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**SUMMER 2009**

# PRINCIPAL PRESS

## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS

**VICKI WARD, PCAM, PRESIDENT/CEO, PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT GROUP**

**H**ave you ever stopped to think how fast the years seem to pass by? Recently, several of our veteran staff members reflected back on how far we have come and how quickly the years just seem to be moving forward. We thought for a moment about how things used to be; no faxes, no e-mail, no electronic bill pay, no electronic board reports, no cell phones- Wow! How did we ever get anything accomplished?

Today, we proudly announce we are celebrating 30 years in business. We believe we accomplished this milestone by becoming committed to a job well done, by demonstrating genuine care and concern for others, by inspiring others to dream, to learn more, and to become more. We also came to the realization that the first step of wisdom is sometimes silence, the second step is listening, the third is memory, the fourth is practice and perfecting and the fifth is teaching and educating others.

We are proud of the fact that we have consistently provided service to our clients while assisting them in building outstanding relationships along the way. We know the importance of growing stronger everyday, never satisfied with mediocre instead always striving for excellence. During our past 30 years we have continued to move forward in developing numerous programs that offer our clients more products for their hard earned dollar. We continue to look ahead and strive to bring more and more value to our clients and our employees.

Much of our business success has been in our good fortune that has come from aspiration, desperation, perspiration and inspiration. Yet the most important factor of all has come from YOU, our clients! You have continued to share ideas of improvements that would assist you and your communities and have supported us as we listened and strived to accomplish your needs. We will be celebrating our 30 year milestone by giving back to you to - our supporters, our business partners, our long and short term business friendships which has assisted in establishing us as a vibrant professional management firm.

This fall we will sponsor a night of celebration with you by providing a forum which you can "Ask the Experts". We will bring experts for various fields to you for informational purposes. We will be inviting professionals from the following fields for your benefit: CPA, Attorney, Reserve Study Analysis, Irrigation Specialist, Horticulturalist, Pool and Lake Management, Insurance and County Representatives. Our night will start with a short PMGH celebration and then provide a legislative update for bills that successfully passed and that will affect our industry. We will forward more information to you regarding this special night we wish to share with you this fall.

We sincerely wish to take this time to "Thank you" for your business and share our desire that you will be with us as we celebrate our next milestone. The following page contains a few recent testimonials we have received from some of our long-standing clients. We sincerely appreciate all our clients whom have been so instrumental in our continued growth over the past 30 years.

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS

## SPEAKING OUT Testimonials

“ I have the dubious honor of being on two Homeowners Associations - Seven Meadows and Avalon at Seven Meadows. The Seven Meadows Homeowners association has always been associated with PMG. However, the Avalon at Seven Meadows Homeowners Association had been going through quite a bit of transition, and we were experiencing the very worst that Property Managers could deliver.

Once we changed our Management Company to PMG, the residents of Avalon saw an immediate and drastic change. Our emails were answered immediately; we could call our property manager or her assistant and talk to them immediately or within the hour. Our property manager actually drove the neighborhood and knew the street names. The problems we had with our gates and our lakes began being addressed.

PMG along with our community manager brought a new level of management to Avalon at Seven Meadows. Under their management, our residents now have a management company they can talk to, returns calls, follows up and one that works to better the community for the residents. Under PMG's management, the Board of Directors now does a better job of managing the budget, managing the assets of the neighborhood, and proactively running our community. PMG has taught our Board of Directors how to be a Board of Directors. They are truly what any new or experienced Board of Directors needs to make them selves better. PMG is truly the best property management group in the city of Houston.”

**Nick Jessett, Board Member  
Avalon at Seven Meadows HOA  
Vice President, Seven Meadows HOA**

“ The Westgreen Park neighborhood has worked with PMG since the development began. We have partnered for the least seven years -during this time our support needs have fluctuated as we've completed each section of our new subdivision. PMG was instrumental in our early years in working with the developer to deliver promises of a pool and playground area. As our neighborhood has grown, PMG has become an integral part of our community improvements. We value PMG's response to provide us with the support required during this growth. In the last two years, our PMG manager has devoted

countless hours to our community. She has worked side-by-side with our Board members to create a strong team. As our neighborhood is young, our manager's years of management experience has provided a wealth of information and guidance as we strive to improve our common area, increase our property values by maintaining a strong compliance with deed restrictions and manage our portfolio for the future. We look forward to our continued successful relationship!”

**President of Westgreen Park**

“ I have been in the Boardwalk Community for over 12 years and on the Board going on nine years. PMG has been taking care of us for more than 12 years. The best part of PMG as a management firm is that our residents never have to worry about anything! The people at PMG are some the greatest that I have had the pleasure to work with. Boardwalk congratulates PMG on 30 years of great service to their clients and looks forward to continuing our great relationship for a longtime into the future.”

**Mr. Johnson  
President of Boardwalk HOA**

“ As president of Mission Green HOA for 18 years, it has given myself and my fellow Board members great comfort for 25 years to know that PMG continues to offer top notch direction for our Board and homeowners. The success of our community is dependent on two things: the leadership from PMG - H and the participation of our homeowners. I'm happy to say we have both. We have used many of the different programs that PMG offers with great success. We look forward to another 25 years with PMG.”

**Ms. K. Thomason,  
President of Mission Green HOA**

“ Thank you for all your help in making Seven Meadows community a success. The hard work and expertise of our community manager and her team had made my job as President of the HOA much easier. I appreciate your flexibility and can do attitude. Thanks again for a job well done!!”

**Jennifer Bryson,  
Seven Meadows HOA President**

# VIEWS FROM ASSOCIA®

## CAN WE GET A ROUND OF APPLAUSE PLEASE?

*Board Members Dig In to Meet the Challenges of Today*

CAROLYN CUMMINS, PCAM®, CMCA®, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ASSOCIA

**W**ith delinquencies on the rise, foreclosures looming, vendors needing to be paid, owners wanting areas maintained and pools open, it can seem like a laborious task to be a Board member these days. So why do it? It might be the need to give back or a selfish need to make a change in the community. It could even be something as simple as a desire to help and improve the lives of your neighbors as well as your own.

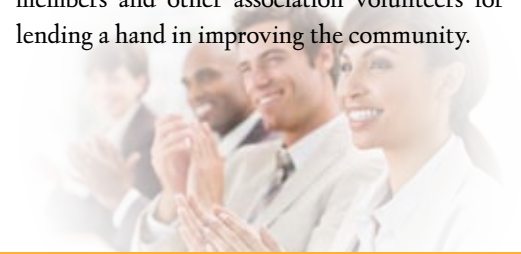
Whatever the reason may be, Board members should be commended for their tireless efforts. Board members, and for that matter committee members, serve as volunteers; non paid workers who devote personal time to helping maintain common areas and ensuring the governing rules and regulations are adhered to. Along with this

can come some unpleasant interactions with unhappy owners, vendors or others who often find themselves in difficult situations and unable to meet their association obligations.

Today, though perhaps more challenging, is no different than any other day for a Board member of a homeowners association. Some situations may have been forced into the forefront like foreclosure and spiking delinquencies but the goals of the association and the Board of Directors are the same: maintain and improve property values in the community. Board members' fiduciary responsibilities obligate them to act in good faith and in the best interest of the owners/members while still exercising good judgment and acting within the legal guidelines of the association. Sometimes these

responsibilities can be at odds with each other and create a challenging situation for Board members. It is these tough decision making times that Board members do not like; it is not fun or easy to be the enforcer, in good or bad times.

Associa and Principal Management Group of Houston understand the challenges Board members face and sincerely appreciate all the hard work, selfless time and energy dedicated to maintaining the integrity of the association. Thank you to all Board members, committee members and other association volunteers for lending a hand in improving the community.



## FEATURED COMMUNITY: THE EMPIRE LOFTS

**T**urn of the century cosmopolitan elegance is revised through Houston's majestic new condominium development, the Empire.

The Empire Lofts located in the heart of Uptown Houston, on the water, at the water wall, across the street from Galleria IV and minutes from downtown Houston. Inspired by classic New York architecture, The Empire Condominium's seventy units, offers distinct variety of lofts & flats to provide an idyllic lifestyle that is second to none.

With all the monumental amenities of its Northeast counterpart, The Empire boasts a prestigious exterior design. The exquisite architectural detailing and harmonization of the building materials is complemented by

the old world style iron railing. The oak lined approach and landscaped motor court is unforgettable as it leads to the grand entrance that finalizes the experience with the declaration that you have arrived. A grand lobby, includes concierge service, an oversized pool and whirlpool spa, and a private movie theatre for the resident's enjoyment which is complete

with a kitchen and bar for private functions. Units at The Empire feature soaring ceilings, the penthouse flats enjoy enormous living spaces and every unit features a Balcony or a Terrace.

Principal Management Group is honored to provide their management services to this elegant condominium while working as a team member with the homeowner controlled Board of Directors.



# HAVE YOU PLANNED FOR PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE?

**A**s elected leaders of your community, your members expect you to be the custodian of the Association owned facilities and common elements. When they are unable to use a portion of the facilities or they find such use difficult or discover a lack of proper maintenance, they look to you for answers.

Most of us know the seasonal maintenance needs of our homes, but how often do we consider the seasonal needs of the Associations' common areas and facilities?

Principal Management Group has implemented a list of Preventative Maintenance Tasks you may wish to consider in order that you can be assured you are taking pro-active measures instead of re-active. Most maintenance issues are recurring tasks and can be serviced by our in-house maintenance staff.

Ask your community manager to provide you with a sample list of preventative maintenance items and schedules which can be developed to ensure you are taking the appropriate measures allowing the association the ability to obtain the useful life of the components necessary for consistent and proper use of its members. Now is the time to seriously consider adopting a preventative

As elected leaders of your community, your members expect you to be the custodian of the association owned facilities and common elements. When they are unable to use a portion of the facilities or they find such use difficult or discover a lack of proper maintenance, they look to you for answers.

maintenance plan as you begin to prepare your 2010 budget. You want to be sure you consider the needs and importance of preventative measures and cost versus replacement and repairs when you least expect it or can financially handle the unexpected expense.

Our in-house maintenance staff can assist with all preventative maintenance issues and more, just let your community manager know you are interested in learning more about how we can help you and your community with a yearly preventative maintenance program.

The following are a few examples of service needs you may have overlooked but need to consider as preventative maintenance measures:

**EXTERIOR LIGHT FIXTURES** - how often are the globes removed to wash and remove insects, etc.? Are they being promptly replaced when cracked or broken? Is it time to update the fixture altogether?

**GUTTER CLEANING** - When was the last time these were inspected for proper slope, leaf removal, water test of down spouts?

**CLUBHOUSE** - cleaning the bathrooms, storage rooms, pool house, etc. Is a fresh coat of paint needed? Are windows in need of cleaning or need caulking?

**COMMUNITY STREET LIGHTS BURNT OUT?** Monthly light checks can be done and reported to the proper entity for replacement. What about carport lights or adequate walkway lighting. How often is it checked?

**HOLIDAY DECORATIONS** - installation, removal and storage

**PARKING LOTS** - repainting of parking lot stripes, reserved spaces faded, curb markings for "no parking" areas, etc.

**TENNIS COURT NETS** need tightening or reinstalled  
**INSPECTION OF PLUMBING** fixtures in pool/clubhouse bathrooms

**AC FILTERS** need replacement

**SMOKE DETECTORS** - batteries need replacement

## EASY WAYS TO KEEP COOL THIS SUMMER



With our temperatures hitting all time highs, we all need to consider the following suggestions for keeping COOL!

- Replace standard incandescent light bulbs with compact

fluorescent light bulbs. The electricity used by standard bulbs reduces 10 percent light and 90 percent heat. Also, compact fluorescent lights are cheaper to operate.

- Schedule heat-producing chores like baking and doing the laundry after the hottest part of the day.

- Install an insulating jacket on your water heater.
- Use the kitchen and bathroom fans to remove heat and moisture during and after cooking and bathing.
- When replacing an appliance, buy those with the Energy Star label. These appliances conserve energy and release less unwanted heat.
- If you are home during the day, use a room fan to create a cooling breeze.
- On those rare cooler summer evenings, don't forget about the cheapest cooling method of all: open your doors and windows, run ceiling fans. This will help move cool evening air through your home for almost no cost.

# COMMUNICATION IS KEY



LINDA BARTEL, PCAM®, AMS®, LSM®, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

**A**ccording to Merriam-Webster, communication is “sending, giving, or exchanging information and ideas”. The Community Associations Institute (CAI) defines persons who are good communicators as having the “knowledge and experience to produce positive relationships, to help create a pleasant social environment and to establish a firm basis for problem solving”.

Effective communication may be the single most important tool available to the Board of Directors and the manager to promote a positive and cooperative spirit in the association. If a Board does not communicate effectively, the Directors could find themselves dealing with apathy. Perhaps some of the apathy starts because not enough information is transmitted from the Board to the residents about projects or the day-to-day issues of the association.

The number one goal for a Board of Directors should be to set the example through positive

leadership, displaying confidence in the association manager as well as each other. By communicating in a positive way to the membership that any changes made are for the betterment of the association and protection of their investment, the Board can persuade the residents to cooperate with and support their decisions.

The Board must listen to the needs of the community, gather enough information to clarify the needs, check the understanding of the problem, respond as appropriate and decide what type of solution is warranted. Strong communications with everyone including resident owners, non-resident owners and tenants, is vital to the success of any community.

Communication is most successful when it takes a variety of forms, personal and public, written and verbal, depending on the message being delivered. Personal communication with tenants is difficult for many associations because often the Board does not know who the tenants are. If your association is challenged with a large number of non-resident

owners, implementing a database to maintain information on tenants would be a valuable tool. This database would be helpful to the Board of Directors or a committee member when it's necessary or beneficial to call a tenant and send correspondence.

Both a newsletter and a community website provide excellent opportunities for resident involvement. The Board should use these effective communication tools to invite residents to participate in specific committees or on a particular project. Remember, the more resident involvement in the operations of their community, the more successful that community will be.

It is wise for all associations to invest in the training and education of Board members, with a primary focus on exceptional communications. There are plenty of specialized courses, books, magazines and local programs available through CAI, its chapters and other organizations. An educated Board with optimal communication skills will make better decisions!

## Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

Even though we use water every day, it's easy to take it for granted. Just imagine how you would function without clean water. It's everyone's responsibility to conserve and protect water resources. The decisions and actions you make today truly affect our water resources for the future. The following suggestions will help you get in the habit of saving water in the great outdoors:

- Get a rain gauge to measure rainfall. One inch of rain per week is generally sufficient for lawns and gardens. Supplement only when rainfall is inadequate.
- Use mulch around landscape plantings. Mulch will help eliminate weeds and hold moisture in the soil.
- Select hardy plants that don't need much water. Native plants that are well adapted to your climate and soils will survive well without supplemental watering.
- Water during the cool part of the day to avoid rapid evaporation.
- When watering is necessary, water slowly and thoroughly. If you notice puddles or runoff, turn water off and wait for water to soak in. Also be sure your sprinkler puts water where you need it—not on driveways or sidewalks.
- Wash cars efficiently. First give the car a quick rinse, and then turn the water off. Wash one section of the car at a time and rinse that section quickly. Turn the water off each time.

For more tips, visit [www.auduboninternational.org](http://www.auduboninternational.org).

A close-up photograph of a champagne bottle being poured into a glass. The golden liquid is splashing, creating a dynamic and celebratory atmosphere. The bottle's neck and the glass are visible in the upper right corner.

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Thank you for your business, we hope you will be  
with us as we celebrate our next milestone.

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