

Community MOMENTS



Bruce Chang

Senior Community Association Manager

RealManage Northern California

April 2020



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10 Interesting Fact About April

- April is actually the second month of spring.
- April's birthstone is the diamond, which characterizes the trait of innocence.
- In the U.S., many professional sports seasons typically start in April.
- April is the month of humor, so laugh it up!
- April is the only month of the year that has the letter "i" in its name.
- Small animals that hibernate usually come out during this month, while birds fly back northward.
- Both zodiac signs that fall under April, Aries and Taurus, are four legged animals.
- In April, the Northern Hemisphere is equivalent to what the Southern Hemisphere is like in October.
- April has many holiday celebrations and observances such as April Fool's Day, Autism Awareness Day, National Poetry Month, and Arbor Day.



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Bruce Chang



SENIOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGER
REALMANAGE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



We are pleased to introduce you to one of our amazing Northern California Senior Community Association Managers, Bruce Chang. Bruce obtained a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance at Cal State East Bay. He worked in the property management industry for 15 years when he joined the RealManage family in the Spring of 2017.

Having been hired as a Community Association Manager, he immediately got to work getting to know his portfolio of communities, as well the processes for RealManage including understanding and using CiraNet, which is a proprietary software developed by CiraConnect for common interest development management.

The leadership team quickly saw that Bruce's educational background and industry experience made him a valuable team member. He was assigned a portfolio that only someone with his skill set could take on. Bruce obtained his California Certified Association Manager designation from the California Association Institute (CAI) in 2018. He recently completed the course required to achieve the Association Management Specialist designation from CAI.

As a result of his tenacity and continued efforts to bring high-quality service to this portability, his board members often express appreciation for his work. Earlier this year, a board president reached out to the leadership team, noting: "I want to say that I am personally very happy with the service we receive from Bruce. He is always responsive to our concerns, always pleasant and helpful, and is knowledgeable of our HOA issues as well as overall laws and rules regarding California Associations".

His co-workers also enjoy working with Bruce. He has a witty sense of humor, and he is quick to step in and help anyone who needs it. He has covered board meetings, helped train other staff, given tips to other community managers who may be dealing with challenging issues and is always there to guide his boards in whatever projects they are undertaking.

On a personal level, Bruce has many hobbies he enjoys. While he may not admit it, he is known for being quite the "Foodie" and he has introduced our local office to many great restaurants in the Bay Area area. Up until recently, he was a high-performance driver who participated in many races. He is also an avid poker player. He placed 246 in the World Series of Poker. But one of the most important things to Bruce is his family. He enjoys spending time with his dad, and his sister and her family, including his young niece, who he often brags about.



Bruce is an amazing representative of the high-quality people that RealManage is proud to have as part of our team. He is a true pleasure to work with, as he continues to uphold the RealManage core guiding principles, including integrity, respect, selflessness, personal relationships, and always improving. Thank you, Bruce, for all you do!

Written by **Suzette Beck** — Director of Community Association Management

BOARD SPOTLIGHT



Park Towers Dallas, TX

[GrandManors](#) is proud to manage the beautiful Park Towers in Dallas, Texas. As the on-site management company, it has been an honor working alongside Anne Bernhardt, president of the Association board of directors, since 2015. Growing up in Switzerland, then a career as a mechanical engineer in the manufacturing industry, Anne has lived in many international locations, a life throughout which she grew accustomed to high-rise living.

After settling in Dallas in 1985, Anne moved to Park Towers in 2010. Having served for ten years on the board of directors of her previous homeowner's association, the Park Towers nominating committee was quick to catch hold of her. She joined the board in 2013 and took over as President in 2015. When asked what she likes the most about Park Towers, Anne immediately said it was the community. "Everyone looks out for each other. They are all family."

As she reflected on her tenure at the helm of the Park Towers board, she is most proud of their completion of a Reserve Study, something that had never been done in the building's 60-year history. In tandem with the Reserve Study, the By-Laws were amended to provide for regular contributions to a Reserve Fund. This commendable accomplishment addresses the many years of deferred maintenance. In the past, major maintenance projects were paid for through special assessments, which proved an ineffective means of addressing much needed

and on-going improvements. Anne is thankful to the GrandManors management professionals for their guidance in initiating the Reserve Study, amending the By-Laws, and assisting the board of directors as they move forward in accomplishing their goals.

In looking towards the future, Anne is keen on ensuring the Governing Documents and Policies and Procedures are kept up to date. Park Towers, formerly a co-op, still leans towards operating in a cooperative fashion. It is Anne's goal, along with her fellow board members, to implement more processes into their operations. Anne also serves on the board of the local CAI (Community Associations Institute) chapter. Through CAI, she has come to recognize everything is becoming more process-oriented. At the same time, she is equally sensitive to the consequences of putting new processes in place and asking long-term residents to change from the familiarity of what they have known for years.

Anne sees the need to carve out a mutually beneficial way to communicate with residents. She recognizes that delivery of communication to residents at the upper end of the age spectrum (one resident is a centenarian), is different from the way in which younger, recent retirees engage and communicate. Anne and the board are learning that the frequency of communication is delicate in its symmetry. Too much or not enough – they are refining their approach to find a harmonious balance.

Written by **Debbie Simpson** — GrandManors Business Development Manager



Anne Bernhardt

HOW TO ADDRESS COVID-19 IN YOUR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The following article is meant to help community association leaders by providing some plans and information about handling COVID-19 (also known as the Novel Coronavirus or Sars-COVID-2) and is not meant to be a full emergency plan or provide health care advice. Please continue checking with primary sources (such as the [CDC](#) or [WHO](#)) for more immediate and fully up-to-date information.

As COVID-19 outbreaks are appearing more and more in the news, it's important that your community and the board members take every precaution to help reduce the spread of this virus. An outbreak could last for weeks or even months in your community. This can be especially true for those communities with communal spaces like elevators or shared gated entry systems.

Depending on the severity of the outbreak, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Local public health officials may make recommendations appropriate to your local situation, such as [flexible sick-leave and telework policies](#) and [temporary school dismissals](#).

Preparing for an Outbreak

There are steps that you and your fellow board members can take before an outbreak to ensure that your community is as prepared as possible for not only a viral emergency but in an [emergency or national disaster](#).

Establish ongoing communication with your local public health department to facilitate access to relevant information before and during an outbreak

Having a good contingency plan in place and developing flexible policies and procedures to accommodate public health recommendations

can help reduce infection. During your planning process, remember to engage key partners across both public and private sectors, such as local businesses, schools, and other community- and faith-based organizations, and community leaders.

Also, the specific details of your plan should be based on the extent of the outbreak and the size of your organization and workforce, complexity of your day-to-day operations, and type of on-site and off-site services your organization provides to vulnerable populations.

Connect to community-wide planning

Find out if your local government has a private-public emergency planning group that meets regularly. Building strong alliances before an outbreak may provide your organization with the support and resources needed to respond effectively.

Also, in recognition of the ["whole community" approach](#) to emergency planning/management, your input as community leaders and/or stakeholders helps ensure the completeness and representativeness of your local government's emergency operations plan.

Putting Your Plans into Action

Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.

Get up-to-date information about local COVID-19 activity from [public health officials](#). Be aware of [temporary school dismissals](#) and company closures in your area because these may affect your board members and volunteers. Those communities with many elderly, at risk individuals may need to suspend meetings and community events until further notice.

Communicate frequently with those in your communication chain.

Update key community partners and stakeholders regularly. Share information about how your organization is responding to the outbreak. Be open with homeowners who are concerned with how they can help and ensure that everyone in your management team is aware of their role in the coming weeks.

Provide information that explains why and when on-site operations and services may be temporarily scaled back or your organization may be closed to non-essential visitors.

Some community administrators and leaders may choose to alter normal operations due to high staff absenteeism. Meet with your emergency operations coordinator or planning team to discuss plans for modifying, scaling back, postponing, or canceling large group activities and events (e.g., community picnics or planned maintenance), especially for high-risk groups like the elderly. Discuss how these actions will impact your organization and those you serve.

Distribute health messages and materials to staff, volunteers, and the community.

Continue to promote everyday preventative actions (e.g., stay home when sick, cover coughs and sneezes, and wash hands often). Offer resources that provide [reliable COVID-19 information](#). Address the fear and anxiety that may result from rumors or misinformation.

Provide COVID-prevention supplies to staff, volunteers, and those you serve.

Ensure that your organization has supplies, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and disposable face masks for staff, volunteers, and those you

serve if you do plan on hosting an in-person meeting. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular detergent and water.

Address the concerns of board members, homeowners and volunteers who are at high risk for COVID-19 complications.

Encourage staff and volunteers to consult with their healthcare provider about how to protect their health if they are at high risk for COVID-19 complications. Be prepared to address the health concerns and needs of those who are at high risk, such as older adults and those with underlying health conditions.

Implement flexible attendance and sick-leave policies (if possible) due to COVID-19.

Ask staff (and volunteers) to stay home if they are sick to lower their chances of spreading illness to others, or if caring for a sick household member. Provide instructions about how and when to safely return to work.

Separate those who become sick at your organization from those who are well.

Send sick members and volunteers home immediately. If someone you serve becomes sick at your organization, separate them from others (particularly from those who are at high risk for COVID-19 complications) as soon as possible. Work with the local public health department and nearby hospitals to care for those who become sick. If needed, arrange transportation for staff and others who need emergency care. If you are interested you can read more about [caring for those sick with COVID-19](#).

ELECTRONIC VOTING AND HOAS

With busy careers, lifestyles, and other things, it is a challenge for homeowners associations to keep a high level of member involvement. However, it is crucial to the success of the community to ensure everyone has a voice on issues that might arise. One method that is emerging is electronic voting for community board votes. According to [HOA Management](#), "The number of votes impact key decisions like approval of budgets, updates to membership, and amendments of documents. Online voting allows a way of encouraging this participation without requiring physical attendance."

Key Benefits of E-Voting

INEXPENSIVE

According to [HOALeader](#), installing electronic voting in community associations is relatively inexpensive with a cost between \$500 - \$1,000.

PRECISE

When using e-voting, HOAs eliminate human error. Mistakes made in manual hand counts, tallying, and duplicate ballots are essentially removed.

STRENGTHENS VOTER PARTICIPATION

By providing a convenient way to vote, participation will increase. Mobile technology gives members the opportunity to vote from smartphones and tablets from anywhere.

ELIMINATES WASTE

The cost involved in designing, printing and mailing paper ballots are virtually eliminated unless some members opt out of e-voting.

A study was conducted by [Vote HOA Now](#) in a recent election where they sent out 2,095 electronic invitations to vote and 73.3% of the electronic ballots (1,536) voted. For the homeowners who could not or did not want to vote electronically, a paper ballot was mailed out (366) and 20 additional ballots were handed out at the concierge desk for those who lost their ballots. They received back 198 ballots (51.3%).

Challenges of E-Voting

OUTDATED LAWS

Many states have outdated laws concerning electronic voting for HOAs. However, according to [HOA Management](#), "More than 20 states have amended HOA laws so that electronic voting is allowed. Different states have different laws so it's important to talk to your Community Manager and Attorneys about the potential legality of using electronic voting."

SECURITY CONCERNS

Some residents may have concerns about the security of their personal information. Although security has improved over the last several years, community associations should provide information on what is involved when e-voting.

LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH ISSUES OR CANDIDATES

If voters do not attend meetings, they may not be familiar enough with the issues or candidates on the ballot and you might not get the vote that is best for the association.

Moving Forward With E-Voting

If your board chooses to move forward with electronic voting you will want to make sure that you discuss the implications with your legal counsel. Also, you will want to check your governing documents to determine if your bylaws will allow or restrict e-votes. If your bylaws allow your members to vote electronically then your next step will be to craft a resolution with the help of your legal counsel.

Your resolution should address the procedures your association will follow, how homeowners can opt-in or opt-out of using electronic voting, and any other items that are necessary to comply with your state or your association's bylaws.

You will then want to send notices to the homeowners informing them of the board meeting at which the resolution will be considered. Assuming you received the favorable number of votes to move forward, your next step will be to evaluate different electronic voting systems. Make sure they adhere to the legal requirements, have extensive security measures in place and offer ease of use for your members.

Having active involvement by homeowners is essential for the success of a community. However, e-voting may not be the right fit for every community association.



BOARD PORTAL TRAINING

KARA'S KORNER

We will be holding a board portal training on April 21st at 7:00pm. In addition, there will be a Board Member Toolkit Basics webinar with our new Board Member Toolkit on April 30th at 7:00pm. In these webinars I'll cover topics such as:

- Board Member Roles and Responsibilities
- Agendas and Minutes
- Tips, Do's and Don'ts
- Financial Quick Overview
- Vendor Help
- CAI Available Programs
- Rules and Regulations Quick Overview



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