

PRINCIPAL PRESS

Principal Management Group Of Houston

Summer 2004

An AssociaSM Member Company

Building a Community

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Successful community associations have a common thread: their leaders have focused on building a strong sense of community among residents in addition to ensuring that the community looks appealing and maintains property values.

So much of what we do every day is “negative” – enforcing deed restrictions, collecting assessments, denying requests for architectural changes. We need to focus on the positive aspects of living in and being a member of a community association – a neighborhood. An association’s core purpose is not buildings, rules or money, but helping people.



Where to start:

- acknowledge the need for a friendly approach – this is a customer service enterprise – put people first! – democracy vs. mandating rules – provide responsible leadership
 - ◆ nurture relationships – owners, renters, committee members, volunteers
 - ◆ show residents that the association is not an impersonal bureaucracy
 - ◆ new owners especially need to lose skepticism about “condo commandos” so they will become involved in the leadership of the community
- understand what the membership wants
 - ◆ survey, survey, survey – what’s important to owners, renters?
 - ◆ publish results, hold forums for discussions
 - ◆ follow up with action
 - ◆ board’s dedicated and patient commitment to member education – formal, written rules, enforcement process, collection process
- assign committees/task forces

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The Staff of
Principal
Management
Group of Houston
hopes you have an
opportunity to enjoy
some
fun filled days of
summer.



Welcome New Clients and Returned Clients

Sablechase HOA
Avalon Trace
Houston Pearl
Village Grove
Elgin Square
Manors @ Riverstone

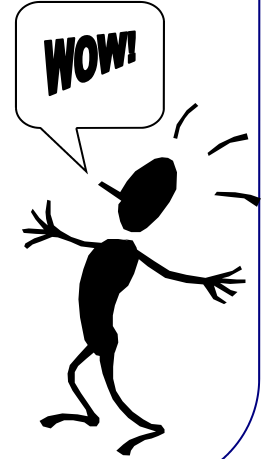
“Welcome Back” Kenswick HOA

New Employees

Michael Barrera - Accounting
 Misty Darilek- Woodlands Assistant Manager
 Serina Wilkerson – Houston Assistant Manager
 Brandi Leal – Executive Assistant
 Patti Roy - Woodlands Branch Manager
 Robert “Justin” Sherinski – Distribution Center
 Nicole Johnson - Woodlands Association Manager
 Melanie Peterson - Accounting
 Amelia “Anna” Osuna – Houston Assistant/Association
 Manager
 Robert Lindsey - Maintenance Department

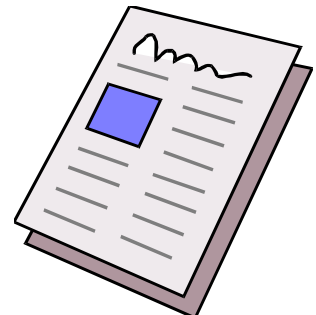
CONGRATULATIONS Employee of Tenure

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Vicki Ward | 19 years |
| Howard Sweidel | 18 years |
| Becky Salinas | 8 years |
| Emma Deatherage | 8 years |
| Patricia Escobar | 7 years |
| Jennifer Hudson | 7 years |
| Bernita Fry | 5 years |
| Aly Long | 5 years |
| Karen Sanchez | 5 years |
| Carolyn Kivett | 5 years |



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- ◆ encourage volunteers, recognize them and reward them whenever possible, – annual meetings, newsletters, press releases to local papers
- ◆ solicit advice and input – if a member is constantly challenging decisions, encourage them to join the appropriate committee and participate in the process
- Annual board orientation – review policies & procedures, governing documents, operating & reserve budgets, long term planning, applicable laws & legislation – rejuvenate, revitalize, invigorate
- deed restriction enforcement
 - ◆ find ways to say “yes” – look for the gray!
 - ◆ reasonable approach to compliance – phone call, personal visit, nice “notice” letter, more formal letter, final visit
 - ◆ commitment to comply, even after the deadline, is better than noncompliance
 - ◆ publish guidelines for exterior improvements/alterations – make it easy to comply
 - ◆ send seasonal reminders, i.e.; removing Christmas decorations
 - ◆ recognize that special circumstances arise – work with member
 - ◆ due process – hold hearings if board decision contested
 - ◆ thank those who do comply
- Communications
 - ◆ newsletters, monthly meeting summary postcards, bulletin boards, door hangers
 - ◆ keep it positive – don’t always repeat rules
 - ◆ educational forum from board to members
 - ◆ communicate constantly with candor and consistency



BE REASONABLE!

Reprint from: [Marjorie Jean Meyer](#), CMCA, PCAM
 Vice President and National Director of

Education and Certification
 Associa

AssociaLivingSM

Serving the residents of Associa member communities.

Community Websites



- ◆ Online assessment account balance
- ◆ Free online greeting cards
- ◆ Interactive community calendar
- ◆ Community news and announcements
- ◆ Association documents
- ◆ Photo Gallery of association events
- ◆ Customer service submittal forms
- ◆ Neighborhood networking

Log in at www.pmghouston.com, select Community Websites and view the sample site!

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Use It... Or Lose It? Community Websites!

What an amazing tool for community associations! In today's world, every community association should take full advantage of what a website can offer to owners, volunteers and management alike. Many of today's communities have websites. Unfortunately, many sites fail to live up to their full potential due to a few common mistakes. First, the owners must be aware of the site and motivated to make the initial visit. Second, the website must prove to be of value to the owner to insure their return and active use.



PROMOTE AND PUBLICIZE. It is imperative to adequately publicize and promote a community website to the owners. An announcement postcard should be sent to each owner to premier the site, but it is equally important to continue promoting the site at every opportunity. While one of the goals of a website may be to scale back newsletter distribution along with its expense, it is wise to continue mailing the newsletter until website usage has been maximized. The Association should also take full advantage of direct mail opportunities provided by day-to-day association mail outs such as meeting notices, assessment statements, community message boards and meeting announcements. These methods are free of any additional cost to the Association. The Board of Directors and management should be alert to all opportunities to reach the owners who are not using the website.

Management can play a significant role in this regard by having customer service personnel trained to promote the website in daily conversations with owners. (i.e. "I will be more than happy to assist you with that, Mr. Jones, but did you know that you can also access that feature/information on the website if that would be more convenient for you in the future?")

UPDATE, UPDATE, UPDATE. Even if a community website is enthusiastically promoted and adequately publicized, it will fail to

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reach its potential if it is not continually updated. Failure to provide fresh material and useful features will discourage owners from using the site as the valued resource it should be. Even if the site improves at a future date, you may lose some owners to the first visit if it fails to impress.



Need a Community Website? Take a tour through the sample site at www.pmg-houston.com!

For best results, an Association should use a professional website administrator in favor of a volunteer. While volunteers may have the best of intentions, the consistency and level of accountability present in a professional relationship will insure a better result. Most progressive management companies provide website development and administration. The unique role of the managing agent in Association affairs provides the best opportunity for immediate updates and accurate website content.

Providing useful information about the Association promotes compliance with rules, enhances participation in community affairs and fosters positive and consistent communication between the owners, the volunteer Board members, and the managing agent.

In spite of the fact that the website provides a wealth of reference material, an effective community website must provide owners with more than information. Convenience and interactive features are the elements that will keep viewers coming back. Features such as the ability to place a service request, access personal assessment account information, submit an application for architectural changes, or reserve the clubhouse for a private party online are all significant conveniences for owners.

Enthusiastic promotion and constant updating will insure that your community website reaches its full potential. What a great tool to spread the word of harmonious association living!

Principal Management Group

Motivating Members

Every well-run organization depends upon interested and involved members for its success. Each new volunteer brings fresh ideas and differing perspectives for the association. Therefore, recruiting volunteers should be a top priority.

Recruitment is an on-going activity. One effective recruitment technique is for members to encourage their friends to become involved in the community. Another technique is for block captains to be responsible for recruiting their neighbors. Many associations sponsor functions such as a dinner or a block party which double as membership drives. Having interesting speakers at meetings is an additional way to attract potential volunteers.

People are impressed with a community that works together and gets results. Some neighbors need to see visible results of what an association can do before they volunteer their time. To motivate members, a new board should start working

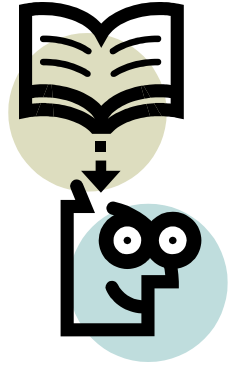
as early as possible on small, visible, quickly resolvable issues, which have been identified as concerns in the community.



After a successful completion of a project, it is important to make sure residents know that the association was responsible for the accomplishment! A newsletter is a good way to keep the membership informed on an on-going basis. Once others realize what the association can accomplish, they are likely to be inspired to participate.

Motivate people by making them feel important. Make sure all residents feel welcome at meetings. Encourage new residents to participate and be responsive to their needs and suggestions. The results will soon become apparent in your well-managed and harmonious homeowners association.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!!



The homeowners association is the cornerstone of a planned residential community. It gives continuity to the community, it preserves the architectural integrity and it maintains the common area. Properly run, the association promotes the community concept and protects the community's property values.

Enforcing rules and restrictions doesn't need to result in unnecessary lawsuits and public relation nightmares. When you buy a home in a common-interest community, be it a condominium unit, Townhome or single-family home, homeowners agree to abide by rules and regulations. They live close to their neighbors, share common facilities and sacrifice certain freedoms – voluntarily to protect property values and reduce nuisances. Many homeowners don't know this. They move into a common-interest community without reviewing the restrictions and are shocked to learn – after receiving a letter from their association – that their choice of exterior home improvements violate the covenants.

Rule enforcement can seem petty and invasive to new residents (or to residents who violate them). But, they serve a purpose – they prevent owners from blasting their stereos at 4:00 a.m. or from turning their yards into car lots! Reasonable restrictions, consistently enforced over time, preserve property values and maintain a high quality of life for residents.

Recognizing the importance of professional education for our clients, Associa has devoted a substantial amount of human and financial resources to the establishment of our National Continuing Education Program. Through this program our managers, accountants and support staff receive regular professional training and are earning recognized industry designations and accreditations in addition to being kept abreast of the latest governmental, operational and philosophical trends in the field of community association management.

Designations:

Associa and Principal Management Group support the continuing education of their managers and congratulate the following individuals on their accomplishments:

- ◆ M-202 Association Communications – congratulations to Shontele Redeaux and Meosha Kay for successfully completing the course.
- ◆ M-205 Risk Management – congratulations to Shontele Redeaux and Carolyn Kivett for successfully completing the course.
- ◆ M-203 Community Leadership – Good luck to Shontele Redeaux, Surina Wright and Stephanie Peterson as they anxiously await their grades!
- ◆ PCAM Case Study – Emma Deatherage has successfully met CAI's educational requirements and will be taking her case study this fall.
- ◆ Common Ground Article – congratulations to Linda Bartel for writing the feature article "Fiduciary Duty" which appeared in the May/June issue of the *Common Ground*.

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OUR MISSION

Established upon the belief that true success is measured by more than profitability, Principal Management Group is committed to excellence in service and to the highest standards of honesty, reliability and innovation in our relations with both our clients and employees.

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