

Community Spotlight
The Penthouses at Thea's Landing
Tacoma, Washington

The Penthouses at Thea's Landing Condominium Association are situated overlooking Tacoma's Foss Waterway. Built in 2002, forty-six urban condominium residents have spectacular views of the Foss Waterway and their unique neighbor, The Museum of Glass. Other neighbors include the Tacoma campus of the University of Washington and the Washington State History Museum. The Museum of Glass, famous for its Bridge of Glass that connects the Tacoma waterfront with downtown, has hundreds of colorful blown glass pieces from Northwest glass artist Dale Chihuly. Thanks to the area's recent extensive renovation, The Penthouses at Thea's Landing are located in one of the hottest areas of Tacoma.

Named in honor of the wife of the founder of Foss Maritime Company, The Penthouses at Thea's Landing Condominiums are unique because they occupy the top floor of a large building that houses 189 apartment units on lower floors and eight commercial units at ground level. Unlike other associations, this Association is part of a master association and master board that controls approximately 80% of the building. The master board is made up of two of the original developers plus Joe Guizzetti, an established local business owner, one of the Penthouse homeowners, and the board president of The Penthouses at Thea's Landing Condominium. Below the master board is the Penthouse's at Thea's Landing Condominium Association with fellow board members, John Doucett, Vice President; Dave Wiita, Secretary; Tim MacLean, Treasurer; and Tony Pantley, Member.

While talking to Joe for this article, I sensed his passion for both his role as board president and about living at Thea's Landing. Joe and his family have resided in condominiums for over 20 years. During that time he has become very familiar with the dynamics of working with other board members, homeowners and professional association managers. A few of the board's biggest challenges are the number of first time homeowners (many of which are first time condominium dwellers); establishing equitable house rules, as well as enforcing them; and determining the costs associated with running their building which form the budget.

Creating a first time budget can be challenging for associations. Developers often artificially deflate the monthly association dues to attract buyers and Thea's Landing was no exception. Initial dues were just under \$200 per month when the residents moved in and now they are hovering close to \$400 per month. However, Joe, and his board keep costs in check by closely monitoring their budget with the assistance of Kim Gratzner, their association manager.

Kim Gratzner, of EMB Management, has been an association manager for over 17 years. In addition to managing Thea's Landing and her other EMB properties, Kim is a resident manager at her association in Tacoma. Joe and the entire Thea's Landing board liked everything that Kim brought with her when she signed on as their association manager.

As Joe put it, “she’s very well qualified, she’s working for a quality firm, she lives in Tacoma, she’s responsive to our needs, and she knows this area well and knows the right people to deal with here in the area.”

Kim is a supporter of the Washington Chapter of Community Associations Institute. She’s attended numerous CA Day events, several national conferences, numerous monthly CAI Managers only Meetings, and many CAI educational courses. One of Kim’s goals is to obtain her Professionally Certified Association Manager or ‘PCAM’, a highly respected and challenging designation to obtain for association managers.

Tall Ships, a special event that took place last summer at the Marina in front of Thea’s Landing, will be returning in 2008. Joe Guizzetti is a member of the Tall Ships committee responsible for bringing these magnificent ships back to Tacoma and the Thea Foss waterway.

The Penthouses at Thea’s Landing board members’ Joe Guizzetti, President; John Doucett, Vice President; Dave Wiita, Secretary; Tim MacLean, Treasurer; and Tony Pantley, can be contacted through Ms. Kim Gratzner of EMB Management at 253-582-5729.

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