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RESIDENTIALResource



THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MANAGERS

Soaring in Seattle

 page 14



This year, NARPM® took to the west coast to experience the metronatural™ city of Seattle, Washington. We found a vibrant city center that coexists beautifully with pristine nature. Take a look at all the fun times that were had by convention attendees!

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Robert M. Locke, Crown Realty & Management (GA)

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IN THIS ISSUE December 2010

FEATURE ARTICLES

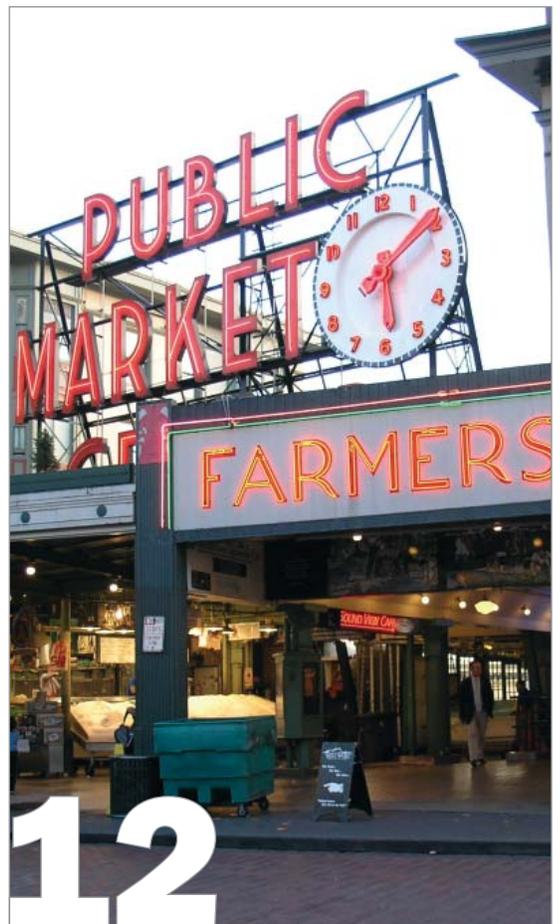
- p12** **Through the Eyes of a First Timer: An Unforgettable Event**
As a seasoned conference go-er across many different industries, Darity Wesley shares her exciting new experiences at our annual association event.
- p13** **Past Presidents' Charity Golf Tournament**
This year's inaugural event was a hole in one! See shots of all the fun times you experienced or may have sadly missed.
- p14** **Dare to Soar | 22nd Annual Convention**
Another convention has come and gone. Take a look at photos from the President's Tour, the Gala, general sessions, and more!
- p18** **The Journey of a Volunteer: Find Yourself in Service**
The year is drawing to an end and now, more than ever, we need passionate volunteers to lead NARPM® into the future. Communications Committee Chair Michele Brassard, RMP®, tells us about her journey and the committee's many accomplishments.
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Connect with fellow NARPM® members and check out more photos and videos from this year's event at www.facebook.com/narpmnational. Convention handouts and a feedback survey are available for download at www.narpm.org/conferences/annual-convention-trade-show/past-conventions.html.



EDITORIAL MISSION

Since 1989, the NARPM® news magazine has been a key focal point for the organization. The *Residential Resource* keeps members up-to-date on association events, and provides valuable industry advice and insight. NARPM® members receive the *Residential Resource* as part of their membership, included in their annual dues.

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The *Residential Resource* is designed for the members of the National Association of Residential Property Managers by Organization Management Group, Inc. in Chesapeake, Virginia. (www.managegroup.com)

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PRESIDENT'S Message

“I could have never guessed that I would have been so profoundly affected by the position that was bestowed upon me.”



IF YOU DID NOT have the opportunity to attend the national convention in Seattle this past October, you missed an absolutely awesome event. Not only were there a ton of great speakers and workshops, there were many occasions to network and catch up with old friends. To top it all off, we had some of the best weather Seattle has to offer for the month of October. Those of us who were out on the golf course on Wednesday for the first annual Past Presidents' Charity Golf Tournament almost got sunburns. A couple more hours and we would have been toasted! You know what I mean—a bit overcooked from the sun!

And, let me tell you about the Gala. I had no idea that NARPM® had so many talented people within our membership. Congratulations to the winner, Rebekah Near from ORCA Information, Inc., on her sultry rendition of *Summertime*. I think this was the most well attended Gala to date. We had dancers (well, maybe not all were actual dancers, but you gotta give Andy Propst, MPM® RMP® credit for doing whatever it was he was doing in front of an audience of over 250 people), guitar players, a pianist, singers, a bassoonist, cinematographers, comedians, and a wonderfully good time. Thanks goes to our judges: Bob “Hasselhoff” Machado, MPM® RMP®; Ray “Howie” Scarabosio, MPM® RMP®; Rose “Paula” Thomas, MPM® RMP®; and James “Simon” Tungsvik, MPM® RMP®. As “Howie” would say, “I only have four words, ‘You guys were fantastic!’”

Everyone absolutely soared at the convention, which is the reason for me telling you about it. This event was the high point of the great year that I have had as your National President. I could have never guessed that I would have been so profoundly affected by the position that was bestowed upon me. I knew that I was stepping into a very important leadership role. The members of NARPM® were entrusting me to guide others towards making good decisions for the organization. I soon discovered that no one does this on their own. All of the individuals that took on their own leadership roles this year did a really good job. Thank you to all my committee chairs, vice chairs, and sub-chairs. Thanks to the directors who oftentimes received 100+ page documents that they had to study in preparation for our Board of Directors meetings. Also, thanks goes to the staff at NARPM® National for helping us to stay on track when we might have been taking a wrong turn.

In closing out my presidential year, I would like to share an excerpt or two from my closing speech at convention:

From my point of view, NARPM® has an awesome future ahead of it. Last year, we were given the task of growing to 4,000 members by the year 2014. We called it our 12x14 campaign. Well, thanks to the help of Rentals.com and some aggressive marketing, in our first year we have over 3,300 members. The best way for new and old members to

see value in their membership is to volunteer, either in your local chapter or on a national level. It is the only way to get the ‘feel’ of the organization. And, it is the only way to make changes if you feel that change is necessary.

Over the lifetime of my career, I have been very involved in a number of trade associations as a volunteer. I was even a member of the Carpet Cleaners Institute (CCI®) in the early 80s. I gotta tell you, there is not a one of them that can hold a candle to NARPM®. We open our offices, our homes and our hearts to those who want to grow their professional real estate management careers and businesses. Our culture is sharing. We do it better than any other organization that I have ever participated in. I want to thank every one of you who have shared a process, an idea, a spreadsheet or an opinion with me. I have soaked it all in. My business is better off today because of what I learned from my NARPM® buddies.

Thanks to all of you for giving me your support and kind words of encouragement this year. And remember, the only way to see it all is to soar above it all. Keep soaring!

Vickie Gaskill, MPM® RMP® CPM® ARM®
2010 NARPM® President

From the
DESK of the
Executive Director



Gail S. Phillips, CAE

It was an outstanding year and President Gaskill found the ability to bring out the greatness in others.

NARPM® once again had an outstanding convention thanks to the Committee, chaired by Leeann Ghiglione, MPM® RMP®, and staff Carla Earnest, CMP. This team of volunteers put together a great program for the members. All the handouts from the sessions are available at www.narpm.org/conferences/annual-convention-trade-show/past-conventions.html. You will also find the survey on the convention there, if you missed the e-mail.

In 2010, President Gaskill dared all the NARPM® members to soar. It was an outstanding year and President Gaskill found the ability to bring out the greatness in others. The committees, directors and staff formed a great bond that will continue to create wonderful new programs for NARPM® members, and I want to personally thank President Gaskill for a great year—I know it was not always easy.

As we close out this year, I wanted to share with you a poem that was sent to National one holiday season from a member. I keep this poem on my wall above my desk so I can look at it and remember how great this organization and the members are.

*“Greatness is our innate capacity to love.
Greatness is loving
without expecting anything in return.
Greatness is allowing yourself to appear small,
so that another can feel big.
Greatness is speaking soft, kind words
when others are shouting.
Greatness is the feel of your hand
in that of a lost child.
Greatness is what others see in you
when you give of yourself and your treasures.
Greatness is the mighty oak, the mountain tall*

*and the power of the oceans.
Greatness is what we learn
from the teaching example of a master.
Greatness is producing all that you do
with superior quality.
Greatness is seeing the sunrise in all its glory.
Greatness is the remarkable result of positive thoughts.
Greatness is standing in your place of worship
and feeling the presence of the Spiritual Power.
Greatness is the ability to celebrate
when someone else wins.
Greatness is the power of a gathering of like minds.
Greatness is the gift of voice to the singer
who moves your soul.
Greatness is an enthusiastic entrance
and a timely departure.
Greatness is understanding
that all God’s children are perfect.
Greatness is believing
in the magnitude of a Grand Plan.
Greatness is the feeling of power
when you no longer have to be right every time.
Greatness is visions of a grand future
starting with this New Year.”*

Thanks to each of you for making NARPM® great and for an outstanding 2010. Until 2011, have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Gail S. Phillips, CAE
Executive Director

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REGIONAL Communications

CONNECTING THE EXPANDING NARPM® MEMBERSHIP ONE REGION AT A TIME.



Northeast & North Central RVP James Emory Tungsvik, MPM® RMP®, entered the property management field in 1993, starting out at *Around The Clock, Inc., CRMC®*. James is a second generation property manager in the company. In 1995, James joined NARPM® and clearly saw the benefits of belonging to the organization. James is thrilled to be a NARPM® national officer serving his fellow members and helping them be the best that they can be in the property management industry.

The RVP Bulletin

It has only been a week since convention as I am writing this article. Fall is in the air now, and the holidays are starting to come into sight. I am sitting in my living room with a fire going in the fireplace, and I just put a huge batch of coffee cake into the oven to take to everyone in the office tomorrow. With the smell of cinnamon in the air and brown, yellow and orange leaves blowing by my large living room window, I am ready to snuggle in, drink a warm cup of cider and type the last RVP article you will read in 2010.

With the North Central/Northeast Region as the largest region with the fewest members, growth seems to be coming slow and steady. Chicagoland kicked off the growth this year with the formation of their chapter. Mia Micaletti, Chapter President-elect for 2011, has her machine guns loaded and ready to go this year, and next, as they work toward increasing their membership base. Having the opportunity to go to two of their meetings this past year, I have to tell you how impressed I am by her commitment to grow and involve property managers in the area.

At our October Board meeting, Minneapolis was approved as the first chapter for Minnesota. Chapter President Lynn Sedlack, RMP®, and her team have put together a chapter that has a clear sense of what they want that is going to make this chapter grow fast. I had the privilege of meeting Lynn at the national convention after talking and e-mailing over the past couple months. I have no doubt that this will be a chapter to watch over the months to come as they are very innovative. These chapters will also succeed by virtue of the many strong leaders in their region.

I am sure you would agree that both of these members are very talented. However, they would be the first to tell you how much help they have received from National Vendor Robert Hansen with Rental-sHomesPlus.com. Wow, what a helpful and busy guy! He has been helping new chapters in both Illinois and Minnesota. Thank you Hansen!

Chapter leaders and members are learning that vendor relationships cross way over from just providing a service. They are a bond to form in the success of our business and the success of NARPM®.

If each chapter member asked just one vendor they regularly use to provide them their client list, just think how fast you could grow your chapter. Now multiply that by how many vendors you use in your day-to-day operations. That is a significant amount of property managers that our organization could reach in educational needs that raise the level of professionalism for all of us. If you can all get the lists of potential members, send them to me. I promise that, on a national level, we will make contact with them and provide your local chapter contact information.

This being my article, and those of you that truly know me, know that it is “always about James.” I have to tell you how much fun I had at convention this year in my hometown of Seattle. I have to apologize for those of you who saw my split personality with my brother “Simon.” He can be so mean at times; however, I have a secret to tell you that will always keep him in check when it comes to rating performances. When Simon was a kid, his parents made him listen to music in his room with headphones. No matter what generation they are from, parents never like their child’s music. Well, unbeknownst to Simon, everyone in the house got to hear him sing a cappella and off-key. His little sister, Janie, and her girlfriends would stand in the hall listening to him sing so they could get a belly laugh. To this day, Simon’s sister says she could have become a rich woman recording that back then to blackmail him with it now.

In Simon’s defense though, I do have to tell all those “haters” out there that his NARPM® Hawaiian brothers and sisters came to him saying how much they wished he could come to their holiday party in December. So, all of you that will be rusting in the pacific northwest, choking on the smog in California, freezing in the midwest, and blowing around on the eastern seaboard, Simon will be chilling with a mai tai on the beach with his island family! Aloha!

In closing, whether the holidays are your thing or not, December is a time to reflect on the year we are saying goodbye to and dream about what new adventures lay ahead. Take this moment to decompress and remember the little things that mean so much. 🏠

Northwest: Tom Guyer, MPM® RMP®
Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana,
Wyoming.

Pacific: Candice Swanson, MPM® RMP®
California, Nevada, Hawaii.

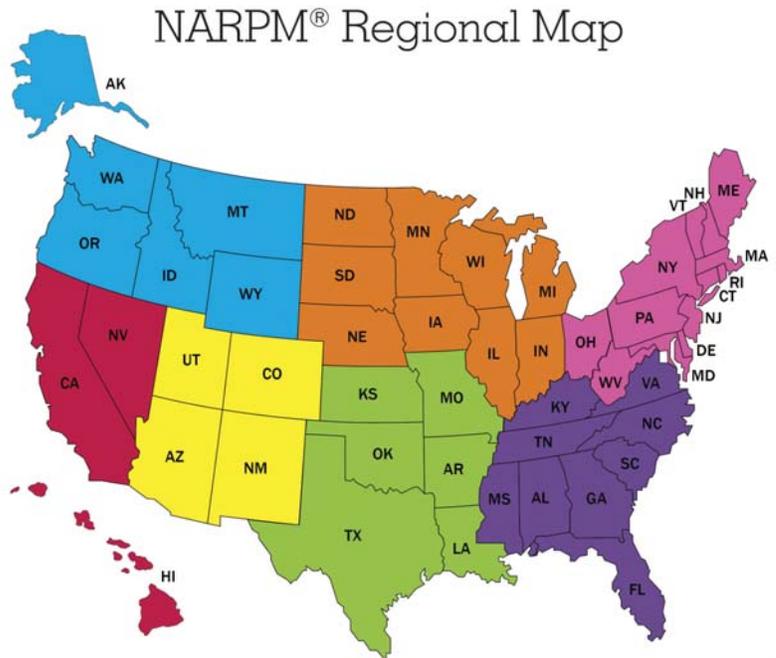
Southwest: Carolyn Rogers, MPM® RMP®
Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico.

North Central: James Emory Tungsvik, MPM® RMP®
North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota,
Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana.

Northeast: James Emory Tungsvik, MPM® RMP®
Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts,
Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania,
New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC,
Ohio, West Virginia.

South Central: Stephen Foster, MPM® RMP® CCIM®
Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas,
Louisiana.

Southeast: John R. Bradford, III, RMP®
Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia,
Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi.



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NATIONAL TENANT NETWORK

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\$13,832,171,239.00*

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FACTS

- The losses above result from only **three** tenant problems out of a potential 17 objective, lease violations.

THE SOLUTION: NTN TENANT PERFORMANCE PROFILE

- There are at least 4 million fair housing violations annually.
- HUD states that "Only one percent of individuals who believed they experienced housing discrimination reported it to a government agency."
- Funding for FAIR HOUSING INITIATIVES PROGRAM (FHIP) should be \$52 million and should expand to approximately \$109 million per year.
- **RECENT FHIP DECISION:** The defendants (landlords/owners) will pay \$35,000 in damages to three victims who the United States contends were discriminated against because of their race at Ivanhoe House Apartments; pay \$7,500 in a civil penalty to the United States; and pay \$40,000 to the Fair Housing Center of SE Michigan as damages for the non-profit's efforts in testing and investigating the apartment complex. The settlement also requires the defendants and their employees to undergo fair housing training, conduct self-testing.

THE SOLUTION: NTN DECISIONPOINT

- **EXECUTIVE ORDER 13224** prohibits all U.S. individuals and businesses from engaging in any form of financial transaction with persons or entities designated as terrorists or their associates. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) maintains a list of "Specially Designated Nationals" (SDNs) that contains names of persons and organizations with which no U.S. individuals or firms may conduct business. Criminal violations of OFAC regulations can result in corporate and personal fines of up to \$1 million per count as well as prison terms.

USE OF INTERNET STARTUP COMPANIES OR THOSE THAT LACK SOLID INDUSTRY EXPERTISE CAN BE COSTLY.

THE SOLUTION: SEEK CAPABLE ASSISTANCE

NTN

In a recent survey of real estate management companies and owners, the NTN national organization was identified as having the best screening data available today – data that is cutting losses substantially and NTN regional offices as providing the ultimate in customer service.

Conducted by the national agency HMH (www.thinkHMH.com)

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CHAPTER Spotlight

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON THE EXCELLENT NARPM® CHAPTERS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.



John Parker, MPM® RMP®, holds a BA degree from Alaska Pacific University. Prior to becoming a property manager, John was a teacher, a clothing store manager, and real estate sales associate. He has been involved in the real estate industry since 1973, when he bought his first fixer-upper. John is currently serving as Chair of the NARPM® National Governmental Affairs Committee. When he is not working, he likes to read, golf, hike, woodwork, and travel.

For additional ideas on how to strengthen your chapter, visit the Chapter Leader Services area at www.narpm.org/chapter-services.

Pierce County, WA

The Pierce County Chapter of NARPM® was the second chapter in Washington State. Our chapter has been assisting local property managers for over 14 years and has grown to 35 local property managers. We generally meet once a month where we conduct chapter business and have speakers talk on various topics affecting our industry. We meet in a restaurant. Our meeting starts with a half hour of networking prior to our business meeting so that we can talk with other members and vendors. I often overhear, “how do you handle this problem?”, or “how are you doing this or that?” Members’ words speak loudly about the benefits of a professional association

To try to understand the benefits that keep our members coming back each month, I asked for answers to: what got you into property management; what caused you to join NARPM®; and what do you enjoy about our monthly meeting?

Roy Gadley told me, “I’ve enjoyed attending our monthly chapter meetings. I’ve met the most giving people in the business. Every member of our chapter assists each other. We keep each other educated on current events and issues. We exchange our company business forms, share vendors and support each other not only through business but also in our personal lives. NARPM® provides great educational courses designed specifically for property managers. Our chapter sponsors training from local real estate schools, provides regional conferences and encourages our members to attend our yearly national convention, all of which offer additional training and opportunities to meet a variety of vendors. My overall experience and association with NARPM® has been very positive. I highly recommend our association to every property manager I meet.”

Terri Patterson enjoys the pace of property management mainly because she really enjoys the stress and pace of dealing with different people and problems each day. “I’m a really nosy person and I like hearing about and trying to fix other people’s problems, not to mention going into other people’s houses. My favorite part is doing interior inspections. I find it very rewarding in helping tenants find a home

to live in and, at the same time, the responsibility of overseeing owners’ investments.”

Anne Pence said, “I had small children and needed to free up my time so I could get them to doctor’s appointments, sports and extracurricular activities. Punching a time card and having a job that needed me to be there the full 40 hours a week was not much of an option. I was a full time bookkeeper so it made sense to do property management and the steady income it brought.”

Jamie Williams replied, “I had managed my own rentals. When I decided to change careers, it just so happened that the real estate office I liked needed someone to take over their small management portfolio. It sounded great, so I became a property manager. I heard about the NARPM® organization and wanted to meet more people in the same field. Our monthly get together provides an opportunity to listen to others and work towards a better industry.”

Bekah Hermansen reflected, “I was hired by Willow Properties as a receptionist. After working for the company for a little while, I was given the opportunity to become licensed and start managing properties. Although becoming a property manager was not my original intention, the more I learned, the more interested I became.”

For myself, I started in property management by purchasing a few properties of my own. My wife, Dorothy Zarelli, and I began managing for others when we could not find managers for those homes. The agents who had sold them to us thought property management was nothing but a part-time job. Their part-time job translated into part-time inefficient property management. We found ourselves looking for programs, forms and methods to do a better job. That led us to looking for organizations that might be able to help. That was when we found NARPM®. We were excited to finally begin meeting new people with the same interests, needs and educational requirements. We constantly find that the meetings provide us with the opportunity for learning more, hearing about changes in our industry, and having colleagues with whom to share ideas. 🏡



Through the Eyes of a First Timer An Unforgettable Event

Darity Wesley is a national expert on Internet law, social networking, and privacy and information security. She is the founder of Privacy Solutions, Inc (www.PrivacyGurus.com) and senior attorney at the Lotus Law Center (www.LotusLaw-Center.com). A veteran of the real estate information industry, Darity helps businesses manage the risks associated with protecting themselves and the valuable data they have gathered. She is a sought after speaker on social media and privacy.

As a first time attendee to the NARPM® Annual Convention and Trade Show, I must say I was astounded with the content, the happenings, the friendship, the feeling of such a shared camaraderie, and such a good turn out in these economic times.

As a new Affiliate member and non-property manager, I wanted to meet as many folks as I could along my way at the conference. The session where I was presenting *The Laws of the Cyberjungle*, was not until Thursday but I flew in early to meet and join up with everyone.

My first session was *The Michelli Experience*, an interesting program on leadership. I had many take-aways from this experience, but what was most memorable to me was the closing where we were talking about our legacy and he said everyone should think about this for themselves. It might seem audacious to think about leaving a legacy, but he said that is an important part of leadership. Being who you are, what you do and how you want to impact others are key elements to consider in creating your legacy. This was really important to me, as I had been thinking along these same lines. Coming to the place of another shift in my life, this was very appropriate. I found myself contemplating both a personal legacy and a business legacy and found that what I envisioned for myself

was to be or to have been an inspiration to others on a personal level and helping to ground what I call A New Kind of Law™ (being what I term a renaissance lawyer)—a more transformative, collaborative approach to the law and its impact on you and your business. The culture of service was Joe Michelli's message and I think it was a great experience for all.

I also attended the First Timer's Reception and it was great to meet NARPM® leaders. I attended several of the sessions and was especially anxious to hear discussions on social media for property managers and its impact. The last 15 minutes or so of my talk on Thursday dealt with both the privacy and legal aspects of social media, which are things most people do not think about when discussing social media. I am looking forward to opportunities to offer this information at regional conferences. As with any good convention, several contacts were made and I am very excited to share some of the most important "must-do's" for property managers at the local level.

I must admit that my favorite session of all was with Bill Stainton. I have not stopped talking about that session with business associates everywhere and how I had prejudged him, thinking before hand, "How can someone use The Beatles as a basis for a speech?" Well, I was blown away. He was funny. He was historical. And, he was relevant. I learned so much about The Beatles I never knew. The underlying message of the *Five Best Decisions* was just phenomenal. Oh, and the lip-syncing Beatles singers at the end were the icing on the cake! NARPM® Convention Committee: you went over the top with this gentleman! Bill was extraordinary!

The NARPM® Convention Committee did a wonderful job. As a person who attends many conferences, I can only say that I was totally impressed with the present leadership, the incoming leadership, and the members and vendors. What a great show, folks! Thanks so much for a job well done and for a great experience! 🍷

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

In accordance with NARPM® guidelines for approval of the Certified Residential Management Company (CRMC®) designation, notice is hereby posted that Raymond Scarabosio, MPM® RMP®, with Jackson Group Property Management of San Francisco, CA, and Andrew Propst, MPM® RMP®, with Park Place Property Management of Meridian, ID, have applied for the CRMC® designation.

If anyone knows of any reason why these companies should not be eligible, please contact NARPM® National by phone at 800-782-3452 or by e-mail at info@narpm.org. Objections must be received by December 31, 2010.

Past Presidents' Charity Golf Tournament



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Paul Angell is a veteran web developer with 15 years experience ranging from freelance work to a ten year stint at Infor Global Solutions, where he served as the Director of Web Development for the Hosted Solutions division. He joined PropertyBoss in May of 2010 as the company's Web Architect and manager of the Web Solutions group. For more information about Paul or PropertyBoss Solutions, visit propertyboss.com or call 864.297.7661 x28.

Keyword Spiders & Crawlers

Your company has a website. Great, you need one. Unfortunately, having a website is not enough. You also need to drive traffic to it and the line from *Field of Dreams* is most certainly not true in the online world of 2010. If you build it, they will not come—unless they know about it.

While there are many ways to attract visitors to a website, ranging from e-mail marketing to viral YouTube videos and Super Bowl ads, there is one method that offers a steady stream of traffic. Getting your website URL ranked “above the fold” (high enough that the user does not have to scroll to see it) on the front page of the major search engines (Bing and Google) for your relevant keywords is the single most cost-effective way to attract website visitors. Converting those visitors into qualified leads, and ultimately customers, will be the subject of future articles.

Search engine optimization, or SEO for short, is the practice of optimizing your website, its code, content, and the links to it from other websites, for the benefit of the software, called “spiders,” that search engines use to assess your site’s relevance to a certain keyword or phrase.

Despite what you might conclude if you have ever tried to make sense of the SEO landscape (by which I mean what it is, how it works, what software and tools are available, what companies offer SEO services and, of those, which are legit and which are scams), the fundamentals of SEO are fairly basic. Simple enough that before you pursue any form of paid traffic generation, be sure you have addressed them. You may be surprised by your results.

Consider these areas first in your pursuit of that immensely valuable, if sometimes elusive, front page ranking for your most important keywords:

- Choosing the Right Keywords
- Setting Title and Meta Tags
- Producing Relevant Content
- Acquiring Backlinks

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KEYWORDS

How do you know if you are targeting the right keywords? In the property management business, the keywords “property management” are obvious—to you and everyone else in the property management industry. Therein lies the problem. The more popular or valuable a keyword, the harder it will be to achieve favorable rankings. That does not mean you should not be focusing on “property management,” but it does mean you need to go beyond that phrase. There are two ways to tackle this problem of “crowded” keywords and cut through the noise: geographic keywords and what are called “long tail” keywords. Geographic keywords are just that—keywords that relate to geography. If your company offers property management services in Boston, including “Greenville” in the list of keywords you are targeting will effectively reduce the number of websites that you are competing against from all of those that relate to “property management” to just those that relate to “property management” and “greenville.” The latter is a *much* smaller group and, as a result, you will have a better chance of climbing to the top of the search rankings for this particular search.

Long tail keywords are those that, in and of themselves, will not drive large numbers of traffic to your site because they are searched less frequently. The key here is that when you rank highly for enough of them, the one or two visits a month you get from each start to add up. Let’s take that example of a property management company in Boston again. Some good long tail keyword phrases in this case might be “upstate property management,” “down-town greenville property management,” “greenville rental income management services,” etc. Again, the idea is that while you might only get a few visits each month from someone searching for these less obvious keyword phrases, but get enough of them and sooner or later you are talking about meaningful numbers.

TITLE AND META TAGS

Behind your webpages are instructions called HTML tags that control the display of your pages. The initial

page codes convey information to web browsers and search engine spiders. The Meta tag content is not seen by your site's visitors, but the Title tag is. The contents of the Title tag are typically rendered in the browser's title bar and used as the display text when you create a bookmark for a page.

Title Tag

The Title tag is crucial as it is used by search engines, along with other criteria, in determining how to rank your site and is very often used when displaying your site in search results. Be sure to include your most important keyword(s) in your site's Title tag and be aware that search engines limit the number of characters they will make use of. Google and Ask.com use the first 69 characters of your Title tag (including spaces), Bing uses 65 and Yahoo uses 72.

Keywords Meta Tag

This tag allows you to explicitly list the keywords that relate to your site. Sounds great, right? Well, the reality is that most search engine spiders completely ignore this tag because, traditionally, it has been abused to "game the system." In the early days of SEO, webmasters would often list popular keywords that had no actual relation to the content on their website in the hopes of being ranked highly for those keywords. Having said all that, this tag is useful to some search engines, particularly if you are precise about only listing keywords that also appear in your site's content.

Description Meta Tag

This meta tag is fairly important. Most search engines will use it to learn about your site's content and will factor it in when determining your rankings. Many also use it, along with the Title tag, when they display your site in their search results. Ideally, your Description tag should be direct and concise. Use those keywords again and keep the length to 25 to 30 words, or, more specifically, around 150 characters at most.

RELEVANT CONTENT

At the end of the day, your site's content will have the greatest impact on your search engine rankings. A website rich in topical content will be viewed by search engines as highly relevant with regard to that topic. In producing content for your website, there are a few things to pay particular attention to:

Page Titles

Search engines place a high degree of importance on the placement of keywords in page titles. Using our previous example, a page titled "Offering Property Management Services in the Greenville Area" will serve you better than one simply titled "Services."

Content Headings

Properly designed webpages use HTML tags to impart meaning to content headers. The H1 tag implies greater importance and hierarchical prominence over an H2 tag and so on. Search engines treat keywords wrapped in HTML header tags as a strong indicator of that page's content, in addition to the frequency of keywords in the page's actual content.

Keyword Density

This is the ratio of keywords on a page to the total number of words. Too low a ratio and the search engines will not regard that page as being a good source of material on your target keywords. Too many and they will penalize you for blatantly "stuffing" your page with keywords. All search engines have a different "sweet spot" in terms of keyword density, but a five percent ratio is a good target.

Other Considerations

Beside keyword density, the frequency, proximity and prominence of keywords also matter. Frequency is a measure of how many times the keyword appears in a page, the most frequently occurring word having the highest frequency. Proximity refers to how close together keywords appear, and prominence refers to how close to the top of the page a keyword appears. Too much emphasis on frequency, proximity and prominence makes it difficult to write clear, concise content that human visitors will appreciate. While it is useful to understand these factors, it is best not to dwell too much on them as the marginal benefit of high frequency, prominence and proximity is far outweighed by the more important goal of writing good content that people want to read. Very often, the juice ain't worth the squeeze.

BACKLINKS

When most people think about optimizing their website for search engine rankings, they think about their website. Ironically, it is what other websites do, or do not, that can make the difference between a top ten ranking and Internet obscurity.

One of the biggest factors that determine your search engine ranking is how many other websites link to yours, what anchor text they are using in those links (ideally your keywords), and their site's ranking on the keywords you are targeting. Links to your site from other sites are called backlinks and you want them—lots of them. There is no silver bullet when it comes to getting other sites to link to yours, but creating quality content that people want to link to is one effective approach, albeit one that takes time and effort. Put in the time and effort and before long you will end up with more backlinks over time. 🏠

In the property management business, the keywords "property management" are obvious—to you and everyone else in the property management industry.



Michele Brassard, RMP®, has worked as a licensed REALTOR® in the property management field since 1986, managing single-family homes, multi-family homes and military housing in Florida and California. Michele holds the Residential Management Professional (RMP®) designation and has served as the Communications Committee Chair for both the national association and the Orlando Chapter, and will serve as president-elect with the Florida State Chapter in 2011. Michele is married to her best friend, Tom Brassard, and enjoys gardening, reading, traveling and interior decor.

The Journey of a Volunteer Find Yourself in Service

In 2008, I was approached by our 2011 President-elect, Jayci Grana, MPM® RMP®, who was the National Communications Committee Chair at the time, to serve with her as Chair of the *Residential Resource* Sub-committee. I accepted, life was good, and I had a production schedule to follow supplied by Kristi Dunlap, our graphic designer at NARPM® National. I made up a schedule on my Outlook calendar and contacted the article contributors to remind them about their articles each month. Piece of cake, I said. Not a problem and all went well.

In 2009, Jayci was asked to serve on the National Board. I was then asked to step up to the National Chair position and oversee the Communications Committee and all of the various sub-committees. No problem I said, it will hopefully be an easy transition, and I added more events and reminders to my Outlook calendar. I went about asking others to serve as chairs and vice-chairs and they agreed. The subcommittees flourished and by the time we had the National Convention in Orlando, Florida (my home turf), we had accomplished quite a bit from the Action List we were given by the National Board. One item we spearheaded was to go green and, instead of publishing an outdated membership directory once a year, we saved many trees and lots of money by making this available online.

In 2010, our committee was approved by the National Board to advertise in the *Journal of Property Management* (JPM) published by IREM®, and to move forward with a redesign of the NARPM® website. This was new ground and very exciting for all of us involved in these projects. We also worked closely with Gail Phillips, CAE, and Kristi Dunlap at NARPM® National to wisely budget our resources. We are grateful for the positive responses we have received, and I know the committee looks forward to breaking more new ground in the future.

And now, as the end of my time approaches as your National Communications Chair, I would like to thank all of the committee members, all the staff at

NARPM® National, and all the officers and directors on the National Board for allowing me to serve you these past three years.

I learned a lot about NARPM® and myself. I learned about the tireless efforts put forth by the members, the committees and the staff across our great organization and what can be done when we *Dare to Soar*.

One of the best examples was the convention this year, which we were privileged to attend in beautiful Seattle, Washington. The weather was mild, the hotel was right in the heart of the city, and the restaurants and shopping were steps away from the hotel. With our annual event, the Convention Committee has a huge task to put together the agenda for over 400 people to attend workshops and general sessions, coordinate with staff for speakers and events, and to bring you the best education possible for professional property managers and business owners. The Trade Show was well attended and the after parties were a fun place to meet with members and affiliates. This was all made possible by volunteers just like you, with a desire to make the experience as enjoyable and informative as possible.

In 2011, I look forward to continuing to serve the NARPM® Florida State Chapter with Nancy Jackson, RMP®, as President and myself as President-elect. It will be an exciting year to be involved in the formation of the chapter and to assist with growing the chapter one new member at a time.

That is really why we do what we do—to help others be as successful as they can be, while we learn about ourselves right along with them. It may sound simplistic, but it is very true. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

In my case, I have been privileged to work with the best people and leadership, and to have become friends with people that I will cherish each day as I continue to pay it forward to the next generation of property managers. 🏡

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LEGISLATIVE Scoop

KEEPING OUR MEMBERS CURRENT ON THE NEWEST INDUSTRY LAWS AND POLICIES NATIONWIDE.



John Parker, MPM® RMP®, holds a BA degree from Alaska Pacific University. Prior to becoming a property manager, John was a teacher, a clothing store manager, and real estate sales associate. He has been involved in the real estate industry since 1973, when he bought his first fixer-upper. John is currently serving as Chair of the NARPM® National Governmental Affairs Committee. When he is not working, he likes to read, golf, hike, woodwork, and travel.

Jump In and Get Involved!

As chair of the Government Affairs Committee over the last few years, I have had a great experience working to improve and expand our G/A activities. We have worked hard to strengthen our legislative efforts and protect the property management industry. We have also made an effort to improve the information available for our members and increase the opportunities for members to provide us feedback and updates. As my term comes to an end, I wanted to share a few comments with you about the G/A Committee and why it is important for you to get involved in the legislative process.

Hopefully, you have seen our G/A communications. The results are the effort of numerous committed hardworking NARPM® members. Our committee has grown from just a couple of members to over thirty this last year. We hope to eventually have a level of volunteers to coordinate between the National Committee—who will act as liaisons between the RVPs—and region members. The next level would be members at each state level. Within each state would be members of the local chapters who would provide information and updates about local, state and national legislation.

This year, we had requests for input from staff members of the US Congress and gave our opinions to national committees looking at reforming Fannie and Freddie. We have had successes on the local and state level. We accomplished much, but we cannot relax our vigilance. We need members to be involved. We all have value to contribute. Many of our members have experience in legislative affairs and they would, no doubt, share their experience if asked. A fellow member whom I spoke to recently said they had no legislative experience, but experience in negotiations is something we all do on a daily basis. It is no different. I encourage all of you to join the G/A Committee and get involved with your local chapters.

So where to from here? Our website is a good place to start with its pointers under legislative issues and how to engage in grassroots activism. If you are from an area that does not have a Day on the Hill, consider asking to join with other housing organiza-

tions. We have a coalition of landlord groups in Washington State. It has grown over the years to have more than 20 affiliated groups.

How and where does one begin to make a difference? Government belongs to those who show up. A Senator I know said to me, "A farmer does not plant seeds and expect to come back the next day and harvest a crop." We must do more than attend a Day on the Hill event and expect to be the authority known to our Representatives. Attend their events or send them a note during the time when the legislature is not in session. They will remember it. Recognition starts with one issue at a time and gradually you can become known as a person with influence in your arena. The rewards are immense.

Here are some other ideas to think about as you prepare to make a request for support on an issue:

- Be sure that you seek support from all parties, especially those who hold leadership positions.
- Craft your story to be short and to the point. I looked at the time my Senator had for daily review during the session and was amazed that he often gets 800 pages of proposed legislation a day. They are very busy and appreciate brevity.
- Know both sides of the issue and be careful not to appear negative towards the opposition.
- Sometimes it only takes a short e-mail to get your message across. If your note has a quick description with a solution, your chances of being heard are better. In one hearing, a Representative said, "It appears to me that we have several landlord groups in the room today with different solutions. If you cannot agree amongst yourselves, how can we possibly know what is best? When you have a uniform solution, bring it back."

My involvement in the process has been very rewarding. I have met all of my representatives and they have always been willing to listen. It was especially surprising to me on one visit, when I overheard the Senator's staff member say, "Senator, you have several visitors. Mr. Lobbyist and two constituents." The Senator's reply was, "Always the constituents first." Do not be afraid; jump in and get involved! 🏠

2011 Designation Candidates

(since 2010 convention)

RMP® CANDIDACY

Laurel Anderson
Karen Birdy
Jason Bostick
Celine Cantwell
Randy Halsne
Claudia Host
Stephen Lankford
Todd Monohon
Craig Richey
Melissa Riqueres
Sandra Thomas
Alejandro White

MPM® CANDIDACY

Scott Abernathy, RMP®
Riza Bell, RMP®
John Bowen, RMP®
Hoppy Cantwell, RMP®
Amy Karns, RMP®
Marcia Lewis, RMP®
Nick Scarabosio, RMP®
Lynn Sedlack, RMP®
Shana Smith, RMP®

CRMC® CANDIDACY

Jackson Group Prop. Mgmt.
Park Place Property Mgmt.

Thoughts on My First Property Management Agreement

by Tammy Billington, RMP®

'Twas the day before signing and all I could think...
Will it close, will it happen? I need a stiff drink.
So I call up my mentors with questions galore,
Then I call them again and bug them some more.
I've done my due diligence, title search too,
Filings and notaries, so much to do!
There's papers & problems and hoops by the score,
Inspections & permits and who knows what more?
Comps and appraisals, numbers to crunch,
Faxes and e-mails come all in a bunch.
I've talked with the owners, the title folks too.
Applied for the license, done all I can do.
My pulse is a racing, my stomach is queasy,
How come at training it all sounded so easy?
The pressure is grueling, I simply can't bear it,
This real estate business, I think I'll forswear it!
'Tis the day after signing and all through the office
I'm rocking, I'm reeling, and no longer nauseous!
It's over, I did it, it's finished! It's done.
Nervous breakdown averted, the victory won.
The check's in the bank and I'm feeling quite flush.
My very first signing—wow, what a rush!
To all of my mentors, the praise is now due,
They helped me get through it, now on to deal two!

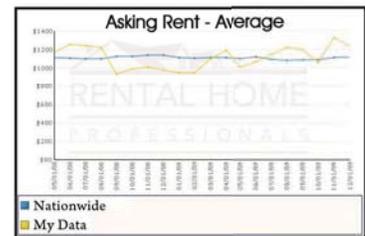


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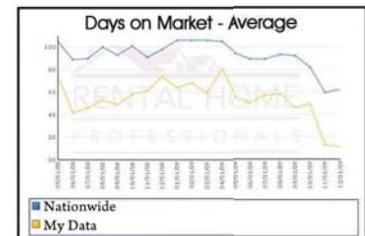
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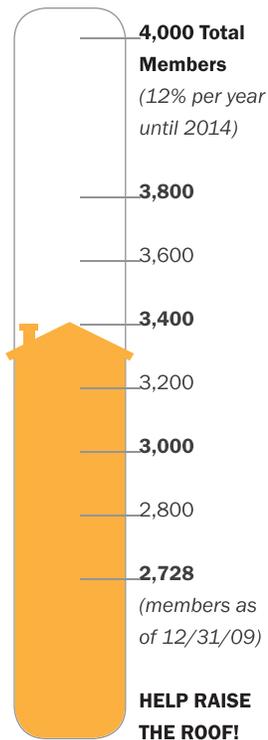
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For more information on our
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search/search-affiliates.html](http://www.narpm.org/search/search-affiliates.html).

AMBASSADOR Program

EARN REWARDS AND ACHIEVE AMBASSADOR STATUS FOR REFERRING NEW NARPM® MEMBERS.

Who better to spread the word of the benefits of NARPM® than its members? To achieve Ambassador status, you must refer five new members in one year. You will then receive an award certificate and a \$200 NARPM® credit that can be used toward your annual dues, upcoming events, education classes, and more! You can earn multiple award certificates in a 12-month period, so be sure you continue referring new members even after you have achieved Ambassador status.

1. Contact NARPM® National for Membership Application brochures. Upon request, National can mail the application directly to the prospective member.
2. The 12-month period to obtain five new members starts the day the first application is processed.
3. When the fifth application is received, an award certificate and a recognition certificate will be issued and dated. A \$200 NARPM® credit will also be issued.

AUGUST 26, 2010 – OCTOBER 29, 2010

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Andrew Pokomy
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Richard Elias
Kathy Hall-Burman
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Vickie Lazio
Jennifer Trecker
Scott Hampton
Lori DeLong
Laura Williams
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Paul Jakeman
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P.J. Chapman, MPM® RMP®
Dave Holt, MPM® RMP®
Jennifer I. Herman
Gaby Gray
Steve Stein
Erika Hashem
Christine Gallagher
Ginger Slattery, RMP®
Louise Rock
Louise Rock
Kristi Villani
Maggie Balagot
Wayne Marinik
Jim Pickett, MPM® RMP®
Jim Pickett, MPM® RMP®
Heidi Webber
Christine Hall
Heidi Webber
Robert Locke, MPM® RMP®
Wayne Marinik
Robert Machado, MPM® RMP®
Andrew Barcis, MPM® RMP®
Mary Margaret Sheffield
Robert Locke, MPM® RMP®
Debra Carson, RMP®
Mary Tungsvik, MPM® RMP®
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Kim Meredith
Andrew Barcis, MPM® RMP®
Christina Hogan, RMP®
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John Bowen

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Tawny Worth
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Greg Doering
Greg Doering
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Brian Birdy, MPM® RMP®
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Scott Abernathy
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W. Derrick Gainey
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Patricia Francesco
Paul Arrington
Darryl Kazen, MPM® RMP®
Donna Beavers
Terri Patterson
Kenneth Ellis
Cyndy Starr
Evey Edwards
Wayne Guthals, RMP®
Keith Becker
Valerie Fleischmann
Thad Gantt
Thomas J. Hubba
Joe Berger

CONGRATULATIONS GIFT CARD WINNERS!

Every month, the Member Services Committee will be drawing one name of a referring NARPM® member for a \$25 Visa gift card. You must have at least one referral each month to be eligible for the drawing, so keep those referrals coming!

September Winner

Mary Sheffield
Austin, TX

October Winner

Roy Gadley
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