

Hello my Friends and Business Associates:

January 18, 2006

To begin the New Year, I would like to present a short introduction and statement of purpose and goals for the year. Also included in this newsletter will be many tips and current information pertinent to the Rental Owner's Business in Lewis County.

My name is Bob Kling and I have been a Real Estate Broker and/or Agent in Lewis County for over thirty consecutive years. My wife and I operate Kling and Associates Real Estate Company in Chehalis. We are Landlords and I am also the Vice President of the Lewis County Rental Owner's Association (LCROA) and my wife is the Secretary.

The purpose of this letter is threefold:

1. To work together effectively to banish the criminal element & problem tenants from our rentals and, ultimately, Lewis County.
2. To help Landlords unify and solidify their focus on the issues facing Landlords today.
3. To get to know one another, network, and achieve faster, more effective communication among the Landlords, thus creating a rock solid organization.

The Landlord has many opportunities during the application process to discourage the criminal element from becoming a Tenant---translate---"Problem Tenant". As Landlord's, we are in the unique position to exercise tremendous power over the criminal element by using all of the tools available, such as Criminal, Civil, and Credit checks. Landlords may then weed out many, if not all, of the Bad Tenants. Fewer "Bad Tenants" will eventually lead to less crime, which in turn tremendously improves the Landlord's public image within the community.

Please note that on January 21, 2006 there will be a **Lewis County Meth Summit** from 8:30am-4:00pm at the Bethel Church in Chehalis. The Keynote Speaker will be **Washington State's Attorney General, Rob McKenna**. The Meth problem will be addressed on four levels---one of which is Rental Housing. The conclusions reached at this meeting will affect Landlords. This meeting provides a great opportunity for Landlords to participate and be a part of the solution to the methamphetamine epidemic in Lewis County. Be a part of the Solution! Deputy Nelson of the Lewis County Sheriff's Office (phone number 748-9286) is the contact for this meeting---or just join us at the meeting.

I would like to take a moment to commend the new owners of the St Helens in Chehalis. An article appeared in the Opinion page of the Chronicle and I quote "The St Helens has become part of the solution to downtown misconduct rather than the problem. Five "problem tenants" were evicted from the building. Strict rules for the tenants include no drugs, no violence, and no smoking in the newly renovated apartments. Apartment applicants must pass an extensive credit and background checks". What an inspiration and an excellent example!!!

One of the many tools available to the Landlord for a Criminal Search is the Washington State Patrol (WSP). For a mere \$10 you may email, fax, or go online to request a criminal check of an applicant for the State of Washington. I encourage all Landlords to include as part of their main criteria that you will not rent to individuals with criminal records. By eliminating the criminal element from our rentals the safety and quality of life in the community increases. Bottom line the net worth of our investment also increases.

Members of the LCROA receive a CD Rom with 89 rental forms in Word format, plus many pages of tips and suggestions concerning the initial screening of potential Tenants. Examples of Criteria lists for effectively and legally screening out Bad and/or Criminal Tenants are also a part of this important information.

Also, as a member of the LCROA, you are automatically an associate member of RHAPS, which provides a Civil/Credit/Criminal Report for approximately \$20+. Another benefit to membership with the LCROA is the list of Unlawful Detainers filed in 2001-2004 (this is not a comprehensive list but does provide another tool to help in the application process).

The Crime Free Apartment Certificate program is an idea whose time has come. As part of an ongoing effort to improve our community, I plan to take a class on this program in February in Tacoma. Many of you may think you are too busy to take the time to drive to Tacoma or Puyallup but the end result is the ability to increase rents because you now have a desirable rental that is free of crime and criminals.

By raising the rents (now that your units are “Crime Free”), you have just increased the value of your property by \$3,500 for each \$35 per month increase. Just think---an increase of \$35/unit in rent and a potential savings of +/- \$5,000 a year in probable damage to your rental property by being a “Crime Free” rental. All in all you will have better and happier tenants. So, take advantage of a perfectly honest and legal tool to get rid of the Criminal/Meth/con artist Tenant and certify your Apartment Complex as “Crime Free”. Raise your rents and increase the value of your property considerably!

One of the most egregious ordinances facing Landlords in Centralia is the Utility Department’s Ordinance concerning unpaid utility bills by Tenants. The city’s ordinance goes well beyond the Landlord Lien Act and violates the letter of the law ([revisit RCW 35.21 concerning city owned utilities](#)). The City of Centralia’s Ordinance is one that we, as Landlords, must deal with and induce change. Many Landlords have been stuck with paying utility bills for their Tenants. What is even worse, the Landlord does not have legal standing to pursue the Tenant in court for the Tenant’s utility bill, which the Landlord paid. This is truly criminal.

Landlords, the time is ripe to take full advantage of the Real Estate Boom. With so many new businesses and people moving into the area, we can probably expect our units to remain full, especially if they are Crime Free. For help in setting your new rents at current market level so that they are not “above market,” please give me a call. I am finding that over all, the rents in many complexes are \$35-\$85 under market. I have more experience with the **MULTI FAMILY** rental market than any other organization in the area.

Unification and focus will go far towards creating a more profitable business and a safer environment for ourselves and the community as a whole. As many of you are aware, we are faced with some ordinances and regulations which are unfair to us as property owners. Ultimately, these ordinances and regulations are highly detrimental to our industry as a whole. Members of the LCROA have the opportunity to network with Landlords in the area and benefit from the years of experience other Landlords have been exposed to as Rental property owners.

[I suggest that all Landlords become proficient with their computer and the Internet.](#) **Email** is truly one of the most effective means for highly concerned individuals to communicate quickly and efficiently on emergency issues with the 400+ property owners that we send this newsletter to on a monthly basis. Important dates and issues are thus quickly disseminated among the organization as a whole. Important events that involved Landlords should attend are dates such as the [January 23rd dinner meeting with Senator Swecker, Representative DeBolt & Representative Alexander.](#) This dinner meeting is exclusively for the LCROA and provides an opportunity for Landlords to present issues of importance facing Landlords in Lewis County. Included within this newsletter is a brief statement of some issues that will be presented at this meeting that we feel are important to address in the coming months. To RSVP for this no host event in Olympia at the Mercato at 5:30pm, please phone or email Bob Kling @ [360-748-4188](tel:360-748-4188)---bobkling@localaccess.com or Roxanne Byrnes @ [360-736-0083](tel:360-736-0083)---blondie60083@yahoo.com Also, please email your experience with these different issues so that they may be presented at this meeting.

Kling and Associates Real Estate, Inc. is the company to call to Buy or Sell your Multi-family or Single-family residence. With our 30+ years of experience in the Real Estate Market in Lewis County you will find that we can provide you, as a Seller, with a realistic Comparative Market Analysis. This is important in today’s market. As a Buyer, we can provide you with a thorough analysis of the property you are interested in buying. Either way Kling and Associates will provide the best information concerning your investment.