

Community Interests

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Countdown to the Gala – ONE!!!

by Melissa Ramsey, CMCA®, AMS®, CPO®

The time is NOW! Glitz and Glam will be taking over Treasure Island Saturday, February 8 starting at 6 pm. We will spend the evening acknowledging those in the industry who have gone above and beyond not only with their associations but also with their involvement and impact on our very own CAI Nevada Chapter.



The Gala would not be what it is each and every year without two special groups, our Gala Committee and our Sponsors. A huge round of applause to my fellow committee members Barabara Westhoff (Chair), Sunny Wilcoxon (Co-Chair), Inga Hale, Gisella Sanches, Jolene Macrae, Lauren Stemmler, Kathy House, Mike House, Stephanie Freeman, and Kathi Reiha.



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Be on the lookout for pictures from the evening in the March magazine! ●

March 28th 6pm • Orleans Arena

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Community Interests

THE MAGAZINE FOR COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES

FEBRUARY 2014

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Correspondence

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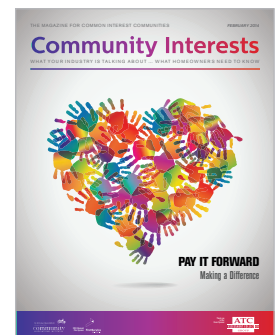
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NORMAN ROSENSTEEL,
CMCA, AMS, PCAM

President's Message

What a great program at the luncheon in January! Many thanks to Susan Bauman for bringing us up to speed on the very confusing Affordable Care Act. Is it good or bad? Only time will tell, but as with most things, it will probably be a little of both...I am always the optimist.

I would also like to give a big "thank you" to The Gold Coast for holding the blood drive and to all of our members who gave blood after the Luncheon. It really was a great start to the coming year!

As we start the month of February, I give pause to reflect a bit on how much has changed since I was president in 2002. We have increased from approximately 300 members to over 1100. We have grown to depend on a paid staff of 3 people to help all of our volunteers accomplish our goals. The Chapter has won numerous awards over the years for the innovative programs that were developed by our staff and volunteers. We have, in my opinion, one of the best TEAMS in the country! I do not think I have ever worked with a more caring, helpful group of people ... anywhere. Thanks to all of you for the countless hours you put in for the good of CAI and our industry as a whole.

Have you volunteered yet? Whether for a CAI committee or another worthy cause, it is always time to consider giving back to your community. The magazine will be highlighting a different

charity, community organization, or cause for each month's publication in 2014. The feature articles will involve causes that our members are involved in outside of CAI. The theme for February is American Heart Month.

Regardless the cause, if you have a story to tell about an organization you are proud to be involved in, please write an article for us so we can share your story with others. I continue to be amazed at how many of our members are involved in helping others on a regular basis.

And now to the final questions: Do you know who your legislators are? Have you contacted them about your association experiences? As I said last month, the time is now to prepare for the next legislative session. If you do not know your legislators, find out who they are. If you have not contacted them, do it now!

Norman Rosensteel

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MARY RENDINA
CHAPTER EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Chapter Commentary

2014 has gotten off to an amazing start! Our speaker for the January Las Vegas luncheon was Susan Bauman of Western Risk Insurance. She did a wonderful job explaining to attendees the many aspects of the "Affordable Healthcare Act". The CAI Nevada Chapter's 2014 Board of Directors was sworn in by Steve Vitali, PCAM and the gavel was passed to our new President Norman Rosensteel, PCAM. Attendees spent time visiting with committee representatives to learn about opportunities to get involved. If you were unable to attend and would like to join one of our many committees, please contact Chris Snow marketing@cai-nevada.org.

A big 'shout out' to our Community Outreach Committee for hosting a blood drive outside the Gold Coast Hotel during the luncheon. Fox 5 news was on hand to cover the event. Thank you to all our members who participated through blood donation.

None of our programs could take place if it were not for our sponsors.

Thank you to FirstService Residential, our January luncheon sponsor.

For me, personally, the highlight of the day was when I was conversing with two new business partners representing a National Bank. They have attended numerous business networking luncheons in other areas and they often feel those attending are very cliquish. Not so with the members of our chapter! They told me how impressed they were by the warm welcome they received and were very excited to join our chapter. They are excited to join a committee and be an active member of our chapter largely because they felt so welcomed. It is you, our members, I have to thank for this. I appreciate each and every one of you!

Okay, so enough about how great our members are who attended the luncheon ... now I will brag about our folks in Northern Nevada. Santa's elves were busy in December delivering gifts and playing Secret Santa to some very deserving families in Reno.

As our membership continues to grow so does the expansion of our committees. Northern Nevada now has a chartered Community Outreach Committee that works under the Northern Nevada Committee. Nothing is beyond their reach ... from bagging onions at a

local food pantry to participating in the Organ Donation Awareness Walk. Tonya Bates, PCAM will be organizing this year's Northern Nevada Community Outreach events.

While our committee members in the North may be a small group, they are mighty in what they accomplish and contribute to our chapter throughout the year. I'm excited that we also have a Northern Nevada Membership Committee Representative Michelle Goodell, who will actively work this year as an extension of the Southern Nevada Membership Committee.

Lauren Stemmler, CMCA will be co-chairing the 2014 Awards Gala and Melissa Ramsey, CMCA, AMS is serving on the magazine committee as the representative from Northern Nevada.

With Lorrie Olson, PCAM, Melissa Ramsey, CMCA, Becky Richter and Ken Carteron leading our committees, I know it will be a stellar year in Northern Nevada.

Thank you to all our committee volunteers! With over 60 events, 2014 is going to be a rocking year!

Warm Regards,

Mary Rendina

Wine and Canvas Night!

March 21, 6-8pm



CAI members...\$45
Non-member...\$55
Includes the art supplies, instructor fees, wine tasting and Hors d'Oeuvres.

RSVP to Katie at admin@cai-nevada.org by March 14th!



ANDREA CHESTNUT,
DCAL IS CHAIR
OF 'COMMUNITY
INTERESTS' MAGAZINE
COMMITTEE, NOTED
AUTHOR AND A MEMBER
OF NATIONAL SPEAKERS
ASSOCIATION

In this Issue

by Andrea Chestnut, DCAL

It is that time of year again when we recognize those among us for doing 'a job well done!' The CAI Nevada Gala held on February 8th has become part of a 'tradition' and a 'celebration.'

When I was reviewing the articles this month, I became aware of a common thread running through each article ... communication. This month's articles stress not only the importance of communication, but the need to have your facts ... yes, facts ... in proper order before engaging.

How often do we consider the consequences of, not only our actions but, our decisions? Boards make decisions at every meeting. Most decisions are made with the good of the community association as a whole in mind. But not all decisions are based on the consideration of the consequences.

Flexibility is another key to clear communication ... not only hearing what the other person is saying, but correctly understanding and truly listening to the other person. Flexibility comes into play at that critical moment when we realize that the other person has a very good point.

Our dogs can teach us a lot about communication. After reading "It's a Dog's Life ... A Little Light Music, Please!" you'll get what I mean. Our dogs can read the facts fast and communicate clearly.

Check out Northern Nevada and the many ways they are communicating with the communities and people of the Reno area. You'll even find a list of ways you can share in their enthusiasm and make it part of your outlook. ●

Upcoming Events *All Dates and Events are subject to change or cancellation.*

Southern Nevada Upcoming Events

Month	Date	Event	Location	Time
FEBRUARY	2/8	Awards Gala	TI Hotel	6:00 p.m.
	2/11	Las Vegas Monthly Luncheon	Gold Coast Hotel	11:15 a.m.
	2/11	CAI Nevada Chapter Board Meeting	Gold Coast Hotel	1:30 p.m.
	2/22	Las Vegas Homeowner Seminar	CAI Training Center	9:00 a.m.
	2/27	M-203	Gold Coast	8:00 a.m.
MARCH	3/11	Las Vegas Monthly Luncheon	Gold Coast Hotel	11:15 a.m.
	3/11	CAI Nevada Chapter Board Meeting	Gold Coast Hotel	1:30 p.m.
	3/21	Wine & Canvas	CAI Office	6:00 p.m.
	3/25	Las Vegas Manager Breakfast	CAI Training Center	9:00 a.m.
	3/28	CAI Wranglers Game Night	Orleans Arena	7:05 p.m.
	3/29	Las Vegas Homeowner Seminar	CAI Training Center	9:00 a.m.

Northern Nevada Upcoming Events

Month	Date	Event	Location	Time
FEBRUARY	2/20	Northern Nevada Manager Breakfast	Peppermill Hotel	9:00 a.m.
	2/20	Northern Nevada Homeowner Seminar	Peppermill Hotel	6:00 p.m.
MARCH	3/19	Northern Nevada Quarterly Breakfast	Peppermill Hotel	7:30 a.m.
	3/20	Northern Nevada Manager Breakfast	Peppermill Hotel	9:00 a.m.
	3/20	Northern Nevada Homeowner Seminar	Peppermill Hotel	6:00 p.m.



JUDITH HANSON, DCAL,
VOLUNTEER LEADER
ALIANTE MASTER
ASSOCIATION;
PRESIDENT
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DIRECTOR
FIELDS, TREASURER, CAI
BOARD MEMBER
DIRECTOR

Winter Wonderland

by Judith Hanson, DCAL

December 7, 2013, and the weather forecast was for rain, snow and plenty of wind... and, that was the date for our 4th annual Winter Wonderland, formerly Holiday Lighting, in Aliante Master Association. Things looked dubious, but, luck was with us once again. By 1 pm the sun came out and the winds died down to make the afternoon chilly, but, very pleasant. The snow hill, which we introduced last year, was a huge success as it did not turn to mush and slush. It stayed rigid and allowed for interesting challenges as the youngsters sat in the snow disks and slid down the hill.

Fortunately for Mr. and Mrs. Santa, we had a heated tent for them to interact with the children and to hand out candy canes. This was also where the Shadow Ridge String Ensemble performed most of their music. We did have a small group play at the refreshment tent and outside the main tent where kids, young and old, could write their letters to Santa and mail them.

We consider this to be a major step in "Building Communities," one of our DCAL classes, taught by DCALs, this past year. It makes for an easy transition into how to build a Community when you have an event such as this. Open to the residents of Aliante free of charge, it is a great way to form friendships and family bonds. This year we were surprised by a visit from Congressmen Steven Horsford and his aide along with

Councilwoman Anita Wood (who tries diligently to grace us with her presence at all of our events).

In addition to the String Ensemble and the snow hill, Aliante always provides a number of raffle prizes to be won by our residents. We are always thankful for the contributions from our vendors. This year's list included:

- Smith's
- ViaDirect
- Gothic Grounds Maintenance
- Hilburn & Lein, CPA's
- FirstService Residential
- Farmers Insurance

This year's charity event was the Firefighters of Southern Nevada Burn Foundation, consisting of fire department active personnel from Las Vegas Fire & Rescue, Clark County, Henderson and North Las Vegas Fire Departments. While we did not collect an overwhelming number of toys for this charity, at least we tried to make a difference and make people aware that the City has such an affiliation. Information on this charity was provided on the Sun City Aliante Web e-blasts, published in the Breeze, on the Aliante web portal, and published in its magazine, The Aerial. Below you will find pictures of the event. Enjoy and 'thank you' to all those who attended the DCAL class 'Building Communities'. ●





CHRISTIAN DIAMANDIS,
CMCA, PCAM IS WITH
LEVEL PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT

Commentary: Considering the Consequences

by Christian Diamandis CMCA, PCAM

This article addresses two new laws that benefit those who break the rules at the expense of those who abide by and/or enforce them.

The first law has to do with taking pictures of a violation if it is practical and sending that picture along with the violation notice. There are so many things wrong with this law it is hard to pick a place to begin.

Whoever came up with this idea has never done an inspection of a community. I have been personally threatened with death if I so much as set foot on the common area of one homeowner's driveway. I can only imagine his reaction if I was taking pictures of his unregistered, dilapidated vehicle.

What about privacy issues? Taking pictures of someone's front yard could be construed to be snooping in windows, especially if the violation

has to do with unapproved draperies or a broken window or screen.

It is also a convenient excuse for actual stalking or invasion of privacy. A professional would probably not do such a thing, but, I am sure there are committee members, board members and even neighbors who would abuse the legal premise for taking a picture of a neighbor's property if the opportunity presented itself.

And what of children? A child breaking the rules in the common area...a picture is easily taken, but, in today's society that could provoke violence and criminal allegations in some quarters.

Moreover, it gives homeowners another excuse for non-compliance. "I did not see a picture: Prove that my son hopped the wall". "That oil stain is not in front of my house: you cannot

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prove it was my car.” “You do not have a picture of the beer in the pool area, so I am not guilty of having it there.”

Lastly, there are pictures of violations that just do not show the violation. I recall distinctly a time we photographed a pile of pine needles in the front yard of an owner’s home after a neighbor repeatedly complained that the pine needles were blowing into his yard all the time. We went over to the house and the needles were plainly visible in the rock-scape, but, when photographed it you could not tell they were there.

Then there is the matter of storage and expense for the pictures. The pictures will cost money in added time to take and catalogue and then there is the added capacity needed to store the photos. This cost will be passed on to the Association members. It is also another deterrent, hurdle to entering the Community Management market as a startup company.

The reality is that those who would comply with the rules and are good members of an Association call the management company when they get a courtesy letter. They are proactive in correcting the problem. If they need guidance, they ask for and get it. Those who ignore courtesy letters and hearing letters now are going to do the exact same thing whether a picture is included or not...that goes for tenants, landlords and property management companies too.

What the law should have done was require a courtesy notice to be sent before a hearing notice, unless the matter is a Health, Safety and Welfare issue, and in the courtesy notice it is required to state: “where practical, a picture of the violation may be requested by the owner.” This way the owner has a chance to be proactive and has given permission for a picture to be taken so they will be expecting it. It also gives the opportunity to start a dialogue and resolve the matter congenially if a picture is not sufficient or practical.

The next new law that could have used some rethinking, as far as homeowner associations are concerned anyway, has to do with collection policies, foreclosure and the mess that came before and will continue under this new law. The reason it will continue is that the new law is allopathic in nature and not homeopathic: it attacks the symptom and not the root problem, as much legislation tends to do.



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The association I was managing had a 23% delinquency rate in 2013 at a cost of over \$120,000. The Board had to raise assessments for 2014 because of the delinquencies, burdening the paying homeowners with the costs of the delinquent. Much of that money is already lost forever due to the 9 months super priority law, the reluctance of banks to foreclose, and the cost of the association finally having to foreclose. Bankruptcy laws prevent the Association from acting in some of the cases. Moreover, the continuation of the Higher Ground matter, the result of previous poorly conceived legislation, still looms as a liability for the association down the road.

The intent of the new law was to slow down the foreclosure process and give banks and owners time to renegotiate their loans without being foreclosed on by the association. All that is well and good because homeowner associations do not want to foreclose as a rule; however, it granted those not paying more time at the expense of the homeowner associations once again.

The law states that the owner must remain current on their assessments while they are renegotiating their loan with the bank. The law does not specify what the Association can do if the owner does not pay current assessments during this time of renegotiation. This is just like the bankruptcy law: the owner is to remain current while restructuring their debt. That is what the law says,

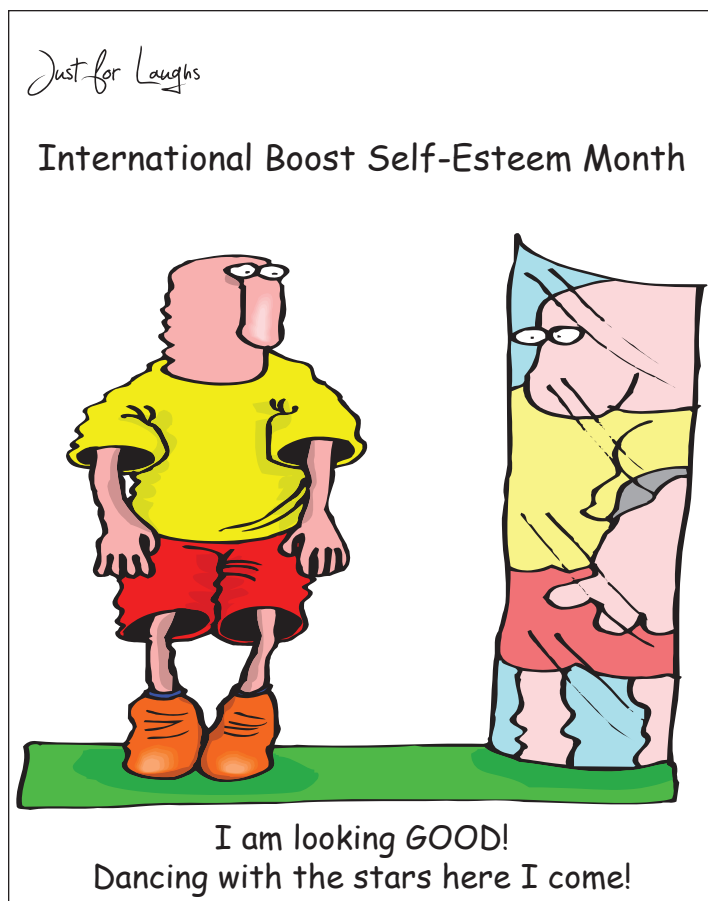
but, in my experience it never happens and collection agencies are reluctant to act due to the litigious nature of bankruptcy. I get the same sense about this new law: the owners will not stay current and, together with the bank, they will buy time until they can reach an agreement or do a short sale leaving the association holding the bag for everything over the nine months super priority assessment as required by law. The new law favors the banks, what a surprise!

The correct, homeopathic remedy to the problem with HOA foreclosures is to make homeowner assessments equivalent to taxes. All assessments should be due and payable to the Association under the foreclosure laws. Banks should be required to address the assessment issues when structuring the loans they create just as they do for property taxes and insurance. If the homeowner wants to pay his own assessments, he will have to pay a higher interest rate on the loan. This is what happens with taxes and insurance: it is an actuarial calculation.

If the banks were responsible for the assessments, they would learn more about the associations they are buying into and prevent some mistakes investors make before they happen, like buying in a rental restricted community. Moreover, if an association was guaranteed its money, the association would practically never foreclose save for the most extreme cases. If the association does have to begin the foreclosure process, say after 12 months of no assessments from the owner or the bank, the bank can either let the property go or choose to pay the assessments and the cost of collection at any time before the auction. If the bank lets the property go to auction, it loses title just as it would in a property tax sale.

The fact is that the banks have the most control over who is qualified to afford a home in a homeowners association. It should be the banks' responsibility to consider and cover the assessments of the association as part of the loan process. Why should a homeowners association lose money over a bad business decision made by a bank?

As always, I would love to get feedback on this or any other article. If you have a law that could use a critique, I am sure our readers would love to hear about it in the "Commentary". ●





CATHERINE LINDSAY IS PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT WESTCHESTER MANOR HOA

An Open Letter to New Board Members

by Catherine Lindsay

There's \$50,000 in the Reserve account and \$15,000 in Operating. The HOA budget estimates monthly income at \$16,000 but actually collects, on average, \$12,000. Buildings have not been painted in 15 years. If the asphalt is not replaced in the next 12 months the insurance may drop the HOA. And apparently there is a lawsuit pending from a pool vendor that was fired in July because they had not been on property since April, but the contract did not have a 30 day termination clause so whether or not they show up to work, the HOA may still have to pay them to the end of the 12 month contract.

And in a fit of frustration over a stalled building project, you signed your name on the dotted line to volunteer to help fix this mess and now find yourself seated at a table in a cold club house with 4 other people sporting crossed arms and speaking cross words.

Welcome to your Home Owner Association Board of Directors!

It is likely that, just like you, the others on the board joined because there was a project or issue they felt was being neglected. Rarely does someone join the board without some personal agenda driving them to take the leap. But that is okay. It means there is passion and it means there is interest and it is possible to channel that frustration into something pretty cool.

Except that is not what you want to, or maybe even need to, hear right now. Right now you need fast answers and easy short cuts that can galvanize your board and help create a cohesive team in order to efficiently solve problems and promote community togetherness.

Sorry dude - there are no short cuts and there are no quick answers.



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I know – definitely not what you want to hear. It is not what I wanted to hear either when I joined my HOA board 5 years ago. Back then I figured if someone with a little business experience and a firm hand joined the board, all the issues would simply dissolve. But the more I learned about the true state of the association and the more I found out about the players involved, the more I realized precisely how difficult it was going to be to dig out from where we found ourselves.

Along with other Vegas valley HOAs, we were seated center stage at the grand opening of an economic crisis that would paralyze whole segments of our population. Most contingency plans were useless. More than one association found itself failing. Our HOA board chose to go with a rather unyielding plan, taking hard stances against slow paying members and stringently applying fines as though there was no crisis and if we waited long enough, everything would go back to normal.

The plan failed, hence the angry people seated around a table in a cold clubhouse. The only thing we had in common was passion. It seemed we all wanted different things – fix the pool, fix the asphalt, reign in spending, take care of collections. In reality we all wanted one thing. We wanted to protect our homes - which comes across as a very melodramatic statement and believe me, there was a time when I would have thought a statement like that was hysterical fuss. I mean, come on, really? What could

we as a board do to protect our homes? We only had to come to a meeting once a month – right?

Wrong! I have heard stories of a time when being on a homeowner association board was not difficult or stressful and you only had to show up and say “aye” or “nay” and everything was fine. Not now. Not today. Today each board member has to do more than review vendor proposals or approve an annual budget. They cannot just show up once a month and expect things will all be fine.

But again, that is not what you are looking for and not what you need right now. What you need is more than a pep talk. What you need is something to grab onto, so here goes:

1. There is no “one size fits all” answer to homeowner association problems. There are some “one size fits most” solutions that can be flexed and pumped to work in your HOA but the only place a cookie cutter really belongs is in your kitchen.
2. The members of the board are going to disagree and it could even be contentious and bitter. Do not be afraid to stop the discussion or postpone an item and allow emotions to cool.
3. Listen and think. And it is vitally important to think before you pop-off in a meeting or hit the send key on that e-mail. Being the queen of snarky may give you a momentary thrill but it is not going to cure any of the association problems.
4. Communicating with your homeowners and residents is vital. Use every means available. Websites and e-mail may only reach a small segment of your homeowners so use snail mail, post signs near the mailbox and at the clubhouse, pass out flyers door to door and have meetings both during the day and in the evening.
5. Start with one thing. Just one. And once it is on its way, start another thing.

Here is how it worked for our homeowners association:

1. When I joined the board prevailing theory was that you had to have certain line items on the budget. It is true that you do have to have power and water and garbage pickup. But since the clubhouse was only being used for board meetings once a month we really did not need a janitorial service there twice a week. And since the landscapers blew out the debris from the property each week, we really did not need to have a street sweeping service once a month. Having a decision that everyone can agree on, such as changing a janitorial contract, erodes that feeling of impotence and, silly as it seems, can be a first step to getting bigger projects on track.



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2. E-mail is a part of my daily work life. That is not the case for most people and even those who use it for personal business are not necessarily e-mail adept. What was a logical communication tool for me was disconcerting to some of our other board members. I did not understand their concern and they did not understand my intent. Some did not realize that e-mail communications were actually legal documents so were upset with me when I objected to their e-mails. They were "just spouting off". I was shocked because all I could think of was "what happens if our records are required for a lawsuit". But my concern was interpreted as "she doesn't care what I have to say." We all had to get off the e-mail merry go round and actually talk and listen and when we did, we managed to get more accomplished.

3. I was surprised to find that the biggest obstacle our homeowner association faced was not lack of funds but was actually fear. Our HOA was clinging to the side of a very high fiscal cliff by our fingertips. All of us on the board, me included, were afraid that we would make a bad decision and suddenly plunge every one of our homeowners down the canyon and into the abyss. That fear can make each conversation volatile. While I agree that sometimes you just have to push through those debates, if members of your board have shutdown due to fear, or anger, you really are not going to get anything accomplished. It took a while for us to realize that postponing a discussion until emotions cooled would not bring our HOA to the brink of extinction. Drawing battle lines and taking public stands was guaranteed to make problem solving impossible.

4. People talk. If the board does not take the lead in letting the community know what is happening, then the fairytale stories spun by a few residents, or even by a couple of board members, will become the basis of truth for the whole community. We knew putting a flyer on every door would be time consuming and we knew that yes, even then someone was going to claim "no one ever told us". However, if we controlled the information on that flyer and made sure it was placed in as many hands as possible, we were creating the base conversation. Plus, now there was something we had on hand that could be used to help educate anyone who may have "never heard" about the pool key day or parking restrictions during an asphalt project.

5. When everything is a mess you have to start somewhere. We began with our finances. There were "claims" that payments had not been applied to homeowner accounts and that fines had been incorrectly assessed. There were "claims" about vendors working without contracts or proper licensing and "claims" about checks issued to the board for "personal" use. It was important to find out precisely what was truth

and what was fiction. That meant we started with all things related to money. It does not mean we sat around waiting to do something during the time it took to get all "claims" clarified. It was just where we began. Being able to make the decision and give direction to the new management company allowed us to relax and begin discussions on other things. Like vendors, projects and what to do about the dog poop.

And now 5 years later, it is all strawberry shortcake and lemon drops.

Well. No.

We are not in the "fabulous" category but I would say we are holding our own. Our homeowner association has qualified for 4 Neighborhood Partners grants that helped save our trees, improve lighting, fix sidewalks and most recently we received a grant to help improve the pool area. We have completed \$150,000 in asphalt repairs, changed 3 primary vendors, resurfaced the pool and even found money in the budget to add part-time security.

Board members have come and gone. We continue to test the value of disagreeing and focus on the importance of education. It is not that everything is wonderful – it is just that when things were really bad, we learned it is possible to leverage the most minor accomplishments into long term success.

At the end of the day my perspective as an HOA board member is simple, I do what I can. I am not a researcher who will find a cure for the common cold or a CEO leading the world towards better, safer technology. I **can** help my neighbors improve their property values and I **can** help make our community a safer, happier place to live. I **do** have a direct impact on our condo complex by showing up to meetings and getting involved in the day to day and year to year activity of our homeowners association. You can too.

Welcome to your Homeowner Association Board of Directors – we are glad to have you here. ●



ROBERT ROTHWELL, PH.D., DCAL IS CHAIR OF CAI NATIONAL CAVC, A MEMBER OF CAI NATIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND A MEMBER OF CAI NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Around The Block

Around the Block is an idea for a new regular segment in the monthly magazine that presents articles relating human-interest stories from our family of communities. If you have a story to relate, be it a tale about competition, coffee clutches, sewing circles, hobbyists, book clubs, community activities, and/or people or groups who deserve recognition, this is the place to tell it. We are looking for humor, ideas and upbeat examples of what makes your community a great place to live in 600 words or less. The magazine committee looks forward to hearing from you and thanks you for your contributions.

It's a Dog's Life ... A Little Light Music, Please!

by Robert Rothwell, PhD, DCAL

If you're like me — well, heck, like most of us these days — one of the first things you do every day is check in online. Your dog's version of this is something called "pee mail," and it's just as important a means of communication for our canine companions as our digital check-ins are for us.

How much do you know about pee mail? While we can never get as much information from it as

our dogs can with just a single sniff, you can still learn a great deal about your dog — and all dogs. Here are some fun facts about this important canine ritual for you!

THE GREAT COVER-UP

Have you ever watched the effort a tiny dog will put forth to make his mark more substantial than any other dogs? It can be dramatic! I've seen



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many little dogs that have an almost acrobatic ability to stand on their front legs and adjust their rear ones to squirt as high as any Great Dane can. They put the high-hitching leg-lifters to shame! These dogs are trying to “over-mark” the scent of other dogs, and they won’t let short legs stop them. Don’t tell a little dog that he can’t do what a big dog does! He’ll work extra hard to prove you wrong every time.

But what is your dog finding out when he sniffs where other dogs have marked? There is a lot of information to gather, and it’s all very interesting to your dog. By checking the pee mail, a dog can determine the gender of the dogs that came before him and whether they’re spayed or neutered. If there’s a female in heat, he’ll know that, too. He can also determine the health and stress level of the dogs that have been by, as well as a dog’s social status.

Until fairly recently, we didn’t know that much about pee mail, aside from general observations. For example, most people believed that caring about another dog’s pee was something male dogs did but females did not. Turns out we weren’t paying close enough attention. According to a study by Dr. Anneke Lisberg, intact males with high social order are most likely to over-mark, or pee over another dog’s scent, while females tend to mark nearby, as opposed to on top of, the urine mark left by another dog. Dr. Lisberg’s work also suggests “female dogs are interested in both male and female pee mail, while male dogs are primarily interested in what other male dogs lifted on.” For all dogs, unfamiliar urine got more attention than familiar urine, and that’s not really surprising. After all, a stranger who walks onto your property will get more scrutiny than someone you recognize, like a friend or relative.

Perhaps not surprisingly, dogs that are low on the pecking order sniff but don’t pee over another dog’s mark as often. It may be that those dogs are looking to identify a threat but aren’t interested in waving their urinary capes in front of the neighborhood bully.

CURIOSITY OR SECRET MESSAGING

We know that dogs communicate with each other (and try to do so with us, of course) through a variety of nonverbal signals. Many dog owners are well versed in at least the most obvious canine body language (fur straight up on its back, for example, or a happy tail wag), but until recently we didn’t know much about communication through scent marking. But it’s not at all surprising that dogs



communicate in intricate ways through their urinary postings, since their sense of smell is so complex and powerful that we can’t begin to imagine the messages dogs get through their noses.

We’re starting to key in on the contributions of pee mail. For example, we’re learning that scent marking is another strategy dogs use to avoid conflicts with each other. By marking his territory with a yellow stream, a dog that wants others to stay away may get his wish.

All well and good, of course, but what to do about a dog who spends all of his time reading pee mail when it’s time to be walking and insists that you stop at every vertical surface along the way? A sniff or two, with your permission, is fine, but you should not allow your dog to “spread the word” near and far. We may be impressed with our dogs’ ability to communicate with other dogs without saying a word, but we still need to keep moving on our walks together, no matter how juicy the gossip they smell on that fire hydrant. ●

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It's the Time of the Season

by Tonya Bates, CMCA, AMS, PCAM

The last quarter of 2013 for the Northern Nevada Community Outreach Committee was busy. It started the week of Halloween with 18 participants working with the Reed High School honor society to stuff 20,000 pounds of pears for the Food Bank of Northern Nevada.

Prior to Thanksgiving, CAI's Northern Nevada Business Partners and managers came together to provide funds for Fourteen (14) Thanksgiving turkeys to the disadvantaged students and families at Virginia Palmer Elementary School. Each family was provided a frozen turkey and all the fixings for a Thanksgiving feast, each dinner also included a \$10 gift card to the local grocery store to purchase perishable items such as, milk, butter, whipped cream, etc. One of the receiving families reported that they were able to make 7 meals with the donated items.

The next few weeks would be even busier with Home for the Holidays to benefit Step 2. Step 2 was the 2013 Northern Nevada recipient of Ordinary People Extraordinary Measures award in September. The benefit started on December 6 with a Jingle and Mingle Mixer. Then December 7th and 8th, four (4) homeowners in Arrowcreek HOA allowed participants to visit their holiday decorated homes. Each home was beautifully decorated for the season. Because Reno had their first major snow storm of the Season, the outdoor décor was even more picturesque. CAI Nevada Chapter was listed as a 2013 Donor to the charity in the "Thank You" brochure handed to each visitor.

Following Home for the Holidays, members of CAI stopped by the Blood Hero bus in Spanish Springs to donate blood. Valerie Hand, Debra Costa and Danielle Rederford, gave the gift of

life by donating 30 minutes of their time and a pint of their blood for the holidays. The Outreach Committee would like to thank them for "Finding the Hero" in them.

The week following Homes for the Holidays, the members of the Northern Nevada Chapter met at the local Target to purchase gifts for ten (10) Angels at Virginia Palmer Elementary School. The Committee fulfilled each child's wishes through some private donations. The committee would like to thank each company for their private donations:

- Bike—Reno Bike Project
- Sea Coast Commerce Bank—Comforter and sheet sets
- Gaston Wilkerson Association Services—Electric Blankets

The Friday after shopping, Somersett HOA hosted the committee members to a wrapping mixer in their clubhouse. Committee members and their families worked together to wrap and tag the purchases, as well as pick up the Toy Drive Donations generously donated by the homeowners of Somersett HOA.

On Monday, December 16, members of the committee were picked up by JC and the All Season's "sleigh" to deliver the gifts and toys to the children at Virginia Palmer Elementary School. KOLO Channel 8 was present to report the spirit of generosity through the holidays.

Wait, the Outreach Committee was not done. December 14 is Wreaths Across America, where volunteers meet at Veteran's Cemeteries across



the nation at the same time to place wreaths upon the graves of men and women that made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Pierre Claeysens (1909-2003) "To be killed in war is not the worst that can happen. To be lost is not the worst that can happen... to be forgotten is the worst." Again, there was snow on the ground and the morning started at 9 degrees. Thankfully, complimentary coffee and hot chocolate were provided as the volunteers awaited the dedication and presentation of flags, where each branch of the military was honored. Then the volunteers placed wreaths upon the graves of the veterans at the Fernley Memorial Veterans Cemetery. Wreath sponsors were able to honor their loved ones by noting their loved ones names. The sponsor's family would then receive a military escort to the site and their loved one would receive a solute and remembrance. Making the day extra special was the attendance of 3rd Petty Officer Hays of the U.S. Navy. Ms. Hays was a Navy nurse during the Korean War; she was there to honor her friends and comrades. She celebrated her 79th birthday just days before.

That same night, many of CAI's finest were seen supporting the Washoe County School District in the 13th Annual Santa Crawl. Attendees dressed as Christmas Characters; presents, elves, Santa, Mrs. Clause, Ralphie, reindeer and snowmen to tour downtown Reno. Over 7,000 Santas and their entourage participated in the "Crawl" all to benefit the local school district. At 10pm, all the attendees met under the Reno Arch to have their picture taken and sing "Silent Night".

Lastly, members of the Outreach Committee made their final donation of the season by taking what was left of the budgeted funds and purchasing 20 pairs of jeans, 20 packages of panties and underwear and 20 packages of socks to benefit the Reno Rodeo Foundations Denim Drive. The Reno Rodeo Denim Drive collects NEW jeans, socks and underwear for abused and neglected children who are in emergency and long term foster care. The Reno Rodeo Denim Drive serves children across 13 Northern Nevada counties. The Committee elected to have their donation benefit 3 Northern Nevada Counties; Washoe, Douglas and Lyon.

Please visit the following websites for more information and volunteer opportunities for the Northern Nevada Outreach Committee selected charities.

ABOUT THE RENO RODEO FOUNDATION WWW.RENORODEOFOUNDATION.ORG

The Reno Rodeo Foundation is committed to enhancing and enriching the lives of northern Nevada families by aiding children with extraordinary needs, building community partnerships, and providing scholarships to the University of Nevada, Reno.

ABOUT SIERRA NEVADA DONATE LIFE WWW.SIERRADONORAWARENESS.COM

To promote and raise awareness for the tremendous need and success of organ and tissue donation. Utilizing community outreach programs including our signature Donor Awareness Walk, we will highlight the success, honor the donor's and their families, and educate our community of the need for organ and tissue donation.

ABOUT STEP 2, WWW.STEP2RENO.ORG

STEP2 is a comprehensive substance abuse treatment program that provides women and their children suffering from chemical addiction, poverty and domestic violence the opportunity to rebuild their lives. The result is self-sufficient healthy families.

ABOUT VIRGINIA PALMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WWW.WASHOE.K12.NV.US/PALMER

Our main goal for the upcoming school year is to educate every child to his or her full potential and to maximize opportunities to achieve the highest of all standards. Our staff is dedicated to providing a learning environment that is positive, challenging, supportive, and one that will offer every child the opportunity to succeed.

ABOUT FOOD BANK OF NORTHERN NEVADA WWW.FBNN.ORG

Now in our 30th year, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada is a regional food distribution center and support system for more than 130 partner agencies serving the needy, the ill, the elderly and children. Our partner agencies include emergency food pantries and senior meal programs, low income day care centers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, family and domestic violence shelters and various youth programs, all of which offer bags of groceries, meals or snacks. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada serves an area of over 90,000 square miles.

ABOUT RENO SANTA PUB CRAWL WWW.RENOSANTACRAWL.COM

The Reno Santa Crawl benefits Washoe County Schools through Donorschoose. As of today, we've funded 140 projects and reached 12,000 students.

Ronald Reagan said it best, "We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." Thank you to every Business Partner, Manager, HOA, homeowner and Management Company that has assisted the Outreach Committee fulfill its 2013 goals and mission. We look forward to a generous and bountiful 2014: "It's the time of the season for loving" and always the season for caring. ●

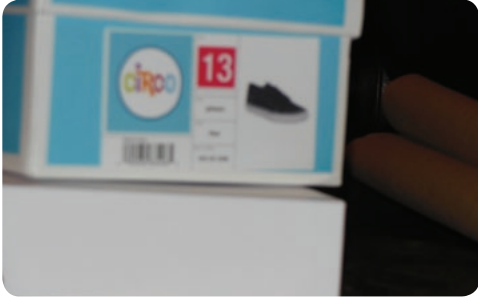


For more photos, visit our Facebook page! Search CAI Nevada.

Northern Nevada Community Outreach Gallery

OUR NORTHERN NEVADA COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEMBERS WERE BUSY IN DECEMBER. NOT ONLY DID THEY PARTICIPATE IN A BLOOD DRIVE, BUT THEY ONCE AGAIN ADOPTED THE CHILDREN OF VIRGINIA PALMER ELEMENTARY. THEY WORKED SELFLESSLY TO SHOP, WRAP AND DELIVER GIFTS TO THE CHILDREN FOR THE HOLIDAYS. THE GROUP CLOSED OUT THE YEAR BY PARTICIPATING IN WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA, PLACING WREATHS ON THE GRAVES OF VETERANS. WAY TO GO NORTHERN NEVADA COMMUNITY OUTREACH!







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by Sara Barry CAM, CMCA, PCAM

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- 1) Minimum of 7 years legal practice with concentration in community association law;
- 2) Five years of legal practice with concentration in community association law immediately preceding their application;
- 3) Their current practice must constitute at least 50% community association law;
- 4) Must maintain their CAI membership;
- 5) Must regularly attend CAI law seminars;
- 6) Must not have been reprimanded, censured, or placed on probation by any professional or licensing organization;
- 7) Not be currently subject of a disciplinary action by a professional or licensing organization;
- 8) Have not been involved as a debtor in reorganization for the benefit of creditors in bankruptcy;
- 9) Have not been convicted of fraud, misrepresentation, or misappropriation of funds or property;

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- 10) Have not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor (other than minor traffic violations);
- 11) Must not have had their law license suspended or revoked;
- 12) Must have written publications for the community association related publications. This includes books, articles or substantive works published in trade or industry journals. These must be published works, not just any writings associated with general practice of community association law and not just an article to get this designation;
- 13) Must have taught numerous educational courses or sessions relating to community association law or the association industry;
- 14) Must have been involved in the legal professions industry such as the ABA, state or local bar associations serving on Committee;
- 15) Must be involved in leadership in industry organizations such as CAI, which would be the Board, committee, etc.;
- 16) Must have significant involvement in legislative activities and must be able to detail participation in legislative action committees, lobbying, drafting

legislation, serving on governmental appointed councils, committees or advisory groups, etc.



John E. Leach, Esq.



Michael T. Schulman, Esq.

We are fortunate to currently have the following two individuals who hold this prestigious designation: John E. Leach, Esq. and Michael T. Schulman, Esq. We thank them for enabling Nevada to be included as one of the states that has these talented lawyers working for our industry. Both of them have been very active in attending and testifying before our legislature for many years.

Thank you, John and Michael. ●



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JUDITH HANSON, DCAL IS THE DIRECTOR SUN CITY ALIANTE, PRESIDENT ALIANTE MASTER ASSOCIATION, DIRECTOR THE FIELDS AT ALIANTE, AND DIRECTOR CAI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Project Management

by Judith Hanson, DCAL

What goes into a good Project Management program? Using my experience in Sun City Aliante, I would like to share a few of my thoughts. First, it involves team-work. Team-work from the Board, the Management Company, the Property and Grounds Committee, the Finance Committee, the Builder and most importantly the community at large.

In 2010, we did our first major project – the conversion of the Del Webb Sales Office into offices and meeting rooms. We developed the idea and asked for community input. That input was important in how this project would look in the end. We had a social hall, conference room, card room, library, exercise room, swimming pool and billiard area, but, we wanted more and that is where the community at large came in. They submitted their ideas on what they wanted to see done with the existing building framework and what they wanted to see with the new portion, the

old sales office. Comments ranged from adding more floor space to the existing building and converting the sales office into more of a gathering area to special uses for a multitude of different special interests: the community definitely had ideas on how to best use the space.

We are an active adult community with some twenty-five different clubs including library, computer, painting, ceramics, scrapbooking and poker clubs along with mahjong, Mexican train, bridge and a multitude of other amenities. Each of the clubs had a chance to submit their wish lists: kilns to bake the ceramics, storage facilities for art supplies and scrapbooking needs, library with multiple shelves for books, entertainment room with a full service kitchen and more. All these ideas were compiled and sent to the Property and Grounds Committee and management to come up with an RFP to send to vendors who could facilitate our project.



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Of course, financing played a big role in this as well. Where was the money going to come from to undertake a massive project such as this? We, here in Sun City Aliante, were very fortunate that when our community was built the builder established a Capitalization Fund which is 1/3 of 1% of the sales price of each home sold is contributed into a capitalization fund for future expansion. That 1/3 of 1% continues today as homes are sold and resold so our capitalization fund is always growing and developing.

That does not mean that we were given free reign with this money. It is and was closely scrutinized by the Finance Committee who wanted the best value for our money that was possible. And that meant taking a look at what would be needed in the reserve account going forward. Would we have to increase assessments or would we have to cut corners elsewhere?

Once the RFPs were formulated they were submitted to a group of builders who sent their suggestions back and pricing as well. At this time, the Board of Directors, all who either had their DCAL or were in the process of working towards it, interviewed the proposed builders on what they envisioned for our community. Based on the interview process, the Board selected their builder of choice. It was then the obligation of the builder to supply specs and complete drawings of three different proposals for our addition and remodel. These drawings were placed in the community center for our residents to look at along with the club participants.

After a period of time, a workshop was held and ideas were presented to the Board by the homeowners of changes they would like to see. These changes were considered by the Board of Directors and management with the help of the builder and a plan was devised and implemented. Even though the plan was devised and implemented, it did not mean that the Board did not have a hand in the final project.

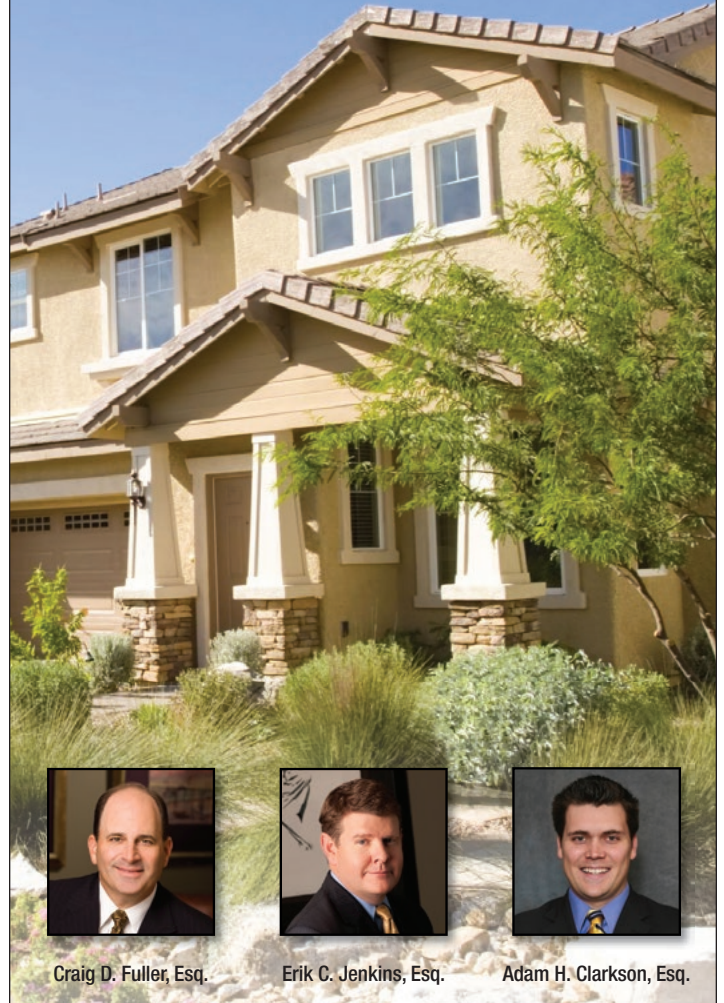
Weekly meetings were held between the builder's representative, the Board President and the Board Treasurer to make sure there were limited cost over-rides and that everything was on schedule. It was a very time consuming process on the part of both our Board President, Treasurer and a representative of the Property and Grounds Committee, but, one they willingly took on as part of their fiduciary responsibility to our community. Of course, any other board member who wanted to come to the 6 am meetings was welcome to join in and coffee was served.

In the end we have a building that we can be proud of and one that functions very well. As the building was finished and new equipment was purchased, it had to be added to the reserve study, and yes, we contemplated in the beginning whether the reserve study would be impacted in such a way that assessments would have to be raised or a special assessment would have to be implemented. None of these

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were necessary: a full, new reserve study was developed after the project was completed to include all the amenities.

Was our project perfect? No! We are still fine tuning it, but that was to be expected. We have a very energetic lifestyle director who is always looking to bring in entertainment to our community. This means we need a stage and good lighting. This is part of the ongoing development that we are undertaking to perfect this building. It is only after clubs start using the facility, especially our Songsters and our Steppers that we found what our additional needs were and still are. We are in the process of putting in an upgraded sound system, stage lights and adding to the portable stage. We have the good fortune of having the money to do this either through operating funds or capital improvement funds.

Today we are in the process of undergoing our second project management endeavor – the building of a sports complex to resurface our tennis courts, add additional pickle ball courts so we can host tournaments and adding a couple of basketball hoops for our energetic seniors to play one on one, or just have fun shooting baskets. This project has been in the development stages for some time.

Our residents suggested over a year ago, to the Board, that they would like to see a basketball hoop put in place. Where was that hoop going to go? It could not go on our parking area as by law we needed all the parking places for our residents. It could not be a moveable hoop added to the tennis courts and rolled in and out when needed. In addition, after making what we thought was an answer to our pickle ball players, a conversion of one tennis court to pickle ball courts, we found this sport to be growing at such a fast pace that this was no longer a feasible option. At Board meetings, various residents spoke up for the addition of a sports complex and why it was important to the value of Sun City Aliante. These suggestions were turned over to the property and grounds committee to come up with some viable solutions and then to develop an RFP with the board's blessing to send out to vendors.

Workshops were also held asking homeowners for their input. One of the problems we faced in this whole project was with our tennis courts. We had them resurfaced about five years ago and that proved to be a stop gap measure at best. We did not want stop gap measures to continue so we needed to develop a plan on how best we could revamp the tennis courts and that plan was post tension, concrete expansion. Again, not only was the Property and Grounds Committee involved, but the finance committee as well. We have been fortunate to have very savvy treasurers who look at the pros and cons of all monies being spent and a great financial advisor as well. Nothing gets by this team.

After the RFPs were sent out and sealed bids opened at a Board meeting the proposals were turned back over to the Property and Grounds Committee to make sure everyone was bidding apples to apples. The Committee did find flaws with one or more of the quotes and had to pick up the phone

and ask further questions of the builders to make sure they were reading the RFP correctly. Once we chose the builder we had the builder and his team come to an open workshop to present their plans with the board and the community at large who wanted to speak for or against various proposals. The builder came in with two different proposals – the Ford and the Cadillac. In the end the Cadillac version was picked.

At our November Board meeting, the vote was taken and it was seven for the project and none against. How did we reach such an overwhelming yes vote? It was the voice of the community. The pickle ball players stated that they wanted the extra courts. By gaining those extra courts not only would we be able to invite other senior communities to play in a tournament here, it also opened the door for us to host the Senior Games down the line. Those in support of the basketball hoops were elated that they would no longer have to chase balls down the hill and into the street. Those who play tennis on a regular basis were especially excited to know that the courts would have a surface that would last for many years.

One of the most compelling arguments in favor of the total project was learned in classes held by CAI. What do they teach you in these classes? Our homeowners' answer was to protect values and enhance the community for future generations to come. Our homeowners felt that the number of players at any particular time was not an important factor in our making a correct decision: it was the ability to offer something that would be of strong interest to new buyers coming to Sun City Aliante for the very first time. It did not matter how many clubs we had or how many movie nights we were going to hold. What mattered most is that we would have the ability to offer a buyer an appealing variety of activities and facilities in good repair. Without the owners voicing their opinions and high praises for what we envisioned, the project probably would have been canned: I know of at least four Board members who were swayed by the support of the community to vote in the affirmative for the project.

Our sports complex project is far from over with. It is still in the ground breaking stages, which means that more questions will be asked of the builder, our treasurer will be involved in all cost decisions as will the Finance Committee, and the Board President or Property and Grounds liaison will be involved on a weekly basis until the project is complete. At each Board meeting, until the project is completed, the community will be informed of the status of the project and if we are on target financially.

As I stated in the beginning, I feel blessed to know that we have strong committees willing to go above and beyond the call of a committee member; a strong and educated Board; a community at large who is willing to come to board meetings and speak in favor or against various projects; and a management team that works well with all aspects of the community. ●



CAI Nevada Chapter Members' Brag Page



FIRSTSERVICE ANNOUNCES MELISSA RAMSEY AS REGIONAL MANAGER IN NORTHERN NEVADA

FirstService is pleased to announce **Melissa Ramsey** as their new Regional Manager in Northern Nevada! Melissa joined FirstService in January 2011 as the Community Manager for Somerset. Prior to that she was the General Manger of the Club at Town Center in Somerset where she served in various capacities since November 2005. She has over 10 years of management experience. Melissa holds her CMCA and AMS designations, as well as a CPO (Certified Pool Operator) license. She is also a member of the Nevada CAI chapter, serving on the Magazine Committee as well as the Co-Chair for the Northern Nevada Education Committee.

FIRSTSERVICE ANNOUNCES LAUREN STEMMLER AS COMMUNITY MANAGER AT SOMERSETT OWNERS ASSOCIATION

FirstService is pleased to announce **Lauren Stemmler** as the new Community Manager at Somerset Owners Association! Lauren joined FirstService in January 2011 as part of the Somerset team. Lauren has served in various roles within the community since 2009 and most recently the Assistant Community Manager overseeing Lifestyle. Lauren holds her CMCA designation and is a member of the Nevada CAI chapter, serving as the Co-Chair for the Gala Committee. ●

If you have anything you want to share, please submit it at least 6 weeks prior to the magazine publish month. Anything received after the 20th of the month prior to publication may not make it into that issue, but will appear in the following issue. Please submit your items to info@cai-nevada.org or fax to 702-240-9690.



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JAMES STONE IS THE CURRENT VP, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, RED ROCK COUNTRY CLUB. CAI MEMBER AND DCAL SINCE 2011. UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA SOUTHERN REGION CERTIFIED MASTER GARDENER SINCE 2002.

A Useful Resource

by James Stone

As a member of the Board at Red Rock Country Club HOA I, like many of you, recognize that our common area landscaping is an important asset which needs constant attention and tweaking. I have a great respect for our Landscape Committee which is charged to work with our contracted landscape company to keep our community common areas looking great. This is hard work given our extreme environment: caring for seasonal flower beds demands vigilance and periodic upkeep. We use a 3 year plan where we divide our community into multiple segments and concentrate on specific plots on an annually rotating basis.

Your landscape company is your primary commercial resource to discuss horticultural issues, correct problem areas or make changes to the common areas within your communities, but, it is not the only source. There is another gardening information resource for gardening

and horticultural questions and it is a good place for quick answers on plant material and related issues. The source I am talking about is the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Southern Nevada.

The Master Gardener program of Southern Nevada first started in 1972: Extension agents from the Washington State University Cooperative Extension began to train gardeners in order to disseminate gardening information to their students' various communities. The program was so successful that it has since been adopted by a Cooperative Extension in almost every state.

In Nevada, there are some 400 active Master Gardeners. To become a certified Master Gardener, one has to complete an extensive horticultural training program through the University, pass an exam and continue to



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contribute to the community through volunteer work and education: a minimum of 50 hours a calendar year working on a variety of approved projects. Some of the projects in which Master Gardeners participate include creating and maintaining community/healing school gardens, fruit tree orchards, horticultural seminars, conferences, workshops and donating time and expertise to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve.

Master Gardeners are also available to help you. They have multiple resources at their disposal including their own extensive training and experience, a large library and experts who have probably encountered issues you may have with plant identification, disease, irrigation, fertilization, or plant recommendations for our desert climate to name a few. They also have access to numerous printed publications which they will be happy to share with you. These might include general gardening topics or specific interests like caring for roses. All are adapted for our climate.

The Master Gardeners of Southern Nevada has a hotline for answers to your home gardening questions. The number is 702-257-5555. Assistance is available Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm throughout the year. If your question is not immediately answerable, your question will be researched and your call returned with the answers.

As an aside, one of the Master Gardener projects listed above includes the Fruit Tree Orchard. This is open to the public for tours and offers seasonal fresh fruit for sale. The Orchard is located on Horse Road, 1 block east of Decatur Blvd. in North Las Vegas. If you use "Google Maps" and enter Horse Rd. and Decatur you will see the Master Gardener Orchard on the map. Hours are Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 8am to noon, excepting holidays. The Orchard has over 600 fruit trees and many vegetable plots. Its primary purpose is to experiment with new varieties of trees to determine those which grow best in our tough desert conditions.

Best season to see the Orchard or purchase locally grown and freshly picked fruit and vegetables is from late April through early August and late September through mid December. The Orchard is not organically certified, but it does practice organic growing methods. The Orchard also maintains bee hives and offers locally harvested honey for sale as well. This is usually available from September until supplies run out. You can also purchase difficult to find fruit trees here and purchase compost and topsoil. Some classes are offered on the care of fruit trees. ●



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CHRISTIAN DIAMANDIS,
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“It’s My Nature”

by Christian Diamandis, CMCA, PCAM

I do not know to whom to attribute this little anecdote, but, it does bear repeating. It is the tale of the scorpion and the frog. The scorpion was faced with the problem of getting across a river which was too swift and wide for it to navigate. The scorpion approached a frog on the river bank and asked the frog to give him a ride on his back across the river. “No way” said the frog, “you will sting me and I will die.” The scorpion answered: “If I did that, I would drown and I do not want to drown.” The frog thought about it and, after some haggling over price, the frog agreed to ferry the scorpion across the river. When they were about half way, the frog suddenly felt the sting of the scorpion. Paralyzed and going down to their certain doom, the frog managed to gasp “why?”: “It’s my nature” replied the scorpion.

The point of the story is that one cannot escape one’s own natural proclivities; however, we

should be able to control them and/or foresee them and not suffer the fate of the frog and the scorpion. Moreover, the story is not solely applicable to individuals: it applies to business, corporate and government entities as well, which are actually gestalt beings.

It is the nature of individuals in this country to view their private property, their home, as sacrosanct: “man is the king of his castle” is the old cliché. The advent of Homeowner Associations put new constraints on that private domain, in addition to the municipal, county, state and federal government constraints and obligations already extant. The additional rules sometimes do not sit well with those who have no experience with homeowner associations, those ill-suited to live in a homeowners association and those who purchase homes as investments and do not live in the association themselves. Even though these owners agreed

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in theory to live by the covenants, conditions and restrictions of the association when they purchased the home, they complain to their elected state representatives and ask them to change the way the

associations govern their communities rather than take the time to understand, participate in and make a positive difference through involvement in their community governance. There are, also, individuals who would like homeowner associations to be eliminated altogether, essentially killing the frog while not realizing the full consequences of their actions.

It is the nature of government to forget the role they played creating the problems that they would deem to resolve. It would do well to remember that Homeowner Associations, also known as Common Interest Communities, were created and accepted to save municipalities money. In exchange for allowing some self-governance and control over aesthetics, associations pay for their own infrastructure such as streets, street lights, amenities and even sewers in some cases while paying the same tax rates as homeowners outside of the Association. What would be the incentive to keep paying assessments if there was no authority and no self-governance? What would be the alternative? The State absorbs the associations' infrastructure and assessments? It seems to be in line with the big government trend in this country at present, but, anathema to the vast majority who like their associations.

It is also the nature of government to react to perceived crises: that is why they create so many. When homeowners complain about their associations and the injustices they deem to have suffered, though it is a small group compared to the silent majority of content homeowners, elected officials react by introducing laws ostensibly to address the concerns of their constituents, the homeowners. Of course, our elected officials are influenced by other entities as well: lawyers, banks, government agencies and other lobbyists that have an interest in the legislation that is produced. Lawmakers tend to react favorably to those who have their ear and their back: that is why much Homeowner Association legislation tends to be negligible or detrimental to the majority of homeowners it was introduced to help while it helps those who gave support and/or advice to the legislators that passed the law. It is the nature of power, it corrupts with great subtlety: the scorpion is a good talker.

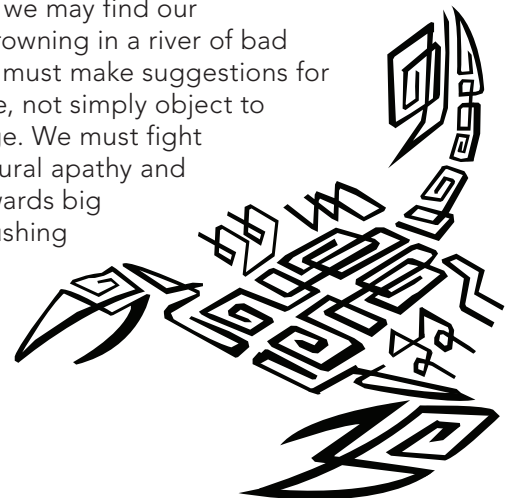
The nature of Big Business and Corporations is to increase profits. Influence peddling in the halls of government is a

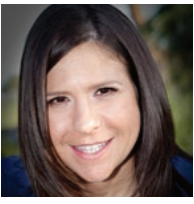
cost of doing business for these companies: the larger the Company, the more influence it can afford. Large Corporations and Big Business try to suppress competition through legislation when they can: sometimes they increase the regulatory costs of doing business to the point where only businesses already in operation or supported by other large companies can afford to operate or compete. Ralph Nader may have been right when he said that "Corporations ruined this country, with the willing participation of Big Government."

Large Businesses and Corporations also tend to operate in many states and sometimes internationally. Economy of scale saves money, along with consolidation of operations. From the standpoint of a homeowner association, that has to be a consideration. How is hiring a management company, a bank or any other company that operates out of another state enhancing the community or the local economy? Every board should consider the economic impact of sending jobs and money out of state, out of the larger community where it resides, before hiring a company based in another state.

So where is this going? Homeowner Associations are Corporations too, but, not-for-profit Corporations: they cannot use profits to influence legislation. Homeowner Associations are government entities on the smallest, most accessible scale, but, they are heavily scrutinized and regulated. Homeowner Associations are made up of individuals who are shareholders in the corporation and participants in the self-governance of their associations whether they know it or not. It is the nature of these homeowners living in associations to be apathetic about state and federal legislation because they do not think it can affect them. They are oblivious to the scorpions on their back.

Community Managers and Boards need to stay informed of proposed legislation and communicate it with their memberships. Homeowners need to get involved and pay attention to events that will affect the Association: it is their duty as members. All of us must get involved with our local, state and federal government or we may find our Associations drowning in a river of bad legislation. We must make suggestions for positive change, not simply object to negative change. We must fight against our natural apathy and resignation towards big government pushing down on us. Fatalism is a lack of effort: sheer numbers is our only real strength. ●





ANDREA BEHRENS, DCAL IS ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INDUSTRY AND RESIDES IN THE SUMMERLIN AREA

Why You Should Love, or at Least Communicate, With Your Neighbor

by Andrea Behrens, DCAL

Establishing a sense of community is more important than ever. The World Health Organization recently declared a “social recession” because of the economy’s emotional toll. If you live in a community governed by a homeowners association (HOA), you are already aware of the benefits of living in a common-interest community. You probably also realize that conflicts sometimes arise. Implementing strategic tools to handle conflicts properly is essential for keeping peace and growing a healthy community.

Here are some recommendations:

CREATE AND NURTURE COMMUNITY

Let’s be honest, if we had our choice, many of us would choose to keep to ourselves ... pull into our garage, watch our big screen television and play in the backyard. However, the reward of creating and nurturing a healthy and connected community far outweighs the time and effort required. Start with small steps, such as being kind to others and reaching out to neighbors. Positive communication is a great start.

STAY INFORMED WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Exchange e-mail addresses with your neighbors. That will allow you to nurture friendships despite busy schedules. Also, if your HOA website does not already have a public venue, suggest creating one. Community websites and Facebook pages are a great tool for residents to share information with each other and post events.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Be the kind of neighbor you would like to have next door. This is really a matter of common sense: be conscientious about loud noises; end parties at a reasonable time; keep a neat and tidy yard; pick up your dog poop; return anything you borrow and offer to watch your neighbor’s house while they are away.

KNOW THE RULES

Being an informed resident means being aware of your association’s rules and regulations. Many disputes result from misunderstandings of the community guidelines. For example, many times disputes over the American flag have nothing to do with the flag itself, rather the placement of permanent flagpoles.

COMMUNICATE AND SET GOALS

Consider joining your HOA board or attending meetings. My husband is active on two boards and our family utilizes our HOA to the fullest.

ESTABLISH A MEDIATION PROGRAM

If your homeowners association does not already have a mediation program, recommend the idea to the board. According to a senior mediation specialist with a Nevada Neighborhood Justice Center, mediation is a wonderful way to solve disputes. “The most common areas of dispute are neighbor-to-neighbor issues, such as a barking dog or a parking encroachment. Through the mediation program, the neighbors meet with one another, along with a neutral third party, such as a mediator or a case worker, and solve their problems the old fashioned way – talking about them.”

Taking the time and effort to become more engaged in your community, whether it’s an HOA or neighborhood not governed by a HOA, can have long-lasting positive results. In the fast-paced world we live in, we could all use more support in our daily lives. These challenging times present a perfect opportunity to connect with others. When we do so, we create a safer and more vibrant community. ●

RANDOM THOUGHT

Take advantage of every opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when important occasions arise, you will have the gift, the style, the sharpness, the clarity, and the emotions to affect other people.

—Jim Rohn

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Authors ... We're already compiling new articles for these issues. It sounds like a long way off, but it's really just around the corner. Any topic relevant to community association governance or living will be considered. Send your articles to Chris at the email address above.

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