give them a look-see. They run no risk and have a chance to check us out at our expense, not theirs. I find prospects in many ways. I look for un-

familiar, "For Rent," signs. I notice companies who ask for rental references on my tenants. I notice companies from which we ask for references. I always ask owners with whom I am competing for their accounts.

If you are serious about recruiting here are some other sources:

- Scan your local newspaper for Rent ads for companies who are not members;
- Check out the local MLS system for agents who have rental listings;
- Scan the Internet for rentals in your area;
- Run ads in the local investor clubs and exchange groups newsletters;
- Talk to a management company when you take over an account they were managing;
- Ask the area tenant screening services for a list of their customers;
- Check the local home owner association managers. They often manage rentals; or
- Run small ads in your local Board of Realtors® newsletters.

Recruiting can be a team effort. After you develop your prospect list, assign your chapter's board, committee members, or general members to call three or four prospects before each membership meeting to encourage attendance. Multiple contacts are very effective. At the membership meeting, assign board members to introduce prospects and sit with them. Ask the prospects to stand just before you adjourn the meeting and encourage members to shake their hands before they leave. Then, close them! We are too lax about letting them go. Ask for their membership and get their application before they leave.

Recruiting is fun if you have a plan and a team effort. It takes some time, but it is rewarding to see members you recruited as you look around the room at a membership meeting. Plan a good recruitment campaign and give us the pleasure of recognizing you as a NARPM Ambassador at the next convention.

Ambassador Program details are listed separately in this issue of the *Residential Resource*.

Robert Alvarez, MBA, CRB, MPM, is with MRA Realtors in Garland, TX.

Ambassador Program

Ask your chapter's leader or membership chair for some applications. Enter your name on the 'referred by' line before giving it to the prospect, so that when they join, you will receive credit. If your chapter does not have any applications on hand, call NARPM Headquarters at 800/782-3452, and request a membership application to be mailed directly to the prospective member. Make sure you ask the prospect to enter your full name in the 'referred by' line.

The 12-month membership period for the five new members starts the day your first recruitment's new membership application is approved by Headquarters. When Headquarters receives the fifth new membership, an Award Certificate will be dated and issued.

Ambassador recognition will also be posted in the *Residential Resource*.

The Award Certificate can be used to pay future NARPM annual dues, or a like amount can be applied toward the National Mid-Year Conference or National Convention. A legible copy of your qualifying Ambassador Award Certificate must be used in full at the time of use and attached to your dues or convention registration.

The applicable value of the Award Certificate is equal to what the national dues were at the time the Award Certificate was issued. It must be used within 12 months of the issue date. A member can only earn one Award Certificate per 12-month period. However, a member can earn unlimited Recognition Certificates.



Not All Property Managers Are Debt Collectors

By Walt Welti

On October 8, 1998, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York decided a case of great importance to property managers. In *Franceschi v. Mautner-Glick Corp.*, 22 F. Supp. 2d 250 (SD NY 1998), the court determined that the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) did not apply to the collection efforts of a property manager who sent a rent demand notice to the tenant, Franceschi.

In deciding this case, the court had to first decide whether or not the property manager was a "debt collector" for purposes of the Act. In this case, the property manager had obtained the right to collect the tenant's rent before the rent was in default, therefore, the court determined that the property manager was entitled to the exemption provided under Section 1692a(6)(F)(iii) of the statute. This section exempts from the definition of "debt collector."

Any person collecting or attempting to collect any debt owed or due or asserted to be owed or due another to the extent such

activity... (iii) concerns a debt which was not in default at the time it was obtained by such person.

Because the property manager was entitled to the exemption provided in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6)(F)(iii), the court determined that the property manager was not a "debt collector" within the meaning of the FDCPA.

The court further noted that the legislative history of the FDCPA confirms that Congress did not intend the Act to cover companies in the business of regularly servicing outstanding debts, such as rents, for others. The Congressional Report on the Act explained that the definition of a debt collector does not include "mortgage service companies and others who service outstanding debts for others, so long as the debts were not in default when taken for servicing." In this case, the property manager fit squarely within this description of Congressional intent.

The application of this exemption to a property manager also conforms with Congress' purpose

in parsing the Act, specifically its determination that debt collectors posed a greater risk of abuse to consumers than creditors:

"Unlike creditors, who generally are restrained by the desire to protect their good will when collecting past due accounts, independent collectors are likely to have no future contact with the consumer and are often unconcerned with the consumer's opinion of them."

The Act recognizes that creditors have a natural incentive to avoid abusing their debtors and thus are less in need of policing. As the agents of the creditor, property managers have as strong an incentive as creditors to maintain their reputation in the community in order to encourage existing and new tenants and landlords to conduct business with them. Thus, the Court's finding that the property manager stood beyond the reach of the statute was in harmony with the goals of the Act.

Based on the Franceschi decision, our office has decided to sign and send our own rent demand notices, providing that the tenant's rent is not in default at the time we obtain the management account. If we obtain a new management account with a delinquent tenant, we will have the property owner sign and send the rent demand notice, since property owners who sign and send their own rent demand notices are generally not subject to the FDCPA. If a property owner uses preprinted stationary to prepare or send the notice, the letterhead and envelope must contain the name of the property owner, so that it will not appear that a third party is collecting the debt. If a property owner is unavailable to send the notice, we will use a licensed process server, since a process server (who merely serves the notice) is not subject to the Act.

Property managers should consult with competent legal counsel before changing their existing office policy regarding rent demand notices. A copy of the *Franceschi v. Mautner-Glick Corp.* case decision is available to view and print at: www.quickvect.com/franceschi.htm

Walt Welti is the Broker of American Property Management in Concord, CA. Walt is not an attorney and the information contained herein is not legal advice and is not intended to replace legal advice. If you need legal advice, you should consult with a competent attorney.

In Case You Missed It — Lessons from the Convention How to Start Affiliate Members in Your Local Chapter

Did you know the Sacramento chapter has over 60 Affiliate members and growing? Sharing their "secret" with other chapters, Sherry Luttrell and Robert Winger taught a class at this year's convention "How to Start Affiliate Members in Your Local Chapter."

According to Sherry, "Our chapter was chosen to teach the class because we have been very effective in obtaining Affiliate members. In the class, we stressed how easy it is to get Affiliates to join. The big secret to our success is: ASK THE VENDORS YOU ARE PRESENTLY USING TO JOIN AS AFFILIATES! Guess what? It works. Really, that is all there is to it. Then start using their services to keep them coming back year after year. The benefit to the new Affiliate is increased business plus much more."

The benefit to your chapter is a growing bank account which allows you the funds needed to:

- Start up a local Directory
- Fund a Web site
- Purchase plaques and awards for local board members
- Donate funds to local charities
- Purchase supplies and food for networking mixers and Christmas parties
- Plus much more!

If you would like more information regarding this program, feel free to contact Sherry Luttrell, PPM, at 916/482-RENT (ext. 103).

Meet Your National Board

Past President Raymond Scarabosio, MPM

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

I am truly a product of a “family” business. My grandparents started acquiring property in the '50s and '60s in San Francisco — apartment buildings, flats, etc. My father continued to acquire property, and the holdings enlarged. It became apparent that someone needed to manage the holdings, and that person was me.

2. *What extra-curricular, industry related activities are you involved with?*

I am a long-standing member of the San Francisco-based Professional Property Managers Association. I have served as its president and worked on various other committees. I have been involved with charitable work such as Christmas in April and project open hand. And I have also spoken at the NARPM state conferences and participated in the California Apartment Association legal roundtable.

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

Growing up I wanted to be a professional baseball player; now, when I really grow up, I want to be a touring pro on the Senior Golf Tour.

4. *What is your perceived greatest strength?*

I think it is my ability to see both sides of a discussion, and to be fair.

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

Believe all of what you see and none of what you hear. Too often a situation presents itself that you give someone the benefit of doubt, and then it comes back to haunt you. An example was once I felt sorry for a tenant that was having problems with paying the rent. I allowed them to pay a little later etc. The owner came down on me for not looking out for his best interest. I've learned that this is a business, and to not get personally involved.

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

We manage approximately 350 “doors” in San Francisco. We are a full-service company that can manage and sell your assets. One of

our strongest assets is that we are well-versed in the dreaded Rent Control ordinance that exists within San Francisco; as such, we consider ourselves light years ahead of some other property management firms.

7. *What impact has NARPM had on your business?*

It has allowed me to evolve and expand my forms within the office. NARPM is all about sharing, and our members have a lot to offer. Whenever I visit another member's office I ask to see move-in forms, interoffice memos, agreements, etc. It has allowed us to become more organized.

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

I am comfortable with where the company is right now. Perhaps in the future I'd like to offer a maintenance company, but as of now, the status quo is fine.

Raymond Scarabosio, MPM, is owner and founder of Jackson Group in San Francisco. His portfolio consists of apartments, commercial



space and single family dwellings. He has been a licensed real estate agent since 1982. Raymond is a past president of the San Francisco-based Professional Property Managers Association (PPMA). He is a charter member and Past President of the San Francisco Chapter of NARPM. He has been a member of NARPM since 1992, and has earned his PPM and MPM designation. Raymond has served and chaired various NARPM committees such as Finance, Convention, Publications, and Marketing, to name a few. Raymond has served on the National Board of Directors since 1994, and the executive committee since 1997. He currently serves as immediate past president of NARPM. Raymond is a native of San Francisco, he resides just south of the city with his wife Kathleen and 3 children.

NARPM Road Show Coming Soon to Your Town

The Membership Committee leadership met in Stuart, FL, in late August with the dual purpose of forming a new chapter and planning out the year to grow the association and strengthen the existing chapters as we work to “Share the Vision.”

The results of that meeting were exciting for the attendees: Melissa Prandi, MPM; Mike Mengden, MPM; Bob Machado, MPM; Fred Thompson, PPM; Erika Green, MPM; Marcy Walsh, PPM; Andrea Caldwell, MPM; and Lee Schulman.

NARPM was happy to welcome its newest chapter as a direct result of the road show efforts at the Florida meeting. The Treasure Coast of Florida, which was approved by the Board of Directors at the National Convention in New Orleans, has joined the family of NARPM.

The Committee spent a full day making plans for the coming year by specifying target areas for revitalization and other areas for brand new chapters (Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, the Carolinas, Florida, Kentucky, Utah, New Mexico...*here we come!*)

If your area needs help in growing your membership or organizing meeting planning or educational sessions, contact either Erika K. Green, MPM, Chapter/Member Support Chair at emailus@questps.com, 817/763-9696; Marcy Walsh, PPM, New Membership Chair at marcy@sw-fl.net, 800/488-3393; or Andrea Caldwell, MPM, Membership Chair at agetto@aol.com, 408/978-8100. Our efforts are not limited to these areas. We have resources, energy, and excitement galore. So let us work with you, and together we will “Share the Vision” in the coming year!

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Welcome New NARPM Members

The following is a list of new members from August 1 to September 30, 2000:

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Sandy Adams & Asse
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Checked Your Vision Lately? By Rose G. Thomas, MPM

A year ago, if you had told me I would be acting as Editorial Chair for the *Residential Resource*, I would not have believed you. This is an honor I never expected, yet one I take very seriously. And to accept the gauntlet, as Jean Storms put it in “The Gauntlet Passes,” from someone who has done such a fine job as editor for the past two years, increases the honor and the level of the challenge.

This year, for the first time, an Editorial Committee will assist the editorial chair, and I am grateful. We’ve been blessed with a wonderful group whose vast knowledge and broad contacts will be a great asset for the *Residential Resource*. These seasoned professionals will help temper my editorial inexperience. Steve Stein will serve as vice chair. The other members and their areas of specialty are: Robert Alvarez, MPM, Chapter News and the Ambassador Program; Donna Brandsey, PPM, Technology and the Internet; Wendell Davis, MPM, Human Resources; Karen Ebert, MPM, Maintenance; Wallace Gibson, MPM, Legal/Legislative; Ellen Webster, PPM, Feature Articles. Working together, I believe this Editorial Committee can, as Jean said, “continue the tradition.” Our challenge is to maintain the high quality that makes *Residential Resource* an indispensable guide for property management professionals. Yet no matter how hard we try, the Editorial Committee cannot do it alone.

As Jean Storms reminds us, it is articles coming from our readers that make the *Residential Resource* a vibrant yet practical publication. This means you. Whether you are a veteran contributor or a novice, we need your articles. If you are short on ideas, the areas of specialty listed by our committee members may help, and we can even provide a list of possible topics. The best articles, though, spring from an individual’s area of expertise, passionate interest, keen observation or simple desire to share an experience for the lessons it teaches. Each of you has something to offer; so check your vision, pick up a pen, rattle your keyboard, and give it a try. We are eager to hear from you.

A new feature appearing in this issue of the *Residential Resource* is “National Board Member Profile.” Our cover story, “Laissez Les Bon

Temps Rouler! (Let the Good Times Roll)” by Karen Ebert — tales from the New Orleans convention — is a theme we hope to echo with tales from the Mid-Year Conference. We plan to print some pieces by instructors of the PPM and MPM courses as well as from other well-known speakers and experts. And, future articles may well include advice on inspiring your muse and how to get your thoughts into article form. So those of you thinking up excuses for why you can’t send an article, we are way ahead of you — might as well get busy right away. As to what else might be in store, well, that depends on you.

As you know, “Sharing the Vision” is the NARPM theme for 2000-2001; and there is no better way of living this theme than writing for your *Residential Resource*. Together, we need to keep the content accurate, ethical, intriguing, lively, and practical. Together, let us strive to keep this publication a powerful means of enticing new members to NARPM as well as inspiring all members to action.

Did you know that of NARPM’s about 1500 members only about 325 attended the New Orleans convention?

Startling isn’t it? But through the *Residential Resource* we can continue to encourage, and perhaps increase, member participation in the association and at conferences and conventions.

We have much work to do. Sharing your knowledge and unique perspectives through contributing to the *Residential Resource* helps make it possible to “Share the Vision” with more property management professionals than ever before. Let this idea be your inspiration and instigation.

Information on deadlines and the format for submitting articles are listed in this issue. If you wish to discuss an idea or article, please feel free to contact me or any member of the editorial committee. As I look forward, I’m depending on all of you!

Rose G. Thomas, MPM, is serving as Editorial Chair as well as on the NARPM Board of Directors. President of the Maryland Suburban Chapter of NARPM, Rose is owner and founder of Property Management People, Inc., in Frederick, Maryland.

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Continuing Education Hours for License Renewal

By Bob Patterson, PPM, Double Z Property Management,
Tacoma, WA

One of the major problems for licensed real estate agents in any state is finding the time to get those renewal hours. At the National Convention in New Orleans, the Education Committee came up with an idea that might help many of us. The idea is to have classes given at the conventions certified by the local state for CEUs. Now you're thinking, "Great, I'm from Minnesota and I'm not moving to Louisiana." Well, some states will give you credit for classes taken in other states under certain conditions. For example, Washington State will allow credit for classes given out of state that are approved by a "tax-supported, public technical or community college, or any other institution of higher learning, and the director (Department of Licensing) determines the course substantially satisfies the course approval requirements contained in the administrative rules." However, the student must submit the documents to the Department of Licensing after taking the course, there is no preapproval. The certificate given must state how many hours were given, what the class is, who approved the course and that it is specifically for real estate education. In some instances classes given by private schools will also be allowed, but the student must also be able to present a syllabus to the director.

On behalf of the Education Committee, I've been exploring other states to get their requirements for granting hours for out-of-state classes for the Education Committee. The few states for which I have been able to obtain the requirements run from "anything goes" to "no way." I have also discovered that some other trade organizations have their conventions certified by a local college as a standard part of setting up the convention. I feel that if NARPM could do this, it would be a tremendous asset to its members and would give us another recruitment tool for membership and convention attendance. I would like to ask any other members who have information on their state's rules (or just want to comment on the idea) to e-mail me at bobatz@netscape.net or call me at 253/531-9431 (ext. 101).

A Retrospective

By Raymond Scarabosio, MPM, Past President

There are a few constants in our lives, a birthday every year, paying taxes, and the continuation of NARPM. My year as your president was a continuation towards the maturity of our organization. We have grown rapidly, which was good; but we outgrew our infrastructure, which was cause for concern. This past year the Board of Directors and the committee chairs focused on reestablishing the structure of NARPM. I feel as though we all succeeded in this endeavor. Because of this, the future for NARPM looks great.

Some of the highlights included reestablishing chapter support, instituting the Ambassador Program, enhancing our Web page, rewriting the PPM Marketing Course and establishing the Long Range Planning Committee to truly look at NARPM "outside of the box." All of these actions are steps forward, which is the direction we are headed.

Your next administration, led by Melissa Prandi, is continuing this work in progress. Her team needs volunteers to lend not only support but also the individual talent that each of you fellow NARPM members possess. Now is the time to get involved, while you can still make a difference. It takes a little bit of your time, but imagine if you will, the difference each of our 1500 members would make by just giving 1 hour a month to NARPM. The possibilities are endless.

Rewards for Serving on the Board

By Peggy Rapp, MPM, PCAM

Raymond Scarabosio, MPM, chairman of the Nominating Committee, asked that I write an article about the personal rewards of serving on the NARPM Board of Directors. At first, I thought about the obvious — helping our industry grow and gain professionalism, being able to direct the future of the organization by making important decisions on operations and policies, and working with and getting to know other professionals.

However, there is much more to it than that. I served on the Board in various capacities, including president, during the early years of NARPM. We entered the room as strangers and to this day have left as allies and friends. Since most of us owned our own businesses and made decisions daily without outside opinions or help, we had to learn to listen to each other and view issues in a different light.

We rarely agreed (particularly Steve Urie and I), but we shared in a bond that we were forming an organization that was going to be a real asset and source of education and knowledge for thousands of property managers in the future. We all had to learn to voice our opinions and work to an equitable solution. By doing this, we all formed a deep trust and friendship, and even though now we only see each other once or twice a year, it seems like no time has passed.

Every Board member brings various talents to the table — you may have one who sees the “big picture,” one who is a financial whiz and

enjoys developing and reviewing budgets, one who reminds the past president to enforce the parliamentary procedures, or one who enjoys researching issues, and so on. That is why it is so important to volunteer for the Board; you may fill the exact niche needed to make NARPM more successful.

Serving on the Board also helped my business grow — not because of the title, but because of the confidence it gave me to obtain new business. It helped with my organization skills, which always need attention! And, finally, it gave me an incredible sense of pride and satisfaction, which I still have today.

It is really personally rewarding when people look back and say, “you did this or that”; however, there would be no one to say that if it were not for the incredible talent we have seen on the NARPM Board of Directors that keeps the flame burning. I admire each and every one of the Board members and enjoy seeing newbies come up the ladder. Consider volunteering on the national, state, and local levels, so we can continue to grow future leaders.

You won't be sorry. Your time and talents will be rewarded at least three fold.

Peggy Rapp, MPM, PCAM, is with Rapp Management Co., Inc., in Galveston, TX.

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NARPM ANNUAL CONVENTION 2000

(See article this issue.)

1. Ambassador founder Robert Alvarez, MPM, presents the 1st NARPM Ambassador Award to Robert Locke, MPM.



2. A new era begins! President Melissa Prandi, MPM, presents Past President plaque to Raymond Scarabosio, MPM.



3. CRMC recipient Crown Management, Inc., CRMC, receives their plaque.

4. Retiring Director Bruno Friaa, MPM, receives his board plaque.

5. Retiring Director Jean Storms, MPM, is honored by President Melissa Prandi, MPM, and Past President Raymond Scarabosio, MPM.



6. Retiring Director Bill Wright, MPM, receives congratulations for a job well done.





7. Julie Potts, MPM, and Andrea Caldwell, MPM, present the Chapter of the Year Award to Atlanta Chapter President Robert Locke, MPM.



8. Past President Scarabosio addresses conventioners.



9. JoDee Lucier enjoyed selecting a mask for the Saturday night ball at the mask vendor booth.

10. Julie Potts, MPM, and Eddie Davis, MPM, assist President Prandi and Past President Scarabosio in officially opening the trade show.



11. Past President Steve Urie, MPM, served as stage manager during the convention.

12. 50/50 Raffle Chairmen Past President Mark Kreditor, MPM, and Robert Winger, MPM.



12

13. Co-New Chapter of the Year recipients Betty Fletcher from the Central Arkansas Chapter and Theresa Reed, PPM, of the Northwest Counties Chapter. Congratulations!

14. Professor P.P. "enlightens" NARPM conventioners with his industry observations.



14



11



13



15

15. Chapter Support Chair Erika Green, MPM, presents "Mr. Florida" Fred Thompson, PPM, with the chapter banner for the Treasure Coast of Florida Chapter.

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Committee Source

Membership Committee Update

By Marcy Walsh

“Sharing the Vision” — your New Membership and Member Support Committees’ combined goal! To implement this goal, Member Support will focus their efforts on revitalization of existing chapters who are showing decline in membership or loss of strong leadership. Under the direction of Committee Chairman Erika Green, MPM, 18 chapter revitalizations are scheduled, bringing in national level speakers to help spur membership drives in the selected chapters. New Membership will focus their efforts on starting up new chapters. Some key areas are already targeted. Committee Chairman Marcy Walsh, PPM, had a new chapter presentation already scheduled for Key West, FL, in October 2000. Other exciting projects coming out of these committees include a Chapter Mentor Program, revival of the Ambassador Program and an update and distribution of the *Leadership Handbook* to chapter leaders.

The Chapter Mentor Program will facilitate strong existing chapters in mentoring and assisting weaker chapters in close proximity. This concept has already proven successful in Washington State where the King County Chapter helped start the Northwest Counties Chapter.

Membership Committee is a happening place! If you haven’t signed up for a national committee, you need to get involved. Contact Andrea Caldwell, MPM; Erika Green, MPM; or Marcy Walsh, PPM, to learn how you can help.

Marcy Walsh is with Vineyards Properties, Inc., in Naples, FL.

Chapter Source



Santa Clara County Chapter Goes to the Dogs

The September meeting of the Santa Clara County Chapter, an affiliates appreciation breakfast, took an interesting turn. The chapter, in the great NARPM tradition, always has a 50/50 raffle with additional table decorations included. The September meeting decorations were dogs in a bag, representative of the “No pets — always end up with pets” syndrome of property management. Unbeknownst to the uninitiated members was the fact that these dogs were electronic and unless one was a six-year-old, could not be turned off easily once activated. Curious folks that property managers are, the dogs were quickly removed from the bags and accidentally turned on. Ex-probation officer and recently certified PPM, President-Elect Mike Segal, with increasing annoyance, continued to conduct the meeting over the cacophony of barking, howling, and whining dog noises. Members cruelly pounded their dogs, covered them with napkins, and stuffed them back into the bags all to no avail. Although most members of this chapter would take exception to the accusation that the group had “gone to the dogs,” one would be hard put to defend that as the meeting deteriorated in the face of today’s technology in the toy market.

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- 03 Clauses a Rental Agreement Should Include, *Friia*
- 04 Managing Multiple Offices, *Hull*
- 05 Managing 70 to 150 Units Successfully, *Allredge*
- 06 Detecting Leaks, *Kleinpeter*
- 07 Property Surveys, *Hill*

WORKSHOP SESSIONS II

- 08 Get Rich Slow...Buying Houses, *Locke*
- 09 Checklist to Success, *Hermanski*
- 10 Introduction to the Uniform Housing Code, *Ebert*
- 11 Homicide: Law & Order, *Lassen*
- 12 Direct Mail Marketing, *Holt*
- 13 Disaster Planning Before It Happens, *Maxwell*
- 14 Making Success Come More Easily, *Kidd*

SUPER SESSIONS

- 15 **2 TAPES:** Using Microsoft Office 2000 for Marketing, *Storms*
- 16 **2 TAPES:** Marketing Your Firm, *Hull*
- 18 Resident Managers, Most of Us Have Them, *DeMartini*

WORKSHOP SESSIONS III

- 19 Who, Me? An Expert Witness? *Holtsclaw*
- 20 Legal Issues, *Holzer*

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- 21 The New Internet, ZAM Development
- 22 Ideas for Structuring Your Staff, *Richter*

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- 28 You've Got Mail, Now What? *Scarabosio*

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- 57 Business Planning, *Reeder*

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Legislative Subcommittee Report

Wallace S. Gibson CPM, MPM, 2000 NARPM Legislative Chair

Rent Control — When Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack (D) signed the Rent Control Preemption Act (SF 428) into law effective July 1, it signaled that the United States now has 34 states that preempt the imposition of rent control by local jurisdictions. The Iowa law prohibits cities and counties from enacting, maintaining, or enforcing an ordinance or resolution that controls the amount of rent charged for leasing private commercial or residential property.

Rent controls first appeared during the World War II era when some communities suffered severe housing shortages. Controls were put into effect to prevent property owners from taking economic advantage of an extremely tight market. The federal government adopted nationwide rent controls from 1942 through 1949; however, controls were lifted thereafter except in New York, where a “housing emergency” was declared.

A number of states and jurisdictions across the United States, from the mid-1970s, have adopted either laws prohibiting rent control or ordinances instituting rent control, depending upon the politics and economics of those areas. With affordable housing crises existing in the past two decades and continuing to exist, rent control will continue to be a controversial issue in many locations. More than 200 communities in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and the District of Columbia have considered or enacted rent control ordinances.

Rent control ordinances govern the rate at which rents for sitting tenants are allowed to rise. The most stringent ordinances in the past have frozen rents, though in recent times rent freezes have not occurred. Typically, current ordinances provide for annual increases on some specific basis and allow for decontrol when a unit becomes vacant. Some provide for recontrol when the unit is again rented. Most also exempt units built after the ordinance is enacted, though sometimes this exemption is later modified, as in New York. Rent control laws vary in severity, particularly with decontrol. The most stringent ordinances in effect permit annual increases that are well below inflation rates and do not provide for vacancy decontrol. Example locations of the more strict ordinances include New York City, Berkeley, and Santa Monica in California, and Cambridge and Brookline in Massachusetts.

According to the December 27, 1999, issue of *Forbes* magazine, rent control is listed as one of the 10 worst economic ideas of the past 100 years. In “The Dumbest Ideas of the Century,” Dan Seligman says, “Here we have a policy initiative that has done huge damage to cities around the globe. It is very hard today to find an economist supporting rent control.”

Congress has general oversight responsibilities over the District of Columbia government, which continues to allow outdated rent control policies to exist in the nation’s capital. In particular, Congress needs to take steps to eliminate the rent control policies and abusive rent control administrative procedures of the District of Columbia. While such policies are many times created with good intentions, they often have the unintended effect of increasing costs and decreasing the

availability of affordable housing.

The rental housing industry operates under a host of local, state, and federal policies that substantially increase the cost of construction and ultimate rental costs for rental residents. Late in 1998, a state-by-state survey by the National Multi-Housing Association found that owners of rental housing pay substantially more property tax yet require fewer public resources than their counterparts in other forms of housing. Inflated local permit and impact fees drive up demand for very limited public subsidies for low-cost rental housing. Systematically lower fees would, instead, make affordable rental housing more widely available and lessen the demand for subsidies in a tight budget environment. Further, federal environmental mandates, which are often based on skewed cost-benefit analyses, reduce land availability and increase land costs for newly-built rental units and increase remediation and rehabilitation costs for already-built properties.

Rent Control Status by State

States with Rent Control

- California
- District of Columbia
- Maryland (Only in one town: Takoma Park)
- New Jersey
- New York

States that Preempt Rent Control

Alabama	Louisiana	South Carolina
Arizona	Massachusetts	South Dakota
Arkansas	Michigan	Tennessee
Colorado	Minnesota	Texas
Connecticut	Mississippi	Utah
Florida	Missouri	Vermont
Georgia	New Hampshire	Virginia
Idaho	New Mexico	Washington
Illinois	North Carolina	Wisconsin
Indiana	North Dakota	Wyoming
Iowa	Oklahoma	
Kentucky	Oregon	

States with No Rent Control/No Preemption

Alaska	Maine	Ohio
Delaware	Montana	Pennsylvania
Hawaii	Nebraska	Rhode Island
Kansas	Nevada	West Virginia

Civil Asset Forfeiture Legislation Passes, including Innocent

Property Owner Protection — The U.S. House and Senate recently passed the civil asset forfeiture reform legislation. The bill, (HR 1658, spearheaded by Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL) enhances innocent property owners’ protections against seizure of their property where the property owner is not cognizant of illegal acts committed on the property.

Under the bill, the government cannot seize property illegally used in connection with a crime unless it can first show, by a preponderance of evidence, a connection between the property and the illegal act. Property owners seeking to prevent seizure may claim an “innocent owner defense,” by showing that they were unaware of the illegal use of the property. The legislation also eliminates the cost-bond requirement and extends the period to contest a seizure to 30 days, and most importantly, places the burden of wrongdoing on the government.

Property owners who become aware of illegal and unauthorized use of their property are also protected from seizure if they notify police of the criminal conduct. Finally, property owners are permitted to sue for property damage that occurs during the seizure.

This reform is especially import to owners and managers of single family homes or properties with a small number of units where knowledge of such activity is not readily available.

Bankruptcy Reform — Bankruptcy reform legislation (HR 833) passed the U.S. House of Representatives in 1999 and was one of the first bills to pass the US Senate when it convened last January. Unfortunately, the bills are now stalled in conference. They would eliminate the cap on single asset bankruptcies, provide protections for shopping center owners when tenants file for bankruptcy and eliminate a loophole in the Bankruptcy Code which allows residential rental tenants to avoid eviction. The House and Senate are still debating differences unrelated to these provisions and advocates on the Hill are still committed to passing a bill this year.

This is an election year — Many state and local candidates will be on our ballots in addition to the more publicized federal nominees. When you have an opportunity to meet with or question candidates, be sure to bring your concerns for rental housing issues to their attention.

Wallace S. Gibson is the owner of Landlord Tenant Services and Gibson Management Group, Ltd., in Charlottesville, VA. She has over 30 years of residential and commercial property management experience. She holds the professional designations of Certified Property Manager (CPM) from the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) and the Master Property Manager (MPM) designation awarded by the National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM). She is the 2000 chairperson of the Virginia Association of Realtors Property Management Advisory Council as well as being the NARPM 2000 legislative chair. Wallace currently serves as president of the Central Virginia Chapter of NARPM.

We're Looking for a Few Good Men and Women!

The NARPM Board of Directors has put out the call for instructors for our certification classes! To be eligible, you must have your MPM certification. All MPMs should have received an e-mail on this project, but if you have not, give NARPM Executive Assistant Sherri Beck CPS a call at 800/782-3452. All applications will be handled in an electronic format.

Congratulations!

Welcome to our newest Professional Property Managers, Master Property Managers, and Certified Residential Management Company! (*Approved by the Board on September 19, 2000.*)

PPM

Marc Banner, PPM
Judith Brosee, PPM
Sandra Burkhamer, PPM
Steve Crossland, PPM
Louann Ginn, PPM
Jerry Maupin, PPM
Anne McCawley, PPM
Lambert Munz, PPM
Debra Schall, PPM
Michael Segal, PPM
John Taylor, PPM

MPM

Robert Alvarez, MPM
Wendell Davis, MPM
Wallace Gibson, MPM
Karen Hull, MPM
Suzanne Reeder, MPM
Tom Stokes, MPM
Rose Thomas, MPM

CRMC

Crown Management Corporation, Robert Locke, MPM



Ambassador Program

NARPM's goal this year is to reach 2000 members in the year 2000! You can help achieve this goal and reward yourself at the same time. Recruit five new members this year, and you will receive an awards certificate, which you can use toward paying your dues or for events for the coming year. To do this, do the following:

- ★ Call NARPM Headquarters at 800/782-3452, and request membership application forms. Headquarters, upon request, will mail the application directly to the prospective member but will not fill in the “referred by” line.
- ★ The 12-month membership period for the five new members starts the day your first new membership application is approved by headquarters.
- ★ When Headquarters receives the fifth new membership, an Awards Certificate will be issued and dated. A Recognition Certificate will also be issued, and you, as the “Ambassador,” will be recognized in the *Residential Resource*.
- ★ The Awards Certificate can be used to pay NARPM annual dues, or like amount can be applied toward National Midyear Conference or National Convention.
- ★ It must be used in full at the time of use and attached to your dues or registration for Midyear or Convention. The value of the Awards Certificate is equal to what the national dues were at the time the Awards Certificate was issued. It also must be used within 12 months of the issue date.
- ★ A member can only earn one Award Certificate per 12-month period. However, a member can earn unlimited Recognition Certificates.

2000-2001 PPM/MPM Certification Classes

Date	Location	Class	Instructor
2000			
Nov. 10	San Jose, CA	PPM Technology	Jean Storms
2001			
Jan.	Northern, VA	PPM Marketing	TBD
	Northern, VA	PPM Operations	TBD
Feb. 13-14	Denver, CO (Mid-Year)	MPM Risk Management	TBD
	Denver, CO (Mid-Year)	PPM Marketing	TBD
Mar.	Richmond, VA	PPM Tenancy	TBD
Mar. 23	WA State Conf.	PPM Marketing	TBD
	WA State Conf.	PPM Operations	TBD
Apr. 25	San Diego, CA State Conf.	PPM Tenancy	TBD
	San Diego, CA State Conf.	MPM PP&O	TBD
May 14-16	Orlando, FARPM Conf.	PPM Technology	TBD
May 14-16	Orlando, FARPM Conf.	PPM Maintenance	TBD
May 14-16	Orlando, FARPM Conf.	MPM Risk Management	TBD
May 14-16	Orlando, FARPM Conf.	PPM Marketing	TBD

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.

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.

PPM/MPM Class Registration

FEES

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

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.

Property Management Software — What Is Wrong with this Picture?

By Bob Patterson, PPM, Double Z Property Management, Tacoma, WA

I read Tony Warren's article "Software that Works for You — Or Does It?" in the September/October 2000 issue of *Residential Resource* with great interest. I have just gone through three months of exasperation and frustration with a new program. The program finally works (if you know the "work-arounds").

Since 1995 we have gone through five programs. The first program had been around for years, but the maker decided they would no longer offer support for it (was it just a coincidence that they had recently come out with a new, very expensive program?), so we got the new program. We even sent two people to a two-day class by the program manufacturer. What I learned in the class was that if you hadn't bought their "Cadillac" program and wouldn't pay for their "consultant" to spend two days in your office, then all your questions were ignored or skimmed over. If you needed tech support, then you had to leave a message and hope they would call you back. In the meantime, your system was down (once for three days). Interestingly, we had four months of problems with the program when the state auditor visited us. Luckily, I could show the auditor that we were in balance even though the computer program wasn't. The auditor identified the program as not meeting state requirements for accounting software. Well, we got a new program and became a Beta Tester. The maker worked with us on every program problem. It looked like our problems were gone. Then one morning the maker called and said "I'm bankrupt and out of business, good-bye." The next day the program totally crashed.

I researched over two hundred programs. Many were for foreign countries, some were for large multi-plexes, some commercial properties, and a few were for folks like us. So, I found the one that had a good reputation and would actually answer the phone when you called with a problem. Things went okay for awhile and then they developed a new program. Remembering that a new program means the old one has a limited lifetime for support, we got the new one. During the first several months I would work with tech support to try and get the program to work (at the time I stupidly assumed that the manufacturer wouldn't charge to get the program up and running, I later found out how expensive assuming can be). Finally a supervisor explained to me that I was mistaken (his exact words were much more rude), his program worked perfectly and nobody else had problems (I know of at least one other person who has problems with this program). Since that time I have received several messages from his tech support stating that "their" programmers had discovered problems in the program (the same ones that didn't exist weeks earlier) and had upgrades to fix them (the upgrades were free, but the time I had used talking to tech support wasn't). You had to call them or go check their Web site to find out about the upgrades, they will not notify you (in their words "we just have too much to do"). I never did receive advice that solved the problems (neither did their upgrades). What I did was take the program apart and figure out how it worked and how to solve problems as they come up. I can run the repair program three times in a row and get a different balance each time (reminds me of playing the slots). Most of these programs use very

questionable accounting techniques (i.e., doing a NSF in a way that changes your last bank reconciliation, not tying the bank account balance in one area to the transaction journals, generating a bank reconciliation that doesn't show NSF's, and so on). Our local chapter has several other members who have different programs who haven't been able to balance their books for months.

Now, a little about me. I am a reasonably intelligent person; I have a Washington State Brokers License, bachelor's in business administration, several years of accounting, and I have established several successful businesses and earned a PPM (working on the MPM). I have built computers from parts (one is the only one in our office that has never frozen or crashed), installed all kinds of programs with no problems, used QuickBooks and Quicken for years (never had to call for tech support), and installed our 10-computer network. So, even though I'm not a technical guru, I do have a little knowledge.

Okay, now back to Tony's article. I have found that we not only need a program that will work as he describes and that a "mere mortal" can use, but desperately need one that works (you know, a program that can add one and one and get two on a consistent basis). If you bought a car or computer and it didn't work from day one, would you pay to have it fixed? If your new car's door fell off, would you accept the manufacturer saying, "Must be user error" or "Must be your gasoline"? Would you have to diagnose why your new car wouldn't start and then pay the mechanic to install a starter that they forget to put on at the factory? Something is very wrong when you must pay to not only diagnose the problem, but also pay to get the solution when the problem is inherent in the program.

NARPM has an enormous, untapped potential. We must start communicating our problems with each other and coming together as a group to get vendors to play fair. Don't get me wrong, there are many excellent, honest vendors out there and they do need to make money to stay in business. But we need to work together to pressure the others to service our needs. Remember, we are not here to justify their existence; they are here to serve us. One solution would be a bulletin board on the National Web site that can be used to communicate with members worldwide, not just the local members or those we meet once or twice a year at conventions.

If there is a software manufacturer out there that has a property management program that can add, do what the program says it will do, guarantee that he will solve program problems at no cost to the user (he should however charge for legitimate user errors), provide responsive tech support, listen to the customer, and not assume the customer is an idiot, please call me. I will buy you lunch. The software industry needs to "fish or cut bait."

I encourage NARPM Members to contact me and challenge property management software manufacturers to meet the needs of their customers.

Bob Patterson, PPM, invites your feedback at bobatz@netscape.net (e-mail) or 253/531-9431 (phone).



How Do I Select and Register a Domain Name?

By Mr. Internet

Last month we discussed the advantages of registering your domain name. This month we'll discuss the process of registering your domain name.

You can select and register your domain name(s) in many places. Since the Network Solutions monopoly was broken last year, over 150 companies have been authorized to register domain names. There are now some big players, like Register.com and RegisterFree that do a good job of registering domains. There are also some companies, like HomeRentals.net, that provide domain name registration for a specific industry, in this case property management. When you go to the Web site of a registrar, they'll provide you with instructions for determining if your domain name is available and then registering it.

There are a few pitfalls to watch out for when registering your domain name. The biggest one to watch out for is making sure that the name is registered to *you*. Many unscrupulous Web site developers have registered clients' names to themselves, and then held the names hostage later. Also watch out for registrars that charge you to make a change. You may change your phone number, then find that it cost \$15 or more to change the phone number on your domain record.

Country specific registrations have been touted as "the next .com," but little has materialized. The reasons for the "flop" of country specific domains are abundant. We'll list a few here.

First, when you tell someone your domain name, they automatically think it ends in a 'generic' extension (such as .com, .net, or .org). Studies have shown this is what people will type into their browser, and if your site ends with .hm, it won't be found! Some browsers, like Netscape Navigator, even automatically search the generic extensions to find the Web site. For example, if your Web site is NorthHillHomes.net, and a person types NorthHillHomes into their browser, it will find your Web site. It will not find NorthHillHomes.cc, .ws, or any of the other country specific extensions.

Second, many Web sites of illegal businesses will not get a generic domain extension. They locate their servers in another country, typically a banana republic, and their Web site has the extension of that country. It is likely for this reason that many Internet users say that they do not trust a Web site with a country specific domain extension.

Last, but not least, the countries that own the extensions generally dictate the control over their domains. This means that they could raise the rates preposterously, give your domain to another person who bribes them, or shut down your domain altogether. Although you have some recourse, generally there is little you can do without hiring expensive international intellectual property attorneys.

Typically, you are better off registering your domain with a generic extension. Even better, register your domain with multiple extensions.

Registering NorthHillHomes.com as well as NorthHillHomes.net ensures that people can easily find your site. It ensures that your visitors are not going to the wrong place. As an example, years ago, all domain names were registered at InterNIC.net. Somebody else registered InterNIC.com. InterNIC.com would accept requests for domain name registrations, charge a fee of \$100, then turn around and register that domain at InterNIC.net for \$70. People who thought that InterNIC.com was the place to register domain names got taken for an extra \$30. If only InterNIC.net had also registered the .com domain, they would have avoided a lot of irate customers, and eventually, a lawsuit. Registering multiple extensions also secures your intellectual property rights to that name. If you did not register NorthHillHomes.net, someone else could register it and later claim they were the "NorthHillHomes" of the Internet and that *you* were in violation of *their* intellectual property. By registering all major domains right off the bat, you'll never have this problem.

If this all seems confusing, it doesn't have to be. Talk to someone with experience in this area, and ask them to help you. A properly chosen domain will prove to be a great asset to your business.

Mike Anderson of Home Rentals.net prepares this column. If you have a questions you would like answered, email him at mike@homerentals.net.