

APRIL 2017

COMMUNITY MOMENTS

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Theresa Stack

Director of Community Association Management

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“Valued clients, it is amazing that we are already a quarter of the way through 2017! At RealManage, we are finalizing our preparation for pool season and yes, planning for 2018 community budgets. This month has been full of wonderful wins for our company and family.

We have two members of the RealManage family that will be recognized at the CAI National Awards Ceremony in Las Vegas, Nevada on May 4th. **Leslie Alvarez** is the General Manager for Park Towers in Dallas, Texas and is one of the three finalists for CAI National Onsite Manager of the Year. **Mystre' Van Horn** serves as a Director of Community Association Management in our Austin Market. Mystre' recruited more people to CAI membership than anyone else across the United States and will be the recipient of the CAI National Recruiter of the Year Award.

Last year, **Mary Arnold**, out of our Austin Market, was one of three finalists for CAI National Portfolio Manager of the Year. I don't have the words to express the depth of pride I have for these individuals and the outstanding credit they reflect on our company and the Community Associations we manage. We look forward to diligently serving you throughout the remainder of the year and if there are any ways we can improve, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Champions every day!



Chris Ayoub

President, RealManage

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Theresa Stack

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

If you take the sarcastic wit of a New York native and combine it with Florida Sunshine and Colorado optimism you will get Theresa Stack; our Director of Community Association Managers located right here in Denver. Originally from Hoboken NJ, Theresa eventually moved to the heat of Florida to handle the on-site management of over seven hundred single family homes. After a decade of management there, her daughter was accepted to attend school in Colorado and Theresa, naively not knowing that lots of white powdery stuff fall from the sky here, decided to come along.

An excellent example of Theresa's dedication comes right from her first day when I interviewed her: she showed up right on time even while a funnel cloud was descending and tornado sirens started going off. That kind of fearless dedication has shown during her tenure at RealManage, and frankly, someone does not manage Homeowners Associations for twelve years without a healthy stockpile of courage. While Theresa and I both experience a shot of panic when the snow starts falling (her driving skills were honed in Florida and mine in Texas, so the Colorado natives who work here only laugh

at our snow-driving fear), she has still braved the elements to take care of her associations. She recalls "for one meeting I had to drive an hour away to Fort Collins in a blizzard. When I made it out of the meeting I could barely see the road, and I was white-knuckle driving all the way home!"

So why does she keep at it? Well, it should not be surprising that someone who has moved around to so many places to experience new locations loves the variety in her work. "Every day is different," she says, "you can come in with a plan but that usually only lasts until about 9:30. You have to stay on your toes and constantly find new approaches to solving problems". That is

not the only reason, however. Theresa loves to work with board members and homeowners who can put their egos aside and work together to find solutions for their community. It can be a challenge to guide them to that path and to make sure enough people get what they want, but what is life without a good challenge?

Theresa has been an outstanding addition to the Colorado branch since day 1, so much so that she was promoted from Manager to Director in less than a year. She certainly isn't alone in hard work and success!

Written by **John Garvin**
Senior Vice President, RealManage Colorado





BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ron Tanciar

HILLCREST FARM HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION OF WAKE COUNTY

Hillcrest Farms is a beautiful 54 lot neighborhood in Wake Forest, North Carolina. It boasts almost 17 acres of natural common area that include two ponds where neighbors can enjoy fishing in or just each other’s company around the pergola.



Hillcrest Farms President is Ron Tanciar. He has been a member of Hillcrest Farms since 2014 and has been President of the Association since October 2015. While his tenure has been short, Ron dove right began his work to make Hillcrest Farms all that it can be.

This last year, Ron has managed to reduce landscaping costs by over 43% and HOA Insurance cost by over 19%. Ron met with every single landscaper who gave quotes (nine to be exact) walked the property with each and made sure everyone was on the same page. He always comes to every board meeting with hand outs and information to make sure all board members are fully informed of all aspects of work to be done. This enables the board meetings to run efficiently and allows board members to make an informative decision that is best for the current situation of the neighborhood and sets them up for future success as a whole.

Ron is retired from a 30+ year career with GM. He is married to his wife Debbie. Debbie is also a volunteer member of the Architectural Committee for Hillcrest Farms and enjoys gardening. Ron and Debbie enjoy camping and traveling to the different National Parks. They are planning a trip to the wine country this year. They are also enjoying their first grandchild born this year! Ron also has a passion for classic cars and attends most of the local classic car shows in the area. He is also participating in a local charity classic car show in Wake Forest this June. Ron has been a great addition to the Hillcrest Farms Board and it has been a pleasure to work with him!

Written by **Holly Bunch**
Director of Community Association Management, RealManage Raleigh

Spring To-Do List

Start the season off right with a comprehensive to-do list

LEAF REMOVAL

Many association-governed communities perform leaf removal in late autumn, however, certain types of trees tend to shed leaves throughout the cold season instead of all at once. If your community has these trees, you will probably need to perform an additional round of leaf removal at the beginning of spring. Areas where leaves commonly accumulate in the winter include corners where fences meet, under shrubs, and around outdoor equipment.

PLANTING ANNUALS

Eye catching annual flowers such as impatiens and marigolds are relatively inexpensive and great for adding color to flower beds in grassy areas, and at the base of signs and permanent equipment that are surrounded by mulch. The catch is that you have to replace them every year. Annuals are separated into “warm season” flowers and “cool season” flowers. Now is a good time to start planting cool season annuals such as pansies, calendulas, and primrose.

POWER WASHING

During winter, paved surfaces such as tennis courts and swimming pools can accumulate dirt and residue from decaying foliage. One of the fastest ways to remove the build up is to use a power washer to spray it away. Power washers emit a high-velocity stream of water that can damage plants, vinyl siding, and wood paneling. Therefore, it is best to have a condominium association management provider schedule the work to be done by professionals.

RESEALING PARKING LOTS

Cracks in blacktop parking lots often become larger in winter, as water enters them and expands as it freezes. If left unsealed, the cracks can cave in under the pressure of tires and become even larger. Some neighborhoods try to seal the cracks by hand using sealant purchased from hardware supply stores. In addition to being time consuming, this method rarely achieves a tight seal. The best option is having a blacktop company reseal the lot.

COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT tips

The early signs of spring are upon us and soon it will be time for the Easter Bunny to make his annual trek! Here are 13 tips on how to put together a fun-for-all Easter Egg Hunt at your community association that will bring everyone together for a day of fun.

get out ahead

Select a Date and Time well in advance. Publish the date in community newsletters, on websites, and on social media sites to spread the word. You do not want to go through all the effort only to have a low turnout due to a late announcement!

scheduling

Keep in mind that that people often have family or religious plans the day of Easter, so plan your event for the day or the weekend before. Late morning or afternoon egg hunts also give parents a chance to prepare the kiddos for the excitement of the day.

age groups

Schedule hunts at different times for different age groups. To keep things fair for the kids, schedule the hunts for age groups of 0-3, 4-6, 7-9 etc. Schedule the different groups either at different times, or if your common areas allow, in separate sections or regions to section groups off from one another.

location

Choose your Easter egg hunt location(s). Whether you decide to centralize your egg hunt in one place, or in a few separate courses for different age groups, choose your location early to help with the planning and preparations. Set boundaries to prevent children from wandering too far away while they are on the hunt for their precious goodies!

difficulty

Easter egg hunts are perfect for any age group, but keep ages in mind when hiding the eggs. Young children will need the eggs to be in places where they are easily reached; toddlers need them just spread across the surface of the lawn. For older guests, you might hide eggs in trees, bushes, under or inside objects and such.

map it out

Make a map of the hiding places to prevent you from losing eggs. A map will help you make sure your eggs are spread across the hunting grounds so that more kids have a chance of experiencing the thrill of finding eggs. Moreover, remember the hunt does not end until the last egg is found!

upkeep

Notify your management company to ask the landscaper crew to turn off any irrigation in the area on the day of the event, and make sure the area is neatly mowed. A great part of a fantastic event is a hunting ground that looks great!

safety

Inspect the location of the hunt a few days before the event. You want to ensure there are no hazards present such as holes, garbage or pests. Walk the area thoroughly and report any findings to your management company or Board of Directors.

supply

Determine how many plastic eggs to buy based on the number of people you expect to participate in the hunt. A good rule of thumb is just about a dozen eggs per egg hunter. Also, plan to have a few extra Easter baskets on hand in case someone forgets to bring their own. Better to have leftovers than to disappoint the children with skimpy findings. Fill the eggs with jelly beans, chocolate, coins, or any other small prizes.

volunteers

Hosting a community Easter egg hunt is too much for one person to handle. Seek out volunteers among your friends and neighbors to help. Let them know "I'll only need you for an hour on Saturday!". On the day of the event, give your volunteers clear instructions to avoid confusion on the big day.

easter bunny

Imagine the delight on the kid's faces if the Easter Bunny himself made an appearance in the flesh (or fur)! Ask if one of the volunteers wouldn't mind donning the costume and brushing up on their acting chops!

easter games

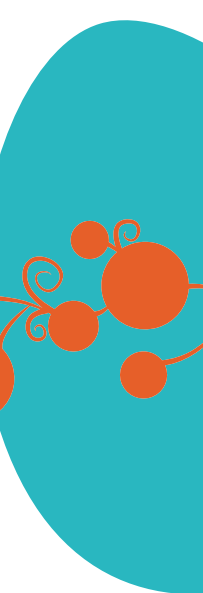
Add some extra fun to your event with a few games. Hide a gold egg with a dollar bill in it and let everyone know about the golden egg to make the event even more exciting! Everyone will love the added competition. Alternatively, announce that whoever finds eggs of certain colors may trade them in at the end of the hunt for a particular prize (you can recycle the plastic eggs for next year!). Or have the kiddos engage in a game of Bunny Hop where instead of running around the field, they are asked to "hop" with their feet together and get out your cameras!

after party

Thank your volunteers and celebrate your hard work with an informal after party gathering. Your efforts are sure to be appreciated, and this will give everyone a little time to reflect on the day and unwind. Enjoy the fruits of your labor (and any leftover Easter chocolate!).

Written by **Mary Arnold**, CMCA, AMS®

National Director of Training and Community Association Management Support



HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS



PARKING RESTRICTIONS



PROS AND CONS



armed guards checking fingerprints as people pull their cars into the garage. Well, maybe that isn't the best solution for communities that don't want to raise assessments by a few hundred thousand dollars per resident, so here are some better options.

| LOOSE |

First realize that there IS **NOT** a solution that is going to make everyone in your community happy, so no matter what you do you have to prepare yourself for at least a few upset residents. Fortunately, that is the easy part. The hard part is deciding where your community belongs on a shifting scale of being more authoritarian with parking enforcement vs. more lenient and laissez-faire. To decide, let's go over the pros and cons:

I will start with *looser* controls. Ultimately this means that if there is assigned parking and visitor spaces, the board doesn't take the time to get involved in parking disputes. Now, I am not talking about the wild west of parking here. You can still have some control measures, such as posting the towing company information. And of course, if someone sees a car parked illegally, or a parked in such a way that there is a safety concern, they can always call the police to have them resolve that issue.

| PROS |

Money. This is by far the biggest perk of looser parking enforcement. It is not expensive to let people sort out their parking issues. For the most part, neighbors will resolve their disputes if someone keeps parking in their spot, and they can always call the tow company if needed. There is no financial burden on the association this way which means less headaches and paperwork.

The looser controls option can give some versatility towards what residents can do. Like I said, I have seen cars towed out of a visitor parking spot shortly after parking, and more than a few boards have told me that they want to limit visitor parking to two hours or less. Now, try explaining to your date that you loved having them over for dinner, but they have to leave because their two hour parking limit is up.

| CONS |

You are saving money, but does that matter when you come home and have a car full of groceries with a few tubs of ice cream and some screaming kids in the back seat, and someone has parked in your spot? Usually it doesn't.

That goes double if you live next to a location that has a high parking demand. We may not all live next to the Superdome, but if you live downtown and parking anywhere else is \$20, I can guarantee you that people will try to save some money by parking in your spots.

| STRICT |

Now about *stricter* controls. Say you have an association with a parking lot close to downtown, or have limited visitor parking, and parking is always clogged up to the point that your friend has to circle the block for 45 minutes before they can find a place to park. A recent study from the Department of Transportation states that the average household has 1.8 cars, and your neighbor might be raising the national average by a few points with the number of junkers they park in the association. When your association has a lot of cars is the time to start considering stricter parking policies. Things like hiring a parking monitor company, using parking permits, or having a towing company do drive-thrus will help make it so your residents that are following the rules always have consistent parking.

| PROS |

Strict assigned parking rules can offer homeowners peace of mind that they won't have to worry about someone taking up their spot. And let's be honest, most people wouldn't say anything or call the towing company anyway. Stricter controls place the burden on the association and management company, but takes it off the homeowner.

Your community can create and issue parking permits and tags that generate some revenue for the association that you can use to hire companies that will put boots on cars that are improperly parked. It is then up to the owner of the vehicle to pay to get it off.

| CONS |

Creating and issuing parking tags and permits isn't always cheap to initiate for the association. Plus it creates a lot more work for you. Inspection services and everything else that goes into a fully structured parking system will take time and money.

If you go too strict on your parking enforcement it creates tension between homeowners and the association. Try throwing a party to celebrate your child's graduation that can only take place in a short time window. No one likes worrying if their friends will be towed or ticketed for parking at their house.

It might be time to pencil out a few minutes at the next board meeting to decide which direction you want to go as a community association. It is important to factor in the hard metrics such as cost, but you should also get some input from your residents to get a sense of how they feel about parking and what they would like to see. Again, you will always have some people in any association who will be to the extreme side of that scale no matter what, but as long as you have a reasonable and justified approach to parking you should be able to keep most people in the association happy!

Written by **John Garvin**
Senior Vice President, RealManage Colorado



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