It’s About Us!
Welcome to the first edition of the quarterly Monarch Monitor; our new internal newsletter aimed at celebrating our company culture and connecting our team across the nation, sharing the wealth of knowledge that makes Monarch succeed. Stay abreast of Monarch news and progress while learning about your fellow team members. It’s about motivation and engagement. It’s about collaborating and constantly improving. It’s about what it means to be a part of Team Monarch!

The Monarch Story
By: Jonathan Bundy

The following is an interview with the owner Bob Nicolls about the establishment of Monarch Investment & Management Group and how we came to be the company we are today.

Jonathan: Why did you call this company “Monarch”?
Bob: As my partners were retiring from active business and I decided to carry on alone, I needed a new name. The first new transaction was the purchase of the ski area, Monarch [Mountain]. Since Monarch implies “King, Power, Preeminence” I figured it was a good goal and position to aspire to.

Jonathan: When and why did Monarch separate from First Pacific Investment?
Bob: In 2002. It was simply to carry on with the essential business plan developed by FPI, but with a more operational focus.

Jonathan: Tell me a little about the multifamily industry in the 90s.
Bob: The 90s began with a recovery phase resulting from the disruption caused by the 1986 Tax Act. The Act disallowed passive losses from commercial real estate and likely cut values some 20% across the board. (Monarch Story continued on pg. 6)

Meet Your Team
Maureen Damon, Regional Manager
By: Katie Erinn Bernstein

Recently I was able to sit down with Maureen Damon, a Regional Manager for the Colorado, Missouri, and Arkansas portfolio. She invited me to her home office at Fox Hill in Golden, Colorado, and albeit her crazy schedule and leaving in the morning for Kansas City, I was able to learn a little bit more about why she started with Monarch and what’s kept her here over a decade later.

I asked Maureen about the beginnings of Monarch and she told me that she actually started as a Leasing (Meet Maureen continued on pg. 2)
Monarch Superstars

Each issue we will recognize Monarch team members who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, demonstrating superior character, commitment, work ethic, and excellence. It’s a celebration of you! To nominate a Monarch Superstar, please email Marketing2@monarchinvestment.com.

🌟 Kris Relyea
City Limits - Minneapolis, MN

“Since the manager had been gone on maternity leave she has been running everything at City Limits. She has taken ownership in the property in the absence of a manager. She was very involved in every aspect of the property. She really stepped up and wanted to learn what she could do to make the property a success. They had been very short staffed and she was always there. Came early...stayed late...worked weekends!! Handled the office by herself for 3 weeks while the leasing agent was gone and she didn't miss a thing. Since being promoted to Manager she has worked very hard to learn all the ins and outs of Monarch and how to run a property. She is a quick learner and has wonderful attention to detail. She is respected by staff and residents and goes above and beyond with everyone. Wonderful attitude and great work ethic!"

- Jill Ziehme, Assistant Regional Manager

🌟 Luis Espinoza
City Limits - Minneapolis, MN

“He has a wonderful attitude. Stays late, comes in early and has went to other properties to help out. He is very friendly and all the residents love him. He is also very good about shopping around for the best price possible to save City Limits money. Gets along great with the manager Kris and works hard with her to watch the budget. His communication between the team is great. He is looked at as a leader to all the staff;"

- Jill Ziehme, Assistant Regional Manager

🌟 All Staff Members
Eastland - Kentwood, MI

“We would like to recognize the staff at Eastland! The fire started above the unit of our maintenance tech Mark Kempen. After the alarm sounded he jumped into action making sure the authorities had been notified, then reaching out to Gary. He grabbed the fire extinguisher from the hall, entered the unit insuring all of the occupants were safe, and attempted to extinguish the flames. Gary Binder our Regional (Superstars continued on pg. 4)

We Love What We Do! Monarch Selected As a Denver Post Top 100 Workplace

Each year, Colorado companies have the opportunity to compete as a Denver Post top workplace. The analysis in choosing top workplaces is based on the results of an employee survey measuring qualities such as company leadership, communication, career opportunities, working environment, managerial skills, pay, and benefits. This year marked the toughest level of competition, for more Colorado companies applied than ever before. We are pleased to announce that based on the measured criteria, not only did Monarch Investment & Management Group make the cut as a top workplace, but we successfully triumphed as a top 100 workplace! Just another reason why it’s great to work at Monarch! The top 100 rankings were published in the Denver Post on Sunday, April 13 and on DenverPost.com.

(Meet Maureen continued from pg. 1) Agent and worked her way up to Regional Manager in a short three-year period. When she started, it wasn’t unusual for her to call our owner Bob if she had questions. Her resiliency made her quickly responsible for posting money, leasing apartments, handling evictions, accounting, and marketing with no budget.

In regard to where the company is going, she said, “It’s exciting to watch. I can’t even imagine where we started and where we are today.” The biggest reason Maureen loves her job is she loves the people she works with. Across from us in the leasing office is Barbara Sanchez, who has known and worked with Maureen since she started. They both agreed the friendships they have made at this job is the number one reason they are still here. They are now lifelong friends.

Aside from work, Maureen loves to ski and travel. Machu Picchu is at the top of the list for her dream destinations.
A Look Inside
Tiffany Woods – Muskegon, MI

By: Chelsea Roberts

Tiffany Woods is a 302-unit community located in Muskegon, Michigan. Monarch purchased the community in March of 2013, and it is currently 94% occupied. The staff at Tiffany Woods has done a great job continually improving their occupancy, even during the brutal winter Michigan experienced this past year. The dedication of the staff is one of the many reasons why this property has been so successful.

Monarch is a thriving company due in part to the amazing and talented people we employ. The staff at Tiffany Woods is a great example of the family we are excited to have on our team!

Steve, Ken, Paul, Jon, Brenda, and Stephanie make up the Maintenance and Housekeeping staff. Steve is the Maintenance Supervisor, with us for 15 months. He has worked at 5 of Monarch's properties in that time and enjoys the variety this creates for his work life.

Ken has been with Monarch for 5 months and enjoys satisfying the residents by getting the job done! His favorite food is pizza and he has 2 cats named Bruce and Brenda, as well as a German Shepard named Samson.

Jon started with Monarch in December, and enjoys working with his team members. In his spare time, he likes to fix up his house, and play with his 4 dogs: JJ, Goofy, Bear, and Bandit.

Paul is also new to Monarch and has been with us for 2 months. His favorite food is Chinese and in his spare time he enjoys repairing small motors.

The property is managed by Teresa Vander Myde, who has been with Monarch for 4 years, and has had the privilege of working at four of Monarch's properties, including Eastland and Chelsea Park. Teresa is from Roosevelt Park, MI which is only one square mile in size! Her favorite thing about working at Monarch is the variety. She enjoys meeting new people and loves that no two days are ever the same.

Jennifer is the full-time Leasing Agent and has been with Monarch for about one year. She enjoys leasing because she likes to meet new people. Her favorite food is pasta and she has a Dachshund named Rosie!

Jennifer is the full-time Leasing Agent and has been with Monarch for about one year. She enjoys leasing because she likes to meet new people. Her favorite food is pasta and she has a Dachshund named Rosie!

Valerie is also a Leasing Agent and splits her time between Tiffany Woods and Timber Ridge. She is originally from Cape Coral, FL and enjoys running in her spare time. A fun fact about Valerie is that she has lived in tents and cabins for the majority of her life!

Jill is the Assistant Manager, and she has been with Monarch for exactly 1 year as of May 13th! She has worked at Shoreline Landing and Tiffany Woods. A fun fact about Jill is that her brother is named Jack!

Steve, Ken, Paul, Jon, Brenda, and Stephanie make up the Maintenance and Housekeeping staff. Steve is the Maintenance Supervisor, with us for 15 months. He has worked at 5 of Monarch's properties in that time and enjoys the variety this creates for his work life.

Jill is the Assistant Manager, and she has been with Monarch for exactly 1 year as of May 13th! She has worked at Shoreline Landing and Tiffany Woods. A fun fact about Jill is that her brother is named Jack!

Valerie is also a Leasing Agent and splits her time between Tiffany Woods and Timber Ridge. She is originally from Cape Coral, FL and enjoys running in her spare time. A fun fact about Valerie is that she has lived in tents and cabins for the majority of her life!

Jill is the Assistant Manager, and she has been with Monarch for exactly 1 year as of May 13th! She has worked at Shoreline Landing and Tiffany Woods. A fun fact about Jill is that her brother is named Jack!
Meet Your Team
Jack Vere Nicoll, Asset Manager
By: Katie Erinn Bernstein

Introducing the first ever Monarch Analyst, Jack Vere Nicoll. I caught up with him at Monarch’s home office in Franktown, Colorado to find out a little more about his background and history with Monarch. Jack is from Boulder, Colorado and went to college at Denver University to study Real Estate Finance. He jokes he is probably one of the few people who went into the field of his chosen degree. When Jack started with Monarch 3 ½ years ago the company only owned 25 properties, and his role as an analyst evolved over time.

This position initially had him evaluating utilities and contracts before the dynamic Analyst/Asset Manager tandem evolved. He worked mostly with Chuck Lavezzi as a mentor until his promotion last year to Asset Manager. Jack now manages Gray’s Lake, Granite Valley, Eagle’s Pointe, Hampton at Coral Ridge, Northgate, Commodore Perry, Executive Towers, Valley Stream, and the Brick Lofts.

When I asked him why he enjoys working for Monarch, he told me, “I think it’s a good company culture. I have never felt overly pressured; if you work hard and try to do your best you feel rewarded. I’ve never been bored and Bob’s a great mentor.”

Jack estimates he’s traveled to about 75% of the portfolio and his favorite place to visit is (Coralville) Iowa City. As a big sports fan, he enjoyed his last visit where he saw Iowa beat Michigan in a big 10 rivalry! He loves to travel, and when he’s not out visiting the Midwest and looking for deals, he has a trip planned this summer to Brazil for the World Cup!

(Superstars continued from pg. 2)

Maintenance
Rover contacted the Regional and the phone tree went off to alert Marshall Bloem Maintenance Tech, and the Manager Melisa Garrett. All were on the scene in minutes helping to accommodate residents in the office and community room providing hot coffee and pastries, while other gathered information for the Fire Marshal and police. The staff acted quickly to ensure as soon as the Fire Marshal gave clearance to go back into the building, contractors were on site cleaning up common areas and deodorizing, repairing water/sewer lines to get the rest of the building cleaned and operational for the residents within an hour. It was a well-coordinated effort by all, and a great example of quick-thinking, committed employees."
- Connie Bryant-Paynter, Regional Manager

🌟 Raul Soto Puente
Eden Park - Brooklyn Park, MN
“He was originally hired as a caretaker, but he is always willing to help do additional work to help out the team. He has worked MANY weekends to help us get caught up and to help stay on top of things. He is willing to learn anything new. He has helped with grounds and even some light maintenance. Has a great attitude and willingness to do whatever is asked. I don’t think he has ever said ‘no’ to Christina. He likes to stay busy and is always smiling.”
- Jill Ziehme, Assistant Regional Manager

🌟 Shawn Sumrall
Eden Park - Brooklyn Park, MN
“Shawn has one of the best attitudes that I have ever seen! He is an extremely hard worker. Never complains. Wants Eden to be a success and really cares about the property, the residents and staff. He is another one that stays late, comes early. Does whatever is asked of him and even finds things to keep himself busy and better the property. He has been doing maint. and has went out to buy more tools so that he can learn and do more. (Superstars continued on pg. 5)
What Residents Are Saying About Us...

Greenmar - Fenton, MO

“I think Greenmar Apartments are great!! We moved here in January 2014. The office staff is all very friendly and helpful; the new ownership had just taken over the week we moved in. Maintenance is quick & friendly- they had our ac fixed the day that we called about it and the office staff even follows up to make sure you are happy with the work. They are in a quiet, country like setting; the neighbors have not been problem. We love to walk to the playground and can’t wait for the pool to open soon. They are also about to open a fitness center at the clubhouse (second pool/playground location), and dog park somewhere too. They just came in and sprayed for pests (even though we have never seen any) just as prep for spring. Someone even comes in to clean the hallways/stairs to make it look nice and smell fresh! Prices are very reasonable. I would highly recommend!!”

- Jill Ziehme, Assistant Regional Manager

Kim Wauters

Hampton at Coral Ridge - Coralville, IA

“Not long after she started with us she went to Dayton for 3 months. Her dedication and ownership was remarkable. She managed Stonebridge for a month, stayed for two months after that to help train staff and support them to head things in the right direction.”

- Betsy Hoffman, Regional Manager

Rebecca Lindley

Harbor Pointe - Milwaukee, WI

“She has an amazing attitude. She helps with her sister property without even being asked. She asked to help with our new property acquisition in WI so she can learn more. She takes a lot of ownership and pride in her property, sister properties, and the company.”

- Betsy Hoffman, Regional Manager

AJ Sproles

Walnut Creek - Florence, KY

“He is the Maintenance Supervisor at Walnut Creek. He has been running short-staffed for the past few weeks but on Mondays has work orders down to under 10 and is keeping up on turns. He is also taking time to help get the pools ready to open in Dayton. His hard work and dedication is remarkable!”

- Elaine Rainge, Assistant Regional Manager

(Superstars continued from pg. 4) He has taken the on-call phone and tries to be the first line of defense with the calls and makes himself available day or night to the property. He is never sitting down! He has worked many weekends as well to help get the job done. Gets along GREAT with everyone and always positive.”

- Jill Ziehme, Assistant Regional Manager
(Monarch Story continued from pg. 1) That, along with some speculative building in certain markets and the savings and loan debacle and crash resulted in a difficult time from ’86 to ’91. Recovery ultimately occurred by ’91-’92, and what followed was a strong market for the rest of the 90s.

**Jonathan:** What was Monarch’s first property?

**Bob:** Mesa Ridge [in Albuquerque, NM] was the first purchase.

**Jonathan:** Did you imagine Monarch would grow so much when you started?

**Bob:** No. I’ve always said that I have no goals or targets for growth, just that I wanted to operate the properties the best we possibly could. As we grew, certain functions could be addressed and brought in house such as: project teams, legal and marketing department, hiring a full time CFO etc., etc.

*Stay tuned for the remainder of The Monarch Story in the next issue!*
The Rules

- The contest will be held from opening hours June 1, 2014 until closing hours August 31, 2014.
- A “renewal” counts towards your percentage if the lease renewal term is 6 months or longer.
- Properties are sorted into three different categories to keep it as fair as possible: 0-150 units, 150-300 units, 300+ units. One property will win from each category.
- Managers and Leasing Agents will work together to monitor their Renewal Tracking Sheet and report to Chelsea Roberts (croberts@monarchinvestment.com) once per month with their current monthly percentage. These percentages will be sent out companywide so you can view your competition!
- At the contest’s completion, your average renewal percentage from the contest period will be used as the property’s “entry” into the contest.
- In the event of a tie, the property with the higher occupancy at the time of the contest’s completion will be deemed the winner.

Strategy Showcase

As members of the Marketing Department, we know how valuable successful community strategies can be. From prize drawings to resident nights to leasing specials, every implemented program hopes to wildly benefit the property, but many can feel like a shot in the dark. This is why we bring you the Strategy Showcase segment: to present plans that have already benefited our fellow communities. Whether it’s a marketing initiative that generated occupancy, or an engaging idea that fostered a sense of community, let our team members show you what works and take the guesswork out of it.

The Community Gardens at Ramblewood

Fort Collins, CO

Since recently opening just this May, the Community Gardens have proven to be more than just a pretty feature on the Ramblewood apartment grounds; they are a mutually beneficial investment in both the neighborhood involvement and the financial success of the community. Property Manager Anthony Petrone explains why this outdoor addition is so successful:

1. It builds community by inviting residents to participate in a summer-long activity with their neighbors and the Ramblewood team on a common goal of growing produce.
2. It serves as curb appeal when designed with the proper fencing, soil, irrigation and all the basics needed to make it easy for residents to participate.
3. It heightens security on the community, as those involved in the gardens take ownership for their piece of land and in turn have a keener eye for what goes on, in, and around the gardens, thus reporting suspicious activities to management.
4. It helps families partake in a great activity to strengthen their bonds and build family growth all while teaching our next generation about healthy eating and where our food comes from, which is grossly missing from today’s youth.
5. Many people who live in apartment communities never get exposed to gardening. By offering this great amenity we are setting ourselves apart from other communities. Even if residents do not directly partake in the gardens they get to watch the gardens grow and walk through them which helps create a more grounded psyche and overall mental health.
6. It improves the bottom line. It represents one tool in what should be a multitude of tools to help build community, which in turn will help a community grow, stay full and drive rents up. Thus the investment, if properly done, will translate into greater financial success for a community.

Stay updated on this project’s success. Watch the Community Gardens flourish on Ramblewood's Facebook page! 

https://www.facebook.com/RamblewoodApartments