

# WHAT'S NEW?

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NEW CONCEPTS

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL  
REAL ESTATE SERVICES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

GENERAL CONTRACTING

RENTAL MANAGEMENT

MORTGAGE SERVICES

CONSULTING

## FEATURED ARTICLE – “It Doesn’t Bother Me...Our Water Is Free!?”

By Property Manager Nick Reider, New Concepts Management

In a large number of condominiums water is a shared community expense that is paid for by the association. Due to the fact that homeowners do not individually see a bill, it can unfortunately lead them to assume that water is free. It is important that every Board and property manager acknowledges this misconception and takes the time to educate the member’s of their association that water is, in fact, a major expense.



Nick Reider, New Concepts Management

Most people are currently well aware that gasoline costs are soaring. However, few recognize that water costs are also experiencing a similar escalating trend. For instance, an article in the New York Times “Your Home; Reducing Water Usage,” reported a condominium association that had their water bill go up by \$36,000 in an eight year period, without any substantial increase in consumption. This information and many other similar statistics need to be taken into consideration as associations look to the future and put together their budgeting plans.

Associations that want to conserve water as a way to cut back on their budget, and in the process help the environment, should look to the following 4 R’s - Report, Reduce, Replace, & Repair – of water management as a way to achieve these goals.

### REPORT

Whenever possible, association leadership should report water usage related costs to the membership. This can be done in the association newsletter or through various other forms of communication. For example, the Heritage Ponds Association in Hugo, MN decided to remind homeowners the amount that is yearly budgeted for water (and sewer) by simply making the following statement in their spring 2008 newsletter: “Water is not free! ...as a matter of fact the 2008 budget has allotted for ‘x’ amount in water and sewer costs for the Association. Please check for drips leaks, running toilets, etc.” By including this statement the Board is actively increasing awareness and as a result lowering the water related expenses for the Association.

### REDUCE

There are many simple things we can all do to reduce water usage. For instance, an association may choose to kindly ask each of its members to take a “family water audit” like the one found at [www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com). This website also has other great resources like a list of “100 ways to

save” water. An example of one such way to conserve water usage would be not using the toilet as a wastebasket. Numerous sources say toilets result in the largest single use of water in residences. As a result, it is important that we attempt to reduce the number of flushes whenever possible.

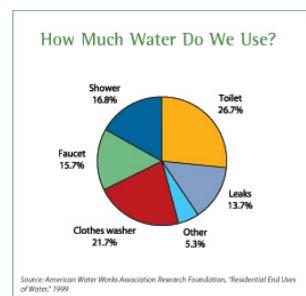
### REPLACE

If possible it greatly benefits an association to encourage its members to replace less water efficient fixtures or appliances with a newer one that is more water efficient. This process has resulted in success stories such as one described in the Carrboro Citizen. In the article “Recently: Condo overhaul conserves water, cash,” it details an association that switched out old 4.2 gallon toilets with the new 1.6 gallon toilets. In addition, they also had some owners upgrade faucets or showerheads and replace old 45 gallon washing machines with new 14 gallon front-loaders. The results of these replacements speak for themselves; as in the first month alone, water use within the association dropped by 140,000 gallons!

### REPAIR

In many association’s replacements like the one described above, may not be a realistic option. As a result, repair of the current fixtures and appliances are the next best option to pursue. Probably the greatest cost efficient way to make changes is by eliminating leaks. In a recent Wall Street Journal article “Cut Your Bill: Fix the Toilet,” it says that the result of a toilet leak can lead to the loss of about 300 gallons of water a day which translates to a cost of about \$250 per year. As a result of this information, some associations are opting to conduct annual leak inspections of all the units within the association. One such association is the River’s Edge Condominium Association in Minneapolis, MN that annually hires plumbers from Start to Finish Contracting to conduct a leak inspection and immediately make needed repairs. These inspections have saved the association hundreds to thousands of dollars in costs from wasted water and/or repairs that result from leak related damages.

Should you have any questions in regards to the ideas or services discussed in this article please contact your property manager at New Concepts.



<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/pubs/indoor.htm>

**QUICK TIP:** Toilet leaks can be detected simply by adding about 10 drops of food coloring to the water tank and waiting about 30 minutes to see if any of the dye is discovered in the toilet bowl.

**QUICK TIP:** Simple tasks such as replacing the rubber toilet flapper with a vinyl flapper can save hundreds of dollars. ■

What's in the News?

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## “Where You Live” with Gene & Toni.



A live radio call in program geared towards anyone who owns or rents - a home, condominium, townhouse, or apartment. Listen or participate every Saturday morning from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on AM1570 KYCR – “The New Talk of the Twin Cities”. ■



## Featured Employee

**Name:** Toni Crockett | **Title:** Director of Rental Management Services  
**Designations:** ACCAM – Advanced Certified Community Association Manager  
CRM – Certified Residential Manager  
Board Member for the Minnesota Multi Housing Association, 2005-2007

### Years with New Concepts:

Eight years with New Concepts, twenty-three in the property management industry.

**Luckiest day of her life:** I've had a lot of lucky days, the luckiest? It's still to come.

**Number of children:** 2

**Little known fact about Toni:** In 1969 Toni was asked to perform as a back-up singer for a then well-known Twin Cities Rock Band called C.A. Quintet. The album called "Trip Through Hell" is today an international collector's item.

### What Toni likes best about her job:

The variety of tasks and responsibilities that come in on any given day.

Even with her previous experience in property management, Toni began her New Concepts career as an assistant property manager. Toni immediately began garnering the respect of both colleagues and clients. Especially appreciated was her no nonsense approach in getting things accomplished tempered with a knack for being able to help defuse the most adversarial of opponents. Before long Toni moved on to take over a portfolio of Associations as clients.

Four or five years ago Toni began to notice a distinct pattern developing in her portfolio. It was the realization that the climbing value of real estate in the Twin Cities was creating a very favorable market for first time investors who thought they could not go wrong in buying property and then turn around and sell it again quickly for a profit. Property was changing hands much quicker than it ever had before. However, like the saying goes "all good things must come to an end" and that's what happened to this boom market.

### Accidental Landlords

Many would-be investors who never intended to keep their investment property long term were forced by the changed real estate market to do so. Other property owners decided to hold on to their real estate due to life changes like marriage, divorce, job relocation, and additions to

the family. These and other factors led to an increase in what Toni calls "Accidental Landlords."

Toni's experience as an association manager led her to conclude, "The problem with many accidental landlords is they did not plan to equip or prepare themselves for what is needed to manage a property, and they got themselves into trouble." Increasingly, association boards began voicing their concerns as they tried to correct these issues. Many associations seriously considered amending the documents to limit or eliminate rental units.

The change in the market was creating a need that had to be met. With that in mind, Toni asked the owners of New Concepts if she could begin a new division, New Concepts Rental Services. The goal was to give the unprepared landlord/ investor a resource to use if they found themselves unsure or without time in handling the day to day issues that come with owning rental property. Toni went on to say "One of the things that I appreciate most about working with an organization like New Concepts, we are all encouraged to continually look for the needs of our customers, and then are empowered to do something to address those needs."



Cathy (left) working with Toni Crockett (right)

That was the case of homeowners like Jim & Shelly Robinson, at The Trails Homeowner's Association in Eden Prairie. "When we found ourselves having to relocate for Jim's work, we initially didn't know what to do." stated Shelly. "We found out about New Concept's rental division just in the nick of time. They made the whole process worry free. We have been out in California for two years and are now returning sometime this summer. It's comforting to know our house is waiting for us when we return. Those two years have not only been hassle free for us but also for our association because New Concepts made sure that our renters were aware of their responsibilities in the community."

Those type of comments are being heard again and again. What started out as a division consisting of Toni alone has now grown to employ six leasing agents serving New Concept's clients as well as referrals that have come from other real estate agents and relocation companies in the Twin Cities.

Toni's passion does not end here; she also can be found working with Minnesota Multi Housing on their CIC Education and Industry Standards Task Force Committees. And if that's not enough you can also find her occasionally speaking at local high schools. The name of the course? "What it Means to be a Good Renter." ■

## Upcoming Webinars Offered On Line at New Concepts U!

What others have recently said about our on line webinars:

"I found your webinar to be extremely helpful. I am a new Board Member, but I know in some way no matter how experienced a board member you are, these sessions will help." – Kris Koepl, Williams Place Condominiums, Eden Prairie.

"This was terrific! Very good and valuable information. Being able to log on from home was so easy. Thanks." - Lynette Carlson, Sunrise Court III, Brooklyn Park.

From the comfort of your home, join us. Classes typically run no more than 30-60 minutes. Even though you can register anytime right up to the start of any seminar, registration is limited, so sign up early by going to [www.webinar.com](http://www.webinar.com) and click on the "join webinar" button.

You will be guided through the registration process. To register you will need to supply your e-mail address and identify the seminar you wish to join by typing in the 9 digit I.D. # assigned to each class below. Please join us in any of these great offerings:

**"How Much is Enough?" – Wed. Oct. 8, 2008 from 7-8 p.m. I.D. # 639601904.** We all understand that we need to put away for a future retirement account. But how much does an Association need for a healthy account? Learn how to determine "how much is enough?" What are the important components to look for in a great capital replacement plan? – Instructor Paul Roth, Vice President of New Concepts Management.

**"When Bad Rentals Happen to Good HOA's?" – Tues. Oct. 28, 2008 from 7-8**

**p.m. I.D. # 138962994.** Why is it that rental property seems to get a bad reputation? Weren't most good homeowners also formerly renters? Find out how the answer may not be in "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." Perhaps the answer is in developing a wise and thorough policy in managing everyone's expectations. – Instructor Toni Crockett, Director of Rental Services, New Concepts Management.

**"What Kind of Community Do We Want?" – Wed. Nov. 12, 2008 from 7-8 p.m. I.D. # 897620660.** Are rules and regulations really just written by a few people who want to make your life miserable? Or is it possible to develop policies that set the tone for your community and give it that reputation as a great place to live? – Instructor Gene Sullivan, President of New Concepts Management. ■

## Home Savings Store

– Products and services available at special pricing just for our homeowners and subscribers. To take part in any of these specific offerings, please contact our Home Savings Store Coordinator **Courtney Graf at 952-224-2663** and ask her for full details.

## Featured Service - Home Maintenance – Start To Finish Contracting.

Here is how one homeowner responded when asked about their experiences with Start To Finish:

**"Matt from Start To Finish has been out a good number of times in order to take care of one issue or another. It's always very comforting to know that there is someone you can depend on."** - Jim Curry, Whitehall Condominium Homeowner, Edina, MN.

## Mortgage Network

Allow us to introduce you to one of our preferred lenders. They won't just put you in something to make a sale; they will counsel you to see what makes sense.

## Preferred Realtor Network

Our preferred realtor network will help you get top dollar to sell your home. Discounts are available on the cost of a re-sale disclosure by going through this program.

## Home Valu Interiors

Through New Concepts, Home Valu is offering homeowners the same discount contractors enjoy on carpeting, flooring, paint, kitchen and bath cabinets - and much, much more!